

FOUR STROKES

GAME RULES



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The First Action Card Game for Swimmers!

Introduction

Dive into the exhilarating world of Four Strokes, the first card game designed specifically for swimmers and enthusiasts of all ages, in this unique game, players form teams, strategize with action cards, and face swimming challenges to score points. Whether you're competing head-to-head or in teams, Four Strokes brings the thrill of swimming competition. With elements of strategy, luck, and skill, it's a race to 1650 points or to outscore your opponents before time runs out. Perfect for swimmers who want to enjoy their passion beyond the practice and for any swimmer who loves a competitive and engaging game. Gear up, strategize, and may the best team win! This core edition is a combination of basic drills and relays. While Four Strokes encompasses challenges across all four swimming strokes, players do not need to be proficient in each stroke to play and enjoy the game

Disclaimer: Coaches must be USA Swimming certified.

Components:

- **4 custom six-sided dice:**

			
Rep Die	Distance Die	Stroke Die	Effort Die

- **52 waterproof cards:**

Challenge cards (32 Tarot-size): Sets challenges for a set and shows how to win

Action cards (20 Poker-size): Grants a team specific advantages / disadvantages.

Objective:

Win by being the first to reach a score agreed upon by all teams at the start of the game, with the default target set at 1650 yards. If time runs out before any team hits target score, the team with the highest score wins.

Setup:

- **Select a Coach:** Appoint one player or an outside party (preferably the coach or another knowledgeable, responsible adult) to take on the role of the Coach. The Coach will be responsible for managing the Challenge card deck, interpreting game rules, resolving disputes, establishing intervals, and ensuring a smooth flow of the game.

- Gather / prep a whiteboard or some paper for tracking points and establishing the Base Interval (BI)
 - If the interval is not pre-established for your group, a good default is 2 minutes per 100 yards / meters.
 - Whenever a peretition's distance is less than 100, be sure to round the interval up as necessary.
 - The Base Interval can vary during the game by +/-15 seconds per 100.
 - For Backstroke, Butterfly & Individual Medley (IM), increase the BI by 15 seconds per 100.
 - For the Breaststroke, increase the BI by 30 seconds per 100
- Form Teams: Gather four players and form teams of balanced skill, with each team consisting of up to 4 swimmers. Have each team choose a Team Captain to start the game.

Remember, players are not required to master all four strokes to participate, ensuring everyone can join in the fun. However you should agree on not swimming specific strokes prior to the start of the game. If there are 2 or 3 players, each player plays as an individual, not on a team

- Gather the players around an SCY or SCM pool. This game is designed to be played at short course pools only.
- Have the Coach shuffle the decks of Challenge cards and Action cards, then place the decks face-down on a table.
- Have the Coach deal 4 Action cards to each Team Captain. Have each Team Captain hold these in their hand when not in the water, and set them face-down somewhere when swimming
- Have each Team Captain roll the black repetition dice. The team with the highest roll chooses the Challenge card in the first round, The team with the second highest roll chooses the Challenge card in the second round, and so on.
 - If any Team Captain roll ties, reroll the black repetition dice.
 - Have the Coach write down the order of Teams from highest to lowest roll

Coach Prep

The Coach is free to change or amend these rules as they wish to accommodate their players and their skills

- Lay the ground rules appropriate to the environment and the players. Some examples might include:

- Safety first, especially on a wet deck. Nothing in the game requires players to run on a wet deck, for example
- All swimmers need to give solid effort for their team
- Be a good sport
- As the Coach, you are free to create your own consequences for any sore losers or sore winners
- Decide if teams should be allowed to forfeits or not. A more serious practice should not allow forfeits, while a more casual practice can allow them
- The game ends when any team has a mile's worth of points (1650 yards/1500 meters), or when the time to play runs out, whichever comes first.
- It is the Coach's responsibility to track the time you have available, and clearly announce how many more rounds there will be based on that time. Announcing something like «time for 2 more rounds!» or «Last Round» is perfect.

Play / each round:

A full round has three main phases: Choosing, Playing, and Swimming.

During the Choosing phase, it's time to choose a Challenge card and roll some dice:

- The coach draws 4 Challenge cards and places them in a face-up row.
- The Team Captain consults with their team to choose the next Challenge. They have up to 1 minute to choose, so choose quickly!
- The Team Captain rolls the dice shown on the Challenge card they chose. The dice may determine the number of reps, the distance, the stroke, and/or the necessary effort.
 - Unless the Challenge card or a die states otherwise, the default stroke is Freestyle
- Each Challenge card has a minimum distance that swimmers have to swim. If the rep die and the distance combine to be less distance than the minimum distance on the card, increase the number of reps until the distance is equal to or higher than the minimum distance
 - Example #1: On the Oxygen is Overrated Challenge Card, a swimmer rolls a 4 on the rep die and 50 on the distance die, for a total of 200 yards. Since the minimum distance on the card is 300 yards, increase the number of reps to 6 to have swimmers go 300 yards
 - Example #2: On the Bubblehead Challenge Card, a swimmer rolls a 1 on the rep die and 75 on the distance die, for a total of 75 yards. Since the minimum distance on the card is 100 yards, increase the number of reps to 2 to have swimmers go 150 yards

During the Playing phase, it's time to play Action cards:

- The Coach announces the Base Interval and starts a timer for 1 minute.
- The Team Captain consults with their team to choose if they want to play any of their's team's Action cards. (Unless the Action card says otherwise, this is the only time to play Action cards.) Teams only have 1 minute for this, so decide quickly



Important: some Challenge cards have an Honor System icon

Each swimmer is responsible for counting their own mistakes and in communicating that honest number to the Coach

- During these rounds, the Coach will be watching carefully, and if a swimmer is caught lying, their team will automatically lose the round! The Coach has discretion to use other consequences for repeat offenders.

During the Swimming phase, it's time to swim!

Have all swimmers on all teams get into position according to the Challenge card. When the Coach blows their whistle (or calls out «GO!»), get swimming!

Important: in general, all swimmers must obey the USA Swimming Rulebook as they would during a competition.

Additionally, all swimmers must abide by the game's rules, base intervals, the proper effort according to the red die, the legal strokes and turns, and so on.

Any swimmer failing to follow any of these rules and expectations incurs a penalty in points lost, or may cause their team to lose the round.

On Challenge cards where the «last team standing» wins, the last player still going wins the round for their team.

End of round

After the set is over, the Coach announces the result, if the swimmers on any team missed an interval or failed to follow instructions, they are disqualified. The team that won the round (from being, from making fewer mistakes, and so on) keeps the Challenge card and scores the card's points.

If a team has collected two Challenge cards of the same category, all other teams get to draw a new Action card.

Have the Coach record the score on the dry-erase board and announce the results before initiating the next round

If there is a tie, it's a swim-off!

Have each team that's tied secretly choose 1 swimmer who will do the swim-off.

Roll the Distance + Stroke Dice to determine the required distance and stroke.

The victor claims the points on the Challenge card for their team.

Swimmers can't partake in another swim-off until all teammates have competed in a swim-off once.

Each Team Captain chooses another player on their team to be the next Team Captain. Ensure everyone on the team gets to be the Team Captain at least once.

End of Game and Winning

The game ends when any team has a mile's worth of points (1650 yards/1500 meters), or when the time to play runs out, whichever comes first.

The team with the most points wins!

Special types of Challenge cards

Most challenge cards are worth a set number of points, but two types of Challenge cards are different:

Bet: Each Team Captain must secretly decide how many of their points they want to bet. Have each Team Captain share their bet with the Coach.

Each team must bet at least 100 of their points.

If your team has fewer than 100 points, your team must bet exactly 100 points.

If your team wins, you score that many points!

If your team loses, you lose that many points!

Yards: The points the Challenge is worth is equal to the distance swam (in yards or meters, whatever swimmers are swimming)

About the Action Cards

During setup, each Team Captain gets 4 Action cards to hold in their hand. Keep them secret from other teams, but let your own team see them. Each Action card can only be used once, so use them wisely!

In general, Action cards can overrule the round's, but not the ground rules of the game.

The strategic use of Action cards can serve as an obstacle for an opponent or a benefit for your team. They can significantly impact the outcome of the game, allow for comebacks, surprise turns, and can swing the game in your team's favor.

About the Cards:



CHALLENGE CARD

BI

Base interval
Adjustment

Interval

Category of the
Challenge

25

Minimum
distance to swim

350

Round Points



Dice to roll for
this Challenge



Honor System



ACTION CARD

About the Dice



Rep Dice (black): Ranges from 1-6



Distance Dice (Blue): Values:
25, 50, 50, 75, 100, 100.



Stroke Dice (White): Values:
Freestyle, Choice, Butterfly,
Backstroke, Breaststroke,
Individual Medley



Effort Dice (Red): Values:
Neg. Split, Pos. Split, Build Down,
Build Up, Descend, Ascend.

Glossary:

**Find a glossary of terms for this game
at swim4strokes.com**

Credits:

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