

SWIMMING OFFICIALS' NEWS



A two way exchange of information with the Swimming Officials Committee

It is that time of the year again. Rule change time. Not only new rules but also a new Swimming Officials Secretary to deliver them to you. I'm Bob Outram and have been appointed to this onerous task following in the footsteps of Chris Bostock. Chris was the SOC Secretary for four years and is still actively involved in the National Swimming scene. I know we have all appreciated Chris's tremendous commitment over this period and on behalf of all Swimming Officials I say thank you Chris.

Back to the new rules. I will endeavour to break it down into sections to make it easier. First let us deal with the FINA Rules changes. These were agreed in Japan in July 2001 and became effective not before September 2001 for events held under FINA Rules.

The ASA Committee agreed that they would be implemented on January 1st for events held in England. In the past the English Referees have received a copy of the FINA rules in a small booklet with an ASFGGB cover. This was discontinued as a cost saving exercise last year and this booklet is no longer available.

All is not lost however. You can download the rules from www.fina.org and print them if you wish. In addition if you go to the ASA Web site <http://www.britishswimming.org/sports/officials/> you will find a downloadable extract of the sections that were changed.

If you are unable to access the Internet the ASA Customer Services Department will send you a copy of the FINA rules on request. However, please do not swamp them, you only need these for events held under FINA Rules. Events held under ASA Rules only required the ASA Handbook or Extracts. Both of these are currently being made ready for distribution by the ASA office.

One of the major changes relates to the leg action in Butterfly events. In the past a Breaststroke leg action has been allowed but this is now illegal. Unfortunately this also applied to Masters events and this new rule change rather caught the FINA Masters Committee unaware.

Since there is a FINA Masters Technical Congress in New Zealand in March 2002 FINA has announced that the rule change concerning Butterfly legs will not apply to Masters events until after the Technical Congress when it is possible (not definite) that this will be changed for Masters events only.

This concession applies to Masters events only so please don't confuse it with speed swimming.

So how does this affect ASA Technical Rules? Note I say Technical Rules, not laws. The sections I am referring to are Rules 501 to 520 inclusive. The ASA Swimming Committee has agreed that ASA Technical Rules will be changed to acknowledge the FINA changes for all events swam under ASA Technical Rules from May 1st 2002.

Separately from that are the Law changes that are made at the 2002 Council. Details of these are not available when writing so for now I can only print the rules changes and comment on those.

Here goes. To help clarify the changes they are marked in traditional Microsoft Word editing format. Deleted rules are struck out and new ones are underlined. I have put comments in using *italics* so please don't mix them up. After all you may disagree. (The mailbox should be fun and provide the bulk of the input for the next SON!)

A major point to understand is the question of "one start" or "two start". Neither of these terms appears in the revised rules. Quite simply the rules describe the start of an event.

502 Duties and Powers of Officials

502.1 THE REFEREE shall:

502.1.5 disqualify any competitor for any violation of the rules that he personally observes or which is reported to him by other authorised officials, after consultation with the officials concerned. All disqualifications shall be subject to the decision of the referee;

1005.1 THE REFEREE shall:

1005.1.6 disqualify any swimmer for any violation of the rules that he personally observes or which is reported to him by other authorised officials after consultation with the officials concerned. All disqualifications shall be subject to the decision of the referee;

The power of the Referee is reinforced and I suggest allows the Referee to disagree and not disqualify.

502.2 THE STARTER shall:

have the power to decide whether the start is fair, subject only to the decision of the Referee. ~~If the starter believes the start is not fair, he shall recall the swimmers after the starting signal has been given unless the unfairness consists of a false start under the one start rule or the second false start under the two start rule. In such a case it shall not be a false start;~~

Removed because all references to one or two starts are no longer required.

~~502.2.3 have the power to decide whether the start is fair, subject only to the decision of the Referee. If the starter believes the start is not fair, he shall recall the swimmers after the starting signal has been given. In such a case it shall not be a false start;~~

~~502.2.4 have the power to recall the competitors at any time after the starting signal has been given, in accordance with ASA Technical Rule 511.3;~~

The starter still has the power to recall the swimmers in the event of an unfair start (an external noise for example)

502.5 A TIMEKEEPER shall:

502.5.5 give a warning signal when his competitor has two lengths plus 5m to swim to the finish in events of 400m or longer except for relays or medley events. The warning signal shall be given by whistle or bell. The signal may be repeated after the turn until the swimmer has swum 5m from the turning point.

"May be repeated" watch out for hyperventilating timekeepers!

512.7 Finals

512.7.1 Scratch Races. Assignment of lanes shall be based on the heat times or, if semi-finals have been swum, on the semi-final times by placing the swimmer with the fastest time in the centre lane in a pool with an odd number of lanes, or in lane 2, 3, 4 or 5 respectively in pools with 4, 6, 8 or 10 lanes. The swimmer having the next fastest time shall be placed in the next higher numbered lane and then alternating the remaining finalists to the next available lower and higher numbered lanes in ascending time order. If a one length race is swum to finish at the normal starting end each swimmer shall be placed in the same numbered lane as he would have been placed in if the race were started at the normal starting end;

I think we have been doing this for years.

511 Starting

~~511.1 The promoter shall decide whether the competition shall be held under the one start rule or the two start rule. In either case, the decision shall be published on the entry form and in the promoter's conditions and shall be announced at the start of each session.~~

The one and two start rule cease to exist, we only have" the start"

511.3 False Starts in Scratch Races:

~~511.3.1 If after the command "Take your marks", a swimmer leaves his starting place before or is moving when, the starting signal is given it shall be a false start.~~

~~511.3.2 The signal for a false start shall be made by the Starter by repeating the starting signal, where appropriate, or by repeated whistle blasts, by the Starter or Referee, in all cases along with the dropping of the false start rope.~~

~~511.3.3 When using the two start rule, the starter shall call back the swimmers at the first false start and remind them of the penalties. After the first false start any swimmer starting before the starting signal has been given shall be disqualified. If the starting signal is given before~~

~~the disqualification is declared, the race shall continue and the swimmer or swimmers shall be disqualified on completion of the race. If the disqualification is declared before the starting signal is given, the starting signal shall not be given and the remaining swimmers shall be called back, be reminded by the starter of the penalties and start again. The reminder to the swimmers shall be "Swimmers, you will be disqualified for a false start".~~

~~511.3.4 512.7.1 When using the one start rule if a swimmer starting starts before the starting signal has been given or is moving when the starting signal is given it shall be a false start and the offender shall be disqualified. If the starting signal is given before the disqualification is declared, the race shall continue and the swimmer or swimmers shall be disqualified on completion of the race. If the disqualification is declared before the starting signal is given, the starting signal shall not be given and the remaining swimmers shall be recalled back, be reminded by the starter of the penalties and start again. The reminder to the swimmers shall be "Swimmers, you will be disqualified for a false start".~~

Quite simply removed. There is now no verbal warning from the Starter.

511.4 Wherever practical:

511.4.1 A rope shall be provided to stop the swimmers in the event of a false start or recall;

511.4.2 The rope shall be suspended across the pool from fixed stands 15m in front of the starting end, attached to the stands by a quick release mechanism;

511.4.3 If the rope is not operated automatically by the ~~repetition of the starting signal~~ starter's signal it shall be released by a designated official in response to that signal.

You still need a false start/recall rope, there may be a faulty start.

512.8 Team Races

512.8.6 Unless in accordance with the promoter's conditions the names of competitors and their order of swimming in a team event have been declared in advance, following a false start or recall in a team event the order of swimming may be changed so that another member of the same team swims the first leg.

Have you visited the Officials WEB site Yet?

www.britishswimming.org/sports/officials

What would you like to see included?

517 Backstroke

517.3 Some part of the swimmer must break the surface of the water throughout the race, except that it shall be 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.

517.4 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, ~~there shall be no~~ kick or arm pull ~~that is independent~~ must be part of the continuous turning action. The swimmer must have returned to a position on the back upon leaving the wall. When executing a turn there must be a touch of the wall with some part of the swimmer's body.

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

The wording for the Backstroke turn has been tidied up. It should still mean the same as before. Also a swimmer may be submerged for the finish.

515 Breaststroke

515.4 The hands shall be pushed forward together from the breast, on, under or over the water. The elbows shall be under the water except for the final stroke before the turn, during the turn and for the final stroke at the finish. The hands shall be brought back on or under the surface of the water. The hands shall not be brought back beyond the hip line, except during the first stroke after the start and each turn.

This is worth reading again. The swimmers elbows may break the surface of the water during the last arm stroke before any turn or finish. It also lays to rest the argument about elbows being out of the water during the turn. It is LEGAL.

516 Butterfly

516.2 From the beginning of the first arm stroke after the start and after each turn, the body shall be kept on the breast ~~and both shoulders shall be in line with the normal water surface~~. Underwater kicking on the side is allowed. It is not permitted to roll on to the back at any time.

516.3 Both arms must be brought forward together over the water and brought backward simultaneously throughout the race, subject to the provisions of ASA Technical Rule 516.6.

516.4 All up and down movements of the legs and feet must be simultaneous. The position of the legs or feet need not be at the same level, but they shall not alternate in relation to each other. A breaststroke kicking movement is not permitted. All movements of the feet must be executed in a simultaneous manner. Simultaneous up and down movements of the legs and feet in the vertical plane are permitted. The legs and feet need not be at the same level but no alternating movements are permitted.

The requirement for the shoulders to be level has been removed. Also note that Breaststroke leg action is now ILLEGAL in Butterfly events.

506 Determination of Race Results when AOE is not used.

506.2.1 Where there are three timekeepers on each lane, if the times recorded by two of the timers are the same that shall be the accepted time. If the times recorded by all the timers differ, the middle time shall be accepted. If one watch fails to operate, the average of the remaining two times shall be accepted;

506.2.2 Where there are two timekeepers on each lane, if the times differ the slower time average of the two times shall be accepted. If one watch fails to operate, the remaining time shall be accepted;

I have left this one until the end. It is a major change and needs serious thought. From May 1st if there are two timekeepers on a lane then the accepted time for that lane is the average of those two times.

Nowhere will you find how to average the times but the time must be to 1/100 of a second. If averaging produces a time to 1/1000 of a second then please round the time up to the next 100th. I.e 25.465 becomes 25.47

This must ask the question "how many timekeepers should we have on a lane" ? The answer lies with the Promoter. There is no reason why you cannot have only one. I would be a little wary of that if you do not have AOE working

The date to remember is May 1st, not before. Also watch out for any last minute changes.

In addition to the above there will be changes to ASA Laws decided at ASA Council. ASA Council decides principle and intention and before the rules are printed they have to be formulated by the Rules Committee and approved by ASA Committee.

A word about exams for those of you planning on taking an exam or lecturing this year. All exams are based on the Laws and Rules that apply at the time of the exam. So at present the on-demand timekeeper papers are based on the 2001 Laws and Rules. The questions (or is it the answers) will not change until the new Extracts are available.

Talking about exams, in October we had the annual Race Results and Referee examinations.

If my mental arithmetic is correct here is a list of 16 new Referees.

Helen Akers
Stewart Brown
Ian Carden
David Carter
David Corbett
Richard Dix
Alun Evans
Lesley Fawkes
Gary French
John Gibson
Eamon Hamilton
Stuart Heseltine
David Jones
Donald Mirrlees
Paul Seaton
Charles Steed

Congratulations !

In addition to the 16 new Referees there were 35 passes of the Race Results paper. We look forward to seeing at least 35 new Referees after this years examinations.

Dear Chris,

Please, please, please in the next edition of Swimming Officials News could you put a section highlighting rule 509 on Split Times. In my very limited experience of 800/1500m races (about half a dozen) I have seen 3 incidents where there was significant confusion over the number of laps swum.

a) timekeeper blew whistle at correct time but computer had not registered one touch so panic ensued - chief timekeeper and ref saying lane timekeeper was wrong. Issue was resolved after the swimmer had finished when the computer operator actually looked at the electronic splits and found one twice as big as all the others.

b) timekeeper blew whistle 2 lengths early, swimmer stopped for about 20 seconds before realising that there were still 2 lengths to go and setting off again to complete the race.

c) timekeeper forgot to turn lap card at some point in the first 20 laps. The lap count was queried but any problem was strenuously denied. About 16 laps later, lap card not turned again (same lane - swimmer now heading for a 1600m swim!!). Eventually problem

resolved at 1350m - don't know what prompted the change of mind. Chief Timekeeper made aware of problem (by a non-officiating but qualified official) during the race and backed the lane timekeeper saying there was no problem and to "keep out of it".

(b) and (c) happened at designated meets!!

The ONLY way to be sure that the laps are correctly counted - because it is very easy to forget to turn the lapcards and equally easy to forget to mark off the number of laps - is to manually record the splits for each lap, e.g. on the back of the entry card. Rule 509 states that for long races splits should be recorded if possible though in case (c) the chief timekeeper stated that splits need only be taken if requested. In case (a) the timekeeper had recorded splits and so was confident enough to challenge the senior officials.

Actually, the rule does not make it clear whether it applies only to AOE or to the manual times as well - what is the official position?? In any case, once a human timekeeper has blown their whistle (or not blown their whistle!!) it is almost too late to put right any mistakes.

I know I do tend to get bees in my bonnet about all sorts of things but I HATE above all else the 'infallible official' syndrome that seems to afflict so many of us. Where mistakes are easy to make, we should put systems in place to make it harder to make them! In this case it would take only a small change in the rule to significantly benefit at least some swimmers. The only down-side being that some people would have to buy new stopwatches.

Perhaps, this suggestion could be considered by the committee setting the rules? or is this being a bit too ambitious!!

Best Wishes,
Debby
(a definitely fallible official!)

2002 EXAM DATES

Timekeeper/Judge/Starter
Monday 11th November
Entries by 10th September

On Demand Timekeeper
By Arrangement with the District Organiser

Referee/Race Results : Monday 14th October
Entries by 10th September

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