



ASA Rulebook

August 13, 2009 ed.

MISSION

Our mission is to provide opportunity and incentive to pursue excellence in competitive swimming:

- To promote the sport of competitive swimming
- To promote health and fitness through competitive swimming
- To promote the enjoyment of competitive swimming
- To promote recognition for top swimming performances and performers
- To increase the number of competitive swimming opportunities
- To increase the quality of competitive swimming opportunities
- To make swimming meets easy to host and enjoyable for everyone involved
- To cooperate with other competitive swimming organizations for the betterment of the sport

PREAMBLE

Purpose. ASA Rules are designed to delineate boundaries that create an environment for fair and honest competition within which swimmers can enjoy competing safely, with dignity and respect.

Intent. ASA Rules are intended:

To promote integrity, honesty, equal opportunity, fair play, dignity, responsibility, respect and enjoyment in competitive swimming;

To keep competition in the perspective of ASA's stated mission;

To encourage and reward performance excellence and initiative;

To protect the health, safety, and well-being of participants;

To allow natural consequences to prevail for minor deviations from start, stroke, and turn specifications that are disadvantageous to the swimmer and to disqualify swimmers only for acts that are unfairly advantageous or that are otherwise inconsistent with the fair, honest, safe, and respectful environment required of ASA competitions.

The rules are intended to be inclusive and are designed:

To facilitate the ease of entry into the sport and

To facilitate the ease of hosting and judging competitions.

Member Conduct. ASA members are assumed to, and expected to, conduct themselves with integrity and in a manner consistent with ASA Rules and with the intent of ASA Rules.

Construction. ASA Rules shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with their purpose. Whenever the context so indicates, the masculine or feminine gender shall be construed to include the other and the singular or plural number shall be construed to include the other.

Rules Exceptions and Additions. For any particular event, a meet/race director may request from ASA a specific exception to use more restrictive rules (e.g., the use of another organization's rules) or to make an addition to ASA Rules. All requests from a event/meet host for a variance from the currently published ASA Rule Book must be made in writing. All applications for a variance from the currently published ASA Rule Book must be expressly approved in writing by the President of ASA and must be announced to all participants prior to the event.

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MEMBERSHIP

Eligibility

Anyone may apply for membership in ASA. ASA reserves the right to reject applications for any reason.

Membership will be good for the calendar year.

Single-event Membership

An event host may offer a single-event membership to nonmembers in order to allow them to participate in that one event, subject to prior written permission from ASA.

Team Membership

Any properly authorized representative of a club may make application for team membership with ASA.

Swimmer Eligibility

A swimmer must be a member in good standing of ASA in order to participate in any ASA sanctioned meet. A swimmer must be a member in good standing of ASA at the time of any swim in order for the time from that swim to be considered for records or top times.

Team Representation

An ASA member in good standing may represent any ASA registered club in good standing with ASA by indicating a team affiliation on the membership application. At the renewal of membership for the next calendar year, a swimmer may transfer to any other ASA registered club in good standing by indicating a change in club affiliation on his membership renewal form. A swimmer may change his affiliation at any other time between meets through application to ASA and payment of a transfer fee.

Affiliation with teams in any other organization does not effect a swimmer's eligibility to represent any ASA member club member in an ASA sanctioned competition.

COMPETITIONS

Application for Sanction

In order to host an ASA competition, potential hosts must submit a completed Application for Sanction Form, submit the proposed meet information, and pay any applicable sanction fees.

Membership required

Only ASA member swimmers shall be permitted to compete in ASA sanctioned competitions.

Strict adherence to meet information, ASA Rules, and sanction guidelines

Competitions shall be conducted in strict conformity to meet information, ASA rules, and sanction guidelines.

Object

The object of each swimming race shall be to determine which competitor completes the designated stroke, the specified number of lengths of the course, the fastest.

Placing

Times shall determine the placing. The swimmer swimming the designated stroke, within the constraints of the rules, the specified number of lengths of the course, with the fastest time shall be declared the winner. All subsequent places shall be determined by relative times. Each swimmer swimming the designated stroke, within the constraints of the rules, the specified number of lengths of the course, with the next fastest time shall be awarded the next subsequent place.

Meet format

Any distance of any stroke (freestyle, butterfly, backstroke, or breaststroke) or combination of strokes may be offered in an ASA sanctioned competition. Meet hosts do not have to be limited to offering events or age groups currently recognized for records.

Strict adherence to meet information and sanction guidelines

Competitions shall be conducted in strict conformity to meet information, ASA rules, and sanction guidelines.

COMPETITIONS, CONT.

One swimmer per lane

Each swimmer shall have the full width of an assigned lane, enclosed by two lane lines, in which to complete a race.

Exception: With the swimmers' consent, two or more swimmers may be assigned to one lane, but a time achieved in a lane with more than one swimmer shall be ineligible for records.

Tobacco and alcohol

There shall be no smoking or use of other tobacco or alcohol products in any area used by swimmers during warm-up or during the course of a meet. No tobacco products or alcohol may be sold on site during warm-up or during the course of any competition.

Officials

There shall be one referee, a starter, and any other officials as determined by the referee in conjunction with the meet director. The referee may act as the starter. The referee shall have full authority over the technical conduct of the meet and shall act to ensure a fair and honest competition conducted in strict conformity to the rules.

Allowances for disabilities

The person responsible for overseeing the meet may allow deviations from the rules at his discretion for swimmers with disabilities.

Exceptions: The swimmer may not be provided with any unfair advantage over other swimmers the swimmer would not otherwise have.

Swimmers may not be allowed to compete unless they are ASA members, and have signed all appropriate waivers.

Swimmers must compete in designated age groupings as determined by dates of birth.

Swimmers shall not be allowed to interfere in any way with other swimmers.

FACILITIES

End walls

The end walls of the racing course for all events should have solid, non-slip surfaces and should be vertical and parallel to each other. For National Championship events, racing walls must have solid, non-slip surfaces and must be vertical and parallel to each other.

Lane lines

Lane lines with continuous floating markers attached to a line secured at each end of the pool shall separate the lanes.

The color or pattern of the floats five meters from the ends of the pool in a 25 meter pool or 50 meter pools and five yards from the ends of the pool in a 25 yard pool should be a distinct from the color or pattern of the other floats.

The lane lines for all courses should have distinct color markings 15 meters (49.21 feet) from each end wall. In 50 meter pools, the lane lines should have a distinct color marking at the 25 meter mark.

For safety reasons, there should be no exposed cable. Take up spools and ratchet mechanisms should be covered.

Starting platforms

The front edge of starting platforms shall be even with the wall on a vertical plane. It may be up to 2 feet six inches (0.76 meters) above the surface of the water.

The surface area of starting platforms should be at least 1 foot 8 inches (0.5 meters) x 1 foot 8 inches (0.5 meters). The entire surface shall be covered with non-slip material. Starting platforms shall not slope down to the front edge more than 10°.

Starting platforms should be secured to the deck or bulkhead.

Pace clocks

There shall be at least two pace clocks placed on an uninterrupted line of vision to swimmers in all lanes, preferably at least one on each side at the starting end of the pool. Pace clocks with sweep hands should be at least three feet in diameter. Digital clocks should have number displays at least 6 inches high.

FACILITIES, CONT.

15 meter mark

The competition course shall be equipped with prominently visible markers that clearly establish a distance of 15 meters from each end of the pool.

Backstroke flags

Backstroke flags shall be hung across the pool at the following distances from the starting and turning walls:

For courses in meters, the flags shall be hung across the pool at a uniform distance of 5 meters from each end, no less than 5 feet, 11 inches above the surface of the water, .

For courses in yards, the flags shall be hung across the pool at a uniform distance of 15 feet from each end, no less than 7 feet above the surface of the water.

Lines on the bottom of the pool

A dark colored line on the bottom of the pool should mark the middle of each lane. The line should be between 6 inches and 12 inches wide and run continuously from two meters from each end wall continuously throughout the rest of the length of the pool. At two meters from each wall there should be a line one meter long, of the same width, perpendicular and centered to the line marking the center of the pool.

Crosses on end walls

A dark colored cross the same width as the lines on the bottom of the pool extending at least 1.0 meter below the surface of the water should mark the middle of each lane on the end walls or touch pads.

Temperature

The temperature of the pool water should be between 78 and 80 degrees for competition.

TIMING

Timing equipment

Each swimmer shall be timed with automatic timing system, semiautomatic timing system, or digital stopwatches. Times shall be recorded to the hundredths of a second for each swim.

Timers

A timer may operate one stop watch or one button for a semiautomatic timing system or one of each.

Official time

The official time shall be recorded from the designated timing system unless the primary system fails, in which case, back-up times shall be used.

When there is a discrepancy among times indicated by the timing system in a lane, the official time shall be determined as follows:

If two watches or button times are identical, that time shall be the official time.

If the times from three buttons or watches all differ, the middle time shall be the official time.

If there are times taken from only two buttons or watches and they differ, the average of the two shall be the official time.

CONDUCT OF THE RACE

General rules

Swimmers may not be allowed to compete unless they are ASA members, and have signed all appropriate waivers.

Swimmers must compete in designated age groupings as determined by dates of birth.

Swimmers shall not be allowed to interfere in any way with other swimmers.

A swimmer must complete the entire race in the assigned lane.

The swimmer may not use any device to artificially enhance performance during the race. This precludes the use any equipment, including, but not limited to, swim suits, that artificially enhance performance in any way, such as, but not limited to, aiding buoyancy, reducing drag to levels below that of bare skin, effecting muscle compression, or significantly altering the natural contour of the body to effect streamlining.

The swimmer shall not rest on or use for forward propulsion the lane lines, the side walls, or the bottom of the pool during the race.

Suits

A swimmer may wear only one suit.

Swim suits shall not cover a man's body higher than the top of the pelvic bone or the belly button and shall not cover any part of the body below the top of the knee. Swim suits shall not cover a woman's body outside the shoulder-joints or above the shoulder-line and shall not cover the any part of the body below mid-thigh.

The material of suits may consist only of cotton, lycra, nylon, polyester, and spandex. Any swimmer wishing to compete in a suit constructed of other materials must apply to ASA for permission in writing.

Integrity of results

It is the responsibility the swimmer to see to it that the results reflect a fair and honest competition in strict accordance with ASA rules. As such, the swimmer is responsible for knowing ASA rules and adhering to them.

Self-disqualification

Upon completion of a swim, if a swimmer is aware that any portion of his swim was performed in contravention to the rules, the swimmer shall report the violation to the referee for the purpose of disqualification. The swimmer shall see to it that the non-conforming swim is ineligible for awards and records and does not appear in the results unless denoted as having been disqualified.

CONDUCT OF THE RACE, CONT.

The start

Swimmers shall start from the starting block, the side of the pool, or from a push from the wall in their assigned lanes.

Swimmers shall not be permitted to start from the starting platforms unless the pool has a minimum depth of 3 feet 6 inches (1.07 meters). In pools where the depth is from 3 feet 6 inches to 4 feet (1.22 meters), swimmers shall not be permitted to start from starting platforms with front edges any more than 18 inches (0.46 meters) above the surface of the water. If depth of the pool is 4 feet or greater, swimmers may start from starting platforms with front edges up to 2 feet six inches (0.76 meters) above the surface of the water.

Upon instruction from the starter (one long whistle or verbal command), swimmers shall take their positions without delay, placing at least one foot at the front of the starting blocks, at the side of the pool, or with at least one hand in contact with the wall in their assigned lanes.

When the starter determines it is fair to give the start command, the starter will give the verbal command, "take your mark(s)," upon which swimmers will assume a ready position without delay. Shortly after all swimmers have assumed a ready position, the starter will give the starting signal (a previously designated whistle, horn, or verbal command.) No swimmer shall move forward after assuming the ready position until the starting signal is given.

False start

After assuming the ready position, any forward movement by the swimmer during the starting signal shall be cause for disqualification.

The race shall not be interrupted or discontinued for a false start.

Delay of meet

Any swimmer who delays the start without prior permission from the referee shall be disqualified.

STROKE RULES

Freestyle

In the freestyle events, the swimmer may swim any style.

Some part of the swimmer's body must touch the wall in order to complete any length of the pool.

The swimmer will have finished the race when some part of his body touches the wall at the finish end completing the specified number of lengths of the pool.

Backstroke

A swimmer may stay completely submerged during turns and for a maximum distance of 15 meters following the start and following each turn. The swimmer's head must break the surface of the water prior to the 15 meter mark.

Once the swimmer has broken the surface of the water, the swimmer must swim on his back, without rolling beyond 90 degrees from horizontal, with some part of his body breaking the surface of the water until the swimmer's head passes the backstroke flags as the swimmer approaches the turn or the finish.

Once the swimmer's head passes the backstroke flags as the swimmer approaches the wall, the swimmer may turn past the vertical to the breast and take one continuous single or double arm pull prior to touching the wall. Some part of the swimmer's body must touch the wall in order to complete any length of the pool.

The swimmer will have finished a backstroke race when some part of his body touches the wall at the finish end completing the specified number of lengths of the pool.

STROKE RULES, CONT.

Butterfly

A swimmer may stay completely submerged for a maximum distance of 15 meters following the start and following each turn. The swimmer's head must break the surface of the water prior to the 15 meter mark.

Once the swimmer has broken the surface of the water, the swimmer's body must remain on the breast. The swimmer's arms shall move in the same direction relative to the end-walls and in unison. The arms shall be brought forward with both hands breaking the surface and reentering the water every stroke. The legs shall move in the same direction, and in unison.

Approaching the turn, but not the finish, on the last stroke prior to touching the wall, the swimmer may break stroke in order to take no more than one backward pull. Some part of the swimmer's body must touch the wall in order to complete any length of the pool.

The swimmer must touch the wall with both hands to complete the last length of the pool.

Breaststroke

The swimmer's body must remain on the breast. The swimmer's arms shall move in the same direction relative to the end-walls and in unison, with the elbows remaining below the surface of the water. Some part of the swimmer's head shall break the surface of the water prior to the initiation of any forward movement of the hands. Subsequent to the initiation of each backward movement of the hands, the swimmer must initiate one breaststroke kick prior to the initiation of any subsequent backward motion of the hands. On the breaststroke kick, the legs shall move in the same direction relative to the end-walls and in unison with the feet pointed away from each other during the propulsive portion of the kick.

Exceptions: Following the start and the turns, the swimmer may stay completely submerged while taking no more than one stroke initiated prior to no more than one butterfly kick, which may be followed by no more than one breaststroke kick. Some part of the swimmer's head shall break the surface of the water prior to the initiation of any subsequent forward movement of the hands.

Approaching the turn, but not the finish, on the last stroke prior to touching the wall, the swimmer may break stroke in order to take no more than one backward pull. Some part of the swimmer's body must touch the wall in order to complete any length of the pool.

The swimmer must touch the wall with both hands to complete the last length of the pool.

STROKE RULES, CONT.

Individual Medley

The swimmer shall swim one quarter of the specified number of lengths swimming each stroke according to the rules for that stroke in the following order: butterfly, then backstroke, then breaststroke, then some stroke other than the first three, unless the meet information specifies some other order or combination of strokes or both.

The rules for turns for each stroke shall apply to the transition turn from one stroke to another.

RELAY RULES

All persons swimming a relay must be registered with the same team. Relay events may consist of any combination of two or more swimmers, each assigned to complete a specified number of lengths of the pool by some particular stroke or strokes. Each swimmer must swim his leg of the relay in strict accordance with ASA competition rules.

Unless otherwise noted in the meet information, a swimmer shall only be permitted to swim one leg of any relay.

Unless otherwise specified in the meet information, a relay shall be swum by four swimmers, each swimmer completing without interruption one-fourth the total number of lengths of the event.

After the first swimmer on the relay, each subsequent swimmer shall, at the start of his leg of the race, maintain contact with the starting block, side of the pool, or the wall until the preceding swimmer completes his leg of the race.

Freestyle Relay

Each swimmer shall swim freestyle in accordance to ASA competition rules.

Medley Relay

One swimmer shall swim backstroke exclusively, one swimmer shall swim breaststroke exclusively, one swimmer shall swim butterfly exclusively, and one swimmer shall swim in some style other than the aforementioned strokes, unless the meet information specifies some other order or combination of strokes or both.

OPEN WATER RACES

The Start

Swimmers must remain behind the designated starting line prior to the starting signal. It shall be cause for disqualification for any part, or all, of a swimmer's body to be within the designated course beyond the starting line during the starting signal.

The race shall not be interrupted or discontinued for a false start.

Drafting

Drafting is not permitted.

Interference

A swimmer or a swimmer's escort craft shall not obstruct another swimmer's progress, make intentional contact with another swimmer, or interfere with another swimmer in any way (including subjecting swimmers to exhaust fumes). Any such interference shall lead to disqualification as per the referee's judgment.

Unassisted Performance

A swimmer may not use or wear any device to artificially enhance performance during the race (including wristwatches & heart monitors). One bathing suit, goggles, one swim cap, nose clip and earplugs are permitted. Swimmers shall be allowed to use grease or other such substances at the discretion of the referee.

Swimmers shall make no intentional physical contact with their escort safety crafts or crews.

Finish

A swimmer must complete the entire designated course.

Placing in timed races

The swimmer in each division who completes the designated course in strict compliance with the rules the fastest shall be declared the winner of that division. Each subsequent place in each division shall be awarded to the swimmer completing the designated course in strict compliance with the rules with the next fastest time.

Placing in untimed races

The swimmer who is the first in his division to complete the designated course in strict compliance with the rules shall be declared the winner of that division. All subsequent places in each division shall be determined by priority of finish.

OPEN WATER RACES, CONT.

Integrity of results

It is the swimmer's responsibility to see to it that the results reflect a fair and honest competition in strict accordance with ASA rules. As such the swimmer is responsible for knowing ASA rules and adhering to them.

Self-disqualification

Upon completion of a swim, if a swimmer is aware that any portion of his swim was performed in contravention to the rules, the swimmer shall report the violation to the referee for the purpose of disqualification. The swimmer shall see to it that the non-conforming swim is ineligible for awards and records and does not appear in the results unless denoted as having been disqualified.