

**BCSSA Swimming Rule Changes 2023**  
**As approved at Provincial Board Meeting April 28, 2023**

## 7. ARTISTIC SWIMMING

Unless specific wording is found in the BCSSA Rules or in the Provincial Meet Package, all officials shall refer to the 2018 FINA rulebook for artistic competitions.

### 7.1 Athlete Categories, Skill Levels and Age Divisions

An athlete's age as of **December 31st** each year, aquatic participation in the non-competitive season and skill level shall be used to determine the athlete's category. All athletes shall declare all artistic swimming participation that occurs from September 1 of the previous year through to April 30 of the current year.

Categories	Skill Level	Age Divisions
<b>Summer Categories (S)</b>	Beginner Athletes can stay as a beginner as long as needed to competently (*7.1.2) compete the beginner elements in a technical routine.	Div 3 – 12u (aged 12 & under) Div 4 – 13o (aged 13 & over)
	Intermediate Athletes can stay as an intermediate as long as needed to competently (*7.1.2) compete the intermediate elements in a technical routine.	Div 3 – 12u (aged 12 & under) Div 4 – 13o (aged 13 & over)
	Advanced Athletes can stay as advanced as long as needed to competently (*7.1.2) compete the advanced elements in a technical routine. Athletes compete the same elements as the o-category 1 athletes.	Div 3 – 12u (aged 12 & under) Div 4 – 13o (aged 13 & over)
<b>Open Categories (o-cat)</b>	O category 1 artistic athletes were registered, trained and/or have competed in a provincial stream artistic swimming program age group 11-12 or younger, <b>excluding recreational or limited competitive.</b>	PS 12u (Provincial Stream)
	O category 2 artistic athletes were registered, trained and/or have competed in any provincial or national stream artistic swimming program age 13 and older.	PS 13-15 & NS (National Stream)

Protests of perceived breaches of athlete eligibility in the categories or skill level shall adhere to the process under BCSSA Rules.

#### 7.1.1 Categories

- a) An S (summer category) artistic athlete is an individual who trains and competes with BCSSA for an unrestricted number of hours between May 1st and August 31st of each year. From September 1<sup>st</sup> to April 30<sup>th</sup> an S artistic athlete may:
- Participate in artistic swimming training programs that are classified as either recreational or limited competitive.
  - Train and compete in diving, speed swimming and water polo or any other sport with no restrictions.

- Train any number of hours in a recognized school led artistic program and may compete in the Provincial high school meet with no consequences to their eligibility of their category.
- b) An **o-cat** (open category) artistic athlete is an individual who was registered, trained and/or competed in either a provincial or national stream organized artistic swimming program during the winter season October 1st to April 30th, excluding limited competitive and recreational athletes.

### 7.1.2 Skill Level and Age Division

- a) The coach will determine their skill level at the beginning of the season based on which elements of the technical routine they can competently compete.
- b) **There will be no level changes after multi-regionals.**
- c) An artistic athlete's age as of **December 31st** determines which age division they are in. All 12 and under are classified as division 3 and all 13 and over are classified as division 4 within each level, **except o-category 1 and 2 which are already divided by age.**

## 7.2 Competitions

**7.2.1 From time to time, regions or clubs may hold meets that are either feedback or judged events with judges, or watershows, and will not be deemed to be required to attend by BCSSA.**

### 7.2.2 Regional Championships

- a) **Regionals will be held in the last half of July.**
- b) Each region shall organize and conduct a Regional Championship to qualify athletes for the Provincial Championship. It shall be the responsibility of each Regional Director to ensure that the Regional Championship is properly organized and conducted. Due to the cost and attendance of certified judges, all regions in the province may group together to hold one Regional meet. At this time, as the sport is small, no scores will be separated out by region. As new clubs from around the province join, video submissions will be allowed for Regional Championships.
- c) All artistic athletes must have participated in a Regional Championship prior to being eligible to compete at Provincials. An exemption may be applied for to the Artistic Director and Artistic Regional Director for extenuating circumstances. If approved, any routines will be swum without said athlete and judged as registered at Regionals. Solos not swum at Regionals can be swum as an exhibition at the Provincial Championships.
- d) If a Regional Championship cannot be scheduled or must be rescheduled, a request for an exemption must be submitted to the BCSSA Board of Directors, by the Director of Artistic Swimming, or Regional Director.
- e) The Regional Championship will have the same events as the Provincial Championship.
- f) Awards will be provided by Regional Directors. Each routine, technical and free, will be awarded **medals to the top three and** ribbons to **fourth through eighth** place.

### 7.2.3 Provincial Championships

- a) The BCSSA Board of Directors shall organize and conduct the annual Provincial Championship to be held in the second half of August each year
- b) The Provincial Championship meet package shall be circulated to all BCSSA clubs no later than May 1st of

- each year.
- c) Athletes must be registered correctly with BCSSA for the current season.
  - d) All entries must be submitted to the BCSSA Office by the date (and time) indicated in the Provincial Meet Package.
  - e) Artistic athletes are to compete in their designated categories and skill level for **technical and free** routines as described under Section [7.1 Athlete Categories, Skill Levels and Age Divisions](#).
  - f) Awards are provided by BCSSA. Each routine, technical and free will be awarded **medals to the top three and** ribbons to **fourth through eighth** place.

## 7.3 Rules Governing Competitions

### 7.3.1 General

- a) All entry packages must be completed and shall be submitted to the BCSSA office by each club by the deadline stated in the Provincial Meet Package
- b) Nose clips/plugs and goggles may be worn.
- c) Make-up that provides a natural, clean and healthy glow is acceptable. Theatrical make-up, nail polish, jewelry, accessory equipment and/or additional clothing is not permitted, unless required for medical reasons, except for medical alerts and Kira religious bracelets. Medical certification must be submitted to the Chief Referee/Judge at least 30 minutes before the event.
- d) **White caps and black suits are permitted for technical routines. Caps are permitted for free routines if desired.**
- e) Suits for **all** routines shall conform to FINA specification in the latest FINA manual, **nothing may hang/dangle from the suits (including longties) – nothing on the suit should be able to float.** In the event that the referee deems an athlete's(s') swimwear does not conform to FINA standards, the athlete(s) will not be permitted to compete until changing into appropriate swimwear.

### 7.3.2 Scores

**All technical and free routines are scored in their individual category/level with awards for each.**

### 7.3.3 Routine Events

- a) BCSSA competes **both technical and free routines** in team, duet and limited solo.
- b) **An** athlete may be permitted to compete in a maximum of one solo (for advanced and o-cat), one duet event, one team event for free **and a** maximum of one solo (for advanced and o-cat), one duet event, one team event for **technical routines**.
- c) **Every athlete must compete at least one technical routine.**
- c) The solo event is for athletes competing in the advanced and o-cat levels only.
- d) The duet event is open to all levels of athletes and consists of two athletes. **They** will compete in the highest skill level of the duet partners.
- e) **Technical routines will have 4 elements (generally figures or positions) that may change from year to year and can be found in the Provincial meet package.**
- f) **Technical and free routines will be judged as a free routines (with Execution, Difficulty and Artistic Impression), using the system prior to 2023, with the addition of judging of the walk-on. Two technical monitors will be assigned to technical routines.**
- g) The free team and technical event is open to all skill levels and shall consist of a minimum of three (3) to a maximum of ten (10). The team event can have any number of different skill levels on the team. When there

is more than one skill level on a team, the skill level with the majority of athletes will determine which skill level the team competes in. **When there is the same number of athletes in more than one skill level, that team will compete at the highest skill level.**

- h) Routines may start on the deck or in the water, but must finish in the water.
- i) **The walk-on will no longer be timed.**
- j) **Deck movements will no longer be timed separately but will still be included in the routine time.**
- k) **All routines, technical and free will have a maximum time of four minutes which includes 10 seconds for deck movements and allows a plus or minus of 15 seconds.**
- l) Timing of the routines shall start **when the music starts upon a signal from the Referee and finish when the music stops.**
- m) The music accompaniment shall begin upon a signal from the Referee. After the signal, the athlete(s) must perform the routine without interruption.
- n) In the case of technical problem(s) during a routine, the athletes may be allowed to re-swim at the discretion of the Chief Referee/Judge.

## 7.5 MUSIC

7.5.1 There should be no more than a 10 second lead in before the music starts

7.5.2 Music must be uploaded to the software BCSSA is using two (2) weeks prior to Regionals and submitted as follows:

Event - Skill Level - Club Name - Coach Name - Athlete Name for solo, Athlete Names for duet and theme for technical and free team

Examples:

**Free** Solo - Advanced - CRB - Sally Sue - Charlie Smith

**Free** Duet - Ocat2 - CRB - Sally Sue - Charlie Smith and Jane Doe

**Free** Team - Beginner - COQ – Bill Boy - Beautiful Day

**Technical Team – Intermediate – NVC - Nancy Road– Happy Days**

7.5.3 Each club coach must be available with a back-up electronic version of **the music for** each routine in case of technical difficulties.

## 7.6 Penalties

**Coaches will be informed of any penalties after the event(s) are completed.**

### 7.6.1 Routines

Coaches are expected to attend the re-timing of their music. Should a coach fail to participate, the Chief Judge/Referee will make the final ruling without the coach. There will be no protest opportunity once the final ruling has occurred when a coach fails to attend the re-timing. Coaches need to be mindful that routines are

timed on a "meet-by-meet" basis. Routines that did not receive a timing violation at a previous competition can still be subject to timing violations at subsequent competitions.

- a) A one (1) point penalty shall be deducted from the routine score if:
  - There is a deviation from the specified routine time limit allowed (less or more than) for the routine.
  - An athlete has made a deliberate use of the bottom of the pool during the routine.
- b) A two (2) point penalty shall be deducted from the routine score if:
  - An athlete has made a deliberate use of bottom of the pool during a routine to assist another athlete.
  - If during the deck movements in team routines athletes are executing stacks, towers or human pyramids.

### 7.6.3 Right to Appeal

- a) The artistic athlete, or the club, may exercise the right to appeal any decision under these rules to the Jury of Appeal at a meet or if not at or about a meet, the Appeals Committee of the BCSSA. No protests shall be made against judges' marks or penalties. The Jury of Appeal shall resolve any protests referred to it **at a meet when possible**.
  - b) A verbal protest must be submitted within 30 minutes of the results being posted or 12 hours after being emailed out and be followed up with a written protest to the Chief Referee/Judge. The Chief Referee/Judge shall deliver the written protest to the Meet Manager **and the** Artistic Director for consideration by the Jury of Appeal **named for the meet**. The Jury of Appeal will then be convened, and reach a decision.
  - c) The Jury of Appeal **is** named prior to the meet **and the name written on the Officials schedule** and shall have no conflicts, where possible, with any BCSSA Clubs and/or athletes. The Jury of Appeal shall follow FINA procedures.
  - d) Any decision of the Jury of Appeal may be appealed to the Appeals Committee of the BCSSA as per Rule 3.11
- Note: The confirmed results of any event conducted under protest, or any protested event should be withheld (not announced or published and no prizes or scoring points should be awarded) until the protest is withdrawn or resolved.