



**INTERNATIONAL BLIND  
SPORTS FEDERATION**

**SWIMMING RULES 2005-2009**

## **1 GENERAL RULES**

- 1.1** FINA (Federation International de Natation Amateur) Rules shall apply except for the modifications noted below.
- 1.2** Should there be any misunderstanding of the IBSA modifications to the above International rules, the English version shall prevail.
- 1.3** Officials must be certified by FINA or the National Associations in accordance with FINA requirements and must be familiar with the IBSA modifications.
- 1.4** In the case of a technical appeal, the official technical delegate of the IBSA Swimming Subcommittee, as appointed by IBSA, must be a member of the Jury. Medical appeals will be under the jurisdiction of the IBSA Medical Officer.
- 1.5** Blind swimmers may compete in integrated competitions with their sighted peers and World Records may be applied for, providing the event is sanctioned by their National Sport Governing Body, and is under the direction of certified officials.
- 1.6** Records will be recognized for competition in Long Course Metres and Short Course Metres for all events recognized by FINA.  
APPLICATIONS MUST BE SENT TO THE IBSA RECORD KEEPER IN ORDER TO BE RATIFIED. Once ratified, Records will not be adjusted due to swimmers changing classes.

## **2 ELIGIBILITY**

- 2.1** Eligible for competition are swimmers registered with a Blind Sports Association affiliated with IBSA and classified as B1, B2, or B3 as defined below.

### **3 CLASSIFICATION**

**3.1 B1:** No light perception in either eye up to light perception, but inability to recognize the shape of a hand at any distance or in any direction.

**B2:** From ability to recognize the shape of a hand up to visual acuity of 2/60 and/or visual field of less than 5 degrees.

**B3:** From visual acuity above 2/60 up to visual acuity of 6/60 and /or a visual field of more than 5 degrees and less than 20 degrees.

**3.2** All classifications are in both eyes with the best correction. (i.e. All athletes who use contact or corrective lenses must wear them for classification, whether they intend to compete wearing them or not).

#### **3.3 Goggles**

Swimmers classified B1 are required to wear opaque goggles for all competition, including events where classes are combined, with the exception of those with prosthesis in both eyes or those whose facial structure will not support goggles. This exemption must be certified by the IBSA Medical Officer and given to the Technical Delegate prior to the start of competition. Swimmers' goggles or medical clearance will be checked at the time the swimmer reports to the call room or marshall and may also be checked after the race. In the event that the goggles accidentally come off during the dive the swimmer will not be disqualified.

### **4 FACILITIES**

**4.1** Paralympic and World Championships must be held in 25m or 50m pools with a minimum of 8 lanes. Indoor pools with good lighting are preferred for visually impaired swimmers. An electronic timing system must be in place.

- 4.2** To ensure the safety of visually impaired swimmers, pools are required to have spaces of at least 0.2m wide outside of the competition lanes for all competitions. If this is not possible then the outside lanes shall act as splash lanes and shall not be used for competition by swimmers of any classification.
- 4.3** Backstroke turn indicators - flagged ropes must be of an adequate size and a bold colour for the visually impaired.
- 4.4** For the safety of the swimmer the tapping device must be approved by the technical delegate. A rod with a firm foam tip is suggested.

## **5 PROGRAMMING**

### **5.1 Events:**

IBSA recognizes all FINA swimming events in 50m and 25m distances for competition and record purposes.

#### **Men**

Freestyle	50M	100M	200M	400M	1500M
Backstroke	50M	100M	200M		
Breastroke	50M	100M	200M		
Butterfly	50M	100M	200M		
Ind. Medley	100M(sc)	200M	400M		

#### **Relays**

Freestyle	4x50M	4x100M
Medley	4x50M	4x100M

#### **Women**

Freestyle	50M	100M	200M	400M	800M.
Backstroke	50M	100M	200M		
Breastroke	50M	100M	200M		

Butterfly	50M	100M	200M
Ind. Medley	100M (sc)	200M	400M

Relays			
Freestyle	4x50M	4x100M	
Medley	4x50M	4x100M	

All events offered in a competition will include class B1,B2,& B3 swimmers. IBSA World records will be kept for each class.

## **6 ENTRIES**

- 6.1** In World Championships each paid up member country may enter a maximum of three competitors per class, per sex, in each event regardless of standards, with evidence of participation in national competition.
- 6.2** In competitions where entry standards are required each federation having no swimmers qualified may enter one man and one woman per class in one event each of their choice with evidence of participation in previous competition.
- 6.3** Events where entries have been received will not be deleted. If there are insufficient competitors for a class then the event will be combined and swum as a timed final, but for the presentation of medals the classes will be separated.
- 6.4** All entries into events must indicate the fastest time for the swimmer in order to facilitate correct seeding.
- 6.5** The days and times of the competition and the order of events must be published prior to the deadline for the second entry into a competition. The order of events and the entry standards will be supplied by the IBSA Swimming Subcommittee.
- 6.6** After final entries/events are confirmed deletion of events shall not be

allowed for any reason ie scratches, reclassification, etc.

- 6.7** After final entries have been collated the Organizing Committee will publish a provisional start list by event indicating events which have been combined or which will be finals. These will be distributed to the relevant officials ie. the technical delegate, the team manager, the team coach, the computer operator etc.
- 6.8** Once published the standard daily program of events may not be altered without the approval of the IBSA Technical Delegate appointed by the chairperson of the IBSA Swimming Subcommittee, and then only under exceptional circumstances. Notice of any alteration must be posted on the official bulletin board at least 24 hours before the alteration is to come into effect and distributed to the relevant officials, including the team manager and team coach.

## **7 YOUTH CHAMPIONSHIPS**

- 7.1** Youth Championships shall be held in the odd numbered years.
- 7.2** Swimmers 17 and under will qualify for youth games. There will be two age groups offered:
- a) 15 and under
  - b) 16/17.

Age will be determined as the age as of 1st day of competition.

- 7.3** Entry Standards for World Youth Championships shall be established by the IBSA Swimming Subcommittee.
- 7.4** Events should be focused on the shorter distances ie. 50m, 100m (all strokes), 4x50 Relays and 200m Ind. Medley.

## **8 MEET FORMAT - SEEDING**

- 8.1** If there are 4 or more swimmers from one class entered in an event they shall be seeded in their own heat according to FINA SW 3.1.
- 8.2** When there are less than 4 entries in a class the event will be combined to swim with the next higher class. If after combining classes there is more than one heat, seeding will be according to FINA SW 3.1. Gold, Silver and Bronze medals will be presented for each class providing that the entry conditions have been met.
- 8.3** If there are less than 4 entries in each class then all visual classes will be combined and seeded together according to entry time and will be swum as timed finals. Gold, silver and bronze medals will be presented for each class providing that the entry conditions have been met.

## **9 RECLASSIFICATION**

- 9.1** Deletion of events will not occur if reclassification of a swimmer results in less than the required number of competitors in a class.
- 9.2** A reclassified swimmer will not be penalized if they do not meet the qualifying time standard of the new class.

## **10 SUPPORT STAFF**

- 10.1** Support staff/tapper is a person/s designated by a country to assist a swimmer. It is the responsibility of the person tapping to act as the swimmer's eyes and therefore they will function as a team.
- 10.2** The tapper will accompany the B1 swimmer to the starting platform and may verbally communicate to the swimmer any information that is visually available to a sighted swimmer.
- 10.3** Using a baton the person tapping will indicate to the visually impaired

swimmer that they are approaching the end of the pool in both individual and relay events. The tapping device is a pole or a baton with a safe tip.

- 10.4** Support staff shall not coach the competitor. However, during relay events tappers may verbally direct the takeover swimmers and may inform the swimmers of the team position, place, etc. They may also offer essential information such as assisting a swimmer to return to the correct lane after a false start.
- 10.5** Tapping is compulsory for B1 swimmers but is also allowed for B2 and B3 swimmers.
- 10.6** When tapping is required each competitor shall have two tappers, one positioned at each end of the pool. For relays an additional person may be required to assist the swimmer to exit the pool.
- 10.7** In the case of a blind and deaf competitor the person tapping shall relay the starting signal to the competitor.

## **11 SWIMMING RULES**

**11.1** Competitors shall be scheduled with twenty minutes between events. However, in the event that a swim-off is required to determine 8th place it shall take place not less than one hour after all involved swimmers have completed their heat.

### **11.2 Strokes**

While the intent is to perform all strokes as described by FINA, visually impaired swimmers require some considerations due to the lack or limited amount of sight. The referee and judges must use their discretion in consultation with the IBSA technical delegate.

Visually impaired swimmers (classified as B1, B2, or B3,) with additional disabilities (ie functional), are required to perform the strokes as required by FINA and IBSA rules.

### **11.2.1 Breaststroke**

A blind swimmer, B1 or low vision B2, may have difficulty making a simultaneous touch if the swimmer is in close proximity to the lane line.

### **11.2.2 Butterfly**

B1 or low vision B2 swimmers may swim too close to the lane line and will have difficulty bringing his/her arms together over the water in a simultaneous action. A disqualification would occur only if the swimmer pulls on the lane line. Likewise, at the turn or finish a simultaneous touch may be impossible due to close proximity of the lane line.

### **11.3 Starts**

**11.3.1** The start in Freestyle, Breaststroke and Butterfly races may be from the starting platform, beside the platform or in the water.

**11.3.2** The option to use the one start or two start rule must be declared prior to the beginning of the competition.

**11.3.3** A swimmer starting in the water must have one hand in contact with the pool end or starting platform until the starting signal is given.

**11.3.4** The visually impaired swimmer may require extra time on the long whistle from the referee to orientate themselves on the starting platform. When the swimmers and officials are prepared for the start, the referee shall gesture to the starter with an outstretched arm and a long whistle, indicating that the swimmers are under the starters control.

**11.3.5** At the finish of the race the referee will signal with a series of short whistles to the swimmers to clear the pool.

**11.3.6** In the case of a blind and deaf swimmer the person tapping shall relay the starting signal to the competitor.

**11.3.7** To ensure a satisfactory start for B1 swimmers, the referee shall

request silence until the swimmers have passed under the false start rope. (Noises created by hooters, whistles, etc. may be mistaken for a false start signal).

**11.3.8** Verbal communication by the tapper is not permitted once the referee has invited the swimmers to take their position for the start with the exception of a false start and a relay takeover. When required the person tapping may then verbally assist the swimmer.

## **11.4** Turns

For the safety of the swimmer the time keeper or judges must not interfere with the tapping process.

**11.4.1** At the turns and finish the person tapping, or the use of an approved electronic device, shall indicate to the competitor that he/she is approaching the end of the pool. The method used shall be the option of the swimmer. While the process is compulsory for B1 swimmers it is also permitted for B2 and B3 competitors. The use of an electronic device must not interfere with the other swimmers in the race.

**11.4.2** Should a foul occur due to a blind swimmer inadvertently surfacing in the wrong lane after a start or turn and the lane he/she has surfaced in is not occupied, he/she shall be permitted to complete the race in that lane. If it is necessary for the swimmer to return to the original lane the person tapping may give verbal instructions.

## **11.5** Fouled swimmer

**11.5.1** Should an accidental foul endanger the chance of success of a swimmer whether caused by the blind swimmer surfacing after a start or turn in a lane that is in use by another competitor or by swimming too close to the lane rope etc., the referee shall allow one or both swimmers to re-swim the event. If the foul occurs in a final, the referee may order the final to be reswum.

## **12** RELAYS

- 12.1** Minimum requirements for a relay team are one B1 plus one B2 or two B1 swimmers. The class of the remaining two is optional.
- 12.2** The class of each competitor and the order in which they will swim must be indicated when submitting the relay entry form.
- 12.3** Each relay team shall have the option of competing in one or two lanes. If preference is not indicated at the time of entry the team will be seeded in one lane only. Tappers are required for each lane.
- 12.4** Where necessary the person tapping will indicate to the swimmer when to prepare for and when to start their leg of the relay. Verbal commands may be used to direct the relay takeover providing they do not interfere with the swimmers in adjoining lanes.
- 12.5** When possible relay swimmers are required to clear the lane. However, if unable to do so without interference to other swimmers they may remain in their lane.