Many of you will be aware that October 1st not only sees the implementation of the new Regional structure but also the incorporation of FINA Rules into the ASA Racing Technical Rules.

This date was decided by ASA Committee to facilitate the inclusion of any changes made by FINA at their Congress in July 2005. FINA consider rule changes every four years and changes made to their Swimming Rules would have been considered by ASA Committee for adoption. Now that FINA Rules have been incorporated into ASA Racing Technical Rules, changes made by FINA will automatically be adopted.

This is not something new for the ASA. Water Polo and Diving have operated this way for some years.

This SON is being distributed with a copy of the Extracts of ASA Laws and ASA Technical Rules which includes the relevant FINA Rules for reference. The complete set of FINA Rules can be found at www.fina.org.

So, how will this change affect the way we all operate on the pool deck? Not much is the answer as the old ASA Racing Technical Rules were very closely aligned with FINA Rules, particularly the stroke rules which were nearly word for word the same. FINA have made some changes to these stroke rules this year and these will be discussed later.

Competitions in England can continue to be held under the ASA Racing Technical Rules, just as now, as these Rules now incorporate FINA Rules. If a competition is held under FINA Rules, none of the additional provisions made in ASA Technical Rules Sxx would apply.

FINA Rules are less restrictive than our old Racing Technical Rules as parts specifically refer to high level competitions and will not be applicable to most competitions held in England. An example of this is the minimum number of Officials at a competition. FINA only indicate the number required at Olympic, World Cup or World Championships. However, in some other areas they are more restrictive than we are used to. Under FINA Rules the swimmer must start with a dive, lap cards must be positioned at the turning end, and just two examples.

In the 2004 annual Referee examinations, the following Officials successfully became registered Referees:

- Sue Barker
- Piers Cardon
- Liz Christian
- Michael Cooper
- Christine Cowley
- Ian Davey
- Robert Drage
- Jim Drury
- Patricia Gabbitas
- Diane Gamble
- Bill Glendinning
- Peter Gonsalves
- Stephen Hennell
- Stuart Highfield
- Pauline Hogg
- Michael Jones
- Lyn Kay
- David McRoberts
- Muriel Moffet
- Keith Munday
- Roger Perrell
- Richard Roberts
- Margaret Roberts
- Jacqueline Sandbach
- Richard Starling
- Roger Strickland
- Stuart Tawn
- John Towle
- Steven Turner
- John Whaling
- Gary Whittle
- Shirley Wigley

Congratulations!

There were also 33 passes in the Race Results Examination:

- 143 Starter
- 320 Judge
- 863 Timekeeper

Successes

The first is easily resolved by ASA Technical Rule 501 “…ASA Health and Safety guidelines take precedence…” so where a swimmer has not achieved the standard of the ASA Competitive Start Award, they are permitted to start in the water. The second is addressed by the “ASA Guidance to FINA Rules” appendix which gives appropriate guidance to Promoters and Referees in the application of FINA Rules in differing competition conditions. More on this new guidance to FINA Rules later.

Let’s start by identifying some aspects that have changed by incorporating FINA Rules. Some of these may be welcomed by you!

There is now no requirement to warn swimmers they have two lengths + 5m to swim in individual 400m Freestyle races, only in 800m and 1500m Freestyle races. (SW 2.5.4 refers) As a reminder, if lap cards are being used, then the warning signal is required.

If you’ve just looked at the SW reference above, you would have seen this duty is undertaken by an Inspector of Turns (IoT). In old ASA speak, this would be a Turn Judge, however, we should endeavour to use the new names to avoid any confusion. Turn Judge becomes an Inspector of Turns (IoT), Stroke Judge is Judge of Stroke (JoS), Placing Judges are Finish Judges and a Competitor Steward is a Clerk of Course (CoC). The other names remain the same.

It’s also worth noting here, that if a competition is fortunate enough to have three Timekeepers allocated to each lane, Finish Judges are not required as final place and time is determined by time. (SW 2.7.1 refers).

Swimmers are no longer required to remain in their lane until released by an Official. SW 10.13 states “Any swimmer having finished his race, or his distance in a relay event, must leave the pool as soon as possible without obstructing any other swimmer who has not yet finished his race. Otherwise the swimmer committing the fault, or his relay team shall be disqualified.” There may be occasions where this is not desirable e.g. over the top starts. Promoter’s conditions and announcements should make this variation known. The Referee may decide that it is safer to have the swimmers remain in their lanes until being released. If this is the case...
the Referee should ensure all swimmers are informed. The ASA Guidance to FINA Rules appendix in the Extracts is designed to offer practical guidance in running a competition. Some of these are worthy of note here.

### SW 1 Management of Competitions
FINA only provide the minimum number of Officials required for Olympic Games, World Championships and World Cups. (SW1.2) This guidance applies to competitions below this level.

### SW 2 Officials
As previously mentioned, FINA position lap cards at the turning end of the pool. This requires an IoT to be positioned on every lane and is considered impractical for many of our competitions. The Promoter should have the discretion to place lap cards at the finish end of the pool and if an IoT is not allocated to every lane, the lane Timekeeper should operate these cards and give the warning signal when required. (SW 2.5.3 & SW 2.5.4.)

### SW 3 Seeding of Heats, Semi Finals and Final
Provision has been made for the case where swimmers from the same heat have equal times but different places when using manual times. To determine progression to the next round, the placing should be used.

### SW 4 The Start
Swimmers who have not reached the standard of the ASA Competitive Start Award are permitted to start from the pool deck or in the water.

### SW 10 The Race

#### Fouling
Previously, the Referee had the option of allowing the fouled swimmer progression to the next round. This progression can now only be achieved through a reswim. (SW 10.14)

#### Relay Events
Swimmers starting in the water must maintain hand contact with the starting place until the preceding swimmer touches. Team Relay members and order of competing must be nominated before the event unless the Promoters conditions state otherwise but may be changed between rounds.

#### Timing
The guidance provided in this section is primarily what to do when things go wrong with the AOE. The significant change being that the Referee uses all available information to determine the result. Previously the Semi-AOE time had to be used if it was available. If none of the manual times, not forgetting that Semi-AOE is a manual time, are suitable, then the Referee can award the same time as the swimmer that causes the conflict. The Referee can now use all available information to reach a decision and decide which information may be more accurate. As an example, there were three Timekeepers on a lane but only one of them operated the Semi-AOE button. If the AOE failed on this lane, it would be appropriate to place the swimmer using the time from the three Timekeepers and not the Semi-AOE.

### FINA Rule Changes 2005
You will have noticed that there is no guidance given for any of the Stroke rules, SW 5 through 9. Adopting FINA Rules has not changed anything here, however, FINA have recently agreed some changes to these which now need to be mentioned. The FINA Rules printed in the Extracts reflect these changes. For clarity, the wording is shown below indicating the changes from the 2002 - 2005 FINA Rules. (bold underline = new, strikethrough = deleted)

#### SW 6.1
Prior to the starting signal, the swimmers shall line up in the water facing the starting end, with both hands holding the starting grips. The feet, including the toes, shall be under the surface of the water. Standing in or on the gutter or bending the toes over the lip of the gutter is prohibited.

The requirement of toes being under the surface of the water has been removed.

#### SW 6.3
Some part of the swimmer must break the surface of the water throughout the race. It is permissible for the swimmer to be completely submerged during the turn, at the finish and for a distance of not more than 15 metres after the start and each turn. By that point the head must have broken the surface.

No change to intent.

#### SW 6.4
When executing the turn there must be a touch of the wall with some part of the swimmer's body. During the turn the shoulders may be turned over the vertical to the breast after which a continuous single arm pull or a continuous simultaneous double arm pull may be used to initiate the turn. Once the body has left the position on the back, any kick or arm pull must be part of the continuous turning action. The swimmer must have returned to the position on the back upon leaving the wall. When executing the turn there must be a touch of the wall with some part of the swimmer’s body.

No change to the current interpretation...a ‘glide’ is not permitted. FINA believe this change will simplify the rule and
make it less open to interpretation.

**SW 6.5**

Upon the finish of the race the swimmer must touch the wall while on the back. **The body may be submerged at the touch.**

Submerged at the finish included in SW 6.3. FINA consider the finish to be the touch.

**SW 7.1**

From the beginning of the first arm stroke after the start and after each turn, the body shall be kept on the breast. It is not permitted to roll onto the back at any time. **Throughout the race the stroke cycle must be one arm stroke and one leg kick in that order.**

Addition moved from SW 7.7.

**SW 7.4**

**During each complete cycle, some part of the swimmer’s head shall break the surface of the water.** After the start and after each turn, the swimmer may take one arm stroke completely back to the legs. **The head must break the surface of the water before the hands turn inward at the widest part of the second stroke.** A single downward dolphin kick followed by a breaststroke kick is permitted while wholly submerged. Following which, all movements of the legs shall be simultaneous and in the same horizontal plane without alternating movement.

First addition moved from SW 7.7.

Second addition is new. Swimmers are now permitted a single downward dolphin kick after the start or turn removing the issue of whether the kick was a permitted undulation.

**SW 7.5**

The feet must be turned outwards during the propulsive part of the kick. A scissors, flutter or downward dolphin kick is not permitted **except as in SW 7.4.** Breaking the surface of the water with the feet is allowed unless followed by a downward dolphin kick. Accommodating the change in SW 7.4.

**SW 7.7**

**During each complete cycle of one arm stroke and one leg kick, in that order, some part of the swimmer’s head shall break the surface of the water, except that after the start and after each turn the swimmer may take one arm stroke completely back to the legs and one leg kick while wholly submerged.** The head must break the surface of the water before the hands turn inward at the widest part of the second stroke. The requirements of SW 7.7 are now addressed elsewhere.

**SW 8.3**

All up and down movements of the legs must be simultaneous. The position of the legs or the feet need not be on the same level, but they shall not alternate in relation to each other. A breaststroke kicking movement is not permitted.

No change to intent.

**SW 10.10**

In relay events, the team of a swimmer whose feet lose touch with the starting platform before the preceding team-mate touches the wall shall be disqualified. Unless the swimmer in default returns to the original starting point at the wall, but it shall not be necessary to return to the starting platform.

No second chance now permitted.

So there we have it. We expect the changes being made will generate several questions/clarifications and the SOC will address these by way of a FAQ on the Officials pages at www.britishswimming.org. So look there first and see if your question has already been answered.

**Disability Swimming**

Over the last couple of years, swimmers with a disability have been integrated into many able bodied events and this process continues.

To support the Officiating of these events, ASA Disability and Districts have funded fifteen volunteers to participate in the International Paralympic Committee Swimming (IPC Swimming) Officials training programme. This training requires the completion of an on-line course and attendance of a seminar together with practical experience at Disability Competitions.

Having completed this training these Officials are now certified as an ASA Disability Swimming Official and should be utilized as a regular deck Official at events where swimmers with a disability participate. If the Referee wishes to clarify any Disability rules that may apply to swimmers, these Officials can provide the guidance.

Officials are located in nearly every Region and the number will increase as ASA Disability delivers a National version of the training.

The following Officials are also, ASA Disability Swimming Officials

Sue Barker, Rodney Briggs, Elizabeth Christian, Alan Day, Lynne Elliott, Hilary Essam, David Harman, Joan Hawkins, Bob Outtram, Susan Prasad, Biddy Rowe, Kaye Savoury, Sally Stow, Tony Ward, Janice Whittle
**Certificate of Permanent Disability**

The Certificate Permanent Disability, currently used by swimmers with a medical condition that prevents them from complying with ASA Technical Rules whilst competing, has been revised and updated. Re-named the ‘Certificate of Disability’, it is similar to the Function Ability Card used by British Swimming for Disability competitions in that information provided on the certificate is more detailed and specific in relation to each individual athlete. All swimmers currently in possession of a Certificate of Permanent Disability are being requested to re-apply for this new certificate. To obtain a certificate a swimmer should apply to the Medical Advisory Committee with a record of the problem and accompanied by proof of the disability. ASA Racing Technical Rule 502 refers.

**Examination News**

This year has seen some significant changes to the examination process.

We continue to deliver the multi-choice Timekeeper/Judge/ Starter papers and now have databases of questions for these. These have been reviewed by the ASA Education department and are considered educationally sound. These databases will be posted on the Officials pages of www.britishswimming.org and all the existing papers removed.

The databases have been reviewed and amended again to accommodate any changes required from the FINA Rules adoption. All examinations after October 1st will be based on those rules.

The Judges examination is being delivered twice this year. There were approximately two hundred candidates sat this year’s first examination in April.

On June 1st an on-line Timekeeper examination was launched and we have a target date of January 1st 2006 when the Judge and Starter examinations will also be available on-line. These examinations follow the same format as the written examinations but when completed the result is instantly given. Following this on-line element, the normal process is followed for the practical examination.

Prospective on-line candidates call the ASA Awards centre on 01527 514310 to register their details and pay via credit/debit card and then receive a confirmation e-mail with the necessary information to complete the examination. It is also recommended that contact is made with the Regional Organiser who can advise on tuition.

If you would like to sample this process for free, visit the Officials pages at www.britishswimming.org where you can download a sample 10 question Timekeeper examination anonymously.

**Examination Fee Review**

ASA Committee has recently agreed the current examination fee of £7.00 will increase to £7.50 from January 1st.

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