

Significant changes affecting the actual strokes with the adoption of the USA-S Technical Rules by YMCA Swimming

There are only three notable changes affecting the actual strokes, as summarized below:

STROKE CHANGES

1. Backstroke Turn – USA-S Technical Rules are more restrictive in prohibiting gliding after the crossover or flip turn is initiated. Once the swimmer leaves his/her back, any arm pull or kick must be part of a continuous turning action. In addition, the USA-S rule does not require that the any part of the head be past the backstroke flags before the initiation of the turn.
2. Breaststroke – There is no prohibition on sculling with the hands during the first stroke in the USA-S Technical Rules.
3. Breaststroke - The elbows shall be under the calm level of the water except for the last stroke at the turn or finish and during the turn (NCAA Rule 2-2-2-b). Under USA-S rules, this is further clarified that the elbows have to remain under the surface of the water only during the recovery portion of the stroke.

STARTING CHANGES

There are two significant differences to the starting protocol:

Whistle Starts – The USA-S starting protocol provides for the Referee to sound a series of short whistle chirps (four to seven or eight chirps) to alert the swimmers to get ready before he/she sounds a long whistle that instructs the swimmers to step on the blocks or step into the water. (Current NCAA starting protocol requires only the long whistle.) Both protocols require a second whistle for backstroke starts to bring the swimmers to the wall. Then, upon a hand signal from the Referee, the Starter instructs the swimmers to take their mark, and when they are all stationary, he/she activates the starting signal.

False Starts – The USA-S starting protocol does not recall false starts. If the Starter and Referee agree that a swimmer false started, the swimmer is disqualified and notified at the end of the race, as with any other disqualification.

A benefit of YMCA adopting USA Technical Rules is that our YMCA meets will fall into the status of Approved Meets (USA-S Rule 202.4). The actual procedures to be followed for Approved Meets will be worked out by our Advisory Committee representatives and the USA-S Rules Committee representatives at the upcoming USA-S Convention and guidance will be issued to local YMCA swim leagues and USA-S LSCs at that time. It is expected that our various state and regional championship meets and possibly our invitational meets will be Approved Meets, but it is unlikely that we will try to have all of our dual meets approved, as the record keeping would overwhelm the USA-S SWIMS database.