



INSPECTOR OF TURNS

TRAINING NOTES

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1. Introduction

These notes detail the responsibilities, duties and procedures of the Inspector of Turns and the procedures applicable to the position.

These Training Notes cover swim meets in general with a bias towards State Championships as they are the standard that you should emulate and the principles you should apply when officiating at local competition. This ensures consistency and uniformity at all levels of competition across the State and equips you to officiate at State and National Championships.

In order to be competent in your position, you will need to know the [Rules of Swimming](#). These Rules are referred to in these notes by their number in the Rules e.g. SW2. The Rules often refer to the appropriate [Federation Internationale de Natation \(FINA\) Rule](#) (FINA SW) as included in the FINA Handbook.

2. General

As an Inspector of Turns, you are to report to the Referee at least thirty (30) minutes before the advertised starting time of the meet.

This enables the Referee to mark you present against the Officials' Appointment Roster, to give you a program and to advise of any special instructions that may apply.

You need several items of equipment to do your job properly. These include:

- A whistle,
- Pencils, pens, notepad and a clipboard,
- Rule Infraction Cards. These are generally given to the Inspector of Turns by the Referee

Although Inspectors of Turns are expected to know the [Rules of Swimming](#), it is recommended that they have a copy of the current edition of the Rules of Swimming with them at the pool.

You may be required to operate equipment including:

- Lap Card displays (often known as Lap Counters), or similar officiating devices for the purpose of keeping a swimmer informed of the number of laps to be completed for individual events of 800 or 1500 metres
- Signalling device for indicating to a swimmer that there are two laps plus five metres to finish for individual events of 800 or 1500 metres
- Semi electronic equipment for underwater displays
- Semi-Automatic Timing (SAT) push buttons

When this is required, you should familiarise yourself with the operation of any of the equipment mentioned above.

It may not always be possible to fully roster Inspectors of Turns to each lane for both ends of a pool. In such circumstances the Judges of Strokes are often requested by the Referee to assist the Inspectors of Turns. As a guideline, where there are insufficient qualified Officials to cover all lanes, the following protocols are applied:

- At the start end, allocate at least one (1) Inspector of Turns per two (2) lanes, with the Judges of Strokes to assist with the outside lanes
- At the turn end, allocate at least one (1) Inspector of Turns per two (2) lanes, with the Judges of Strokes to assist with the outside lanes
- For individual events of 800 or 1500 metres, work with the Referee to obtain Officials from other positions, such as the Starters, Check Starters and Timekeepers, to assist in operating lap cards and warning signals.

3. Responsibilities and Duties - SW2

3.1 Chief Inspector of Turns

The control, duties and powers of the Chief Inspector of Turns are to:

- Ensure that Inspectors of Turns fulfil their duties during the competition
- Be alert and make sure you are watching the Inspectors of Turns after the start, each turn and at the finish of each race in the event they have an infraction to report
- If an infraction is reported, the Chief will inform the Referee by radio
- The reporting IOT will go to the Referee, make their report and, if accepted by the Referee, complete the [Rule Infraction Card](#). The Chief will arrange (if available) for a reserve official to take over on the lane until the reporting IOT returns. If no reserve is available, the Chief will remain on that lane until the reporting IOT returns
- In addition they may also be required to assign the Inspectors of Turns to their lanes

It should be noted that the Chief Inspector of Turns does not have the authority to reject a report. All reports must be referred to the Referee for their decision.

The Chief Inspectors of Turns typically position themselves on the opposite side of the pool to the Starter and Referee, about five metres from the pool end for which they are responsible, so that they may observe all Inspectors of Turns under their jurisdiction and so that the Referee can observe them for any reports that may be coming during, or at the completion of, each race.

When using radios the Chief Inspector of Turns will be alerted by the Inspector of Turns who observed the infraction and will advise the Referee, via the radio, that a report is coming. The Inspector of Turns will then move directly to the Referee to make the report while the Chief will arrange for that lane to be covered until the Inspector of Turns resumes their place.

3.2 Inspector of Turns

The control, duties and powers of the Inspector of Turns are:

- Ensure that swimmers comply with the relevant Rules from the start, when turning and at the finish
- Ensure swimmers comply with the relevant Rules for the change-over in relay events [\(SW10\)](#):
 - Relay take-offs judged by Automatic Officiating Equipment (AOE) have precedence over the human decisions [\(Rule SW13\)](#) provided there is no failure of the equipment however, IOT's should still record all early change-overs that they observe in their program.
- Alert the Chief Inspector of Turns of an observed infraction or violation by standing and looking at the Chief until acknowledged and then report the infraction to the Referee. If the Referee accepts the report, a Rule Infraction Card will be given to the Inspector of Turns for completion. The Rule Infraction Card is a signed card that details the event, heat, lane number, distance, stroke, gender and infraction in terms of the relevant Rule. [\(See Appendix Two\)](#)
- Record the number of laps completed by each swimmer and, in events of 800 metres and over, keep the swimmer informed of the number of laps remaining to be swum by displaying lap cards at the turn or start end of the pool. Electronic equipment may be used including underwater display:
 - The lap cards should be turned after the turn, generally as the swimmer passes under the backstroke turn indicators
 - Don't turn lap cards too early as swimmers sometimes look back after one or two strokes
 - The cards indicate the number of laps to be completed after the swimmer has turned. The numbers shown are thus uneven, if displayed at the turn end and even if displayed at the start end. The first lap display is:

Distance	800m		1500m	
	Turn End	Start End	Turn End	Start End
Long Course	15	16	29	30
Short Course	31	32	59	60

- At the starting end, in events of 800 metres and over, give a warning signal when each swimmer has two lengths plus five (5) metres to swim to finish. The signal may be repeated after the turn until the swimmer is five (5) metres out from the turn:
 - The warning signal is usually given by a whistle but can be a bell (the instrument should be consistent across all lanes)
 - It should be given as the swimmer reaches the backstroke flags and continue as the swimmer approaches the wall
- Where backstroke starting ledges are being used, each Inspector of Turns at the starting end shall install the ledge prior to the start of each race and adjust it to zero, and then remove the ledge after the start
- If required, take the finishing time by operating a push (SAT) button for timing purposes.

4. Jurisdiction

The Inspector of Turns has jurisdiction:

- Over their appointed lane(s)
- At the start commencing from the start and ending with the completion of the first arm stroke, except in Breaststroke where it shall be the second arm stroke
- At a turn commencing from the beginning of the last arm stroke before touching the wall and ending with the completion of the first arm stroke after turning, except in Breaststroke where it shall be the second arm stroke
- At the finish; commencing from the beginning of the last arm stroke before touching the wall and ending with the touch.

Inspectors of Turns are required to observe the swimmers:

- Immediately after the start for Breaststroke, Butterfly and Individual Medley: this requires the Inspectors of Turns at the start end to stand at the long whistle from the Referee and stand behind the swimmer in their lane. At the starting signal they will then move forward into position to observe the swimmer after the start. They will remain standing until their swimmer has finished the race or until the last swimmer has passed the 15 metre mark in the case of 50 metre long course events
- When in the water for a backstroke start using backstroke ledges: on the first whistle, the IOT should stand and move forward on the deck behind the blocks. On the second whistle, the IOT should step up and move forward to observe that at least one toe from each foot is in contact with the wall/touch pad. The IOT may need to request the swimmer to adjust the position of their toes.

Once the swimmer's toes are correctly positioned, the IOT should step back level with the back of the block but remain standing until after the starting signal is given. The check for the position of the toes must be actioned quickly and should not unduly delay the start. All IOT's should stand and move forward at the start of each race as above regardless of whether the swimmer in their lane uses a backstroke ledge or not

- Before and after the turn for all strokes:
when at the turn end of the pool, this requires the Inspectors of Turns to stand and move into position when the lead swimmer is 15 metres from the turn and remain there until the slowest swimmer has passed 15 metres from the wall after the last turn
- Similarly in freestyle and backstroke events where backstroke ledges are not in use:
the Inspectors of Turns at the start end will stand and move into position when the lead swimmer is 15 metres from the turn/finish and remain there until their swimmer has finished the race
- At the finish.

Inspectors of Turns can report stroke infractions occurring in their defined area of jurisdiction over and above touch and turn infractions. For example:

- A swimmer executing alternating kick in Butterfly up to the point of the end of the first arm stroke after the turn
- A swimmer executing alternating movements or downward butterfly kicks after the beginning of the last stroke before the wall and before the touch in Breaststroke
- A swimmer executing more than one butterfly kick prior to the first breaststroke kick after the start or a turn in Breaststroke
- The first arm pull after turning off the back failing to initiate the turn in Backstroke
- Not on the back when leaving the wall after a Backstroke turn.

Note that the Judges of Strokes assist Inspectors of Turns to observe turns.

5. Applying the Rules of Swimming

The Inspectors of Turns apply the [Rules of Swimming](#) as relevant to their area of jurisdiction as fully detailed in:

- Freestyle - SW5
- Backstroke - SW6
- Breaststroke - SW7
- Butterfly - SW8
- Medley swimming - SW9
- The Race - SW10

These Rules are subject to revision by [FINA](#). Inspectors of Turns must always be aware of the latest version of the [Rules](#) and are encouraged to review the Rules prior to every meet to reinforce their knowledge.

It is imperative that the Inspectors of Turns know the Rules and are able to express infractions clearly in terms of the rule that has been breached.

When an infraction has been observed, the Inspector of Turns must be very clear that a rule has been breached. If there is any doubt in the mind of the Inspector of Turns, the benefit must be in favour of the swimmer. Report only what you observe - not what you think may have occurred.

When learning to adjudicate turns, it is suggested that Inspector of Turns candidates break down the sequence of the stroke cycle that occur after the start, at a turn and at the finish in the order that the stroke cycle occurs and then describe the applicable rules being observed at each point in the stroke cycle.

5.1 Freestyle - SW5

Freestyle means that in an event so designated, the swimmer may swim any style and can change styles at any time during the race except that, in individual medley and medley relay events, freestyle means any style other than backstroke, breaststroke and butterfly.

After the start, during a turn and after each turn, the swimmer can be submerged for a distance of not more than 15 metres. By that point, the head must have broken the surface. From that point, some part of the swimmer must break the surface of the water throughout the race.

Some part of the swimmer must touch the wall upon completion of each length of the course and at the finish.

- A hand touch is not mandatory
- Because there are no touch restrictions, a swimmer who, when turning, fails to touch, can return to the wall, make contact and then continue to swim without disqualification. This could happen when a tumble turn is being executed by inexperienced swimmers.

Other considerations during the turn include:

- No stepping, strides or walking
- No pulling on the lane ropes
- No fouling or interfering with other swimmers
- Finishing in the same lane as the swimmer started

5.2 Backstroke - SW6

At the signal for starting and after turning, the swimmer shall push off and swim upon the back throughout the race except when executing a turn. The normal position on the back can include a roll movement of the body up to but not including 90 degrees from horizontal. The position of the head is not relevant.

After the start, during a turn and after each turn, the swimmer can be submerged for a distance of not more than 15 metres. By that point, the head must have broken the surface. From that point some part of the swimmer must break the surface of the water, except during a turn, as detailed below.

During the turn the shoulders may be turned over the vertical to the breast after which an immediate, continuous, single, arm pull or an immediate, continuous, simultaneous, double arm pull, may be used to initiate the turn. It is important that Inspectors of Turns are in a position to observe the complete body of the swimmer in forming an opinion as to the compliance of the turn.

- FINA has defined that "except when executing a turn" means any deviation from the normal backstroke other than to execute a turning action
- A swimmer who turns off the back too far away from the wall when approaching a turn cannot recover the mistake by returning to their back
- Many swimmers kick whilst undertaking the turn. You will note from careful consideration of this rule that this is permitted, provided it is part of a turning action initiated by an immediate, continuous, single, arm pull or an immediate, continuous, simultaneous, double, arm pull. Kicking while off the back is not permitted to get the swimmer into a position in which to start the turn
- Should they fail to touch the wall at the turn, the swimmer cannot float or scull backwards to the wall whilst on their back and touch to rectify the error
- Swimmers do not have to do this form of tumble turn. They may stay on their back and touch the wall with some part of their body before turning or they may leave the position on the back to touch the wall immediately, with some part of their body, before pushing off on their back.

When executing the turn, there must be a touch of the wall with some part of the swimmer's body in their respective lane. The swimmer must have returned to a position on the back upon leaving the wall.

- There is no requirement for a swimmer to use a hand to touch the wall at a turn or finish. A head, arm, shoulder, hand or foot all satisfy the Rule that some part of the body must touch the wall.

Upon the finish of the race, the swimmer must touch the wall while on the back while in their respective lane. It is not permissible for a swimmer to be completely submerged prior to, or at the finish of the race.

Other considerations during the turn:

- No standing on the bottom of the pool
- No pulling on the lane ropes
- No fouling or interfering with other swimmers.

5.3 Breaststroke - SW7

From the start and throughout the race, the stroke cycle must be one arm stroke and one leg kick in that order. A single butterfly kick is permitted after the start and after each turn. Note that the butterfly kick is not part of the stroke cycle and may be executed at any time prior to the commencement of the first breaststroke kick.

For the first arm stroke after the start and after each turn, the swimmer may take one arm stroke completely back to the legs i.e. the hands may be brought back beyond the hip line and the swimmer may be submerged. From the beginning of the first arm stroke after the start and after each turn, the body shall be on the breast.

It is not permitted to roll on to 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.

- After the touch the swimmer can be on their side or back while turning provided they are on the breast when they lose contact with the wall.
- It is permissible for a swimmer to execute a tumble turn after touching the wall, as long as they are on the breast when leaving the wall.

After the start and after each turn, the swimmer may be completely submerged during the first arm stroke and breaststroke kick. The head must break the surface of the water before the hands turn inward at the widest part of the second stroke after the start and after each turn. During each complete cycle, some part of the swimmer's head must break the surface of the water. Adjudication on this is the responsibility of both the Inspectors of Turns and the Judges of Strokes.

All movements of the arms shall be simultaneous and on the same horizontal plane without alternating movement.

- Simultaneous means occurring or happening at the same time
- Alternating (of two things) means occurring successively or by turns.

The hands shall be pushed forward together from the breast on, under or over the water. The elbows shall be under the 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.

- Elbows shall be under the water relates to that part of the stroke when the arms are in forward motion.

The feet must be turned outwards during the propulsive part of the kick. Turned outwards means that the toes must be turned out beyond the line of the heels.

All movements of the legs shall be simultaneous and on the same horizontal plane. Alternating movements of the legs or a downward butterfly kick is not permitted except as in [SW7.1](#). Breaking the surface of the water with the feet is allowed unless followed by a downward butterfly kick.

- After the start and at each turn, either the complete or incomplete movement of the arms or legs is considered as one stroke or kick
- The involuntary rise and fall of the feet and legs following the body's movement in a vertical plane, is not a butterfly kick and, therefore, does not break the rule
- A simultaneous upward drive of the feet does not break the rule.

For the final stroke before each turn and before the finish, the hands shall be pushed forward together from the breast on, under or over the water. For the final stroke before the turn, during the turn and for the final stroke at the finish, the elbows may be above the water.

At the last stroke before the turn and the finish, an arm stroke does not need to be followed by a leg kick.

The hands need not necessarily be at the same level at the touch, i.e. an uneven touch with one hand higher than the other is allowed, provided both hands touch separated and simultaneously.

The 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 the last complete or incomplete cycle preceding the touch.

At each turn and at the finish of the race, the touch shall be made with both hands separated and simultaneously at, above or below the water level.

FINA has interpreted separated to mean that the hands shall not be stacked one on top of the other. The hands may be touching, or the thumbs may be linked, provide that the hands are not stacked. This is illustrated in the following figure.



Other considerations during the turn:

- No standing on the bottom of the pool
- No pulling on the lane ropes
- No fouling or interfering with other swimmers.

5.4 Butterfly - SW8

From the beginning of the first arm stroke after the start and each turn, the body shall be kept on the breast. Underwater kicking on the side is allowed. It is not permitted to roll onto the back at any time except at the turn, after the touch, where it is permissible to turn in any manner as long as the body is on the breast when leaving the wall.

- The swimmer may be on their side or back after a turn, provided they are on the breast when they lose contact with the wall.
- It is permissible for a swimmer to execute a tumble turn after touching the wall, as long as they are on the breast when leaving the wall.

After the start and after each turn, a swimmer is permitted one or more leg kicks and one arm pull under the water which must bring them to the surface. It shall be permissible for a swimmer to be completely submerged for a distance of not more than 15 metres after the start and each turn. By that point, the head must have broken the surface. The swimmer must remain on the surface until the next turn or finish.

Both arms must be brought forward simultaneously over the water and brought backward simultaneously under the water throughout the race.

- Over the water means that at some stage of the recovery, i.e. the forward movement of the arms, the whole of some part of the arms must clear the normal surface of the water
- If, at the turn or finish, a swimmer's hands fall just short of the wall, the swimmer has the option to either kick or float into the wall with arms extended or to take another stroke, bringing both arms over the water to touch the wall.

All up and down movements of the legs must be simultaneous. The legs or the feet need not be on the same level but they shall not alternate in relation to each other. A breaststroke kicking movement is not permitted.

- An alternating kick occurs when the legs or feet move relative to each other. It should be noted that it is not necessary for the feet to pass each other to constitute an alternating kick
- If the legs or feet are not together then they would need to maintain their relative position to each other throughout the pool length, e.g. right leg and foot higher than the left leg and foot. There can be no appreciable movements of the legs or feet in relation to each other.

At each turn and at the finish of the race, the touch shall be made with both hands separated and simultaneously at, above, or below the water surface. It is not permissible for a swimmer to be completely submerged prior to, or at, the turn or finish of the race.

- The hands need not necessarily be at the same level at the touch, i.e. an uneven touch with one hand higher than the other is allowed provided both hands touch simultaneously and separated.

FINA has interpreted separated to mean that the hands shall not be stacked one on top of the other. The hands may be touching, or the thumbs may be linked, provide that the hands are not stacked. See the figure in the Breaststroke section above for clarification.

Other considerations during the turn:

- No standing on the bottom of the pool
- No pulling on the lane ropes
- No fouling or interfering with other swimmers.

5.5 Medley - SW9

In Individual Medley events the swimmer covers the four swimming strokes in the following order: Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke and Freestyle. Each of the strokes must cover one quarter ($\frac{1}{4}$) of the distance.

In Medley relay events, swimmers will cover the four swimming strokes in the following order: Backstroke, Breaststroke, Butterfly and Freestyle. Note that this happens to correspond to the alphabetical order of the strokes.

The key requirement for medley swimming is that each section must be swum, and finished, in accordance with the rules applicable to the style concerned as detailed above.

Of special note in Medley swimming:

- At the start of Individual Medley events, apply the Butterfly Rules
- The normal rules of Butterfly apply throughout the Butterfly section
- The Butterfly section must finish as per the Butterfly Rules i.e., swimmers must be on the breast, both arms must be brought forward simultaneously over the water, the touch must be made with both hands separated and simultaneously and, no breaststroke kicking movement or alternating kick is permitted. It is not permitted for the swimmer to be submerged prior to or at the finish of the butterfly section
- The swimmer must be on the back upon leaving the wall at the commencement of the Backstroke section
- The normal Rules of Backstroke apply throughout the Backstroke section
- The Backstroke section must finish as per the Backstroke Rules i.e., the swimmer must be on the back when touching the wall at the end of the backstroke section. It is not permissible for the swimmer to be submerged at the finish of the backstroke section
- During the change from backstroke to breaststroke, the swimmer must touch the wall while still on the back before the shoulder has rotated beyond the vertical
- The swimmer must be on the breast upon leaving the wall at the commencement of the Breaststroke section
- The normal Rules of Breaststroke apply throughout the Breaststroke section including the first stroke at the commencement of the breaststroke section i.e., 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

- The Breaststroke section must finish as per the Breaststroke Rules i.e., the touch shall be made with both hands separated and simultaneously at, above or below the water level
- Note that for the Freestyle section of the race, freestyle means any style other than backstroke, breaststroke or butterfly ([SW5](#))
- Leaving the wall on the back in the freestyle section is permissible but the swimmer must have returned to the position on the breast before any kick or arm stroke is commenced. At this point, kicking, including butterfly kicking may commence ([SW9.2](#)).

Note that if a swimmer commences to swim the incorrect stroke of any section, they cannot negate disqualification by stopping, returning to the end of the pool and then recommencing the race in the correct style.

5.6 Relay Events - SW10

Apart from observing the Rules as applicable to each stroke, the Inspectors of Turns are to observe that, during the relay changeovers, the starting swimmer's feet do not lose touch with the starting platform before the preceding team-mate touches the wall.

While Automatic Officiating Equipment, if used, will take precedence over the decisions of the Inspectors of Turns in judging relay take-offs, the Inspector of Turns must still observe such changeovers in case there is a failure of the equipment. Observed incorrect changeovers should be noted in the Inspector of Turns' program in case of a query from the Referee.

At the completion of a race, swimmers may become over-exuberant and can re-enter the water before all swimmers of all teams have finished the race. Note that any relay team shall be disqualified from a race if a team member, other than the swimmer designated to swim that length, enters the water when the race is being conducted before all swimmers of all teams have finished the race. ([SW10](#))

6. Summary

- Know the [Rules of Swimming](#)
- Know how to position yourself
- Familiarise yourself with the location and operation of any equipment with which you will be working
- Familiarise yourself with the people with whom you will be working. Teamwork is essential
- Be consistent, not only in applying the Rules, but also in the way you act and how you position yourself
- The benefit of any doubt must go with the swimmer
- Be prepared to get wet.

Appendix 1: Rules of Swimming Within the Jurisdiction of the Inspector of Turns

1.1 [SNSW Swimming Rules:](#)

- Freestyle SW5
- Backstroke SW6
- Breaststroke SW7
- Butterfly SW8
- Medley Swimming SW9
- The Race SW10

1.2 [FINA Swimming Rules](#)

- Freestyle SW5
- Backstroke SW6
- Breaststroke SW7
- Butterfly SW8
- Medley Swimming SW9
- The Race SW10

Appendix 2: Rule Infraction Card

[Rule Infraction Card](#)

Appendix 3: Inspector of Turns Allocation Form

[Inspector of Turns Allocation Form](#)