

# FAIRFIELD COUNTY SWIMMING LEAGUE SWIMMING RULES

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## **ARTICLE I – GENERAL**

### **A. AUTHORITY**

1. These rules shall govern all Fairfield County Swimming League swimming competitions. They are based upon the rules and decisions of USA Swimming Inc., as amended to provide for the special requirements of the FCSL. They are additional to and supplement the rules contained in the General Sports Section of this rule book.
2. These rules shall not be changed by Referees or other meet officials, or by mutual agreement of Coaches. The rules for an individual meet may be changed by mutual agreement of the Swim Chairs of both clubs.

### **B. FACILITIES EQUIPMENT**

1. Backstroke flags of standard design shall be suspended over each lane from a line 5M (16 ½ feet), for a 25M pool, 15 feet for a 25 Yard pool, from each end of the pool. The flags should be 5'11" above the water at the lowest point of the line. (Older 25 M pools may only be able to install flags 15 feet from each end of the pool.)
2. The host club shall provide a roped off area for the referee and any other swimming officials adjacent to and along the length of the course in order to properly officiate the meet.

### **C. AGE GROUPS**

1. Age groups for FCSL swimming competition shall be:  
8 & under, 10 & under, 12 & under, 14 & under, 17 & under.
2. In relays, the 17/u age group shall be composed of one 10/under swimmer, one 12/under swimmer, one 14/under swimmer, and one 17/under swimmer in any order.
3. A swimmer may compete above, but not below, his age group; he shall not compete in the same type of stroke in more than one age group. The penalty for swimming the same stroke in two different age groups shall be: the swimmer shall score no points for the second event. However, it will be counted as an event for that swimmer.

### **D. TRAINING OF OFFICIALS**

Each Official is expected to know the current FCSL rules that concerns his own position.

1. Swimming Referees - Each year the President shall appoint a senior coach, or other qualified person, to be in charge of training swimming referees for FCSL meets. This Referees Chair shall annually conduct one or more clinics to provide instruction and training for meet officials and to certify individuals to serve as swimming Referees in FCSL meets.

Clinics will be held early in the season and will be open to league coaches, assistant coaches, parents, and other interested persons. Each summer a list of currently certified Referees will be sent to all clubs and posted on the FCSL web site. (<http://www.fcsl.info>)

All clubs must use Referees who have been certified by the FCSL. Referees may officiate at any FCSL meet, except that a Referee shall not officiate meets within the same division as their affiliate club.

2. Timers -Each season each club should hold a Timers Clinic to instruct new Official Timers and especially to update the experienced ones in current FCSL rules.
3. Scorers - New Scorers should be given on-the-job training at actual meets by the experienced Chief Scorers of their own clubs.

## **ARTICLE II - TECHNICAL RULES FOR SWIMMING EVENTS**

All competitive swimming events held under the auspices of the FCSL shall be conducted in accordance with the following rules which are designed to provide fair and equitable conditions of competition and promote uniformity in the sport so that no swimmer shall obtain unfair advantage over another. The wording generally conforms to USA Swimming Rules & Regulations.

### **INDIVIDUAL STROKES**

#### **THE FORWARD START**

- A. The Starter, upon receiving clearance from the Referee (for all events except backstroke and medley relay) directs swimmers to step on to the starting block or platform and remain there.
- B. After the Referee's whistle, the Starter instructs the swimmers and directs them to "take your mark", to which they must immediately respond by assuming a starting position with at least one foot at the front edge of the starting block or platform. Sufficient time should follow "take your mark" to enable swimmers to assume starting position, but no swimmer shall be in motion immediately before the starting signal is given.
- C. When all swimmers are motionless in their starting position, the Starter gives the starting signal.

#### **THE BACKSTROKE START (including medley relay)**

- A. The Starter, upon receiving clearance from the Referee, directs swimmers to step into the pool. The swimmer shall line up in the water, facing the starting end, with both hands placed on the gutter or on the starting grips. Prior to the command "take your mark" and until the feet leave the wall at the starting signal, the swimmer's feet, including the toes, shall be placed under the surface of the water.
- B. After the Referee's whistle, the Starter instructs the swimmers and directs them to "take your mark", to which they must immediately respond by assuming a starting position. Sufficient time should follow "take your mark" to enable swimmers to assume a starting position, but no swimmer shall be in motion immediately before the starting signal is given.
- C. When all swimmers are motionless in their starting position, the Starter gives the starting signal. Standing in or on the gutter or curling the toes over the lip of the gutter is not permitted at any time before or after the start. A backstroke starting block may not be used.

#### **FALSE STARTS**

- A. Any swimmer starting before the starting signal is given shall be disqualified if the Referee independently observes and confirms Starter's observation that a violation occurred. Swimmers remaining on the starting blocks shall be relieved from their starting positions with the "Stand up" command and may step off the blocks. The Starter shall restart the race upon signal by the Referee.
- B. If the starting signal has been given before the disqualification is declared, the race shall continue without recall. If the Referee independently observes and confirms the starter's observation that a violation occurred, the swimmer or swimmers who have false started shall be notified of the disqualification upon completion of the race.
- C. If the recall signal is activated inadvertently, no swimmer shall be charged with a false start and the Starter shall restart the race upon signal by the Referee.

- D. A swimmer who would otherwise be charged with a false start may be relieved of the charge if the false start was caused by the swimmer's reaction to the "Stand Up" command.
- E. A swimmer shall not be disqualified for an illegal starting position at the start if the race is permitted to proceed. Enforcement of the correct starting position is the responsibility of the Starter.
- F. Declared false start: swimmers reporting to the Referee prior to the start of their race and declaring their intent not to compete will be disqualified.

## **BREASTSTROKE**

### **START:**

The forward start shall be used.

### **STROKE:**

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. All movements of the arms shall be simultaneous and in the same horizontal plane without alternating movement.

The hands shall be pushed forward together from the breast on, under, or over the water. The elbows shall be under 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.

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.

### **KICK:**

After the start and each turn, a single downward butterfly 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. The feet must be turned outwards during the propulsive part of the kick. A scissors, flutter or downward butterfly kick is not permitted except as provided herein. Breaking the surface of the water with the feet is allowed unless followed by a downward butterfly kick.

### **TURNS and FINISH:**

At each turn and at the finish of the race, the touch shall be made with both hands simultaneously at, above, or below the water level. The head may be submerged after the last arm pull prior to the touch, provided it breaks the surface of the water at some point during the last complete or incomplete cycle preceding the touch.

## **BUTTERFLY**

### **START:**

The forward start shall be used.

### **STROKE:**

After the start and after each turn, the swimmer's shoulders must be at or past vertical toward the breast. The swimmer is permitted one or more leg kicks, but only one arm pull under water, which must bring the swimmer to the surface. It shall be permissible for a swimmer to be completely submerged for a distance of not more than 15 meters (16.4 yards) after the start and after each turn. By that point the head must have broken the surface. The swimmer must remain on the surface until the next turn or finish. From the beginning of the first arm pull, *the body shall be kept on the breast*. Both arms must be brought forward over the water and pulled back simultaneously.

### **KICK:**

All up and down movements of the legs and feet 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 scissors or breaststroke kicking movement is not permitted.

### **URNS:**

At each turn the body shall be on the breast. The touch shall be made with both hands simultaneously at, above or below the water surface. Once a touch has been made, the swimmer may turn in any manner desired. The shoulders must be at or past the vertical toward the breast when the swimmer leaves the wall.

### **FINISH:**

At the finish, the body shall be on the breast and the touch shall be made with both hands simultaneously at, above or below the water surface.

## **BACKSTROKE**

### **START:**

The swimmers shall line up in the water facing the starting end, with both hands placed on the gutter or on the starting grips. Standing in or on the gutter, placing the toes above the lip of the gutter, or bending the toes over the lip of the gutter, before or after the start, is prohibited.

### **STROKE:**

The swimmer shall push off on his back and continue swimming on his back throughout the race. 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 and for a distance of not more than 15 meters (16.4 yards) after the start and each turn. By that point, the head must have broken the surface of the water.

### **URNS:**

Upon completion of each length, some part of the swimmer must touch the wall. During the turn the shoulders may be turned past the vertical toward the breast after which a continuous single arm pull or a continuous simultaneous double arm pull may be used to execute the turn. The swimmer must have returned to a position on the back after leaving the wall.

### **FINISH:**

Upon the finish of the race, the swimmer must touch the wall while on the back.

## **FREESTYLE**

### **START:**

The forward start shall be used.

### **STROKE:**

In an event designated freestyle the swimmer may swim any style; except that in a medley relay or the individual medley event, freestyle means any style other than butterfly, breaststroke or backstroke. Some part of the swimmer must break the surface of the water throughout the race, except it shall be permissible for the swimmer to be completely submerged during the turn and for a distance of not more than 15 meters (16.4 yards) after the start and each turn. By that point the head must have broken the surface.

### **URNS:**

Upon completion of each length the swimmer must touch the wall.

### **FINISH:**

The swimmer shall have finished the race when any part of his/her person touches the wall after completing the prescribed distance.

## **INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY**

The swimmer shall swim the prescribed distance in the following order: the first one-fourth butterfly; the second one-fourth backstroke; the third one-fourth breaststroke; and the last one-fourth freestyle.

### **START:**

The forward start shall be used.

### **STROKE:**

The stroke for each one-fourth of the designated distance shall follow the prescribed rules for that stroke.

### **URNS:**

The turns when changing from one stroke to another shall conform to the finish rules for the stroke just completed, and shall be as follows:

1. Butterfly to backstroke The swimmer must touch as described in the butterfly finish rule. Once a legal touch has been made, the swimmer may turn in any manner, but the shoulders must be at or past the vertical toward the back when the swimmer leaves the wall.
2. Backstroke to breaststroke - The swimmer must touch the wall while on the back. Once a legal touch has been made, the swimmer may turn in any manner but the shoulders must be at or past the vertical toward the breast when the swimmer leaves the wall and the prescribed breaststroke form must be attained prior to the first arm stroke.
3. Breaststroke to freestyle – The swimmer must touch as described in the breaststroke finish rule. Once a legal touch has been made, the swimmer may turn in any manner.

### **FINISH:**

The swimmer shall have finished the race when any part of his/her person touches the wall after the prescribed distance.

## **RELAYS**

### **FREESTYLE:**

Four swimmers on each team, each to swim one-fourth of the prescribed distance using any desired stroke(s).

Freestyle finish rules apply.

### **MEDLEY:**

Four swimmers on each team, each to swim one-fourth of the prescribed distance in the following order: first, backstroke; second, breaststroke; third, butterfly; and fourth, freestyle.

Rules pertaining to each stroke used shall govern where applicable.

At the end of each leg, the finish rule for each stroke applies in each case.

## **RULES PERTAINING TO RELAY RACES**

- A. No swimmer shall swim more than one leg in any relay event.
- B. When automatic relay take-off judging is used, each swimmer must touch the touch plate or pad in his lane at the end of the course to have finished his/her leg of the relay race.
- C. In relay races a swimmer other than the first swimmer shall not start until his/her teammate has concluded his leg of the relay race.
- D. Any relay team member and his/her relay team shall be disqualified from a race if a team member other than the swimmer designated to swim that leg shall jump into or enter the pool in the area where the race is being conducted before all swimmers of all teams have finished the race. Exception: When an in-the-water start is required or such start is approved by the Referee
- E. Each relay team member shall leave the water immediately upon finishing his/her leg, except the last member.
- F. In relay races the team of a swimmer whose feet have lost touch with the starting platform (ground or deck) before his/her preceding teammate touches the wall shall be disqualified.
- G. In relay races involving in-the-water starts, the team of a swimmer who has lost touch with the end of the course before his/her preceding teammate touches the wall shall be disqualified, unless the swimmer in default returns to the original starting point at the wall.

### **DELIBERATE DELAY OR MISCONDUCT**

- A. Any swimmer who delays the start by entering the water, or by willfully or deliberately disobeying a Starter's command to step on the blocks or to take a starting position, or for any other misconduct taking place at the start, can be disqualified from the event by the Starter with the concurrence of the Referee.
- B. A swimmer who fails to appear at the starting platform ready to swim in time for the initial start of his heat shall be disqualified.
- C. Such disqualification shall not be charged as a false start.

### **DISQUALIFICATIONS**

- A. A swimmer must start and finish the race in the same lane.
- B. Standing on the bottom during a freestyle race shall not disqualify a swimmer, but a swimmer must not leave the pool, or walk, or spring from the bottom. Standing on the bottom during any other stroke shall result in disqualification.
- C. Obstructing another swimmer by swimming across or otherwise interfering shall disqualify the offender, subject to the discretion of the Referee.
- D. Should a foul by interference or other means endanger the chance of success of a swimmer, the Referee may order the event re-swum; the swimmer who committed the foul shall be disqualified. In case of collusion to foul another swimmer, the Referee may disqualify the swimmer for whose aid the foul was committed as well as the swimmer who did the fouling. Note: this rule shall not be interpreted to conflict with false-start rules.
- E. Grasping lane dividers to assist forward motion is not permitted
- F. Failure to Vacate the Pool -- A swimmer who willfully fails to leave the pool promptly upon request by the Referee shall be disqualified from and charged with his or her next event. See also IMPROPER BEHAVIOR Section L of Article II, General Sports Rules.
- G. Any swimmer who acts in an unsportsmanlike or unsafe manner within the swimming venue may be considered for appropriate action or penalty by the referee. See also IMPROPER BEHAVIOR Section L of Article II, General Sports Rules.
- H. Speed or Buoyancy Devices -- No swimmer shall be permitted to wear or use any device or substance to help his or her speed, pace or buoyancy during a race. Goggles and standard swim caps may be worn, and rubdown oil may be applied if not considered excessive by the Referee.



## **ARTICLE III – CONDUCT OF SWIMMING COMPETITION**

### **A. GENERAL**

1. This Article shall apply to all dual meets and, except as otherwise provided in Article V, to FCSL Championship Meets.
2. Lane Assignment -The visiting team shall, upon arrival at a dual meet, be given the choice of even-numbered or odd-numbered lanes.
3. Standard Meet Forms -The League shall supply and require the use of standard Timers Cards and Score Sheets.

### **B. ORDER OF EVENTS**

At dual meets, the swimming events shall be held in event order from event 9 (Boys Medley Relay) through event 60 (Girls Free Relay).

A detailed list of the events is contained in Appendix XIX.

Changes in the order of events shall be made only with the approval of the Swim Chair of both clubs represented at the meet.

### **C. WARM-UPS**

Procedures for warm-ups prior to the start of the swimming competition are listed in Appendix VI

### **D. OFFICIAL STARTING TIME**

Please refer to OFFICIAL STARTING TIME, Section C of Article II, General Sports Rules.

### **F. ENTRIES**

1. Entries Per Event (swimming) -- In dual meets, each club shall be allowed three official entries per event in a six lane pool and four official entries in an eight lane pool of which only two shall score in individual events and one shall score in relay events.

2. 4-Event Rule

The 4-Event Rule regarding the maximum number of events applies to all swimming & diving dual meets. The 4-Event rule also applies to all Swimming Championships.

For further explanation, see 4-EVENT RULE, Section I, of Article III, Conduct of Competition, in General Sports Rules.

3. For additional specific rules regarding Entries, see all sections of Article III, Conduct of Competition, in General Sports Rules.

### **F. SCORING FORFEITS**

- a) Of Swimming Competition -- Forfeiture by a club of an entire swimming competition shall represent forfeiture of the entire meet, including diving competition. A meet thus forfeited by one club shall be scored 100-0 in favor of the other club.
- b) Mutual Forfeit -- If both clubs agree not to hold their swimming competition, whether the diving competition is held or not, the entire meet shall be scored 0 – 0 and both teams shall be charged with a loss of the meet and not a tie.
- c) See also FORFEITS, Section M of Article II, General Sports Rules.

## ARTICLE IV – SWIMMING OFFICIALS

### A. OFFICIALS

1. All Referees, Starters, Stroke and Turn Judges must be certified as stated in Section D of Article I. The number and type of officials (and volunteers) that should be used in conducting a FCSL swimming competition are listed below. If possible, the number should match the list in the "Recommended" column; if not enough people are available, competition may be conducted using only those in the "Minimum" column.

<u>Recommended</u>	<u>Minimum</u>
1 Referee, who may also act as Starter	1 Referee, also acting as Starter and as both Stroke & Turn Judges
2 Stroke & Turn Judge	
3 Timers per lane, including 1 Head Timer	3 Timers per lane, including 1 Head Timer
3 Back up timers	1 Back up timer
4 Scorers, 2 per club with 1 Scorer serving as Chief Scorer	2 Scorers, 1 per club with 1 Scorer serving as Chief Scorer
2 Ribbon Writers (one per club)	2 Ribbon Writers (one per club)
2 Runners to deliver time cards to Scorers	1 Runner
1 Announcer	1 Announcer
<b>33 officials for a Six Lane Meet</b>	<b>26 Officials for a Six Lane Meet</b>

2. An individual may act in more than one official capacity where necessary, but no Timer shall act in any other capacity, except as a Head Timer and/or Relay Take-Off Judge. No other official shall act as a Timer. No staff member or parent from either competing club in a dual meet should serve as a Referee or Starter.
3. Referee/Starter. For dual meets the home coach shall notify the visiting coach of his or her selection for a certified Referee/Starter at least one day prior to the meet. It is recommended that a Referee/Starter for a dual meet be paid a minimum of \$120 by the home club. If available, a Starter, in addition to the Referee may be appointed.
4. For Divisional and League Championship Meets there must be a Referee and a separate Starter, each of whom will be paid a minimum of \$200 by the league. If available, in addition, Stroke and Turn Judges may be appointed.

### B. APPOINTMENT OF OFFICIALS

1. Appointment of Swimming Officials & Meet Volunteers
  - a. The home club shall appoint the Referee/Starter, the Chief Scorer and the Announcer.
  - b. The visiting club shall have the right to appoint an Assistant Chief Scorer to work side-by-side with the Chief Scorer in keeping the Official Score Sheet (the home club's copy) while keeping an "unofficial" Score Sheet (the visiting club's copy). This system of "double-sheeting" provides an important double-check against scoring errors.
  - c. Two additional Scorers should be appointed, preferably one from each club, to assist with the Scoring.
  - d. The visiting club shall provide up to 1/2 of the timing officials.
  - e. Each club shall have the right to appoint half of the Head Timers. Such officials may be assigned either to their own or the other club's lanes, at the option of the home club.
  - f. If possible, there should be a "mixture" from Club A and Club B among the Timers on each lane.
  - g. In accordance with the above rules, Swim Chair of the home club shall be responsible for distribution of assigned positions.
  - h. Although the home club is required to (shall) appoint a Referee, Announcer, etc., the home club may, by mutual agreement of Swim Chairs, appoint people from the visiting club to such positions.

2. General Provisions -- Swimming

- a. Appointment of Timers, Scorers and any other volunteer officials shall be the responsibility of the Swim Chairs of the two competing clubs, as provided above. Each Swim Chair shall have sole and final authority to judge the qualifications of any official appointed by his or her club. The Referee shall not remove, reassign or refuse to accept the appointment of an official except with the specific approval of the Swim Chair responsible for that appointment.
- b. Each club is given the right to appoint certain officials. If one club does not exercise that right, the other club may make the appointment.
- c. Each club shall (must) appoint certain officials and should (in all courtesy, is expected to) appoint certain others. Failure by either club to provide as many officials as they should is irresponsible and unfair to the contestants, but is not technically "illegal" and shall not, therefore, provide a basis for formal protest of the meet.
- d. All officials should be instructed to be present and ready for assignment by no later than 20 minutes prior to the scheduled start of competition.

C. REFEREE

The task of the Referee is not to "run the meet" but to help the other officials to conduct the competition in accordance with the rules. The Referee shall enforce all the rules and decisions of the FCSL and decide all questions relating to actual conduct of competition, the final settlement of which is not otherwise assigned by these rules

1. He or she shall assign officials to their position where so required by the rules, but shall not remove nor refuse to accept the service of an official except with the specific approval of the Swim Chair responsible for the appointment of that official.
2. He may overrule any meet official on a point of rule interpretation but shall, if so requested by any official or any Coach, stop the competition and review the pertinent rule in the Rule Book with that official or Coach.
3. He or she may overrule any meet official on a judgment pertaining to an action which the Referee himself has personally observed. If he has not personally observed that action, he or she shall not overrule the other official's decision except as he may determine a misinterpretation of the rules. In considering a possible infraction, the Referee shall not permit any discussion of the action involved with any person not qualified by the rules as responsible for judging that action.
4. He or she shall not permit any person to interfere with an official or with a contestant and may impose upon such person penalties as provided by the IMPROPER BEHAVIOR, Section P of Article II, General Sports Rules.
5. Upon completion of a diving or a swimming competition, he or she shall determine from each club's Coach or Swim Chair if a protest is being made, and shall note and sign the Score Sheet accordingly. If a protest-of-meet is made and not resolved during the meet, he or she shall instruct the Announcer not to announce the score and shall take action as required by the DUAL MEET PROTESTS, section E of Article III, General Sports Rules.
6. The swimming Referee shall disqualify a swimmer for any rules violation that he personally observes and perform such actions required of him by the DISQUALIFICATIONS Section of Article II of these Swimming Rules.

7. Timers' Watch

- a. Approximately 10 minutes before the start of the competition, the swimming Referee shall call together all Timers to check their watches. He or she shall have all watches started together at gunshot or whistle and, approximately 60 seconds later, stopped at a second gunshot or whistle. The range in time among the watches should not be more than 2-tenths of a second.
- b. A watch that checks out as too fast or too slow should be rechecked; if again it checks out as too fast or too slow, the watch should be marked as "defective" on a piece of tape and not used during the meet.
- c. It should not be necessary for the Referee, unless specifically asked to do so, to instruct the Timers further. Those unfamiliar with their duties should be assigned to experienced Head Timers for instruction and supervision during the meet.

D. DISQUALIFICATIONS

1. Referee Confirmation – In a meet with a Referee and a separate Starter, and/or Stroke and Turn Judges, an official who calls a disqualification shall, immediately upon conclusion of that event, notify the Referee; the Referee shall advise that official of his approval or disapproval of the proposed "DQ". If approved, the Referee shall personally notify the Chief Scorer of the DQ.
2. "100% Certainty" - - An official shall not call a DQ unless he or she is 100% certain that the swimmer has committed a violation of the rules.
3. Intermediate Hand Signal -- Upon observing a disqualifying violation within his own jurisdiction, the Referee or Stroke & Turn Judge or Relay Take-Off Judge shall immediately raise one hand high overhead with open palm. An official who fails to make this signal immediately upon observing the infraction shall be considered not to have seen the infraction and therefore shall not call the DQ. This signal may also include a signal with the fingers of the upraised hand to indicate the lane involved in the DQ.
4. A contestant DQ'd in an event shall be charged with that event.
5. Notification to Swimmer -- The Referee shall make every reasonable effort to seek out, in the event of a DQ, a swimmer affected and inform him or her of the reason for the DQ. The swimmer's Coach shall, upon request, also be advised.
6. Jurisdiction of Officials -- A disqualification shall be called only by the official responsible for judging that action. These areas of jurisdictional responsibility shall be:
  - a. Referee - Call and/or confirm all DQs
  - b. Starter - False starts and DQs for deliberate delay or misconduct at the start require concurrence by the Referee.
  - c. Relay Take-Off Judge - Early take-offs by second and following swimmers in a relay event.
  - d. Stroke & Turn Judge - All rules in Article II of these Swimming Rules, except those pertaining to starts and relay take-offs.
  - e. Timers - If all timers on a lane agree that their swimmer has not finished, the Head Timer shall enter "NO FINISH" as the Official Time and send the card to the Scoring Table, where the chief Scorer shall seek confirmation by the Referee. Timers shall call no other infractions.
  - f. Scorers -- Violation of the "No-Entry" rule or of the "4 Event Rule". These violations, or a "NO-FINISH" report by Timers, shall immediately be reported by the Chief Scorer to the Referee for confirmation.

**E. STARTER**

1. Preparation

- a. Shall be equipped with a starting gun, cartridges and whistle, or electronic starting speaker and horn; shall station him or herself within ten feet of the starting end of the pool at a point where the gun flash or strobe light is clearly visible to the Timers; and the gun report or electronic horn is easily heard by the starting swimmers.
- b. Upon signal from the Referee, shall assume full control of the swimmers until a fair start has been achieved.
- c. Shall notify swimmers of the distance and event. At his or her option, he or she may notify the swimmer of the stroke(s) to be used, order of swimming such strokes, the number of pool lengths to be swum and that relay swimmers must leave the pool immediately after finishing their legs of the relay race.

2. The Start

- a. The Starter will perform his/her duties as described in the Forward Start, Backstroke Start, False Starts and Deliberate Delay Or Misconduct sections in the Technical Rules For Swimming Events, Article II.
- b. The Starter shall call a disqualification on a swimmer for any violation of such rules, subject only to a confirmation by the Referee.

**F. STROKE & TURN JUDGES**

If available, two Stroke & Turn Judges, in addition to a Referee, shall be appointed; one shall be assigned by the Referee to each side of the pool. An additional judge may be assigned if required by the conformation of the pool.

1. The Stroke & Turn Judges shall walk abreast of the swimmers during all strokes to ensue that each swimmer complies with the stroke, turn and finish rules applicable to the stroke used.
2. A Stroke & Turn Judge shall not judge starts or relay take-offs, but shall have jurisdiction over all other swimming rules in Article II.
3. A judge shall call a disqualification on a swimmer for any violation of such rules, subject only to a confirmation by the Referee.
4. Upon observing such disqualifying infraction, the Judge shall immediately raise one hand overhead with open palm; see DISQUALIFICATIONS section of this Article.
5. After signaling such an infraction, and after the event is completed, the Judge shall immediately report the swimmer's lane and the nature of the infraction to the Referee who shall advise him as to whether or not the DQ is confirmed.

**G. HEAD TIMER**

One of the Timers on each lane shall be designated as the head lane timer. The head lane timer will be responsible for the following:

1. Determination that the proper swimmer is in his or her lane and that relay swimmers are swimming in the order listed on the lane timer's card.
2. Determination of and recording of all manual watch times.

H. **LANE TIMERS**

Three Timers should be assigned to each lane. They shall be faced directly over their assigned lane at the finish.

1. Each timer shall look at the Starter's gun or strobe and start his watch at the instant the flash or smoke of the gun. If an electronic sounding device is used, the watch shall be started at the flash of the strobe light, when available, or by sound.
2. The timer's watch shall be stopped when, in the opinion of the timer, any part of the swimmer's body touches the wall.
3. It is not the responsibility of the lane timer to judge if the finish touch meets the requirements of the appropriate stroke finish rule, unless assigned the additional responsibility as a turn judge.
4. All lane timers shall promptly report their times to the head lane timer or designated recorder; present their watches for inspection, if requested, and shall not clear them until the command "clear watches".
5. The time of each watch is recorded on the lane timer's card, and the official time established as described below in Section J.

If all manual watches on all lanes provide digital displays to a resolution of 0.01 seconds, the times shall be recorded as displayed to hundredths of a second.

- I. **ALTERNATE TIMER** -- There shall be at least one alternate timer who shall start his or her watch on every race with the starting signal, and whose time shall be used only to substitute in the event of a failure of an official lane timer's watch or its operator.

- J. **OFFICIAL TIME DETERMINATION** -- Following proper watch reading and recording, as described in paragraph H. above, in each lane:

1. If the times of two of the three watches agree, that time shall be the official time.
2. If all three watches disagree, the time of the intermediate watch (middle watch) shall be the official time.
3. If, because of the failure of a watch or its operators, times from only two watches are available, the official time shall be the average of those two watches. After averaging, digits representing thousandths of a second shall be dropped without any rounding.
4. If only one watch is available, that shall be the official time.

**NB:** If a Timers Card is made out for an unofficial swimmer, it should be clearly marked by the Head Timer as "UNOFFICIAL"

If there is no swimmer in the lane, some officials may find it helpful to the Scorers to send in a blank card for that lane, clearly marked "NO SWIMMER".

Clubs are not required to fill out Timers Cards before the meet, with event numbers, etc.; this is a home club option. But if the cards are filled out before the meet, the meet will run more smoothly and there will be fewer errors in writing numbers and events, and less confusion for the Scorers.

**K. RELAY TAKE-OFF JUDGE**

Relay Take-Off Judge – The Referee may act as a Relay Take-Off Judge and shall assign any additional certified Officials to act as Relay Take-Off Judges. The Head Lane Timer may be requested by the Referee to act as a Relay Take Off Judge for his/her lane in relay events.

After the start of the race, the Relay Take-Off Judges shall stand at the side of the pool so that they can clearly see the touch of the incoming swimmer(s) and the feet of the departing swimmer(s) as they leave the starting block or platform. They shall judge whether the swimmer is in contact with the platform when the incoming swimmer touches the end of the pool.

1. If the Relay Take-Off Judge is convinced that an outgoing swimmer has violated the above take-off rule, he or she shall immediately raise one hand overhead..
2. After signaling such infraction, and after the event is completed, the Relay Take-Off Judge shall immediately report the infraction to the Referee, who shall advise as to whether or not disqualification is confirmed.

**L. SCORING TABLE**

The Scoring Table should be situated so that it can be approached from the front and every effort should be made to avoid interference with the Scorers by contestants and spectators at a swimming competition.

1. Coaches shall not be permitted to see the Score Sheet entries of the opposing team, nor shall Coaches be given information regarding such entries, or lack of entries, until after the end of the meet.
2. Coaches may approach the front of the Table to notify the Chief Scorer of entry changes. At the option of the Chief Scorer, Coaches may ask the score or the place results of an event already scored by the Scorers, but shall not approach the Table for other reasons nor be permitted to linger in its vicinity.
3. Undue interruptions cause scoring errors. The Chief Scorer should obtain the assistance of the Referee, if necessary in order to prevent such interference.

**M. SCORERS**

Scorers shall be appointed and assigned as provided in the APPOINTMENT OF OFFICIALS section of this article.

1. Every Official Swimmer -- The Scorers shall record on the Score Sheet the Official time of each official swimmer in each event -- NOT just the time of the first three finishers. Such recording shall be in accordance with information provided on the Timers cards.
2. Unofficial Swimmers may be entered on the Score Sheet, designated as Unofficial Swimmers, as otherwise provided in the UNOFFICIAL CONTESTANTS, Section K, Article II of the General Sports Rules i.e., for "Best Time Attempts" by an unofficial swimmer attempting to establish a better time for his Championship entry time.
3. Team Scores -- The Scorers shall compile cumulative team scores and, from time to time, provide such information to the Announcer.

4. Chief Scorer -- Shall be appointed by the home club and shall have charge of the Official Copy, e.g., Home Club's copy, of the score sheet:
  - a. Shall supervise, help and instruct the Scorers in their duties.
  - b. Shall require the Referee to interrupt the competition whenever necessary to allow the Scorers to catch up with the progress of the meet. The Scoring Table should not be allowed to lag more than two events behind the meet.
  - c. Shall, at the end of the competition, examine the Score Sheet and confirm the final results by signature at the bottom of the final page of the Official Copy of the Score Sheet.
5. Recording of Disqualification
  - a. The Scorers shall not record a DQ on the Score Sheet unless such DQ has been personally reported to them by the Referee.
  - b. No-Entry -- The Chief Scorer shall immediately notify the Referee of such violation, "swimmer competing in an event for which his name has not been entered, or not entered in time, on the Score Sheet". Upon approval by the Referee, the Chief Scorer shall enter that swimmer's name on the Score Sheet, followed by the notation: "DQ - No Entry". The Referee should notify the swimmer's Coach of such DQ.
  - c. 4-Event Rule -- If a violation of the "4-Event Rule" is discovered, the Chief Scorer shall immediately notify the Referee of such violation and the Referee shall notify the Coach involved. See also 4-EVENT RULE Section I, Article II of the General Sports Rules for a complete description of this rule.
  - d. No-Show -- Such infraction, "swimmer's name entered for an event but did not actually compete in it", shall be recorded by writing "NS" or "NO SHOW" after the swimmer's name on the Score Sheet, without notification to the Referee. The Chief Scorer should notify the swimmer's Coach; this infraction is not of itself disqualifying but may result later in a penalty due to violation of the 4-Event Rule. The individual swimmer is charged with this event.
6. Entry Changes
  - a. During competition, the Chief Scorer shall accept entry changes from the Coaches, provided that such changes are requested by the Coach and accepted by the Chief Scorer prior to the first starting gun or electronic signal of the event preceding that event in which the change is to be made.
  - b. It shall be the Coach's responsibility to make sure that this change request has been made prior to the above deadline.
7. Changing a Timer's Card at the Scoring Table -- For rules covering such situations, see the SPECIAL SITUATIONS, Section O of this Article.



**N. SCORING**

1. Individual events in a dual meet shall be scored in order of first three places 5 - 3 - 1.  
Relays scored by place as 7 - 0.
2. When a team has three or more entries in an individual event, only two of them shall score points, to a maximum 8 points in any one event.
3. Ties -- In the event of a tie, the place points shall be equally divided between the swimmers whose places are involved in the tie.
4. Invalidation of Points -- In such cases, violation of the 4-Event Rule, etc., the points invalidated shall be removed from the total team score and no other team or contestant receives those points. However, a contestant whose team points are invalidated shall not lose his or her place or rewards, and no other contestant moves up in place in such cases. See also ENTRIES Section F, through Section J of Article II, General Sports Rules.
5. Scoring of Forfeits -- See FORFEITS, Section M of Article II, General Sports Rules.

**O. SPECIAL SITUATIONS**

1. Changing the Official Card -- Simple and obvious clerical errors such as incorrect event numbers or event description, club name, age group or sex shall be changed by the Scorers as discovered. Any other changes on such cards shall be made only as provided below:
  - a. Swimmer's Name -- If determined to be incorrect upon investigation by the Referee, he shall instruct the Chief Scorer to enter the correct name. Note that the full first and last name is required on the Timers Card: if not provided by the Head Timer, the Chief Scorer shall require that the Referee properly instruct the Head Timer.
  - b. If a Head Timer fails to provide the proper information his or her card, full names, circled Official Time, event identification, etc., the Chief Scorer shall instruct the Referee to advise that official as to proper procedures. Only the Swim Chair of that official's club is authorized to replace or reassign that official.
2. "NO FINISH" given as Official Time -- If all timers on a lane agree that the swimmer did not finish the race, never made a finishing touch against the end wall of the pool, the Official Time of that Swimmer shall be "NO FINISH" (NF). However, since such non-finish disqualifies the swimmer in that event, this DQ requires personal confirmation by the Referee to the Chief Scorer.
  - a. If such confirmation is not received from the Referee, because he did not notice the non-finish or because he believes that the swimmer did finish, the Chief Scorer shall immediately notify the Referee of the "NO FINISH" report by the Head Timer.
  - b. If the Referee is not 100% certain that he or she personally observed a finishing touch by that swimmer, he shall agree with the findings of the Timers, and shall instruct the Chief Scorer to enter "DQ - NO FINISH" in the "Time" Column opposite that swimmer's name.

## **ARTICLE V- CHAMPIONSHIPS**

### **A. HOSTING DIVISIONALS**

One of the member clubs of each Division must be willing to host the Divisional Swimming Championship meet which is normally held on the Monday and Tuesday immediately preceding the County Championship. Normally Division 1 and 3 are held on one day and Division 2 & 4 are held on the other day. The Divisions rotate days in consecutive years. The Division 5 meet is normally held on the Friday (or Thursday) of the preceding week.

Any Division not providing a suitable competition pool may not be permitted to participate in Championships in that season.

### **B. MINIMUM POOL REQUIREMENTS for Holding Divisionals**

- a) Divisionals and Finals must be swum in 25 meter pools
- b) Non-turbulent lane lines
- c) Date for meet and rain date \*
- d) Adequate parking and policeman to direct parking, on-street parking
- e) Secure diving blocks
- f) Public Address System
- g) Adequate pool depth, minimum 48" for swimming
- h) Multi-colored backstroke flags, 5M from each end of 25 M pool.  
(Older pools may have flags 15 feet from each end of pool, as do all 25 Yard pools.)
- i) Targets on end of wall for turn. Marine grit in paint recommended.

\* Only very extreme weather conditions or other exceptional circumstance will cause a postponement.

### **C. DIVISIONAL MEET RESPONSIBILITIES**

All teams participating in a Divisional Championship will be notified by the Divisional Chair of their volunteer responsibilities prior to the meet, including, but not limited to supplying Timers. Any team not fulfilling their responsibilities may be subject to the team being disqualified from the meet and other penalties.

At the end of the Divisional Championships the Divisional Chair will hand over any Camera Ready Sponsorships to the Championship Committee.

The FCSL Championship Committee will retain the Divisional results paperwork.

### **D. FINALS MEET RESPONSIBILITIES**

All teams participating in the Finals Championship (Counties) will be notified by FCSL of their volunteer responsibilities prior to the meet, including, but not limited to supplying Timers. Any team not fulfilling their responsibilities may be subject to the team being disqualified from the meet and other penalties.

### **E. TIMES**

All Entry Times and Result Times are to be expressed in hundredths of a second; NT (No Times) entry times are strongly discouraged.

Qualification for the Final Championships shall be based upon Official time as swum in the Divisional Championships.

**F. CHAMPIONSHIP ENTRIES**

a) Divisionals	Three (3) entries per club per event, 3 relay teams per event. One Alternate per event is allowed and entered on Master Sheet with time, marked as "ALT" but does not swim unless one of the 3 official entries is scratched.
b) Finals	When held in a 6-lane pool, no more than two (2) entries per club per individual swimming event and one (1) entry per relay team. When held in an 8-lane pool, no more than three (3) entries per club per individual swimming event, and one (1) entry per relay team.
c) Who goes	When held in a six-lane pool: if your club qualifies three swimmers for the same event, only the two fastest times or highest scores can be qualified for the finals. The club does not have the option as to whom goes to the finals (but see (f) below). When held in an eight-lane pool: if your club qualifies three swimmers for the same event, all three qualify for the finals.
d) Eligibility	Swimmers must have swum in at least two (2) FCSL dual meets in order to qualify for the Divisionals or County Finals. This will include any FCSL dual meet held after the Divisional Championships.
e) Number of Events	A competitor is allowed to compete in a maximum of four swimming (4) events, at least one of which must be a relay.
f) Divisionals Only	A contestant who has declared he/she is not available for County Finals must be designated as "Divisionals Only", by circling the name on the Master Sheet or clearly noted in an accompanying email.

**G. TEAM ENTRIES & MASTER SHEETS (computerized entries)**

1. The entry for the Divisional Swimming Championships shall be submitted in a computer file generated from the "HyTek Team Manager" program; or similar program (in the same **sd3** or **cl2** standard file format) only by prior acceptance of the FCSL computer committee. The entry file (sd3 or cl2 format) should be emailed as an attachment to **entries@fcsl.info** in a zipped format.
2. A computer-generated paper printout of the meet entry, or meet entry spreadsheet must also be supplied in duplicate. The supplied entry printout will be considered the Master Sheet for that team.

It is strongly preferred that this required "paper" printout be sent as a file attachment to **entries@fcsl.info** in the form of an Adobe **.pdf** or (protected) Word **.doc** file.

It is recommended that, prior to email transmittal, this "paper" file (also referred to as a "Hard Copy") should be printed to inspect for any inadvertent errors.

For more specific instructions on producing these files please see Appendix XX. You may also contact the FCSL Computer Operations & Training Chair(s) or the Swim Coaches' Representative for help.

3. Entries will be seeded at designated times preceding the Divisional & Final Championship meets. A swim coach or swim chair **must** attend the Final Championship (Counties) Scratch meetings.

Failure to provide a representative at the Finals Scratch Meeting may mean disqualification from the Championships. This meeting may be held at the same time and place as the mandatory Scheduling meeting.

4. The Master Sheet (Hard Copy) is considered the official entry. Should any computer entry become lost or unreadable, or if there is a disagreement with the seeding sheets, the Master Entry will determine the team's entry.

5. Alternates, one (1) per event, must be listed on the Master Sheet and meet the entry requirements.

Alternates do not compete unless another competitor from that team drops out of the event during the scratch procedure except, in the event of a competitor who falls ill during the meet, the Referee may authorize an Alternate to be substituted without re-seeding.

6. Relay Swimmers -- Only contestants listed on the Master Sheet are eligible to swim a relay. To be available for selection, additional eligible contestants must be included in the Divisional computer entry, as Relay Only swimmers.

Coaches may list up to 8 relay choices (including alternates) per relay team in the disk entry for convenience.

7. Relay Card -- Coaches must list the four (4) selected contestants on an appropriate 3x5 relay card. Changes in name or order may be made at any time until this relay card is handed to the Head Lane Timer.

A relay swimmer does not become an entry until the card bearing his or her name is delivered when called upon for the event.

8. Divisional and County Championship meets are treated as Trials & Finals of a single meet, so any relay participant is charged with the same relay event for both Championship meets. The Divisional Championships being the trials meets for the same events at the FCSL County Finals Championship meet.

## **H. CHAMPIONSHIP AWARDS**

### 1. The Phillip R. Goode Award

This annual award is to be given to the club which as shown the greatest improvement in its standings in both the division and the finals over a number of years.  
(See APPENDIX X for recipients)

### 2. The Mark Newcombe Cup Award

Initiated in 2002 by this long standing FCSL Board member, Coach and Referee, this award is given to the swimmer who earns the most points at the County Championship meet (relays excluded). Any tie is broken by record tie differential. (See APPENDIX XIV for recipients)

### 3. Divisionals

a) All Divisionals will be provided with ribbons, 1<sup>st</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> place, courtesy of the FCSL. Any trophy for the Divisional Winner is up the discretion of the Division.

b) If Divisional Diving Championships are held, the Divisional Diving Points may be combined with the Divisional Swimming Points to determine the Divisional winner. Please note: the Divisional Winner of this meet is not the same as the Winner of the Division with the best won/lost dual meet record.

4. Finals

a) For both swimming and diving events:

i) When held in a 6-lane pool: medals will be awarded from 1<sup>st</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> place.

ii) When held in an 8-lane pool: medals will be awarded from 1<sup>st</sup> through 16<sup>th</sup> place.

b) 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place swimming and diving team plaques will be awarded by the FCSL.

An overall-winner plaque will be awarded to the team whose combined totals from the swimming and diving final championships is the highest.

**I. METHOD OF SCORING**

1. Timing

Automatic timing plus button and watch back-ups or three (3) digital watches plus back-up, will be used per lane. All Divisional meets must use the same level of timing to ensure fairness when qualifying for Finals.

2. Finals

The Championship Finals will be swum as "Timed Finals" whereby a person seeded in the second heat, i.e. 7<sup>th</sup> or lower, can win the event, not just the swimmers in the last heat.

3. Championship Scoring

Championship scoring rules will be used for the Divisional and Finals Championships.

Divisionals :

Places 1-12 will score points as follows:

Individual Events: 16-13-12-11-10-9-7-5-4-3-2-1

Relay Events (i.e. double points): 32-26-24-22-20-18-14-10-8-6-4-2

Finals (Counties) :

a. When held in a 6-lane pool, places 1-12 for both swimming and diving events will score points as follows:

Individual Events: 16-13-12-11-10-9-7-5-4-3-2-1

Relay Events (i.e. double points): 32-26-24-22-20-18-14-10-8-6-4-2

b. When held in an 8-lane pool, places 1-16 for both swimming and diving events will score points as follows:

Individual Events: 20-17-16-15-14-13-12-11-9-7-6-5-4-3-2-1

Relay Events (i.e.-double points): 40-34-32-30-28-26-24-22-18-14-12-10-8-6-4-2

**J. CONDUCT OF HEATS**

Heats are to be run from slowest to fastest.  
All seeding to be **straight** seeding, no "pyramid" seeding.

**K. SWIM-OFF FOR FINALS**

After scratches have been taken into account in seeding, should a tie for time cause a Swim-Off for qualification in any event, then any swim-offs required will be held prior to the official starting of the Finals. The Championship Committee will notify any clubs involved and set the schedules as necessary. They may be held during warm-ups of the Final Championships.

**L. FCSL CHAMPIONSHIPS – ORDER OF EVENTS**

Both Divisional and Finals Championship Swimming Events will follow the same order of events, using the same event numbers, as that for dual meets but the Swimming Championship Events are held separately from the Diving Championships.  
See ORDER OF EVENTS Appendix XIX

**M. OFFICIALS**

Payment for all Assigned Officials will be \$200.00 (minimum) per Championship meet, paid by the FCSL

Referees, Starters, Stroke & Turn Judges

- a) Divisionals : Each Division must assign at least two (2) officials in consultation with the FCSL Officials Chair. Anyone serving as an official must be from outside his or her Division.
- b) County Championships : The FCSL will assign the necessary experienced officials to properly conduct the finals meet.

Results Computer Operator

FCSL will assign an experienced results computer operator to each Divisional meet. While each Division is encouraged to advise the Board of any qualified volunteers for this position, the Division will be expected to supply additional complementary volunteers as needed. The FCSL Board is responsible for the County Swimming Championship meet volunteer results computer operator(s).

**N. DATE OF CHAMPIONSHIPS**

The County Championship Meet (Finals) will be held in August.

# **Article VI - FCSL SAFETY RULES**

## **Teaching Racing Starts**

At its meeting held on January 24, 2009, the USA Swimming Board of Directors adopted an amendment to Article 103.2.2 of the USA Swimming Rules. The amendment was modified on March 16, 2009 to be effective on May 1 2009. The amendment was adopted pursuant to the provisions of Article 504.8 which provides their Board of Directors, with the advice and consent of the Safety Education Committee, the Rules & Regulations Committee and legal counsel, the authority to amend their Rules if they determine it is necessary for safety considerations. The USA Swimming Safety Education Committee, the Rules & Regulations Committee and their legal counsel have all approved the amendment.

The amendment specifically defines the term “teaching racing starts” and provides that teaching racing starts can take place only under the direct supervision of a Head Swim Coach.

Prior to the adoption of this amendment and the associated Racing Start Certification Checklist, USA Swimming worked with the American Red Cross to update and modify its Safety Training for Swim Coaches Manual. The updated materials emphasize the importance of appropriate safety measures in teaching racing starts, including the proper progression for novice swimmers.

FCSL amended **MANDATORY** provisions read as follows:

### **WATER DEPTH**

- 1. Teaching Racing Starts** - Minimum water depth for teaching racing starts in any setting from any height starting blocks or the deck shall be 6 feet (1.84 meters) measured for a distance of 3 feet 3 1/2 inches (1.0 meter) to 16 feet 5 inches (5.0 meters) from the end wall. (Effective February 15, 2007)

**“Teaching racing starts” shall include:**

- 1) all racing start instruction until a swimmer has been certified by his or her FCSL Head Swim Coach as proficient In performing a racing start, and**
- 2) All instruction, subsequent to certification, which seeks to alter a swimmer’s basic technique in performing a racing start**

**Teaching racing starts shall only take place under the direct supervision of a FCSL Head Swim Coach.**

The FCSL definition of teaching racing starts now includes a requirement that a FCSL Head Swim Coach “certify” that a swimmer is proficient in performing racing starts. The certification process includes the completion of a Racing Start Certification Checklist which is included in the following pages of this notice.

**Included as additional information and explanation of this change are the following:**

1. **FCSL Safety Notice to Parents.** This provides basic information to parents and emphasizes their responsibilities. In making sure their swimmer does not attempt to perform a racing start in less than six feet of water if they have not been properly certified. A copy of this Notice should be given to the parents of every swimmer and should be displayed prominently and regularly on team bulletin boards, in newsletters and in any new members packets.
2. **Safety Notice to All Member Clubs and Coaches.** This provides additional background and the basis for adopting the amendment and the certification process.
3. **Racing Start Certification Checklist.** This process will be required to be completed for every swimmer. Additional Information and requirements are shown on the checklist form.

This amendment and the certification process is very important to the *safety* of our FCSL athletes

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**1. FCSL Safety Notice to Parents**

To avoid risk of serious injury, no swimmer who has not been properly trained should attempt to perform a racing start from either a starting block or the side of the pool, into less than six feet of water.

Following USA Swimming rules, the FCSL has implemented a racing start certification program where a swimmer's coach documents his or her professional judgment that a swimmer has demonstrated sufficient skill to safely perform a racing start into four feet of water.

Swimmers do not always participate in swimming competitions under the supervision of a certified coach. It is the parent's responsibility to make sure the swimmer does not attempt to perform a racing start in less than six feet of water if the swimmer has not been properly certified by the swimmers coach to do so.



## 2. Safety Notice to All Member Clubs and Coaches

In its experience, United States Sports Insurance Company (“USSIC”) has observed that the greatest risk of serious head injury in swimming occurs in connection with teaching racing starts.

In response, USSIC engaged Indiana University to conduct a racing start study. Several important observations from that study are:

- A swimmer who is told to dive straight down with arms at the side may well have sufficient head velocity at a six-foot depth to cause serious injury.
- Racing starts from the side of the pool are typically not more shallow than racing starts off the starting blocks.
- Experienced swimmers can always control the depth of their racing starts (unless they are trying a new technique). Most, but not all inexperienced swimmers can control the depth of their racing starts.

USA Swimming has taken the following steps in response to these observations:

- The American Red Cross Safety Training for Swim Coaches Manual and training course have been modified to emphasize the importance of appropriate safety measures in teaching racing starts, including the use of a proper progression for novice swimmers and the elimination of any technique that involves diving with arms at the side, over sticks, or through hoops, unless that technique is performed in a diving well. The revised version of the Safety Training for Swim Coaches Manual is now available. It can be found at [www.usaswimming.org](http://www.usaswimming.org). (See Chapter 2: Head-first Entries and Racing Start Safety.)
- Effective May 1, 2009, USA Swimming’s Board of Directors has modified the racing start rule, 103.2.2 (which already provides that racing starts should only be taught in at least six feet of water) to further clarify that racing starts should only be taught under the direct supervision of a swim coach, and to expand the definition of teaching racing starts to make clear that no swimmer who has not been certified as proficient by his or her coach should be performing racing starts into less than six feet of water (revised Rule 103.2.2).
- The certification process is described on the Racing Start Certification Checklist which was also approved by the USA Swimming Board. That document requires that for swimmers age 10 years and under or swimmers with less than one year of experience, the coach must certify that the swimmer has been trained according to the progression set forth on the form. (That progression is based on the revised Safety Training Manual). For older or more experienced swimmers, the checklist requires the coach to certify appropriate skill level based on the coach’s observation. The required certification is based on the coach’s professional judgment and must be recorded in writing for each swimmer.

### Racing Start Certification Checklist

Check the appropriate box as each step is satisfactorily demonstrated. Steps 1 through 5 are described with accompanying photos in the American Red Cross Safety Training for Swim Coaches Manual. Access the manual on the coaches' tab at [www.usaswimming.org](http://www.usaswimming.org). (See Chapter 2: Head-first Entries and Racing Start Safety.)

**Step 1-5 must be observed by the undersigned coach for all swimmers with less than one year of competitive experience or who are 10 years of age or younger**

Progression: The swimmer satisfactorily demonstrated the ability to safely enter the water using:

- Step 1; The sitting position
- Step 2: The kneeling position
- Step 3: The compact position
- Step 4; The stride position
- Step 5: A shallow head-first entry

**Step 6 must be completed by the coach for all swimmers, regardless of age or experience. Check either one of the boxes below depending on the age and experience of the swimmer:**

- For swimmers age 10 years and under and/or swimmers with less than one year of experience: The swimmer has satisfactorily completed the racing start learning progression and demonstrated the ability to safely execute a shallow racing start from a starting block.
- For swimmers age 11 years and older with more than one year experience; Based on prior competitive experience, he swimmer is capable of safely controlling the depth of his or her racing starts.

OR

Based on personal observation, it is the professional judgment of the undersigned coach that the swimmer identified below is capable of performing a shallow racing start on demand and can safely perform a racing start in four feet of water.

Name of the Swimmer	Age	Name of the Coach (Please Print)
Club Name	Signature of the Coach	Date

- Record keeping options:
  - An individual form signed by the coach for each swimmer
  - An attached roster signed by the coach documenting each swimmer (sample attached).
- This document must be maintained on file with the club listed above for three years.
- Prior to teaching racing starts check and understand the local and state laws regarding water depth.
- Keep up to date on all FCSL & USA Swimming rules and information in teaching racing starts.