

The following questions were raised by an LSC regarding the change to backstroke rule 101.3.3 in the Sept. 21, 2005, amendment to the backstroke and breaststroke rules:

The sentence reading, "Once the body has left the position on the back, any kick or arm pull must be part of the continuous turning action," has been deleted from 101.3.3 (the turn section of the backstroke rule).

1. Does this mean that gliding or forward motion independent of the continuous turning action are now legal?
2. Does this mean that kicking independent of the continuous turning action is now legal?

Following is a response to the LSC from Bruce Stratton, the chairman of the USA Swimming Rules and Regulations Committee, in an email dated Sept. 26, 2005:

The change to 101.3.3 simply removes a sentence that was misleading because swimmers could always continue to kick during the continuous turning action without it being an infraction. The deleted sentence caused confusion because it was being interpreted by some to mean that no kicking could take place after the shoulders turn past vertical towards the breast. The infraction has really always been that there can be no gliding (with or without kicks) after turning from the back and before initiating the arm pulls; and there can be no gliding (with or without kicks) after the completion of the arm pull and before executing the turn.

The second sentence of 101.3.3 says that the shoulders may be turned past vertical toward the breast after which a "continuous" single or simultaneous double arm may be used to "execute" the turn. The word "continuous" requires, as it always has, that the arm pull must be part of the continuous action and therefore must occur immediately after the shoulders turn past vertical (i.e. no gliding before the arm pull). The word "execute" requires, as it always has, that the arm pull execute the turn and therefore, the turn must be executed at the end of the arm pull (i.e. no gliding after the arm pull and before the turn). This second sentence was, and is, the basis for no gliding.

(This email was provided by Anneliese Eggert.)