

Clarification of World Para Swimming Rules and Regulations

Update- June 2019

Starts for those athletes who use Support Staff

11.2.2.2 The athlete, who has balance problems (i.e. standing stationary), may have assistance to balance themselves on the starting platform (i.e. hold at hips, hand, arm etc.), by one (1) Support Staff. Support Staff may aid the athlete to remain stationary at the start, however the Support Staff shall not allow the athlete unfair advantage by being held beyond the 90 degrees vertical position on the starting platform. Giving momentum to the athlete at the start is not permitted.

Support Staff should not hold the weight of the athlete to aid forward momentum. If an athlete supports their own body weight to lean forward past the 90 degrees from the vertical, it shall not be considered an unfair advantage provided the Support Staff supporting the athlete holds them with flat hands and is not weight bearing.

Freestyle in Individual Medley and/or Medley Relay

11.2.1 Freestyle means that in an event so designated the athlete may swim any style, except in Individual Medley or Medley Relay events where Freestyle means any style other than Backstroke, Breaststroke or Butterfly. For the 75m or 150 m Individual Medley, Freestyle means any style other than Backstroke or Breaststroke.

11.6.3 In Freestyle the athlete must remain on his breast except when executing a turn. After executing a turn, the athlete must return to his breast before executing any kick or stroke.

Specifically, the rule book states the final leg of the IM or Medley Relay must be swum as Freestyle and describes Freestyle as any stroke that is not Butterfly, Backstroke or Breaststroke. Where an athlete uses an underwater Butterfly kick, on the breast, it is NOT legal Butterfly if it is followed by a front crawl style stroke- for a swimmer to be considered to be swimming in the style of Butterfly, they would have to perform Butterfly kicks as well as a double arm pull and recovery over the water. Butterfly kicking whilst on the back is not permitted, as the rule book states an athlete must be on the breast before executing any kick or stroke.

Butterfly

11.5.2 Both arms must be brought forward simultaneously over the water and brought backward simultaneously under the water throughout the race, subject to Rule 11.5.5.

11.5.2.4 Where an athlete can only use one (1) arm for the arm stroke (as determined by the athlete's Code of Exception), the arm shall be brought forward over the water. The position of the body must remain in line with the normal water surface. Where an athlete's impairment results in only one (1) arm being used the non-functioning arm shall be dragged or stretched forward.

The intent of this rule is to ensure when athletes compete, the stroke retains the integrity of a Butterfly stroke. An athlete using two arms will automatically keep their body position in line/parallel to the normal water surface to be able to bring both arms forward over the water. The rule ensures an athlete who competes using only one arm for the arm stroke stays on the breast in line/parallel to the normal water surface, as Butterfly was originally intended, and are not swimming on their side, with a dropped shoulder. The WPS interpretation of "the body" is the trunk of an athlete, including the shoulders, the position of the legs is covered in Rule 11.5.3.

An athlete using only one (1) arm to swim with; can keep their body in line/parallel with the normal water surface, by breathing to the front or by breathing to their non-functioning arm side.