




Why is my child getting DQ'd?

This document will walk you through some of the fundamentals for each stroke to help better clarify why your child is getting disqualified, or DQ'd in an event.

Each stroke has its own set of rules, all of which can be found in the most current rules and regulations book on USA Swimming's website. However, unless you're an official, there is a lot of complicated verbiage that wouldn't make sense to someone who is not a swimmer, coach or official.

A DQ slip looks something like this.

 **DISQUALIFICATION REPORT**

EVENT # _____ HEAT _____ LANE _____
SWIMMER _____ TEAM _____

BUTTERFLY START _____ SWIM _____ TURN _____ FINISH _____
KICK: ALTERNATING (1A) _____ BREAST (1B) _____ SCISSORS (1C) _____
ARMS: NON-SIMULTANEOUS (1E) _____ UNDERWATER RECOVERY (1F) _____
TOUCH: ONE HAND (1J) _____ NOT SEPARATED (1H) _____
NON-SIMULTANEOUS (1L) _____ NO TOUCH (1K) _____
NOT TOWARD THE BREAST OFF WALL (1M) _____
HEAD DID NOT BREAK SURFACE BY 15m (1N) _____ RE-SUBMERGED (1R) _____
OTHER (1T): _____

BACKSTROKE START _____ SWIM _____ TURN _____ FINISH _____
NO TOUCH AT TURN (2i) # _____
PAST VERTICAL AT TURN:
DELAY INITIATING ARM PULL (2s) _____ DELAY INITIATING TURN (2t) _____
MULTIPLE STROKES (2u) _____
TOES OVER LIP OF GUTTER AFTER THE START (2p) _____
HEAD DID NOT BREAK SURFACE BY 15m (2n) _____ RE-SUBMERGED (2r) _____
NOT ON BACK OFF WALL (2k) _____
SHOULDERS PAST VERTICAL TOWARDS THE BREAST (2l) _____
OTHER (2t): _____

BREASTSTROKE START _____ SWIM _____ TURN _____ FINISH _____
KICK: ALTERNATING (3A) _____ BUTTERFLY (3C) _____ SCISSORS (3D) _____
ARMS: PAST HIPLINE (3E) _____ NON-SIMULTANEOUS (3F) _____
TWO STROKES UNDER (3G) _____ NOT IN SAME HORIZONTAL PLANE (3H) _____
ELBOWS RECOVERED OVER WATER (3I) _____
TOUCH: ONE HAND (3J) _____ NOT SEPARATED (3N) _____
NON-SIMULTANEOUS (3L) _____ NO TOUCH (3K) _____
NOT TOWARD THE BREAST OFF WALL (3M) _____
CYCLE: KICK BEFORE PULL (3Q) _____ HEAD NOT UP (3P) _____
DOUBLE PULLS/KICKS (3S) _____
OTHER (3T): _____

FREESTYLE
NO TOUCH AT TURN (4k) # _____
HEAD DID NOT BREAK SURFACE BY 15m (4n) _____ RE-SUBMERGED (4c) _____

INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY
STROKE INFRACTION(S) # _____ OUT OF SEQUENCE (5p) _____
FOURTH DISTANCE SWUM IN STYLE OF PREVIOUS STROKE _____

RELAYS
STROKE INFRACTION: (61-64) # _____ SWIMMER # _____
EARLY TAKE OFF SWIMMER (66-68) # _____
CHANGED ORDER (6p): SWIMMER _____ STROKE _____
OTHER (6t): _____

MISCELLANEOUS
FALSE START (7o) _____ DECLARED FALSE START (7p) _____
DID NOT FINISH (7q) _____ DELAY OF MEET (7r) _____
OTHER (7s-z): _____

JUDGE: _____
(print name clearly)

REFEREE: _____
(print name clearly)

NOTIFIED: _____ SWIMMER _____ COACH

rev. (7/19)

DESK/REFEREE



There are two carbon copies that come off of it. One will go to the crows nest so it can be entered into the system, and one will come to the coach. On our team, once the coach receives the slip, they will keep it until the following practice *unless* the swimmer will be swimming the same stroke in another race during the same meet, to try to prevent a second DQ. At the following practice, the head coach will pull out all the DQ slips and talk to each swimmer individually. Once the swimmer understands what happened during their race, the head coach will have them crumple them up and throw them in the trash. A DQ is nothing more than a mistake written on a piece of paper. As long as our swimmers are learning from those mistakes, there is no reason to dwell on that piece of yellow paper.

How do you read a DQ slip?

That's where it starts to get a little tricky. Starting with butterfly as an example, the official will mark where the stroke infraction occurred; at the start, during the swim, at the turn, or at the finish. After that they will mark which infraction specifically occurred. During an individual medley, the official will mark the stroke that had the infraction, and then put the code number on the individual medley line.

Ex. a swimmer only touched with one hand at the turn during butterfly, the official would mark in the butterfly section, turn, one hand (which is coded 1J) and put 1J on the individual medley line labeled stroke infractions #.

What actions dictate an infraction on the DQ slip?

Moving through the DQ slip starting with butterfly. Butterfly is the Michael Phelps stroke. Both arms come out at the same time while doing a dolphin kick. This is one of the hardest strokes for younger kids because they don't always have the muscle strength to get their arms out of the water far enough to be a legal stroke, and if they can they usually try to back it with a flutter kick.

Kick

Alternating 1A: this would resemble a flutter kick, or freestyle kick, with butterfly arms. Feet must remain together for the entire butterfly swim.

Breast 1B: this is a breaststroke kick with butterfly arms. Feet must remain together for the entire butterfly swim.

Scissor 1C: this is a crooked breaststroke kick, usually it also ends up mixed with a flutter kick. Feet must remain together for the entire butterfly swim.

Arms

Non-Simultaneous 1E: arms must come out of the water at the **same time**.

Underwater Recovery 1F: both arms have to come **out of the water** at the same time.



Touch

One hand 1J: butterfly requires a two hand touch on all the walls. The most technical answer for this one is if a swimmer were to touch the wall with one hand, it is safe to assume their arms were not coming out of the water at the same time, otherwise both hands would have reached the wall at the same time anyway.

Not separated 1H: in order to rule that both hands touched the wall at the same time, the official needs to be able to see both hands. Additionally, if the hands are stacked for example, technically only one hand touched the wall, and the swimmer must touch the wall with two hands in breaststroke.

Non-Simultaneous 1L: just as the hands must come out of the water at the same time, they must touch the wall at the same time.

No Touch 1K: Swimmers must touch every wall throughout the race.

Not toward the breast off the wall 1M: Butterfly must be swum on the breast for the entire race. If a swimmer were to turn to the side, or their back, they would not be in position to swim butterfly.

Head did not break surface by 15m 1N: This one is my most favorite rule to push. With the exception of breaststroke, swimmers must surface the water prior to the 15m mark in every stroke. The 15m mark is located on the lane lines, usually with a white or black bead on the lane line. The mark furthest from the wall the swimmer is pushing off on is 15m from the wall in every pool.

Re-Submerged 1R: Once a swimmer surfaces in the water, they cannot go back under to continue underwater. (I have never seen this call made)

Backstroke

Backstroke is one of the easier strokes because it's basically freestyle on their back. Arms stay opposite of each other for the whole swim with a flutter kick remaining on the back. For distances longer than a 25, a backstroke turn is permitted where swimmers can take one freestyle stroke into a flip turn.

No touch at turn 2I: Swimmers must touch every wall throughout the race.

Past vertical at turn

Delay initiating arm pull 2S: As a swimmer is going into a backstroke turn, sometimes they will realize they are too far away from the wall, and will try to delay their arm stroke to utilize the glide from their backstroke. Their arms must remain moving for the whole race.

Delay initiating turn 2T: As a swimmer is going into a backstroke turn, sometimes they will realize they are too far away from the wall and will do their single freestyle pull and hold their arm at their side and glide. Their arms must remain moving for the whole race.
The way you combat these two calls, if your swimmer realizes they're too far from the wall they would start their freestyle pull, but pull as slow as they can to get into position



to flip, eliminating the pause from the last backstroke stroke to the one freestyle stroke, and eliminating the pause between the freestyle stroke and the flip.

Multiple strokes 2U: A swimmer can only take one freestyle pull per turn.

Toes over lip of gutter after start 2P: Swimmers toes must be at or below the waterline of the pool for a backstroke start. They cannot put their toes over the gutter as it is considered extra leverage. *Most officials will remind them before the start if they see it, but don't rely on that.*

Head did not break surface by 15m 2N: This one is my most favorite rule to push. With the exception of breaststroke, swimmers must surface the water prior to the 15m mark in every stroke. The 15m mark is located on the lane lines, usually with a white or black bead on the lane line. The mark furthest from the wall the swimmer is pushing off on is 15m from the wall in every pool.

Re-Submerged 2R: Once a swimmer surfaces in the water, they cannot go back under to continue underwater. (I have never seen this call made)

Not on back off wall 2K: In backstroke, a swimmer must remain on their back for the ENTIRE race. They cannot turn on their front off the wall or during the race at all.

Shoulders past vertical towards the breast 2L: In backstroke, a swimmer must remain on their back for the ENTIRE race. They cannot turn on their front off the wall or during the race at all. This particular call is usually made at the finish, swimmers must finish completely on their back.

Breaststroke

Breaststroke is another hard stroke for younger swimmers because the timing is weird. Arms and legs have to move at the same time, and most kids will forget about the glide making the stroke really choppy. The kick is like a frog kick, quads and knees continue the body line down so the heels will come up to the swimmer's butt where they will turn their toes out to the side and keep them out like their toes are drawing two halves of a circle. Feet pause at the bottom together. While they are doing the kick, their arms do the same motion as if they were scooping something out of a bowl or tracing the sides of a trash can, and then throwing their hands through the middle back to the top. Hands come to the top at the same time the feet come together.

Kick

Alternating 3A: this would be a flutter kick with breaststroke arms. Feet must move symmetrically throughout the entire race.

Butterfly 3C: this would be a dolphin kick with breaststroke arms. Feet must move symmetrically throughout the entire race.

Scissor 3D: Feet must move symmetrically throughout the entire race without a dolphin or flutter kick.



A lot of kids get called for this because the breaststroke kick is hard, but also because once they learn pull outs, sometimes they forget they only get ONE dolphin kick for the pull out, and will do 5 or 6 and then remember.

Arms

Past Hipline 3E: in breaststroke the arms must remain above the hips. A lot of swimmers pull all the way down past their hips when they first start swimming breaststroke.

Non-Simultaneous 3F: arms must move at the same time symmetrically.

Two strokes under 3G: a swimmer must emerge from the water after every arms stroke. Additionally, they only get one pull to every one kick.

Not in the same horizontal plane 3H: they have actually changed the ruling on this one a little bit in the past year, in order to call in the pool would have to be equipped with underwater cameras, most pools are not. However, let's say the pool is, this just means the swimmer is swimming sideways basically, or unevenly, which would put them not completely on the breast.

Elbows recovered over water 3I: Elbows must remain in the water, if the swimmer is doing the correct breaststroke pull, there should be no issue. (I have never seen this call)

Touch

One hand 3J: swimmers must touch the wall with two hands in breaststroke. Because the arms need to move simultaneously, and symmetrically, if a swimmer were to touch the wall with one hand, it would be safe for an official to assume the arms were not moving in that fashion the whole time.

Not separated 3N: in order for an official to see both hands touched simultaneously they need to be able to see both hands touch, so they need to be separated. Additionally, if the hands are stacked for example, technically only one hand touched the wall, and the swimmer must touch the wall with two hands in breaststroke.

Non-Simultaneous 3L: swimmers must touch the wall with two separated hands at the same time in breaststroke.

No touch 3K: swimmers must touch every wall in a race.

Not toward breast off the wall 3M: the entire breaststroke stroke must remain on the breast. A swimmer cannot turn over on their back or sideways at any point during the race.

Cycle

Kick before pull 3Q: breaststroke is swam simultaneously, when the arms move, the legs are moving. The two kind of mimic each other. You cannot have a teeter totter effect.

Head not up 3P: the head must break the surface after every stroke.

Double kicks/pulls 3S: swimmers get one kick to every one pull.



Freestyle

If your child is getting DQ'd in freestyle please come talk to me. It is nearly impossible to get DQ'd in this event, however there are some circumstances.

No touch at turn 4K: swimmers must touch every wall during a race.

Where swimmers get caught on this one is in the 50 free and they flip too soon and miss the wall with their feet. Your swimmer can glide a little bit into the turn if they're too far.

Head did not break surface by 15m 4N: This one is my most favorite rule to push. With the exception of breaststroke, swimmers must surface the water prior to the 15m mark in every stroke. The 15m mark is located on the lane lines, usually with a white or black bead on the lane line. The mark furthest from the wall the swimmer is pushing off on is 15m from the wall in every pool.

Re-Submerged 4C: Once a swimmer surfaces in the water, they cannot go back under to continue underwater. (I have never seen this call made)

Individual Medley

Here's where the fun stuff happens, the Individual Medley is the thunder dome of swimming. All of the rules and calls that are listed above, also apply to this race in addition to the few other rules that are specific just to the individual medley, or IM.

Stroke Infractions: As previously mentioned, the stroke infractions line will be filled in with the code numbers that are listed next to the rules for each stroke above.

Out of sequence 5P: The order for an IM is butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, freestyle. Each stroke must be finished as it would be finished if it was an individual race. For example, the 100 IM is 4 25's of each stroke, so butterfly must be finished with two hands going straight to the back, backstroke must be finished on the back going straight to the breast for breaststroke, breaststroke is finished with two hands remaining on the breast into freestyle. The 200 IM however, is 50's of each stroke. Butterfly is swam performing 2 open turns touching with two hands going straight to the back for backstroke. ON BACKSTROKE, the swimmer may do one backstroke turn which includes a freestyle stroke, however, the turn prior to breaststroke the swimmer must touch on their back. A LOT of swimmers get DQ'd for this. You **must** touch on your back before switching to breaststroke. Breaststroke has two open turns touching with two hands, and then remaining on the breast to freestyle. Remaining on the breast is important due to the following rule.

Fourth distance swum in style of previous stroke: Freestyle events can technically be swum in any stroke **except** during the IM. For the IM swimmers must remain on the breast for the entire distance. Ex. a swimmer is too tired during the last distance of an IM and switches to backstroke, that is a DQ. Same scenario but the swimmer rotates past 90 degrees, it is considered backstroke.



Relays

Your child will never receive a DQ slip from me for relays because they are meant to just be fun. However if you must know what the DQ's are for, they must swim the stroke that was given to them just as they would an individual race (stroke infractions), they can't leave the block until the person in front of them has touched the wall (early take off swimmer) and they have to swim in the order I gave them.

Miscellaneous

False Start 7O: There are a couple different ways to false start, the main being the swimmer "had intent" to jump off the block prior to the buzzer.

Declared false start 7P: if you were to scratch after the deadline, or opt out of a race during a meet, a coach would approach the officials to let them know the swimmer won't be there declaring a false start.

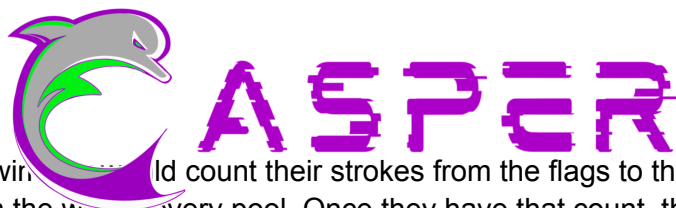
Did not finish 7Q: this is pretty self explanatory. Don't let your swimmer do this one.

Delay of meet 7R: this occurs when a swimmer is running to the block because they weren't paying attention and were late for their race. Don't let your kid be that kid. The coaches have between 9 up to about 50 other swimmers to worry about, we cannot chase your swimmer down for every single race to make sure they get there on time. If your swimmer is sitting with the coaches we will try to remind them, but again, if they are not sitting with us, we cannot chase them through the stands to get them on deck in time. **If your child misses a race**, come have them talk to us. Chances are high we can work them into another heat, but not if they dodge us. We are BIG on owning your mistakes. If your swimmer comes and tells me hey coach I was playing a game outside and I missed my race, I'm really sorry I'll pay better attention, I will talk to the deck ref and see what I can do. However, I will not do that for every single race, at every single meet.

What things aren't mentioned in the rules that my child needs to work on?

Of course there are always things that need to be worked on, however there are a couple small things that we don't always have swimmers jump head first into. One of the most common things in that category is turns. A turn will almost always be faster than touching the wall and then getting all situated to push off again, however, it does take a while for swimmers to get the hang of doing turns. It's an awkward movement.

For freestyle, your swimmer would swim into the wall and when they're about an arms length away, they would push down with their chest, throwing the water over their shoulders into a front flip. From there they would plant their feet on the wall and push off. Done correctly, they should land on the wall on their back, which is important for the following turn.



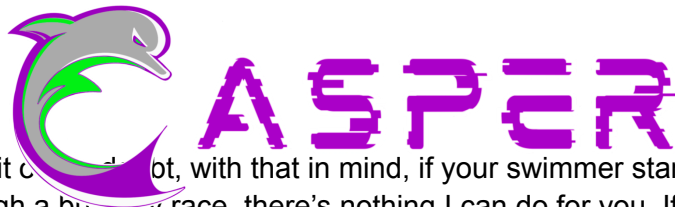
For backstroke, your swimmer should count their strokes from the flags to the wall. The flags are the same distance from the wall in every pool. Once they have that count, they would subtract one, so that when they swim a 50 backstroke for example, they can take that number of strokes, turn over on their front for a single freestyle stroke and do the freestyle turn. Again, done correctly your swimmer would end up on the wall on their back, so they would simply push off and continue backstroke. Please note: you must FINISH backstroke on your back. See the Individual Medley and backstroke rules above.

Breaststroke and butterfly both use open turns. To complete an open turn the swimmer would touch the wall with two hands, drive their knees to their chest while pulling one arm under the water to their hip, and then let go of the wall with their other hand and drop straight down into the water while bringing the hand they just moved to their head as if they were slicking back the side of their hair. From there their hands should move to meet in streamline with the body on their front.

Tricky but not too complicated, the transition from backstroke to breaststroke is always slow. There is a turn specifically for that transition, however, when the coaches have taught that turn, the swimmers tend to cut out their breaststroke pull out, so we quit teaching it UNLESS they can show us they can do that turn and still get an equal distance out of the breaststroke pull out. That turn is called a bucket turn. Instead of a bucket turn, we have swimmers finish backstroke with one hand on their back, grab the wall and drive the knees so the feet are on the wall and rotate to push off on their front. It's a strange movement, but it sounds way more complicated than it truly is.

The other skill that we usually give swimmers a chance to take a breath on, is a breaststroke pull out. Breaststroke lacks a 15 meter rule because the rule states a swimmer gets one pull out, which can/could exceed 15 meters. To perform a breaststroke pull out, after leaving the block or the wall in streamline, the swimmer can take one dolphin kick in streamline, followed by an arm pull through the hips, finishing with a breaststroke kick and recovery (where the arms cut through the middle back to streamline). After that they would continue breaststroke normally. The other way you can do a pull out is by doing the pull through the hips at the same time as the dolphin kick, we usually teach them to do the dolphin kick separately because we've found swimmers to get more distance that way. The cardinal rules however, if you only get one dolphin kick, and that one pull past the hip.

If you ever find yourself with a DQ slip that you do not think was earned, please let a coach know. We are MORE than willing to advocate for your swimmer if they truly didn't do what the official thinks they did. That is our job, that is a huge part of why coaches come to meets. What that process looks like is sending your swimmer to us telling us what they got DQ'd for. We will ask them what they think they did, if we didn't see it ourselves, and we will take that to the deck ref, who will discuss it with the official who made the call. If there isn't enough evidence to support the DQ, it can be overturned. We have overturned plenty of DQ's in the past, it keeps the officials honest, and on their toes. However, a good official will always give



the swimmer the benefit could not, with that in mind, if your swimmer started swimming freestyle midway through a butterfly race, there's nothing I can do for you. If your swimmer did 14 meters underwater in the backstroke and the lane line beads aren't all lined up, I have some room to protest.