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To: General Chairs                      Board of Directors, USA Swimming  
Officials Chairs                      USA Swimming Officials  
Rules & Regulations Committee      USA Swimming Coach Members

From: Jay Thomas, Chair, Rules & Regulations Committee

Re: USA Swimming Rule 101.5.2 – Freestyle – Medley Relay and Individual Medley

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1. On August 23, 2015, the FINA Technical Swimming Committee provided the following interpretation of FINA rule SW 9.1 (Medley Swimming):

**“FINA Technical Committee Medley Interpretation**

**According to SW 9.1 each of the strokes must cover one quarter (1/4) of the distance. Being on the back when leaving the wall for the freestyle portion of the medley is covering more than one quarter of the distance in the style of backstroke and is, therefore, a disqualification. Backstroke swimming is only defined as being on the back.”**

2. The Technical Swimming Committee provided the following additional clarification. Being in a position towards the back and moving through the water after a swimmer leaves the wall constitutes performing backstroke.
3. Effective immediately, the above interpretation shall be in effect as it pertains to USA Swimming Rule 101.5.2
4. On June 1, 1997, the FINA Technical Committee issued the following interpretation regarding medley swimming. This interpretation remains in force.

**When a swimmer has traveled a sufficient distance that the official can with certainty judge that the competitor is swimming in the style of butterfly, breaststroke or backstroke, then a disqualification is appropriate.**

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Jay Thomas  
Chair, USA Swimming Rules & Regulations Committee

## **FAQ REGARDING THE FREESTYLE LEG OF THE MEDLEY SWIMMING EVENTS.**

1. **Is a swimmer who leaves the wall in a position at or past vertical toward the breast and performing butterfly kicks considered to be performing butterfly and thereby be in violation of the rules? NO** – for a swimmer to be considered to be swimming in the style of butterfly, they would have to perform butterfly kicks as well as a double arm pull and recovery over the water.
2. **Is a swimmer who leaves the wall at or past vertical toward the breast and performs a breaststroke kick and then a breaststroke pull in violation of the rules during freestyle leg of a medley event? YES** – even though the swimmer violated the breaststroke rules which require the stroke cycle to be a pull – then kick, the swimmer would be swimming in the style of breaststroke since they performed both a breaststroke pull and a breaststroke kick which are the fundamental elements of breaststroke.
3. **Is a swimmer who rolls to a position toward their back after leaving the wall during the freestyle leg of the individual medley or medley relay to fix their goggles (or any other reason), in violation of the rule? YES** - If the swimmer is moving through the water in a position toward the back during the freestyle leg of a medley race, they should be disqualified since they swam backstroke for more than ¼ of the medley race.