

Addendum – Summary of 2026 Technical Rules Changes That Came into Effect After MCSL Handbook and MCSL Officials Guides Were Printed

Introduction

There were USA Swimming and MCSL Technical Rule changes that came into effect after the MCSL Handbook and MCSL Officials Guides were printed. As a result, the versions of these documents posted on the MCSL website take precedence over the printed versions.

Summary of Additional Technical Rules

Below is a summary of the additional technical rule changes that are in effect starting with the 2026 MCSL season:

- Swimmers may be submerged while finishing in butterfly and freestyle
- Therapeutic elastic tape (including Kinesio tape) is no longer prohibited

The other rule changes that were approved at the March 2026 MCSL Reps meeting remain in effect. All 2026 rule changes are incorporated in the MCSL Handbook and the MCSL Officials Guide published on the MCSL website.

Rule Changes

The following MCSL rules are changed and are in effect starting with the 2026 season:

MCSL Rules for Competition

2.e.10 Therapeutic elastic tape (including Kinesio tape) is no longer prohibited. This rule is reworded as follows: **As a consequence of injury, it is permissible to tape together not more than two fingers or toes.**

MCSL Technical Rules

3.e Butterfly Finish: At the finish, the body shall be on the breast and the touch shall be made with both hands separated and simultaneously at, above, or below the water surface. **Additionally, once some part of the head of the swimmer has passed the final backstroke flags, immediately prior to reaching for the finish, the swimmer may be completely submerged.**

4.b Backstroke Stroke: The last sentence is removed and moved to the backstroke finish rule. The remainder of the rule is unchanged.

4.d Backstroke Finish: Upon the finish of the race, the swimmer must touch the wall while on the back. **Additionally, once some part of the head of the swimmer has passed the final backstroke flags, immediately prior to reaching for the finish, the swimmer may be completely submerged.**

5.d Freestyle Finish: The swimmer shall have finished the race when any part of his person touches the wall after completing the prescribed distance. **Additionally, once some part of the head of the swimmer has passed the final backstroke flags, immediately prior to reaching for the finish, the swimmer may be completely submerged.**