



September 10, 2025

SITUATION ONE: In the 100-yard backstroke, upon the starter's command to "take your marks" the swimmer in Lane 6 curls his toes over the edge of the gutter. The referee instructs the heat to "stand up" and advises Lane 6 of the legal starting position for this event.

Ruling: Correct procedure. Any foot position violations observed prior to the starting signal should be corrected by the starter/referee before activating the starting signal.

Coaches: Coaches should instruct swimmers in proper foot position for backstroke starts for all starting methods. The only time a swimmer's toes should be above the water surface is if a flat wall pad is in use that extends above the water surface.

Officials: Starter/referee must continuously observe the foot position of all swimmers using backstroke starts and delay the starting signal until all have complied with the foot position rule. The only time a swimmer would be disqualified for foot position in a backstroke start is if the swimmer moves his/her feet into an incorrect position after the starting signal is given. See 8.1.2 Situation A

SITUATION TWO: In the 100-yard backstroke, the feet of all swimmers are in proper position prior to the starting signal. Just after the starting signal, the swimmer in Lane 3 curls her toes over the top of the gutter and pushes off from that position. The starter/referee observe this action and, without recalling the heat, disqualify the swimmer in Lane 3 at the completion of the race.

Ruling: Correct procedure. Any foot position violations observed after the starting signal should result in disqualification; violations noted prior to the signal must be corrected by the starter/referee before activating the starting signal.

Coaches: Coaches should instruct swimmers in proper foot position for backstroke starts for all starting methods. The only time a swimmer's toes should be above the water surface is if a flat wall pad is in use that extends above the water surface.

Officials: Starter/referee must continuously observe the foot position of all swimmers using backstroke starts and delay the starting signal until all have complied with the foot position rule. The only time a swimmer would be disqualified for foot position in a backstroke start is if the swimmer moves his/her feet into an incorrect position after the starting signal is given. See 8.1.2 Situation A.

SITUATION THREE: While executing the final turn in the final stroke (freestyle) of the 200-yard IM, several swimmers push off the wall on their backs and rotate to the breast at some distance from the turning wall, in order to complete the final length of the event. Lane 1 takes an arm pull in order to roll to the breast. Lane 2 uses dolphin and flutter kicks to roll to the breast. Lane 3 rolls to the breast without using any propulsive motion.

Ruling: Lane 1 and 2 are disqualified as 8-2-4c requires the swimmer be at or past vertical toward the breast before any stroke, kick or propulsive motion. Lane 3 is legal, provided there has been NO propulsive movement prior to the rotation. When the swimmers turn at this point in the event, they must be past vertical toward the breast before any propulsive movement is performed.

Coaches: Swimmers should be trained carefully in the IM and also the freestyle leg of the medley relay, to assure they maintain correct body position during the freestyle portion of those events.

Officials: Officials must observe the freestyle turns in both the IM and medley relay to assure compliance with this requirement. In all other freestyle events, swimmers may turn in any manner desired and there is no body position requirement.

SITUATION FOUR: Ledges are installed such that the device can be placed more than 4 cm below the water surface.

Ruling: Incorrect; Rule 2-7-3b(1) requires that the ledge be installed within the range of 4 cm above to 4 cm below the water surface.

State Association: Instructions regarding proper installation of backstroke starting ledges should be included in the state association policy governing use of the ledges.

Coaches: Instruct swimmers as to the correct installation of ledges according to Rule 2-7-3 and/or state association policy.

Officials: Officials are not expected to carry measuring devices and perform inspection, provided devices appear to be within the range required by the rule. The metric dimension is approximately the equivalent of 1 ½ inches; officials should utilize an estimate to ascertain whether the ledges are properly installed and should not delay the start of the event unless the ledge is noticeably outside the stipulated range.