

## BREASTSTROKE

USA Swimming has issued an updated interpretation of the initiation of the breaststroke arm pull to conform to the FINA interpretation. USMS Swimming Rules: Part 1 of the USMS Rule Book are based in part upon article 101, "Individual Strokes and Relays", of the USA Swimming Technical Rules which includes the breaststroke. **The updated interpretation will apply to USMS competition (USMS article 101.2.3).** See the following text published by Bruce Stratton, Chair of the USA Swimming Rules & Regulations Committee, December 8, 2008:

**Text from USA Swimming:**

"In 2005, FINA made changes to the technical rules for breaststroke which allowed a single downward butterfly kick during or at the end of the first arm pull after the start and after each turn. As required by USA Swimming Rules, we changed our technical rules for the breaststroke to conform to the changes made by FINA.

During the time since the change, there has been much confusion about what constitutes the beginning of the first arm pull. Based upon the (USA-S) Rules & Regulations Committee understanding of FINA's interpretation and actual practice in international competition, our guidance has been that the mere separation of the hands or arms does not necessarily constitute the beginning of the first arm pull.

However, we have been informed that FINA's interpretation is now different from our previous understanding of what constitutes the beginning of the first arm pull. In order for our interpretation to conform to that used by FINA, the following interpretation is being made, effective immediately.

For purposes of Article 101.2.3, as it relates to what constitutes the initiation of the first arm pull and the allowed single downward butterfly kick, the following applies:

After the start and after each turn, any lateral or downward movement of the hands or arms is considered to be the initiation of the first arm pull.

**Here ends the text from USA Swimming.**

For any questions about the interpretation of the initiation of the first arm pull contact:  
Kathy Casey, Chair  
USMS Rules Committee  
[rules@usms.org](mailto:rules@usms.org)