

## Bill Sweetenham: RELAYS

# Relay Take-overs – a Winning Combination



### FINA Laws for Take-overs:

There shall be four swimmers on each relay team.

In relay events, the team of a swimmer whose feet lose touch with the starting platform before the preceding team-mate touches the wall should be disqualified, unless the swimmer in default returns to the original starting point at the wall, but it shall not be necessary to return to the starting platform.

Any relay team shall be disqualified from the race if a team member other than the swimmer designated to swim that length enters the water when the race is being conducted, before all swimmers of all teams have finished the race.

The member of a relay team and their order of competing must be nominated before the start of the race.

Any relay team member may compete in a race only once. The composition of a relay team may be changed between heats and finals of an event, provided that it is made up from the list of swimmers properly entered by a member for that event. Failure to swim in the order listed will result in disqualification. Substitutions may be made only in the case of a documented medical emergency.

Any swimmer having finished his race or his distance in a relay event must leave the pool as soon as possible without obstructing any swimmer who has not yet finished his race. Otherwise the swimmer committing the fault or his relay team shall be disqualified.

Running take-overs are not permitted.

Any team having recorded a take-over time more negative than minus 0.03 seconds (for example minus 0.04 seconds) shall be judged to have carried out an early take-over and shall be disqualified.

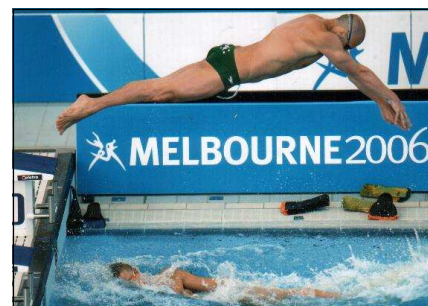
### Theory of Take-Overs:

Fast as possible BUT must be legal.

The start of movement from the outgoing swimmer must be equal to or less than the finishing time of the incoming swimmer from a set distance.

Methods of establishing the mark to a set distance:

- Following swimmer in with arm swing or wind up start.
- Remain still with fingers pointing at a mark; movement starts as head passes through the mark.
- Step start method.
- Grab start and track start spotting.
- Individual preferences.
- Practice a variety of starts for take-overs.
- Video all take-over combinations on several occasions leading into competition.
- All athletes should be exposed to relay practice at training and lead-up competitions.
- Use touch pads (electronic timing) and have a third party evaluate and observe.  
(perhaps a technical official)
- Requires fast consistent finishes from incoming swimmer.
- Requires consistent time of movement from  
the outgoing swimmer.
- Adjusting the mark to speed up or slow down the take-over.
- Testing the mark – finger to toe method.
- Practice in training.
- Check mark in the warm-up.
- Practice from all lanes in preparation.
- Practice with actual team members.
- Practice in the correct order.
- Practice in the correct lane.
- Don't become distracted by others around you – team mates or the opposition or technical officials.
- Don't change your mind at last moment.



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### **Team Spirit:**

Prepare relay strategy years in advance, not months or weeks

You must swim for each other .. you will not win a relay on your own.

**The order of the team is decided by the coach(es).** You **must** accept your position and work together to gain maximum advantage.

Accept changes from heats to finals or changes in order – for resting swimmers or swim-offs or team tactics.

Practice and prepare as a “team”. As an example, have relay team meals leading into the competition, and relay team meetings etc.

### **Body Language:**

What is required is:

A winning combination.

Relays are won and lost on take-overs.

A desire for everyone to win.



### **Race Tactics:**

Stick to your own race plan and tactics.

What if you are behind?

What if you are leading?

Be patient at international level.

Finish strongly in the second half of your leg.

Fast finishes.

No last minute changes to relay order once the final form has been submitted.