

West Houston Aquatic League, Inc. (WHALE)

Stroke/Touch/Turn & Starter/Referee

Last Revised 3-22-2010

Dual Meet Entries

1. Contestants may swim one event per stroke and two relays.
2. The heat restrictions are as follows:
 - a. Unlimited heats of freestyle and backstroke.
 - b. One (1) heat of I.M. for each eligible age-group (10 & Under, 11-12, 13-14, 15-18).
 - c. Two heats of each breast and butterfly unless holding a dual meet at a four or five lane pool, then there will be 3 heats of breast and butterfly.
 - d. Extra heats will be allowed by mutual consent of the coaches when time permits. Extra heats are not awarded ribbons or points.
3. For relays there are:
 - a. Freestyle relays for all age groups.
 - i. 6 & U freestyle relay is a mixed-gender relay and must contain at least one (1) swimmer of each gender.
 - b. Medley relays for all age-groups except 6 & U.
 - c. Unlimited heats of each relay.
 - d. Three (3) possible relay teams are allowed in the 15-18 age-group:
 - i. Boys: (4) boys or (3) boys and (1) girl
 - ii. Girls: (4) girls
 - iii. Mixed: (2) girls and (2) boys or (3) girls and (1) boy onlyA team is allowed to swim two (2) of the (3) possibilities.
 - e. Free & medley relay teams, both boys & girls in the 7-8, 9-10, 11-12, & 13-14 age groups, consist of the same gender swimmers.

Meet Procedures

1. General Meet Procedures
 - a. Meet starting times will be set when the meet schedules are set.
 - b. Warm-ups start one (1) hour before the start of a meet. The home team will warm-up the first twenty-five (25) minutes. The visiting team will warm-up the second twenty-five (25) minutes.
 - c. Starting blocks are not allowed in any WHALE meets.
 - d. Diving starts are not allowed at meets held in pools with depth of less than 3'6" at both ends.

2. Dual Meet Procedures

- a. Ribbons will be awarded at the conclusion of each heat. Any swimmer in the first heat receiving a disqualification will receive a last place ribbon and no points. Swimmers will line up in order of finish and report to the scoring table in order to tabulate points.
- b. Assisted swimmers must swim in pre-meet events. No assisted swimmers will be allowed in regular meet events. The term assisted swimmer does not refer to special needs swimmer.
- c. Special needs swimmers requiring assistance to swim will be allowed to swim in meet events as long as there is no safety issue and the swimmer can supply their own equipment and/or facilitator as necessary to swim. They are not however allowed to swim in the scoring heat and have the option to select a ribbon of their own choosing upon exiting the pool.
- d. Visiting teams swim in odd lanes and home teams swim in even lanes.
- e. If a meet is called due to weather after the completion of breaststroke the team with the highest point total will be declared the winner. If a meet is called prior to the completion of the breaststroke, it may be rescheduled and resumed at the point where the meet was called.
- f. State Regulations require that a private to semi-public pool must have two (2) lifeguards on duty, one (1) to sit in lifeguard stand and one (1) on call (for CPR purposes). This rule applies to our swim meets. A coach, who is lifeguard-certified, may serve as the on call lifeguard. It is each team's individual responsibility to provide the lifeguards required at its home meets. The lifeguard shall be on duty from the time the visiting team begins to warm-up till the last swimmer has swum.

Protests and Forfeiture

1. NO one, except a head coach at a meet, will be allowed to question or protest to the referee the decision of an official during the meet. After hearing a protest and any appropriate rebuttal, the meet's referee will decide what action is appropriate. Then the meet continues.
 - a. The Referee's decision is final.
 - b. Any further protests or questions must be submitted to the league Vice-President in writing within twenty-four (24) hours of the conclusion of the last event of that meet. The Vice-President shall inform the other teams(s) of the protest filed within twenty-four (24) hours of receipt of protest and shall investigate and shall rule on the protest within seven (7) calendar days of the meet.
2. A home team will forfeit a meet if it is not ready to begin the meet at the scheduled starting time.
3. A visiting team will forfeit a meet if it has not arrived before the scheduled starting time of a meet.
4. Forfeit score shall be 50-0. In a forfeit situation, the forfeiture may be waived and the meet swum if both head coaches give mutual consent.

Placing and Officiating

1. At league dual meets, there will be three (3) timers per lane, four (4) touch/turn judges (2 per team), two (2) stroke judge (1 per team) , a starter, and a referee. The home team will provide the starter and referee. All stroke judges, touch/turn judges, and referees must attend a league-sponsored clinic as determined by the league.

2. The starter will be responsible for charging false starts to swimmers. The starter will use a starting device, and only whistle in the event of a device failure. An individual's second false start shall result in disqualification, except for 6 & under events.
 - a. After receiving clearance from the referee, the starter instructs the swimmers, including the type of event. The starter then 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 starting positions, but no swimmer shall be in motion immediately before the starting signal is given.
 - b. When a swimmer does not respond promptly to the command "take your mark" or starts before the starting signal is given, the starter shall immediately release all swimmers with the command "stand up". Any swimmer who enters the water or backstroker who leaves the starting area shall be charged with a false start, except that a swimmer may be relieved of the charge if the false start was caused by the swimmer's reaction to the command "stand up".
 - c. All swimmers leaving their marks before the starting signal is given, shall be charged with a false start, except that a swimmer who has false started because of the action or movement of another competitor may be relieved of the charge and a false start may be charged only to the offender who moved.
 - d. For backstroke starts, a false start may be charged to any swimmer who fails to maintain his feet and/or hands in a legal position after one warning.
 - e. For relay starts, a still start is required with feet touching some portion of the deck – no running, stepping or hop starts.
 - f. A swimmer may also be disqualified for deliberate delay or misconduct.
 - g. When the starting signal is given and one or more swimmers have obtained an unfair advantage, all swimmers shall be recalled at once by a second signal, and the starter shall indicate the swimmer(s), if any, who are charged with a false start.
3. The referee is responsible for holding a meeting before the meet begins with all officials (timers, judges, etc...) and coaches to review meet procedures. The referee:
 - a. Cannot disqualify or place swimmers.
 - b. Cannot over rule a judge, but can make suggestions if you believe they do not understand a rule. If needed, you have the authority to remove/replace any judge or timer.
 - c. Only speak to coaches about disputes, disqualifications, or questions. If parents and/or swimmers approach you; send them directly to their coach.
 - d. Maintains good sportsmanship during the meet
 - e. Can remove swimmers for poor conduct or sportsmanship (foul language, disruption to the meet, etc...)
 - f. Parents can be removed by Referee and/or League Representatives (both teams agree).
 - g. Any ejections must be reported to League Vice-President within 24 hours by the referee.
 - h. The referee will be at the finish line to observe the finish and check with stroke and touch/turn judges for disqualifications
 - i. Keep the meet running smoothly and quickly.

4. A stroke judge will disqualify a swimmer who violates any stroke or kick rule listed in Appendix A except for the following:
 - a. A 6 & under swimmer is not disqualified unless there is an unfair advantage because he/she does not attempt to swim on the back in the backstroke for more than two (2) strokes per race.
 - b. A 7-8 swimmer is allowed one (1) stroke infraction per race and/or relay leg.
 - c. All swimmers, including a 6 & under swimmer will be disqualified if they do not finish the race legally – i.e. on the back in the backstroke. This is a touch-turn infraction.
5. A stroke judge will disqualify a swimmer who gains an unfair advantage by doing any of the following:
 - a. Pulling on a lane rope.
 - b. Pulling on a pool's side.
 - c. Pushing off the pool's bottom.
 - d. Pushing off a pool's side other than at the starting or finishing ends.
6. A touch/turn judge will disqualify a swimmer who violated any turn, finish, or relay race rule listed in Appendix A.
7. Under sections 8, 9, and 10 listed above, all heats will be judged. If a swimmer is DQ'd for any reason, the meet referee will mark the timing slip with a DQ & reason for the DQ in a bold, easily seen way to indicate to the scoring table that this swimmer has been DQ'd.
8. During the Meet of Champs, a judge will write both the nature of any disqualification and "DQ" on the timer's sheet for the swimmer disqualified.
9. Backstroke flags must be fifteen (15) feet from each end of the course and about seven (7) feet above the water surface. Incorrect placement of the backstroke flags is allowed if all coaches approve and the touch/turn judges are instructed to be lenient in assessing disqualifications in the backstroke.

APPENDIX A

ARTICLE 101 INDIVIDUAL STROKES AND RELAYS

101.1 BREASTSTROKE (effective 01-01-06)

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 breast-2006 Rules & Regulations 19

Stroke 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.

101.2 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 the 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.

Turns — 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.

101.3 BACKSTROKE (effective 01-01-06)

1. START

1.1. The swimmers shall line up in the water facing the starting end, with both hands placed on the gutter or on the starting grips.

1.2. 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. Standing in or on the gutter or curling the toes over the lip of the gutter is not permitted at any time before the start. A backstroke starting block may not be used.

2. **STROKE** - Standing in or on the gutter or curling the toes over the lip of the gutter immediately after the start is not permitted. The swimmer shall push off on his back and continue swimming on the back throughout the race. 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) and after the start and each turn. By that point, the head must have broken the surface of the water.

3. TURNS –

3.1. Upon completion of each length, some part of the swimmer must touch the wall.

3.2. During the turn the shoulders may turn 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.

3.2.1. Once that one pull is completed (hands at side) all kicking may stop or may continue. At that point the swimmer is allowed to glide or kick into the wall to complete the turn.

3.2.2. If a swimmer chooses to complete the turn on their breast (3.2), they cannot touch the wall with their hand/s during the turn.

3.3. The swimmer must return to a position on the back before the feet leave the wall.

4. **FINISH** - The swimmer shall have finished the race when any part of the person touches the wall while the swimmer is on their back at the end of the course.

101.4 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 an 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.

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

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

101.5 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.

Turns

A - Intermediate turns within each stroke shall conform to the turn rules for that stroke.

B - 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 101.2.5. 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 101.1.5. 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.

101.6 RELAYS

Freestyle Relay — Four swimmers on each team, each to swim one-fourth of the prescribed distance using any desired stroke(s). Freestyle finish rules apply.

Medley Relay — 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/her 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/her leg.
- 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 enters 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.