



March 17, 2009

To: USA Swimming Member Clubs
USA Swimming Member Coaches
LSC General Chairs
LSC Permanent Offices

From: Bruce W. Stratton, Chair, USA Swimming Rules & Regulations Committee

Subject: Amendment to Article 103.2.2 of USA Swimming Rules (Water Depth)

At its meeting held on January 24, 2009, the USA Swimming Board of Directors adopted an amendment to Article 103.2.2 of the USA Swimming Rules. The amendment was modified on March 16, 2009 to be effective on May 1, 2009. The amendment was adopted pursuant to the provisions of Article 504.8 which provides the Board of Directors, with the advice and consent of the Safety Education Committee, the Rules & Regulations Committee and legal counsel, the authority to amend our Rules if they determine it is necessary for safety considerations. The Safety Education Committee, the Rules & Regulations Committee and our legal counsel have all approved the amendment.

The amendment specifically defines the term “teaching racing starts” and provides that teaching racing starts can take place only under the direct supervision of a USA Swimming Member Coach. Article 103.2.2, with the amended provisions reads as follows:

103.2 WATER DEPTH

- .1 /NC/2 meters (6 feet 7 inches) deep throughout the course.
- .2 /M/**Teaching Racing Starts** – Minimum water depth for teaching racing starts in any setting from any height starting blocks or the deck shall be 6 feet (1.84 meters) measured for a distance of 3 feet 3 ½ inches (1.0 meter) to 16 feet 5 inches (5.0 meters) from the end wall. (effective February 15, 2007)

“Teaching racing starts” shall include:

- 1) all racing start instruction until a swimmer has been certified by his or her USA Swimming member coach as proficient in performing a racing start, and**
- 2) all instruction, subsequent to certification, which seeks to alter a swimmer’s basic technique in performing a racing start.**

Teaching racing starts shall only take place under the direct supervision of a USA Swimming member coach.

The definition of teaching racing starts now includes a requirement that a USA Swimming Member Coach “certify” that a swimmer is proficient in performing racing starts. The certification process includes the completion of a Racing Start Certification Checklist which is included as an attachment to this notice.

Prior to the adoption of this amendment and the associated Racing Start Certification Checklist, USA Swimming worked with the American Red Cross to update and modify its Safety Training for Swim Coaches Manual. The updated materials emphasize the importance of appropriate safety measures in teaching racing starts, including the proper progression for novice swimmers.

Attached as additional information and explanation of this change are the following:

1. **Racing Start Certification Checklist.** This process will be required to be completed for every swimmer. Additional information and requirements are shown on the checklist form.
2. **USA Swimming Safety Notice to All Member Clubs and Coaches.** This provides additional background and the basis for adopting the amendment and the certification process.
3. **USA Swimming Safety Notice to Parents.** This provides basic information to parents and emphasizes their responsibility in making sure their swimmer does not attempt to perform a racing start in less than six feet of water if they have not been properly certified. A copy of this Notice should be given to the parents of every swimmer and should be displayed prominently and regularly on team bulletin boards, in newsletters and in any new members packets.
4. **Racing Start Certification Checklist Frequently Asked Questions.** This should answer most of the questions that may arise regarding the certification process and use of the new Checklist.

This amendment and the certification process is very important to the safety of our athletes and also provides additional protection for our coaches in the event of an injury to an athlete. If you have any additional questions or need additional guidance regarding this, please contact Pat Hogan (719-866-3524 phogan@usaswimming.org) or Sue Anderson (719-866-3586 sanderson@usaswimming.org) at USA Swimming Headquarters. You should also feel free to contact me.



Bruce W. Stratton
Chair, USA Swimming Rules & Regulations Committee