

**Kansas – Nebraska Swim League Rules
2026 Summer Season**

Individual Strokes, Individual Medleys and Medley Relays

1. Backstroke

- a. Start – In Water Start:** Toes must be flush or below the top of the gutter. The swimmer shall push off on the back. Swimmer may kick in any manner they choose off the start. **b. Stroke** - During the swim, swimmer must remain swimming on their back throughout the race except during the turn. Swimmers may kick in any manner they wish. **c. Turn** – Upon completion of each length, some part of the swimmer must touch the wall. The backstroke flip turn is allowed. Once the swimmer is on their stomach, a single arm pull or a simultaneous double arm pull may be used to execute the turn. Swimmers may kick in to the wall once they have rolled onto their stomach as long as the flip turn is completed. “Bucket” and “crossover” turns are acceptable.
- d. Finish** – Swimmer must touch the wall; swimmer’s shoulders must not be past vertical (stay on side or back). Touch may be made above or below the water surface so long as some part of the swimmer’s body touches the wall.
- e. IM-** Swimmers will follow guidelines for each stroke including turn and finish rules per stroke.
- f.** The completion of each stroke requires follow through for finish of stroke listed above.

2. Freestyle

- a. Start** – A **forward start** shall be used. Swimmers may start in the water (must have one hand on the wall), on the deck surface (one foot on the gutter allowed) or on the block. **b. Stroke** – In an event designated freestyle, the swimmer may swim any style. However, in a medley relay or an IM, the freestyle refers to any style other than butterfly, backstroke, or breaststroke.
- c. Turns** – Upon completion of each length the swimmer must touch the wall. **d. Finish** – Swimmer shall have finished race when any part of their body touches the wall. **e. IM-** Swimmers will follow guidelines for each stroke including turn and finish rules per stroke.
- f.** The completion of each stroke requires follow through for finish of stroke listed above.

3. Breaststroke

- a. Start** – A **forward start** shall be used. Swimmers may start in the water (must have one hand on the wall), on the deck surface (one foot on the gutter allowed) or on the block. The exception would be, after the start and turn, the swimmer may take one arm stroke completely back to the hips and one kick while wholly submerged. The head must break the surface of the water before the hands turn inward at the widest part of the second stroke. After the start and after each turn, any lateral or downward movement of the hands or arms is considered to be the initiation of the first arm pull. Once the hands begin

the underwater

arm circular motion they must continue back towards the shoulders (no extra underwater arm pulls – i.e. underwater dog paddle).

- b. Stroke** – The arms shall move simultaneously and in a circular motion. The hands shall not be brought beyond the hipline, except during the first stroke after the start and turn. Some part of the swimmers head shall break the surface of the water at least once during the complete cycle of one stroke and one leg kick. The head must break the surface of the water with every stroke.
- c. Kick** – All vertical and lateral movements of the legs shall be simultaneous. Feet placement, whether toes pointing out or pointing in (pigeon toed) as well as kicking with the top of the foot shall not in itself be a disqualification as long as the motion with the feet and legs is simultaneously circular (i.e. whip kick or frog kick motion). A scissors, flutter or downward butterfly kick is not permitted with the following exception: After the start and after each turn, a single downward butterfly kick is permitted during or at the end of the first arm pull. Breaking the surface of the water with the feet is allowed unless followed by a downward butterfly kick (a stroke & turn tip: only one foot breaking the surface is a good indication of a scissor kick).
- d. Turn and Finish** – At each turn and finish, the touch shall be made with both hands simultaneously at, above, or below the surface of the water (hands may be in an uneven plane – i.e. one hand up high and one hand down low) hands must not be overlapped on the touch.
 - a. After the start and turn, the swimmer may take one arm stroke completely back to the hips and one kick while wholly submerged. The head must break the surface of the water before the hands turn inward at the widest part of the second stroke. After the start and after each turn, any lateral or downward movement of the hands or arms is considered to be the initiation of the first arm pull. Once the hands begin the underwater arm circular motion they must continue back towards the shoulders (no extra underwater arm pulls – i.e. underwater dog paddle).
- e. IM** – Swimmers will follow guidelines for each stroke including turn and finish rules per stroke. The completion of each stroke requires follow through for finish of stroke listed above.

4. Butterfly

- a. Start** – A **forward start** shall be used. Swimmers may start in the water (must have one hand on the wall), on the deck surface (one foot on the gutter allowed) or on the block.
- b. Stroke** – After the start and each turn the swimmer is permitted one or more leg kicks, but only one arm pull under water, which must bring him/her to the surface. Both arms shall be brought forward over the water, at approximately the same time, and pulled back simultaneously. Once the hands begin the underwater arm pull they must continue back towards the hips (no extra underwater arm pulls – i.e. underwater dog paddle).

- c. **Kick** – Swimmers must do a dolphin kick (movement of legs and feet shall be simultaneous). The position of the legs and feet need not be together or on the same level, but they shall not alternate in relation to each other. A flutter, scissors or breaststroke kick is not permitted.
- d. **Turn and Finish** – At each turn and finish, the touch shall be made with both hands simultaneously at, above, or below the surface of the water (hands may be in an uneven plane – i.e. one hand up high and one hand down below) hands must not be overlapped on the touch.
- e. **IM-** Swimmers will follow guidelines for each stroke including turn and finish rules per stroke. The completion of each stroke requires follow through for finish of stroke listed above.

5. I.M. (Individual Medley)

- a. **Start** – A **forward start** shall be used. Swimmers may start in the water (must have one hand on the wall), on the deck surface (one foot on the gutter allowed) or on the block.
- b. **Stroke** – The order of strokes for the I.M. is Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, and Freestyle. The rules of each of the strokes are listed above and apply to the I.M. Swimmers must follow exact stroke order or they will be disqualified.
- c. **Turns** – On the 200 I.M., the intermediate turns (halfway turn) within each stroke shall conform to the turns rules stated for that stroke. Turns used to change from one stroke to another shall conform to the finish rules for the stroke completed. On the back to breast stroke exchange, once the swimmer has touched the wall with their hand they may turn in any manner.
- d. **Finish** – Swimmers will follow guidelines for each stroke including finish rules per stroke. The completion of each stroke requires follow through for finish of stroke listed above. The swimmer will finish when they touch the wall in the appropriate way to finish the stroke and go into the next stroke. The swimmer will finish the IM completely when some part of their body touches the wall at the end of the freestyle leg.

6. Relays

- a. The order of the strokes for the Medley Relay is: Back, Breast, Fly and Free (Stroke, turn, and finish rules listed above apply). All teams must follow exact stroke order or relay team will be disqualified. Swimmers may move up to fill a relay team, but must swim the age group of the oldest swimmer. Team members must wait until the previous swimmer touches the wall before leaving. Team members preparing to leave the starting block must have their toes still on the block until the returning swimmer touches the wall. There will be a limit of two (2) relay teams per group at the All-League Invite and Champs. Teams may enter an unlimited number of relay teams per age group at all other meets. Relays may be coed, but they must be entered as mixed events. All boys relays will be mixed events to prevent meet software errors. The relays can be swam EITHER all boys or mixed. In the event that a small team, defined as under 30 swimmers, wants to combine

with another small team to have enough swimmers to make a complete relay, they are allowed to

combine for the relay under the name of the larger of the two teams. Each swimmer may only swim one stroke in the relay. The relay is competitive.

*EXHIBITION RELAYS must be noted on team entries. They will receive a time but not a placement at regular meets. They are not permitted at the All-League or Champs meet. **b.** In the event of a needed substitution due to unforeseen absence of an already scheduled relay, a small team may “borrow” a swimmer as prescribed above.

Stroke and Turn Judges and DQ's

7. DQ's

DQ's will be given at all meets except for the first two meets. The first two meets of the season will be “help” meets. At the first two league meets, Stroke and Turn officials will be present at meets to give “help” cards when needed. However, no disqualifications will be issued except for swimming the wrong stroke (i.e. swimming freestyle for the first quarter of a breaststroke race or any other action to gain an unfair advantage).

A training video is available for training purposes. Contact the League President for the videos.

Two Stroke and Turn judges must complete training and each team must send out their volunteers and documentation of training to the league President one week prior to the first meet. Judges will be assigned by the host team to pool location and must maintain visual attention to assigned lanes (no sitting during events). Each team is responsible for ensuring that their stroke/turn judges understand the rules and what to look for. Stroke and Turn judges must apprentice (shadow) and should have worked at least two meets prior to the League Championship. If the trained stroke judge does not see it, it does not count as a DQ.

What constitutes whether a swimmer is violating rules and must be disqualified? All Stroke and Turn judges will be assigned multiple lanes to allow for lane “Scanning.” Judges are expected to continuously scan their lanes so as not to focus their vision on one swimmer exclusively. When a swimmer is performing a stroke infraction **continuously for 2 or more times on 2 scans then they are disqualified.**

If the swimmer is continuously pushing off the bottom of the pool this is an unfair advantage and they will be disqualified. If a swimmer is pulling on the rope to pull themselves forward this is an unfair advantage and they will be disqualified.

If the swimmer touches the bottom (due to shallow pool depth) but self corrects back into their

stroke this is not an unfair advantage and they should not be disqualified. If a swimmer stops and hangs on the rope stationary (even if done more than once in a heat) and they return to the swim, without propelling themselves, this is not an unfair advantage and they should not be disqualified.

False starts:

False starts are disqualifiable if they provide an unfair advantage to the swimmer or relay team. Swimmers must come to a stationary position following the command of “take your mark.” A False start is disqualifiable when the swimmer leaves the starting block (or wall) intentionally prior to the starting whistle and goes directly into their streamline and/or swim. The race will NOT be stopped in this case, the swimmer will be disqualified.

A False start is NOT disqualifiable when the swimmer in anticipation of the starting whistle loses their balance and falls off the block before the starting whistle; or the swimmer leaves the block intentionally but does not go into their streamline or swim. In both of these cases when the swimmer stops and returns to the wall to wait for the start, it is not disqualifiable.

Starter False Starts:

A starter false start occurs when the swimmers are prematurely signaled to start before the starter signal, the heat starts and timers are not timing, or any other issue that would prevent all swimmers from being timed and recorded properly to their benefit.

In this case the heat will be stopped by the starter. ALL swimmers will be allowed to take a break to regain energy and the heat will be swam again. Subsequent heats will swim while this heat takes a break.

Fly Over Starts:

Fly over starts will be used at all Kansas-Nebraska league meets. For clarification, here is the definition/explanation of a fly over start:

- Fly over starts (aka dive over starts) are when a heat is started while the previous heat is hanging on the wall, instead of waiting until all swimmers have cleared the pool. Dive overs allow the swimmers in heat 1 a little more time to clear the pool while heat 2 is started. It also speeds up the meet by about 30 seconds per heat. Swimmers in heat 2 will be commanded to the blocks while heat 1 is in the water, as soon as the last swimmer in Heat 1 finishes, the started gives the “Take your Mark” command, then starts the heat. Once heat 2 is off and racing, heat 1 swimmers will clear the pool.
- There will be no penalty for exiting the water early.

Other Notes:

Video review is not allowed.

A break in stroke to adjust goggles, remove swim cap, etc. is not an infraction as it does not gain

an advantage for the swimmer.

The stroke infraction should happen consistently throughout the swim – if in doubt give the swimmer the benefit of the doubt.

Only one Stroke and Turn judge needs to see an infraction. Only the assigned judge can disqualify a swimmer from their assigned area. However, each meet must have a designated Head Referee who is responsible for verifying all DQs before they are submitted. Runners should promptly pick up DQs and Help Slips from Stroke and Turn judges. The Head Referee is responsible for providing training reminders at the meet for judges.

The league will provide a “league ref” (a designated league officer) who is responsible for oversight of the consistency of judging at each meet and has the authority to override any DQ when judging is incorrect or not within the purpose of the league “to the benefit of the swimmer”. The purpose of this is to provide support for your stroke and turn judges and head stroke and turn judges for meets.

The meet host will determine the number of judges and include that information in the meet

flyer. USA SWIM RULES WILL NOT BE USED IN DQ DETERMINATION.

Kansas-Nebraska Swim League Statement on Participants with Disabilities:

Kansas-Nebraska Swim League encourages individuals with disabilities to participate in the sport of swimming and facilitates their inclusion in league programs through education, collaboration and event structure. We seek to involve people with disabilities in existing competitions and programs for all swimmers, rather than provide unique disability-only opportunities. Any swimmers who require adaptations such as adaptive equipment are allowed. Swimmers with medical, physical, developmental, behavioral or any other disability will not be limited or singled out in order to participate in the Kansas-Nebraska Swim League. Individuals assume the risk of medical clearance of participants.

General Information

8. The age group for all swimmers will be their age as of June 1st of the swim year.

9. Swimmers are limited to 3 individual events and 2 relays.

10. Each swimmer must participate swim an event in at least one League sponsored swim meets, in EACH event they wish to be eligible qualify to swim in the League Championship. At least one of their swims must have a meet time.

11. Swimwear is required for all swimmers. Individual teams are responsible for swimwear guidelines for their teams.

12. Exhibition swims will be allowed if lanes are available. **There shall be no exhibition swims at the All-League and Championship meets.**

13. Boys and girls heats may be combined and would allow for lane separation between boys lanes and girls lanes if needed.

13. Swimmers with helpers in the water are considered “aided” swimmers and can finish no higher than an unaided swimmer (touched or untouched). For League Champs, no aided helpers will be allowed in the water. Flotation devices or aids will not be allowed in any age group, including 6 & under. Stroke and Turn judge need to write a card for an “Aided Swimmer.” The person aiding the swimmer must be placed beside or behind the swimmer.

14. 6 & under swimmers may swim 2 distances of Freestyle and/or Backstroke (i.e. a 6 & under swimmer may swim the 6 & under 25 free as well as the 8 & under 50 free, at the same meet, and also the choice of Back for a total of 3 individual events.)

15. 8 & under swimmers may swim two distances of individual freestyle. Coaches may enter 8 & under swimmers in the 25 free and the 50 free.

16. No filming or photography is allowed behind the starting blocks.

17. Parents shall not approach any official at any time to dispute a disqualification or seek clarification about a decision.

18. Poor sportsmanship of any kind will not be tolerated. **Violators will be excluded from competition. This will be enforced at ALL meets.**

Meet Information

19. Entries and all applicable fees for all meets must be in by the deadline. Teams not paying in advance will not be permitted to participate. **League dues will be assessed based on the number of registered swimmers for each league team as noted: 15 under = \$10 per swimmer; 16-30 = \$250.00; 31 to 50 = \$350.00, 51 to 80 = \$400.00 and 81 and Greater = \$450.00.** Checks must be made to KS/NE Swim League and need to be sent to the League Treasurer **NO LATER THAN June 1** along with a copy of their proof of insurance for their team.

20. Swimmers' event entries must be submitted via email (Team Manager format) to the host team contact on or before Wednesday prior to each week's meet. Coaches are responsible for proofing their event list prior to the meet when it is sent by the host team. Host teams **MUST** have team reports of entries back to all teams by 5PM THURSDAY PRIOR TO A MEET. Additions and errors are expected to be corrected by FRIDAY AT NOON BEFORE A MEET.

- All submitted times must first be converted to **meter/yard pool times** prior to submission per the meet host. Each team shall include the course length on the invitation so that entries can be converted and submitted correctly.
- Meets will be run in short course meters/yards.
- Only times from standard league meets will be accepted (not from sprint or relay only meets).
- The designated meet contact will use Meet Manager software to enter all team entries for each league meet.
- Each host team is responsible for printing ribbon labels using the Meet Manager software for their meet.
- Please remember to try and email any known changes into the host team by Friday at noon if possible. At the discretion of clerk, no new heats need to be added.
- Computer systems must allow for scratches and additions. Each league team will have parents who will learn the computer system and be willing to assist as needed at league meets.
- **At the League Championship entries with "No Time" will not be accepted.** All swimmers entering Champs meet **MUST** submit one current season time for the event they are entering.

21. In the case of inclement weather and a meet must be cancelled prior to or during the meet, the host team will be responsible for contacting each team's designated contact(s) for that particular meet. When submitting entries, each team must submit the name and cell phone number of a contact (coach/parent) who will be at the next meet for this purpose.

22. **Additions the morning of a meet are not considered appropriate. However, it is at the host team's discretion to add individuals to a race in which open lanes exist. If permitted by the host team, the requesting coach must do all work of correcting the timer sheets to reflect a swimmer written in.** All scratches and additions are to be kept to a minimum. Additions after the start shall be permitted at the discretion of the clerk of the course. There shall be no individual event additions the day of the League Championship.

23. For all meets including Championships each league team will be assigned lanes for timers and each league team is required to submit the timers to each host team along with their stroke judge for each meet. The host team must provide for a Head Timer who will be responsible for a

back up watch as well to provide training at the meet for volunteer timers.

24. When assigning lane and heats the procedure should be as follows: the fastest swimmers shall be placed in the last heat, the second fastest group will be in the next to the last heat- and so on. The fastest swimmer in each heat should be assigned the middle with the lanes beside him or her occupied by the next fastest swimmers – and so on. The computer system sets this up automatically.

23. Scoring and Awards

- Event finishes that end in ties first default to picker sheets. In the event of a true tie ribbons will be given to both relays and the next place will be omitted.
- Heat Ribbons will be distributed to the Heat Winners of all events. **24.** No starter duties will be fulfilled by anyone under the age of 18 to avoid the issues of false starts. All starters are to use the following commands after announcing the event and heat number for each race (please remind all announcers to use the SAME format to eliminate confusion for the swimmers):

For all starts except Backstroke For all Backstroke starts

“Timers and Judges are you ready?” “Timers and Judges are you ready? (Starter must make a visual check with the head timer and the stroke and turn judges)

“Swimmers on the block.” “Backstrokers in the water” “Take your mark.”

“Place your feet”

“Take your mark”

Whistle, horn, or other starting signal *Whistle, horn, or other starting signal* **LEAGUE**

GUIDELINES

1. A representative from each team shall attend all league meetings and shall provide updated contact information for the contact person(s) for their respective teams.
2. On any matters calling for a vote, one vote shall be accepted per team. 3. Teams petitioning to join the league shall agree to comply with all league rules/guidelines. 4. Teams petitioning to join the league shall be presented at the spring meeting. A representative from the petitioning team must be present. A majority vote of existing teams is required to accept new teams into the league.
5. All teams are required to acquire Team Manager Software and submit entries via the

appropriate format.

6. All teams hosting a meet are required to purchase or have access to Meet Manager software to manage the meet.
7. All teams are required to purchase their own team liability insurance, and shall provide a copy of a current certificate of insurance annually to the league president prior to the first meet of the season.
8. President and Vice President terms shall be for two years.
9. Secretary and Treasurer terms shall be for two years.
10. Consecutive terms are allowed.
11. An end of year meeting will be held immediately following the champs meet to address any issues with the league during the season.
12. All host teams need to send results out to the participating teams in the Hytek format as well as PDF format. If you need assistance with the conversion, please ask.
13. Coaches with swimmers 8 and under must have someone from your team in the staging area to assist with lineup and relays. Those swimmers usually have questions which need answered by their coach, not the volunteers.
14. Please remind timers they need to stay in their assigned lane for the duration of their assignment!

*Rotations of host below subject to change when needed:

Champs Rotation:

2026 – York
2027 –
2028 – Seward
2029 – Concordia
2030 – Crete
2031 – Fairbury

Invitational Rotation (when held):

2026 – York
2027 – Crete
2028 – Beatrice
2029 – Fairbury
2030 –
2031 – Seward