



INFRACTION REPORT WRITING GUIDELINES

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1. Introduction

[The Rules](#) require Officials reporting infractions to do so on signed [Rule Infraction Cards](#).

The Referee's Control, Duties and Powers ([SW2](#)), requires the Referee to, where possible, advise promptly, the swimmer so disqualified of the reason. At State, National and International meets, this is by means of the Announcer reading out a Rule Infraction Card that has been written by the reporting official and signed by the Referee.

[SW2](#) specifically requires Inspectors of Turns and Judges of Strokes to report any violation to the Referee on signed Rule Infraction Cards detailing the event, lane number and the infraction. However, any official reporting infractions to the Referee should be capable of writing infractions expressed in terms of the Rules.

Rule Infraction Cards are a reference document for infractions that may be the subject of protests and appeals. The procedure at meets run by Swimming Australia and Swimming NSW is that disqualifications are announced directly from the Rule Infraction Card on which the authorised official's report and the Referee's decision are recorded. The swimmer is not named in the announcement. It is clear that both these uses require Rule Infraction Cards to be:

- Unequivocal
- Be stated in the terms of the rules
- Consistent in theme and expression
- Worded correctly.

Rule Infraction Cards should indicate the extent of the fault and include the event number, heat number and lane number.

2. General

The key to writing an accurate infraction report is to have a thorough and up to date knowledge of the [Swimming Rules](#). It is strongly recommended that officials:

- Review the Rules prior to any swim meet
- Periodically undertake a thorough review of the Rules for any changes or updates to the Rules
- Practice writing infractions themselves to develop the skill to accurately write infractions without reference to a cheat sheet.

The reporting official must be absolutely sure that an infraction has occurred and is obliged to make decisions autonomously and independently of other officials except where specified in the Rules. Officials are required to report an infraction to the Referee promptly.

Swimming NSW has adopted the [Swimming Rule Quick Reference Infraction Card](#) (commonly known as a cheat sheet) developed by [Swimming Australia](#) to assist technical officials to write accurate infraction reports. It is not a substitute to a thorough understanding of the Swimming Rules.

This is a useful prompt. However, officials must be aware:

- Relying solely on this Quick Reference Card may not provide enough detail
- The Card may not contain enough specific information relevant to each infraction
- Even with version control, there is always a chance a dated version could be accidentally used
- There could be a lag between the updating of rules and an associated update of the card
- Being seen using the Card could convey a perception to coaches, athletes and spectators that Officials do not know the rules.

Following is an example that shows the evolution of a rule and how using an outdated cheat sheet can allow for error and ultimately may not be an infraction at all:

SW7.4 (FINA SW7.4) - Pre October 2009

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. **A single downward dolphin kick followed by a breaststroke 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.

Infraction report for this Pre October 2009 wording:

*“Swimmer executed a **downward dolphin kick** prior to the commencement of the first arm stroke after the 50 metre turn”*

SW7.1 (FINA SW7.4) - Post October 2009 to September 2013

After the start and after each turn, the swimmer may take one arm stroke completely back to the legs during which the swimmer may be submerged. **A single butterfly kick is permitted during the first arm stroke, followed by a breaststroke kick.**

Infraction report for this Post October 2009 to September 2013:

*“Swimmer executed a **butterfly kick** prior to the commencement of the first arm stroke after the 50 metre turn”*

SW7.1 (FINA SW7.1) - Current

After the start and after each turn, the swimmer may take one arm stroke completely back to the legs during which the swimmer may be submerged. **At any time prior to the first breaststroke kick after the start and after each turn a single butterfly kick is permitted.**

Note: It no longer matters **when** the butterfly kick occurs prior to the first breaststroke kick. It is not an infraction.

[Appendix One: Rule Infraction Card.](#)

[Appendix Two: Swimming Rule Quick Reference Infraction Card.](#)

3. Format

When writing an accurate infraction report, the Technical Official needs to consider the key points of the rule. The infraction report would state what the Swimmer did to break the rule and where it happened.

The full extent of an infraction should be written in both the Technical Official's and the Referee's program, i.e. in Breaststroke, executed (3) butterfly kicks after the 50m turn, but should not be included on the Rule Infraction Card that is to be read out by the Announcer.

3.1 Formatting of Rule Infraction Cards

It can be considered there are three basic formats:

1. **The Swimmer:** <what> <where>
 - <Started> < before the starting signal>

2. **The Swimmer's:** <what> <how> <where>
 - <Hands> <were brought back beyond the hip line> <during the race>

3. **The Swimmer executed:** <what> <where>
 - <Executed a non-simultaneous touch> <at the 50 metre turn>

OR

 - <Did not touch simultaneously> <at the 50 metre turn>

3.2 Expression for Where an Infraction occurs

If a swimmer only committed an infraction after or during a certain point of the race, the infraction report should express this. For instance, if during a 200 metre butterfly race, a swimmer only started to execute an alternating kick during the last 25 metres of the race, the infraction should reflect this.

- Example - Executed alternating leg movements during the race.

While this could be because the swimmer became fatigued, a Technical Official should remain silent on any judgement for why it may have occurred. Only apply the rules - do not interpret.

If however, the swimmer executed an alternating kick throughout the whole distance of a race, then the infraction report should be:

- Example - Executed alternating leg movements throughout the race.

In summary, infractions generally occur:

- At or after the start
- Before, during or after a turn
- Throughout the race or during a certain distance of a race
- At or after a certain point in a race
- During a length in a relay or a section of a medley
- Before, prior to or at the finish

3.3 Medley Infractions

Infractions during a medley can be conveyed in one of two ways:

1. Expressing a form stroke infraction during the specific section of a race. For example, a Backstroke turn infraction during a 400 metre Individual Medley in a long course pool:
 - *Was not on the back when leaving the wall after the turn in the Backstroke section.*
2. Expressing a form stroke infraction at the particular point in the race. Using the same example of a Backstroke turn infraction as above:
 - *Was not on the back when leaving the wall at the 150 metre turn*

4. Accuracy

A challenge for a Referee can be the balance between a perfectly articulated infraction report and an infraction report that only sufficiently describes an infraction.

There can also be more than one way of expressing an infraction.

Being pedantic with infraction reporting can be a source of conflict between technical officials e.g. between a Judge of Strokes and a Referee. National level officials would be expected to meet a higher standard.

Where an infraction report articulates the key elements of the infraction, it should be accepted by the Referee.

For example:

The Swimmer executed a single arm pull off the back that did not initiate the 50 metre turn.

Compared with:

The single arm pull while off the back did not immediately initiate the 50 metre turn.

Both of the examples above convey the essence of the infraction that has occurred and accepting either example is appropriate. The main concern here is that the reporting Official is able to then express the infraction in the terms of the rule onto the Infraction Card.

The Referee may need to consider the experience of the reporting Official and the extent to which all swimmers are subject to the same degree of scrutiny. The Referee should support their Officials by acting on their reports while considering the degree to which the Referee tests the Official's understanding of the Rules and of the infraction observed, which will be important evidence in the event of a protest.

The Referee should ask the reporting Official to complete a Rule Infraction Card and then they should check it for accuracy. If there are errors in the compilation of the card, the Referee should ask the reporting Official to complete another Infraction Card. It is permissible for the Referee to give guidance as to the expected wording.

5. Protocols

Protocols are a set of guidelines or rules that help deliver a consistent standard of behaviour and outcome. A professional appearance at a swim meet depends on the following factors:

- Appearance - neat dress
- Good posture is important
- Attitude - body language can be observed by the spectators and swimmers. Move in a quick but calm manner when reporting an infraction
- Consistency / uniformity of movement
- Being in position and appearing to focus on the job at hand
- Attitude can manifest itself in language and posture. Officials choosing a positive attitude will inspire confidence in fellow officials, swimmers and athletes.

The Referee may alter the standard protocol to meet the specific needs of a competition. For example, if there are insufficient officials available, individual duties and protocols may need to be adjusted.

The Technical/Meet Director may also alter protocols to meet the needs of the competition, such as when a meet is televised.

The general protocols for Infraction Reporting at State Meets are:

1. Verbally report any infraction:
 - Immediately it is observed
 - Reporting Official to articulate the infraction clearly and concisely, preferably expressed in terms of the rule that has been infringed
 - The Referee should question the infraction to confirm their understanding of the infraction and resolve any ambiguity or doubt. Any doubt must be resolved in favour of the swimmer
 - Discussion should not be prolonged and neutral body language should be apparent
 - The event, heat and lane should be exchanged in the discussion
2. Starters should immediately confer with the Referee regarding any infraction observed at the start, avoiding any prolonged discussion.

3. Inspector of Turns indicate to their Chief Inspector of Turns, await their replacement and then report to the Referee. The Chief Inspector of Turns is positioned so as to be clearly visible to the Referee.
 - This will allow the Referee at the end of the race to look around the pool and note if the Chief Inspectors of Turns are in their respective positions. The Referee knows that if either Chief is not in position there is a possible report pending
 - Inspectors of Turns should look at their Chief Inspector of Turns immediately the infraction is observed. If the race has ended, remain standing behind their respective lanes until the Chief Inspector of Turns has observed that you have a report
 - If the Inspector of Turns still cannot get the attention of the Chief, they should move to the Chief Inspector of Turns so that the Chief can alert the Referee of an impending report
 - Often the Referee can be aware of a pending report by observation of either this interaction or the Chief Inspector of Turns moving from their position
 - When radios are in use, the Chief Inspector of Turns will immediately inform the Referee that a report is coming from their end of the pool
 - The Chief Inspector of Turns will replace the reporting Inspector of Turns with a reserve official. If there are no reserve officials, the Chief Inspector of Turns will remain on that lane until the reporting official returns.
4. Judges of Strokes should immediately move to the Referee to report an infraction once it is observed. If the Judges of Strokes on the same side of the pool each move to report an infraction at the same time, a reserve official should be moved over to cover the lanes while the reports are being reported. Where radios are in use, Judges of Strokes 3 and 4 will advise the Chief Inspector of Turns to radio the Referee that they are coming over with a report.
5. Where Automatic Officiating equipment is being used to judge relay change-overs, the Referee should check with the CRS/AOE Supervisor after each completed set of change-overs for any infractions.
6. Referees should:
 - Clearly and concisely question any reporting official and if not 100% sure that an infraction has occurred, reject the report
 - Notify the CRS/Chief Recorder immediately of any decision to disqualify a swimmer
 - Not discuss infractions on pool deck, other than when receiving the initial report
 - Ensure that written reports are provided to the CRS/Chief Recorder in a timely manner

6. Handy Hints

Reporting officials may consider:

- Articulating the observed infraction in terms of the rule being infringed when providing the initial verbal report
- Advise the event, heat and lane number when providing the initial verbal report
- If the Referee indicates what they understand to be the rule being infringed, observe any clues for how to write the report
- Once a report has been accepted, seek to confirm how to write up the report by articulating the intended wording of the infraction
- Writing the infraction onto your program and showing the Referee. If they are happy with the wording, then re-write onto the Rule Infraction Card
- Use the few seconds between observing the infraction and reporting the infraction to relax and prepare to report the infraction

Referees should consider:

- Reiterating to the reporting Official the rule being infringed during the verbal report
- Confirm with the Official the event, heat and lane at the time of the initial verbal report
- Question the official on any key component of a report to ensure they are 100% certain of that an infraction has occurred
- Once a report has been accepted, pass on any guidance for how the infraction should be written
- Use what few seconds are available to prepare for providing any guidance on how you would like the report to be written.

7. Summary

- Know the [Swimming Rules](#)
- Be current with the latest version of the Swimming Rules and protocols
- Articulate the key element of the infraction and where the infraction occurred
- Familiarise yourself with format of the applicable infraction report
- Practise infraction report writing with a mentor.

Appendix 1: Rule Infraction Card

[Rule Infraction Card](#)

Appendix 2: Swimming Rule Quick Reference Infraction Card

[Swimming Rule Quick Reference Infraction Card](#)

2.1 Introduction

Swimming Australia has developed the Swimming Rule Quick Reference Card to assist technical officials to write accurate infraction reports.

It is not a substitute to a thorough understanding of the [Rules of Swimming](#).

It is strongly recommended that officials:

- Review the Rules prior to any swim meet
- Periodically undertake a thorough review of the Rules for any changes or updates to the rules
- Practice writing infractions themselves to develop the skill to accurately write infractions without reference to Swimming Rule Quick Reference Card.

Officials are required to report an infraction to the Referee promptly. When writing an accurate infraction report, a Technical Official needs to consider the key points of the rule.

The infraction report would state what the swimmer did to break the rule and where it happened. For example, after a breaststroke turn:

- *Executed more than one butterfly kick after the 50 metre turn.*