Race Guide: Backstroke

Before the Race

- you will be told when to get ready for your race and which lane you will be swimming in
- make sure your hat and goggles are on and adjusted properly
- the official will give 3 or 4 short blasts on their whistle - this tells everyone to be quiet because a race is about to start
- the announcer will usually then say which race is about to start
- the official will then give 1 longer blast on their whistle - this means get ready to start the race - so when you hear the long whistle get in the water and hold onto the block ready to start the race

Start in the Water

- hold onto the wall or the block with both hands
- put your feet high on the wall, with your toes just below the surface
- look forward at the block; do not turn around to look at the starter
- stay completely still and listen for the starting signal
- when you hear the starting signal, push off hard and fast, arching your back over the water, throwing your head back and ensuring you enter the water in a streamlined position

Transition

- hold your streamlined position on your back
- do at least 3 <u>FAST</u> butterfly kicks underwater (do 6 if you can)
- you must come up to the surface before you have gone 15 metres

Breakout

- as you reach the surface start backstroke leg kick and arms
- make sure you start swimming with one arm first (don't bring both arms down to your sides as soon as you surface)

Swim

- powerful and continuous leg kick from the hip
- alternating arm action with thumb exiting water first and little finger entering water first
- as your hand enters the water, roll that shoulder down into the water allowing a hard pull through the water
- release water past your hip with a scull motion
- keep your head still and in the water (don't lift your head to look at your feet)

Finish

- count your strokes from the flags so you can swim hard towards the wall (don't just glide in)
- do NOT stop before you get to the wall
- do NOT turn onto your side or front before you touch the wall
- once you have finished, stay in the water until the officials ask you to clear the pool
- make sure you go under the lane ropes and climb out at the side of the pool (don't climb out at the end of the pool)



Either: Touch Turn

- · count your strokes from the flags, and swim (staying on your back) until your hand touches the wall
- turn around and push off on your back underwater in a streamlined position

Or: Tumble Turn

- count strokes from the flags so you known when to turn (1 stroke before you would otherwise touch the wall)
- roll onto your front with last stroke, duck head down, curl your body up, roll straight over, feet touch the wall
- do NOT stop at the wall push off the wall IMMEDIATELY on your back underwater in a streamlined position
- make sure the turn is one continuous movement (don't roll onto your front and then glide or do frontcrawl)

Common Reasons for Disqualification

- not performing a backstroke tumble turn as a continuous motion (your turn must be a single continuous motion from when you start rolling onto your front until your feet have touched the wall)
- rolling onto your side or front before you finish the race (make sure you stay on your back until you've touched the wall)
- standing up or pushing off the bottom: you must swim the full race distance and touch the wall before stopping and standing up