



INTERNATIONAL LIFE SAVING (ILS)
SPORT COMMISSION TECHNICAL BULLETIN # 6
INTERPRETATIVE GUIDELINES – LINE THROW START

Since publication of the 2025 Edition of the ILS Competition Rulebook there have been reports of some different interpretations of the Line Throw start procedure in competitions that have been conducted around the world.

The reports particularly relate to the optional two handed start procedure.

S3-14.1C. of the Rulebook describes Line Throw start and states in part:

- *The rescuer is free to adopt a position within their throw zone for the start and they may hold the line/rope in one or two hands. The end of the throw line/rope must be held in one hand.*
- *The rescuer holds one end of throw line/rope in one hand.*
- *It is not permitted to wrap the line/rope around the hand that holds the end of the rope.*
- *The line/rope is extended between the victim and the rescuer. The surplus line/rope is extended beyond the crossbar.*
- *A kink in the line/rope between the rescuer and victim is permitted but no loops in the line are permitted.*
- *A kink but no loop in the line/rope between the two hands of the rescuer is also permitted.*

This means for the start of a race:

- *If the line/rope is held in two hands, there can be no loop (“sag”) in the line/rope between the hands i.e., the line must be held taut (firm) between the two hands. A sag in the line between the two hands may result in disqualification.*
- *The term “kink” (referred to in the rules) is simply a change of angle in the line/rope due to the positioning of either or both hands in relation to the rope. Dependent on pool design or competitor positioning at the start, a kink in a line/rope may also occur as the line passes over the edge of the finish wall and into the water.*
- *The end of the line/rope may be held with either the thumb forward or back. However, it is not permitted for the line/rope to be wrapped around the hand.*
- *The line/rope is extended between the rescuer and the victim with the surplus extended beyond the crossbar.*

This interpretation is within the current scope of the event rules and no changes to the rules are required. To further assist please also note the attached photos.

Competitors, Coaches, and Officials are requested to review this Bulletin and to note the Interpretative guidelines to ensure the optimal conduct of the event, and to minimise technical disqualifications.

The ILS Competition Rule Book may be viewed or downloaded from the ILS website at:

<https://www.ilsf.org/lifesaving-sport/rules>.

Should further information be required please direct your enquiry to the Secretary of the ILS Sport Commission at sport@ilsf.org.

28 August 2026

Photographs:

Legal Two Handed Grasp of the Line Throw Line/Rope:



Note 1: The line/rope is held taut between the two hands.

Note 2: The kinks in the line/rope after the line passes through the hand(s) are permitted.

Note 3: Other body positions for the start are permitted.

Illegal Two Handed Grasp of the Line Throw Line/Rope:



Note: The line/rope loops (sags) between the two hands and is not permitted.