

## Rule Infractions at the 2016 Nationals

The 41<sup>st</sup> Masters Swimming Australia Championships were held at MSAC in Melbourne in April. The meet was very successful with 728 swimmers entering the scheduled 22 events over the four days of the event, resulting in approximately 480 heats of swimming.

Over the four days the team of Technical Officials had to record 64 rule infractions against swimmers not swimming to the MSSA rules. However, around sixty percent of the infractions recorded related to “general” infractions, including starting before the starting signal, poor relay changeovers, delaying the start etc. which left only 26 infractions relating to actual incorrect execution of strokes.

‘Starting before the starting signal’ was still the most common infraction followed by incorrect relay changeovers by team members 2, 3 or 4. Swimmers not completing the longer distance events mostly made up the rest of the “general” infractions.

‘Non-continuous turning action’ when completing Backstroke turns, off the back at the finish of backstroke and hands not touching the wall simultaneously when turning and finishing in Breaststroke & Butterfly were the common infractions in the execution of the strokes.

Again this year, there were a couple of infractions for the wearing of non-conforming swimwear and the wearing of a watch. The current swimwear rules have not changed for a number of years, so it is a little disappointing that swimmers are not aware of what swimwear can be worn. (A detailed description of what swimwear is allowed under the rules can be found on the Masters Swimming Australia website under the Rules tab click on Competition Rules / Swimwear Rules.)

A number of swimmers were reported for ‘Delaying the Start’. This is usually caused by the swimmer not being ready to get on the blocks when the referee blows their whistle (i.e. don’t have their cap & goggles on) and therefore delaying the start of their heat. Whilst swimmers most likely get away with this at club &/or branch meets, where there may not be time constraints or the Technical Officials are more lenient, all swimmers need to be aware that at large meets this may not be the case. MSSA rule SW 4.6M states; *‘Where a swimmer makes little or no attempt to take up and/or hold a starting position following the Referee’s long whistle or the Starter’s command, the Starter and the Referee shall consider this to be a disqualifiable infraction.’* Remember, always have your cap & goggles on and be ready to swim before the heat before yours finishes.

Don’t disqualify yourself by not fully understanding the rules or not executing the strokes/turns in accordance with the rules.

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