

# Why Did My Swimmer Get Disqualified (DQ'd)?

## **GENERAL**

1. More than 1 swimmer in lane
2. Start interference by coach/parent/swimmer, especially with relays when multiple people are near blocks, "DO NOT TOUCH" swimmer on blocks.
3. Early take off
4. Wrong stroke
5. Finish in wrong lane
6. Missed wall/no touch

## **STARTS**

1. Swimmers must come to a MOTIONLESS POSITION before the race begins.  
Rocking, rolling, leaning, etc..., must CEASE, or the starter can hold the race.  
Failure to come to a motionless position in a prompt manner can result in swimmers being charged with a false start.
2. A second false start results in a disqualification.

**FREESTYLE** - This is the hardest stroke to be disqualified in, because there are no real stroke rules. Still it happens.

1. Failing to touch the wall on the turn in a multi-lap race.
2. Pulling the lane line to gain advantage.
3. Standing on the bottom and pushing off the bottom to continue swimming.  
(Standing is legal, but pushing off isn't. To avoid a DQ, a swimmer who has stood on the bottom would have to FLOAT back to the surface and start swimming without pushing forward off the bottom.)

**BACKSTROKE** - Similar to rules for freestyle, except athletes have to stay on their backs (with the exception of turns in multi-lap races.)

1. Rolling onto the stomach before completing a one-lap race, or on the finish of a multi-lap race, is a DQ. (This is defined as turning past the vertical-if you are flat on your back, you can't roll more than 90 degrees, or you are more on your stomach than on your back.)
2. THE TURN—This is tricky, but the rule is that swimmers can roll to their stomachs, take one stroke (with one arm pull down, not two) and, IN ONE COMPLETED MOTION, do a freestyle flip turn and then push off the wall on their back. The "one complete motion" part of the rule is fairly objective, unfortunately, and some judges give much more leeway on this than others. A guideline? If swimmers roll over, take their one allotted stroke and then have to kick into the wall for some distance before they turn, they are probably in danger of a DQ.

3. On the start, the swimmer must surface no more than 15 yards from the starting wall (for older swimmers who do lots of underwater butterfly kicking at the start of a race.)

### **BUTTERFLY**

1. One big problem for most young swimmers is the touch on turns and on the finish—both hands must touch simultaneously, although they do NOT have to be on the same plane. On turns, swimmers can dip a shoulder as long as their hands touch together. Then, they can drop one hand to do the turn. On the finish, shoulders must be on the plane of the water, but hands can simultaneously touch at different depths.
2. The feet have to kick together. They can be separated slightly, but they have to stay that way. If the feet start crossing, it's no longer a dolphin kick, it's a flutter kick—and it's a DQ.
3. Swimmers can start a race with a series of dolphin kicks under or above the water.
4. Some young swimmers get DQ'd for an underwater recovery—you can't pull down and then recover your arms for the next stroke under the water. If you do, you're essentially doing breaststroke, not butterfly.
5. Swimmers that do not have both arms in unison are in danger of DQ.

### **BREASTSTROKE** - This is the most challenging stroke to get right.

1. The biggest problem for young swimmers is the kick—both feet have to be turned OUT in a whip-kick style. Lots of young swimmers turn out one foot, but not the other. This ends up being a scissors kick, which is illegal.
2. The second big problem for young swimmers is the touch on turns and on the finish—but hands must touch simultaneously. Swimmers can dip a shoulder on a turn like in the butterfly (not past vertical), but their shoulders have to be on the plane of the water for the finish (no shoulder dipping). Both arms must be in unison.
3. The third big problem—only one pull-down stroke and one kick allowed on the start. Multiple underwater strokes result in a DQ, because the swimmer's head must be above the surface of the water at some point during each stroke cycle. (In other words, swimmers can't go underwater for two or more strokes at a time, during the start sequence or during the race).
4. Except on the start pull-down, swimmers cannot pull beyond the waistline or hips.
5. A stroke cycle has to be completed. If a swimmer is close to the wall, takes an arms-only quick stroke but doesn't kick, that's a DQ. (Advice—swimmers should GLIDE to the finish instead of trying to sneak in a quick stroke right at the wall).

### **INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY**

1. All the stroke rules apply during that segment of the race.
2. On turns, swimmers must complete each stroke the way they would complete a race doing that stroke. In other words, the butterfly to backstroke turn must incorporate a butterfly FINISH, and then a transition to backstroke that puts the

swimmer on his back for that leg of the race. The sometimes-tricky one is backstroke to breaststroke. Swimmers must complete the backstroke leg on their backs, but some swimmers then execute a kind of backward flip turn and push off into breaststroke. BAD IDEA!—these swimmers get far less air on that kind of a turn than on a touch-and-go turn with their head above the surface of the water.

## **RELAYS**

1. All relevant stroke rules apply while swimmers are in the water.

2. Relay starts require the swimmer on the blocks to have some part of his/her body still **TOUCHING THE BLOCKS** when the swimmer in the water touches the wall.