



## JUDGE OF STROKE AND INSPECTOR OF TURNS

The primary role of any Official is to ensure that all Swimmers have a fair and equitable opportunity to perform to their maximum potential. To ensure the fairest possible competition, the Judges of Strokes and Inspectors of Turns must:

**Know the rules** - Read the Rule Book and know it. Officiate on deck and apply the Rules to the actions of the swimmers.

**Apply the rules uniformly** - It should make no difference whether the Swimmer is an Olympian or a 10 year old.

**Observe Swimmers to verify conformity with the rules** - Although the outside lanes are the easiest to see, all assigned lanes must be watched. The Official's attention must be on the Swimmers at all times during the race.

**Call disqualification when the rules are broken** - A rule is either broken or it is not. There is no middle ground. The Judge of Strokes ensures that the rules pertaining to the style of swimming designated for each race are being observed. The Inspector of Turns ensures that when turning or finishing, the Swimmer complies with the turn and finish rules of the stroke used. Violations should be submitted to the Referee on signed slips detailing the event, the heat number, the lane number, the Swimmer's name and the infraction.

The Referee assigns an area of responsibility to each Official prior to the start of the Meet. An Official may do both stroke and turn judging and both responsibilities described above will then pertain to one person. The Judge's responsibilities begin after a fair start has been achieved. Any action prior to the start is the Starter's responsibility. The Judges should observe the start.

Strokes are best judged by walking abreast or slightly behind the Swimmers. The Judges should walk at a pace that is sufficient to stay with the Swimmers. If the field starts to spread out, the Judge should maintain a position slightly ahead of the trailing Swimmers. By turning at the waist, the Judge will be able to observe each Swimmer.

**NOTE** These notes are abstracted from the FINA publication "Manual for Officiating at Swimming Events".



The Judges of Strokes should develop a pattern of observation that assures that all Swimmers are judged fairly. The shift of eyes from head to arms to feet and from lane to lane will vary. The key is *consistency*.

Movement is the key to good performance when an Official serves as combined Stroke and Turn Judge. It is difficult to evaluate turns and finishes from the backstroke flags, or strokes from the centre of the pool. It is recommended that two Judges be assigned to each side of the pool. This is especially necessary when there are diving boards, lifeguard stands and television cameras and crews, which may be barriers to the Judge's quick movement.

The techniques for watching the Swimmers are the same when assigned only one position as either Judge of Strokes or Inspector of Turns.

Turns and finishes are best judged from the end of the pool, slightly to the side of the Swimmer, not directly over the Swimmer. The Judge should stand directly over the Swimmer as the turn is executed. If assigned to judge more than one lane, the Official will need to move to a position to best observe all assigned lanes.

The Inspector of Turns at the starting end of the pool must move to a position to be able to step forward quickly and observe the Swimmer as soon as the starting signal is given.

**Caution:** Judges must not block the Timekeeper's view of the Starter and strobe light, or the Starter's view of the Swimmers.

At the start, the Judges should be as close to the end of the pool as possible to observe the first kick and arm pull, then assume the appropriate position for judging the strokes. As the Swimmers approach the far wall, the Judge must be at the wall when the first Swimmer begins the turn, and remain at the wall until all Swimmers have completed their turns, then move to the position for observing the Swimmer's strokes.

The Judge must maintain proper position and movement to ensure that each Swimmer receives fair judging through accurate observation.



**PROTOCOL IN ZIMBABWE:**

1. All judges of stroke shall arrive at the pool at least 30 minutes before the advertised time of the start of the competition.
2. Judges of strokes shall report to the referee or chief judge, immediately on arrival and shall sign the officials' attendance register.
3. It is important to know and understand all the General Rules and Swimming Rules as laid down in the F.I.N.A. Handbook. Do you have a current copy of the F.I.N.A. Handbook? If you don't then you cannot Judge!
4. The officials required for Zimbabwe National Galas will be the same as stated in Rule SW 1.2 of the F.I.N.A. Handbook.
5. The minimum number officials required for a Provincial Gala are:

Referee  
Starter  
Chief Timekeeper  
6 Timekeepers  
Chief Judge  
5 Finish Judges  
Announcer  
3 Recorders  
Clerk of Course

Where there are only six timekeepers available they shall be utilised as follows:

Three on first place  
One on second place  
One on third place  
One spare

3 times are required for a National record at Senior meets and 2 times at Junior League (note 2 times disadvantages the swimmer).

Where there are 3 timekeepers per lane the times set the place therefore the officials are utilised as follows:

Referee  
Starter  
Chief Timekeeper  
3 Timekeepers per lane  
Stroke Judge  
Announcer



3 Recorders  
Clerk of Course

Note that Head Lane Timekeepers can also act as Inspector of Turns at the Start end if qualified.

6. In all cases the competitor **MUST** be given the benefit of doubt. Judges of stroke must be certain that the competitor has transgressed the rules, before they make a report to the referee. If there is any doubt the competitor is given the benefit of this doubt.

### RULES INTERPRETATION

It is important in order to be a competent Judge to attend lectures, when available, where the rules are explained and debated. For example did you know:

1. In the backstroke turn it is permitted to continue kicking, after the body leaves the position on the back, provided the kicking whilst on the breast is not independent of the turning action.

