



Naperville Swim Conference

Beginning Officials'
Training Manual

The Principle of Officiating

- Illinois Swimming Officiating Philosophy:
 - “Fair and equitable conditions of competition are maintained and uniformity in the sport is promoted so that no swimmer has an unfair advantage over another.”
- What does that mean:
 - “Success of every meet depends on the official’s integrity, knowledge, concern, and regard for the competitive interest of the swimmer.” – Impartiality and professionalism are key!
 - One set of rules applies to each and every swimmer in each and every event.
 - An official judges the technical components of the swim, not the style components.
- An official works in a team:
 - Referee
 - Starter
 - Scoring
 - Stroke and Turn Judge
 - Timers

What Officials are Judging

- Officials look at 4 strokes
 - Butterfly
 - Freestyle
 - Breaststroke
 - Backstroke
- Components of a stroke – swimming rules detail each stroke by these elements:
 - STARTS – The start of the race until the head breaks the water.
 - SWIM – From the head breaks the surface of the water until last stroke into the turn or finish.
 - TURN – From the beginning of the last full stroke into the wall until the head breaks the surface of the water.
 - FINISH – From the beginning of the last full stroke into the wall to the touch at the end of the established event distance, OR, at the time an official moves their gaze from the swimming portion to the touch at the wall
- Each Stroke will be reviewed by a breakdown of the stroke's components.

NSC Rule Variances

NSC modifies several USA Swimming Rules for the benefit of the summer swimmer.

- **Backstroke Turns** – NSC uses Illinois High School Association Backstroke Turn Rules.
 - During turns (usually between the backstroke flags and the wall), a swimmer MAY go past vertical to the breast and MAY utilize a continuous single or continuous simultaneous double arm pull to initiate the turn.
 - After the initiation of the turning action, no other arm pulls may be started.
 - However, kicking and gliding actions are permitted.
- **6&u Infractions** – In 6&u events, NSC rules do not permit swimmers to be disqualified, unless the swimmer doesn't maintain the correct body position. (e.g. A swimmer swims the backstroke by using the freestyle stroke/body position).
- **Definition of Arms during the Butterfly** – NSC relaxes the arm recovery interpretation during the Butterfly stroke. Any part of the arm brought forward (breaking the water) simultaneously over the water is legal.
 - In USA Swimming, the arms of a swimmer are defined from the shoulder to the wrist.
 - In *NSC Swimming*, the arms of a swimmer are defined *from the shoulder to the fingertips*.
- **15m Mark Violations** – Most swimming pools used by the members of NSC do not mark the 15m length. Therefore, the backstroke flags are commonly utilized for any 15m disqualifications.

Butterfly

- Start: Forward start.
- Swim: Body kept on breast.
 - ◆ Stroke:
 - Multiple kicks permitted but first arm pull must bring swimmer to the surface.
 - Must break surface throughout the race except swimmer may be submerged after start and each turn not more than 15 meters where head must break surface.
 - Any parts of the arms, shoulder to *fingertips*, brought forward simultaneously over water and pulled back simultaneously under the water.
 - ◆ Kick:
 - Simultaneous up and down movement.
 - No alternating, scissors, or breaststroke kicking movements.
- Turns:
 - ◆ Touch shall be made with both hands *separated* and *simultaneously* at, above, or below the water surface.
 - ◆ Shoulders at or past vertical toward breast when the swimmer leaves wall.
- Finish:
 - ◆ Touch shall be made with both hands *separated* and *simultaneously* at, above, or below the water surface.

Backstroke

- Start: In water facing start end with both hands on gutter or starting grips.
 - ◆ Gutted pool – feet/toes may be above the water, but may not be in, on, above lip, or bent over the gutter at any time before or after start.
 - ◆ Flat wall pads – feet/toes may be placed above the water level.
- Swim:
 - ◆ Any style as long as swimmer remains on back – at or past vertical towards the back.
 - ◆ Must break surface throughout the race, except swimmer may be submerged after start and each turn not more than 15 meters where head must break surface.
- Turns:
 - ◆ During turns, a swimmer MAY go past vertical to the breast and MAY utilize a continuous single or continuous simultaneous double arm pull to initiate the turn.
 - After the initiation of the turning action, no other arm pulls may be started.
 - However, kicking and gliding actions are permitted.
 - ◆ Some part of swimmer must touch wall at completion of each length.
 - ◆ Once swimmer touches wall, the turn is completed.
 - ◆ Shoulders at or past vertical toward back when feet leave wall.
- Finish:
 - ◆ Some part of swimmer must touch the wall while on the back.
 - ◆ Once a swimmer touches the wall, the swim is completed.

Breaststroke

- Start: Forward start.
- Swim: Body kept on breast.

- ◆ Stroke:

- Stroke cycle is one arm pull and one leg kick in that order.
- After start and each turn, one arm stroke may be completely back to legs. Head must break surface at widest part of second pull.
- After the start and after each turn when the swimmer leaves the wall, the body shall be kept on the breast. It is not permitted to roll onto the back at any time except at the turn after the touch of the wall where it is permissible to turn in any manner as long as the body is on the breast when leaving the wall.
- 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.
- (Continued)

Breaststroke

→ (Continued)

→ Swim: Body kept on breast.

◆ Kick:

- After the start and each turn, at any time prior to the first breaststroke kick, a single butterfly kick is permitted. 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.
- Scissors, alternating movements, or downward butterfly kicks are 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/Finish:

- ◆ Touch shall be made with both hands *separated* and *simultaneously* at, above, or below the water surface.
- ◆ Shoulders at or past vertical toward breast when the swimmer leaves wall.
- ◆ At the last stroke before the turn and at the finish, an arm stroke not followed by a leg kick is permitted.
- ◆ 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 last complete or incomplete stroke cycle preceding the touch.

Freestyle

- Start: Forward start.
- Swim: Stroke/Kick
 - ◆ Any style may be used.
 - ◆ Must break surface throughout the race, except swimmer may be submerged after start and each turn not more than 15 meters, where head must break surface.
- Turns/Finish: Some part of swimmer must touch the wall at completion of each length or required distance.

Individual Medley

- Start: Forward start.
- Swim:
 - ◆ Rules for each stroke apply.
 - ◆ Must swim $\frac{1}{4}$ of event distance as prescribed stroke, in order of Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, and Freestyle.
 - ◆ May not swim *in the style* of the other three strokes during the freestyle leg.
- Turns/Finish:
 - ◆ Intermediate turns conform to turn rules for the stroke, except that in the freestyle turn, the swimmer must return to the breast before any kick or stroke.
 - ◆ Transition turns between strokes must conform to finish rules for the stroke just completed and shall be as follows:
 - Butterfly to Backstroke — 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.
 - 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.
 - Breaststroke to Freestyle — Once a legal touch has been made, the swimmer may turn in any manner and must return to the breast before any kick or stroke.

Medley Relay

→ Start:

- ◆ In water facing start end with both hands on gutter or starting grips.
 - Gutted pool – feet/toes may be above the water, but may not be in, on, above lip, or bent over the gutter at any time before or after start.
 - Flat wall pads – feet/toes may be placed above the water level.

→ Swim:

- ◆ Rules for each stroke apply.
- ◆ Each swimmer must swim $\frac{1}{4}$ of event distance as prescribed stroke, in order of Backstroke, Breaststroke, Butterfly and Freestyle.
- ◆ May not swim *in the style* of the other three strokes during the freestyle leg.

→ Takeoffs:

- ◆ Swimmers' feet/foot must remain in contact with the starting platform until the incoming swimmer has touched the finish wall or pad.
- ◆ "Toes to Nose" or "Toes to Tips" – Look from the swimmer's toes on the platform to the fingers or hands or head of the swimmer in the water.

→ Turns/Finish:

- ◆ Intermediate turns conform to turn rules for the stroke.
- ◆ Transition turns conform to finish rules for the stroke.

Freestyle Relay

- Start: Forward Start
- Swim:
 - ◆ Freestyle rules apply.
 - ◆ Each Swimmer must swim $\frac{1}{4}$ of distance.
- Takeoffs:
 - ◆ Swimmers' feet/foot must remain in contact with the starting platform until the incoming swimmer has touched the finish wall or pad.
 - ◆ "Toes to Nose" or "Toes to Tips"—Look from the swimmer's toes on the platform to the fingers or hands or head of the swimmer in the water.
- Turns/Finish: Some part of swimmer must touch the wall at completion of each length or required distance.

Common Infractions for all Strokes

- Did not finish
- Walking on or pushing off pool bottom
- Pulling on lane lines – Propulsion from lane lines
- Not touching the wall at each end of the pool
- Interfering with another swimmer
- Not starting and finishing in the same lane
- Unsportsmanlike conduct
- Delay of meet (Referee's jurisdiction)
- False start (Starter's and Referee's jurisdiction)

Judging Swimmers with Physical Disabilities

→ USA Swimming/NSC Rule 105

- ◆ “If there are swimmers with disabilities participating, Referee will notify judges in advance.”
- ◆ Judge any part of the body that the swimmer uses.
- ◆ “Do not judge a part of the body that cannot be used.”
- ◆ Base any judgments on the rule, not on technique.
- ◆ Physical Disabilities can include broken or injured limbs at the discretion of the Referee.

How to Judge – “Fair and Equitable”

- “Judging should be consistent among different officials at a meet.”
- “Judging should be consistent at different meets.”
- “All of the rules are enforced.”
- “The rules are enforced equally across all age groups and levels of ability.” – for 8&up events
- “Officials should demonstrate impartiality in their enforcement of the rules.”
- Officials should work at their positions and take it seriously. Pay Attention!
- “Competitors have a right to expect officials to know the rules and interpret them correctly, fairly, consistently, and courteously.”

Guidelines for Officials

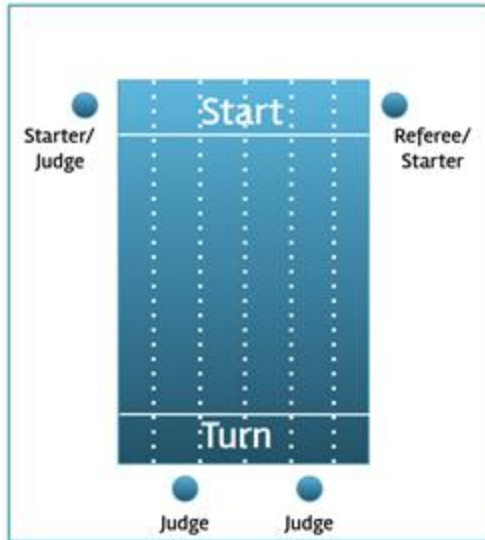
- Familiarize yourself with the facility.
- Know when the officials' meeting will be held.
- Take officiating seriously. Be professional in manner. Be prepared to officiate.
- At the Official's Briefing, learn the protocol specific to this meet. Know your assigned jurisdiction.
- Be courteous, but don't let anyone interfere with the performance of your job
- If someone engages in abusive or unsportsmanlike conduct, refer the matter to the referee immediately.
- Apply the rules uniformly and consistently. Always use the same pattern of observation. Distribute your attention equally, even with open lanes. Do not overly scrutinize any swimmer.
- Never leave your post without first informing the referee.
- Leave cell phones in pockets or cars.
- Remember to observe swims not inspect them. You are there to qualify a swim.

Officiating Rules of Thumb

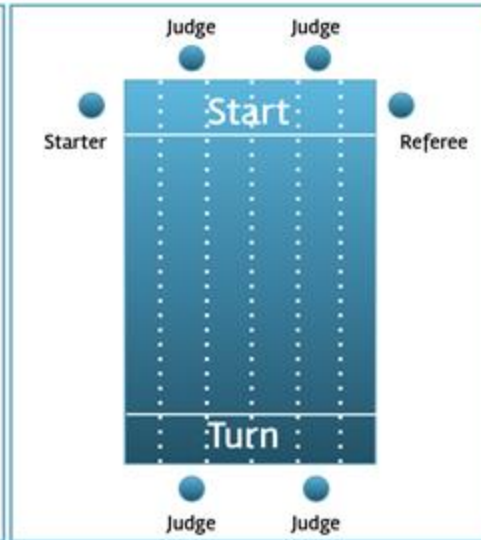
- “THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT **ALWAYS** GOES TO THE SWIMMER.”
- “Call only what you see, not what you didn’t see.”
- Officials judge technique, **NOT** style.
- “No visible cheering for a particular swimmer.”
- It is **OK** to judge your child. Judge their swim like everyone else.
- “Know the rules. Review the rules before the meet.”
 - ◆ Understand the rules
 - ◆ Apply them fairly and consistently
 - ◆ Show yourself in a professional and competent manner

Placement of an Official

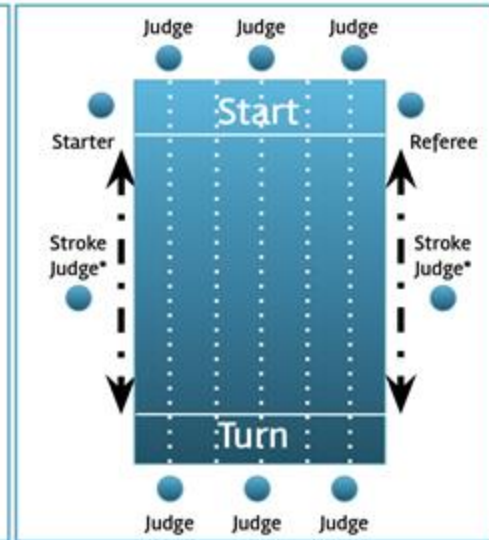
- “Determined by Meet Referee”
- “Dependent upon pool configuration”
- “Dependent on the number of officials”



Minimal



Recommended



Ideal

Position of a Turn Judge

- Stand at the edge of the pool.
- Pay attention to Referee whistle commands.
- Pay attention to Starts and Finishes of events.
- Keep hands, papers, and pens/pencils behind back or by sides – when swimmers are in jurisdiction.
- Use heat sheet to keep track of events and DQ's.
- Look Calm and Professional
- Unless directed by the Referee, “stand where you can see the swimmer in your jurisdiction.”

Observation of an Infraction

- “Upon observing an infraction within your jurisdiction, raise your hand overhead” – long enough to be seen by the referee.
- “If you raise your hand, you don’t have to make a call”, but if you **don’t** raise your hand, you can’t make a call.
- Remember - “***BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT***” goes to the swimmer.
- “After signaling a DQ, continue to observe all the swimmers in your jurisdiction.”
- Use the heat sheet to note the infraction observed.
- When there are no swimmers in your jurisdiction, complete the DQ form.
- Note: The DQ slip is the primary means of letting the swimmer and coach know of the infraction.

Reporting an Infraction

→ If the Referee needs a clarification on a call, prepare to answer these questions:

- ◆ Where did the infraction happen?
 - Which lane?
 - Where in the lane?
- ◆ What happened?
 - Paint a picture of what happened?
 - Don't use your hands to communicate the infraction.
- ◆ Which rule was violated?
 - Use DQ card/rule book terms.
 - When did it happen – Start, Swim, Turn, Finish?

The DQ Card

- Record Event #, Heat #, and Lane #
- Name of swimmer and/or team
- Infraction – most are on the slip
- Your PRINTED Initials
- Referee's Initials for approval (Optional)
- Runners take the DQ Cards to the scoring table, then the cards are given to the coaches.

Event	Heat	Lane	Swimmer/Team
Check Instruction			
BUTTERFLY			
1A		Alternating Flutter Kick	
1B		Breaststroke Kick	
1C		Scissors Kick	
1E		Non-simultaneous arms	
1F		Arms underwater recovery	
1J		One hand touch	
1K		No touch	
1L		Non-simultaneous touch	
1M		Shoulders not past vertical after turn	
1N		Head underwater @ 15 meters	
BACKSTROKE			
2J		No touch at turn	
2J		Illegal turning action	
2K		Not on back off wall	
2L		Shoulders past vertical towards breast	
2N		Head underwater @ 15 meters	
2P		Too careful over garter after the start	
2Q		Did not finish on back	
BREASTSTROKE			
3A		Alternating Flutter Kick	
3B		Non-simultaneous Kick	
3C		Butterfly Kick	
3D		Scissors kick	
3E		Hands past hip line during stroke	
3F		Non-simultaneous arms	
3G		Too sensitive underwater	
3H		Arms not in same horizontal plane	
3I		Elbows uncovered start water	
3J		One hand touch	
3K		No touch	
3L		Non-simultaneous touch	
3M		Shoulders not past vertical after turn	
3P		Head under for 2 or more strokes	
3Q		Out of sequence (1 crawl - 1 kick)	
FREE STYLE			
4K		No touch on turn or finish	
4N		Head underwater @ 15 meters	
INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY			
5P		Stroke in order of sequence	
RELAYS			
6J		Stroke infraction swimmer #1	
6J		Stroke infraction swimmer #2	
6J		Stroke infraction swimmer #3	
6J		Stroke infraction swimmer #4	
6K		Early take-off swimmer #2	
6K		Early take-off swimmer #3	
6K		Early take-off swimmer #4	
6P		Changed order of swimmers	
6Q		Not enough swimmers	
MISCELLANEOUS			
7A		False start	
7P		Declared false start	
7Q		Did not finish	
7R		Delay of meet	
7S		Entered water without permission	
7T		Interfered with another swimmer	
7U		Walking on bottom	
7V		Standing on bottom	
7W		Pulling on lane line	
7X		Swim in wrong lane	
7Y		Unsportsmanlike conduct	
Judge: _____		Referee: _____ (Please Print)	

DQ Disputes by Parents or Coaches

- **Do not talk about calls** on the deck with other officials **or** with parents, friends, coaches, or other swimmers on deck, in the stands, or anywhere else.
- Parents with questions or concerns about a call should talk with their Coach – In a courteous manner, please direct them to their coach.
- The Coach with any questions should contact the Referee – If a coach asks you about your call, please direct them to the Referee in a courteous manner.
- If you have questions about a call or rule, please ask another official or the Referee when you are not officiating or after the meet.

Understanding Whistles Commands

IHSA STARTERS' PROTOCOLS

→ Forward Starts

- ◆ Starter/referee signals the swimmers with a series of short whistles (no fewer than 4) to approach the blocks and prepare to swim.
- ◆ When all swimmers have approached the blocks, starter/referee blows a long whistle for the heat to step onto the block and take their preparatory position.
- ◆ Once all swimmers are on the blocks, the referee immediately turns the heat over to the starter
- ◆ When the swimmers are prepared, the starter says 'take your mark'.
- ◆ When swimmers have assumed the correct starting position and are motionless, starter activates the starting signal

→ Backstroke Starts

- ◆ The starter/referee signals the swimmers with a series of short whistles (no fewer than 4) to approach the side of the blocks and prepare to swim.
- ◆ When all swimmers are at the side of the blocks, starter/referee blows a long whistle for the heat to immediately step into the water. When all swimmers have surfaced, starter/referee blows a second long whistle to have the swimmers return to the wall and immediately assume their starting positions
- ◆ Once all swimmers are on the blocks, the referee immediately turns the heat over to the starter
- ◆ When the swimmers are prepared, the starter says 'take your mark'.
- ◆ When swimmers have assumed the correct starting position and are motionless, starter activates the starting signal

→ **Optional:** If a swimmer (or swimmers) has not responded to the whistles, referee/starter may say "step up" or "step in"

Other Things to Know

- Remember: NSC Rules are based on USA Swimming Rules
- What to Wear:
 - ◆ White Shirt over Khaki Shorts or Pants
 - ◆ White shoes, crocs, or sandals
 - ◆ NSC nametag
- Problems or Questions:
 - ◆ Contact
- Don't forget about volunteering for the Classic Meet
 - ◆ We need officials for 3 classic sessions
 - ◆ The more officials we have, the less work there is

Resources

- Naperville Swim Conference:
- <http://www.napervilleswim.org/Home.jsp?team=recnpdsc> - go to documents/officials
- Please refer to “Naperville Swim Conference Training Materials for Swim Officials”
- Illinois Swimming Website: www.ilswim.org - to become a certified USA official - go here first
- USA Swimming Website: www.usaswimming.org
 - ◆ For rules and rulebooks: <https://www.usaswimming.org/docs/default-source/rules-regulations/2021-rulebook.pdf>
 - ◆ For training resources: https://www.teamunify.com/ilslsc/UserFiles/Image/QuickUpload/judges-training-materials_085563.pdf
- Links to USA Swimming training videos:
 - ◆ Breaststroke – <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xj8YzwB7B18>
 - ◆ Butterfly – <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JYLaAq7puHU>
 - ◆ Backstroke – <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hwj7zPQ4D00> - REMEMBER: NSC allows swimmers to turn past vertical towards the breast and glide into the wall; in USA Swimming Materials and this video, it will say otherwise.
 - ◆ Freestyle – <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=79pdZgcJWSw>
 - ◆ IM/relays – <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rpk6YboSLsQ>

Common Questions

→ Breaststroke:

- ◆ ***Q: With the vertical motion allowed in the breaststroke kick, how do you really judge a breaststroke versus a butterfly kick?***
- ◆ A: The key phrase is the “feet must be turned outward during the propulsive part of the kick movement.” Are the toes pointed in or out? They should be pointed out for the breaststroke (with propulsion from the bottom of the foot) and pointed in for butterfly (with propulsion coming from the top of the foot using a downward motion.)
- ◆ ***Q: Can the hands recover over the water surface? How does this differ from the butterfly recovery?***
- ◆ A: Yes, the hands can recover over the water surface, however, they must still be “pushed forward together from the breast,” i.e., within the shoulder blades, not outside the line of the body as in butterfly and the elbows must remain under the water.

→ Butterfly:

- ◆ ***Q: What is meant by underwater recovery at the turn and how is it judged?***
- ◆ A: To recover, according to Webster’s dictionary, is to “bring back to normal position.” In swimming, it is the forward motion of the arms, bringing them back into position for a pulling action. In butterfly, the arms must be brought forward over the water, therefore, if a swimmer pulls back (breaks elbows) and then finding themselves too close to the wall, comes forward again underwater to make the touch – they would be disqualified for an “underwater recovery.”
- ◆ ***Q: Is a “whip kick” motion legal in the butterfly?***
- ◆ A: A rounded motion of the legs is okay as long as the vertical motion is simultaneous. Toes must be pointed in, since “feet turned outward” would be a breaststroke kicking motion.
- ◆ ***Q: How far do the arms have to be “over the water”?***
- ◆ A: To judge whether the arms of a younger swimmer are recovering “over the water,” look at the arms. If you can see some skin (somewhere between the wrist and shoulder), the swimmer probably is doing a legal butterfly. If not, you’re probably looking at a simultaneous-type “doggie paddle” which would be an “underwater recovery.”

Common Questions

→ Freestyle:

- ◆ ***Q: If a swimmer misses the wall, can they go back and touch?***
- ◆ A: Only if they have not yet touched the wall at the opposite end of the pool as this completes the next length.
- ◆ ***Q: If a swimmer stands up during freestyle and then continues swimming, are they disqualified?***
- ◆ A: Not unless they leave the pool, walk or spring from the bottom. This does NOT apply to the other strokes – once a swimmer stands up during the back, breast or fly, they have violated the stroke rule, i.e., they are no longer on their back or breast.

→ Backstroke:

- ◆ ***Q: How far can a swimmer swim completely under water – and whose jurisdiction is this call?***
- ◆ A: Fifteen meters (NSC Rule: The Flags) – at that point, the swimmer's head must have broken the surface of the water. Jurisdiction for this call (if using separate stroke and turn judges) would normally be given to the stroke judge.
- ◆ ***Q: What is “vertical” and what part of the body is used to judge the swimmer's position?***
- ◆ A: Vertical is considered to be at a 90-degree angle from the surface of the water. The shoulders are used as the reference point to judge body position.
- ◆ ***Q: What if a swimmer turns past vertical, grabs the wall, hangs there, and then pushes off on their back with their feet. Is this legal?***
- ◆ A: Yes, if it is a continuous part of their turning action in reaching for the wall – this is considered their “turn.”
- ◆ ***Q: If the swimmer does turn past vertical, initiates a turn, but misses the wall, can they scull back and touch with their feet?***
- ◆ A: No, the “continuous turning action” required when the shoulders go past vertical is considered to be terminated when the swimmer's feet touch the wall. If the swimmer misses the wall, stops and sculls back to touch, they are no longer in a “continuous turning action” and would be disqualified.