

Swimming New South Wales Introduction to Multi-Class Swimming Presentation



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Multi-Class (MC) or World Para Swimming (WPS) is based
on FINA Rules with Codes of Exceptions.

Officiate by the Rules **NOT** by the Codes of Exceptions.

THEY ARE A GUIDE ONLY!



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MC athletes deserve the same treatment and respect as able-bodied athletes.

MC athletes do not expect special treatment with regard to rule application and interpretation.

Most competitions that you will officiate at will be conducted under the Rules of Swimming NSW, Swimming Australia, FINA and the January 2018 World Para Swimming Rules and Regulations (WPS).

World Para Swimming Rule Book 2018

Website: paralympic.org/swimming/officials



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CLASSIFICATION

Classification is used to place athletes of similar abilities or function into a group for the purpose of competition.

This is achieved by considering an athlete's medical conditions and physical, sensory and cognitive attributes to group them into a Class.

This is carried out at special Classification Days by qualified Classification experts.



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Below is the current Classification Card that is issued by Swimming Australia for MC Swimmers.

The back of this card will indicate the swimmers Class and Code of Exceptions.



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CLASSES

There are 16 Class Numbers:

- 1 to 10 - Physical Impairment (PI)
- 11 to 13 - Vision Impairment (VI)
- 14 - Intellectual Impairment (II)
- 15 - Hearing Impairment (HI)
- 16 - Transplant (T)



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Swimmers receive a Class for each stroke discipline, and a “letter” prefix appearing before the Class numbers above, indicates which stroke the Class applies to.

Where an S appears before the Class numbers above, this refers to the strokes of Freestyle, Backstroke and Butterfly.

Where an SB appears before the Class numbers above, this refers to the Breaststroke.

Where SM appears before the Class numbers above, this refers to Individual Medley.

S - Freestyle, Backstroke and Butterfly

SB - Breaststroke

SM - Individual Medley



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Therefore for physically impaired swimmers, you may see the following listed on their Classification Card:

S10 - SB9 - SM10

This tells you that the swimmer has a physical disability (Class 1-10) and would indicate that they probably have either or both a hip problem or lower limb issue that prevents them from executing the kick in Breaststroke as effectively as they can in the other strokes.



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Classes for Visually Impaired athletes range from 11 to 13.

Class 11 - These athletes have very low visual acuity and/or no light perception.

They are required to wear blackened goggles.
To ensure safety, all Class 11 swimmers must use a tapper.

Class 12 - Athletes who have a higher visual acuity than Class 11 swimmers.

Class 13 - Athletes who have the least severe visual impairment.

Swimmers in Classes 12 and 13 may choose whether or not they wish to use tappers.



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Therefore the following codes would tell you that the athlete was a swimmer with the lowest vision.

They would be required to wear blackened goggles unless they have two prosthetic eyes.

They would be required to have tappers at each end of the pool.

S11 - SB11 - SM11



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The following classification would tell you that the swimmer had an Intellectual disability (Class 14) and therefore has no exceptions because they are physically able to execute all strokes as would an able-bodied swimmer.

S14 - SB14 - SM14



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Now that the swimmers have their Classifications - which are used to place athletes of similar abilities or function into a group or Class for the purpose of competition - we need to look at what part of a particular stroke these athletes are exempt from performing in accordance with the Rules due to their disability.

These are known as "CODES OF EXCEPTION"

The "Letters" will indicate a STARTING exception.

The "Numbers" indicate the exception DURING swimming.



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CODES OF EXCEPTION For Starting

- H - Hearing Impaired
- A - Assistance Required
- E - Unable to grip for Backstroke start
- Y - Starting Device
- T - Tapper
- B - Blackened / Opaque Goggles



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CODES OF EXCEPTION During Swimming

- 0 Nil
- 1 One Hand Start
- 2 Breaststroke - One hand touch
- 3 Breaststroke - Simultaneous intent to touch
- 4 Butterfly - One hand touch
- 5 Butterfly - Simultaneous intent to touch
- 7 Part of upper body must touch
- 8 Right foot must turn out
- 9 Left foot must turn out
- 12 Leg drag or show intent to kick
- + Butterfly kick is able to be performed
(illegal in breaststroke)



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CODE H

HEARING IMPAIRED

Swimmer may require a light, signal or touch start.

A strobe light may be placed by the Starter or beside the relevant swimmer's block.

Other signals can be used such as an arm gesture.

Support Staff may be used to perform a touch start.



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CODE A

ASSISTANCE REQUIRED

Swimmer requires assistance at the start or finish.

Swimmers are entitled to Support Staff who provide assistance at the start, to enter the pool or access the starting blocks prior to commencing the race and/or to assist exiting the pool at the end of the race.



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CODE E**UNABLE TO GRIP FOR BACKSTROKE START**

The swimmer is unable to hold the backstroke grips due to missing or weak hands and/or wrists.

This code means that in backstroke, a swimmer is permitted to start without using the backstroke grips, holding the top of the starting platform / timing pad instead.



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CODE Y**STARTING DEVICE**

Swimmer uses a device when starting.

A starting device is any assistive device that enables the swimmer to perform an effective start.

Typical devices include straps, cords or towels which enables the swimmer to grip effectively for backstroke or forward starts.

Starting devices must be approved by the Technical Manager prior to use.



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CODE T**TAPPERS**

Swimmers with visual impairment who require a tapper.

A tapper will use a tapping device to notify the swimmer when they are approaching a turn or the finish, by a single or double tap onto the swimmer.



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CODE T

A tapping device is typically homemade consisting of a rod or pole long enough to reach out into the lane with soft end pieces.

Tappers are compulsory for S, SB and SM11 Swimmers. If a tapper is required at both ends, a separate tapper must be used.

Tapping devices must be approved by the Technical Manager prior to use.



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CODE B

BLACKENED GOGGLES

For S/SB/SM11 swimmers, it is compulsory to wear blackened goggles unless they have two (2) prosthetic eyes.

The goggles should be checked at the end of the race by a technical official.

If the swimmer has no eyes, they are not required to wear blackened goggles.



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CODE 0

NIL

No exceptions apply to the swimmer.



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CODE 1**ONE HAND START**

The swimmer cannot grip the start with 2 hands.

They will place one hand/arm on the start, but the other arm may sit next to the gripping arm, be in the water or, be non-existent.



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CODE 2**BREASTSTROKE - ONE HAND TOUCH**

The swimmer uses one arm to perform the swim stroke, so must touch at the turn and finish with the one hand or arm used for the swim.

The non-functioning arm may be dragged or stretched forward.



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CODE 3**BREASTSTROKE - SIMULTANEOUS INTENT TO TOUCH**

The swimmer uses both arms to perform the swim stroke.

The swimmer must attempt to touch the wall with both hands simultaneously.

This exception means only the longer arm may touch the wall, but both arms must be stretched forward simultaneously.



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CODE 4**BUTTERFLY - ONE HAND TOUCH**

The swimmer uses one arm to perform the swim stroke, so must touch at the turn and finish with the one hand or arm used for the swim.

The non-functioning arm may drag or be stretched forward.



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CODE 5**BUTTERFLY - SIMULTANEOUS INTENT TO TOUCH**

The swimmer uses both arms to perform the swim stroke.

The swimmer must attempt to touch the wall with both arms/hands stretched forward.

The exception means only the longer arm may touch the wall, but both arms must be stretched forward simultaneously.



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CODE 7**PART OF THE UPPER BODY MUST TOUCH**

Allows for any part of the swimmer's upper body to touch the wall at the turn or finish.

Athletes will typically touch with their head or shoulders or their shortened arm(s).



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CODE 8**RIGHT FOOT MUST TURN OUT**

The swimmer must turn out the right foot when performing the propulsive part of the breaststroke kick.

CODE 9**LEFT FOOT MUST TURN OUT**

The swimmer must turn out the left foot when performing the propulsive part of the breaststroke kick.



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CODE 12**LEG DRAG OR SHOW INTENT TO KICK**

The swimmer may choose to either drag both legs or show intent to kick.

The swimmer must maintain the leg drag or the intent to kick throughout the race and may not change.

For example, a swimmer cannot drag leg/s for the first 50m then begin kicking in the last 50m.



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CODE +**BUTTERFLY KICK IS ABLE TO BE PERFORMED**

The '+' code is not so much a rule exception but rather informs officials the swimmer is physically capable of performing a butterfly kick.

If this action is observed during the normal breaststroke cycle, it is a violation of the rule (WPS Rule 11.4.5).

Remember: In breaststroke, any swimmer is permitted to take a single butterfly kick at any time prior to the first breaststroke kick after the start or turn (WPS 11.4.1).



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WPS RULES AND CLARIFICATIONS:**THE START**

11.1.2When all athletes are stationary, the Starter shall give the starting signal.

11.1.2.1 For an athlete with a Vision Impairment, on the long whistle from the Referee the athlete shall be permitted to orientate themselves prior to the Starter's command "take your marks".



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11.1.2.2 The athlete, who has balance problems (i.e. standing stationary), may have assistance to balance themselves on the starting platform (i.e. held at the 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.



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11.1.2.3 An athlete with only one (1) fully functional leg does not need to have a foot at the front of the starting platform as long as he has one (1) hand or other part of the arm at the front of the starting platform.

11.1.2.9 To prevent abrasion, one (1) layer of towel, or the like, may be placed on the starting platform.



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An athlete is allowed to start in many positions:-

- On the starting platform
- Sitting on the starting platform
- Standing beside the starting platform
- Starting in the water
- Vision Impaired - time to orientate themselves
- Balance - use of Support Staff
- Feet Start - S/SB/SM 1-3 start in water, feet held against wall



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LEG DRAG

11.5.3.1 When an athlete's impairment results in only one (1) leg being used, the non-functional leg shall drag.

Interpretation:

"Shall drag" means that the leg is not providing any propulsion but may follow the undulating hip line and appear to be alternating.



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BUTTERFLY

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

Interpretation: "Both arms must be brought forward simultaneously over the water" means the entire arm from the shoulder to the wrist, not just part of it, must recover over the water.

There is no requirement to see space between the arm and water.



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BUTTERFLY

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.

Interpretation:

The intent of this rule is to ensure when athletes compete, the stroke retains the integrity of a Butterfly stroke.



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Interpretation:

The new rule ensures an athlete who competes only using one (1) arm stays on the breast in line with the normal surface, as Butterfly was originally intended, and are not swimming on the side, with a dropped shoulder.

It is very important that we keep the integrity of all strokes and ensure Butterfly does not look or become Freestyle.

The WPS interpretation of “the body” is the trunk of an athlete, including the shoulders.



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WHO IS THE WINNER?

- Events results are calculated on a Multi-Class Point Score System.
- Times are then calculated as a percentage of the World Record.
- Winner: The closest to the World Record for their Classification.



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MC PROTOCOLS

- The Referee is responsible for obtaining and implementing the rule exceptions for athletes with a disability competing in the competition.
- Judges of Stroke at the finish of every race, shall remain standing 5 metres from the end of the pool to observe and assist any swimmer only if required.
- Judges of Stroke shall check the goggles of S11, SB11 and SM11 athletes at the conclusion of their event.



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- When officiating, view the athlete as an able-bodied athlete.
- Judge what you see.
- Giving the benefit of the doubt is always the primary function of the official if you are uncertain of exactly what you saw or what the athlete did.
- Never confuse “ Giving the benefit of the doubt” with “Abdicating your responsibility”.
- Officials must be prepared to make calls when and where appropriate.



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- The primary responsibility of the Technical Official is to apply the swimming rules to ensure fair competition for all.
- Officials should officiate by the rules and then check the codes, **NOT** the other way around.
- There is absolutely no substitute for the Rule Book.
- It is totally necessary that you have a thorough and clear understanding of the rules.



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QUESTIONS



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