

ePOSTAL NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP GUIDELINES

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Prepared by the
Long-Distance Committee

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Introduction

These guidelines apply to the ePostal National Championship events. These guidelines are intended for use after an ePostal National Championship Event Host has been selected by the Long Distance Committee.

Instructions for bidding on an ePostal National Championship event can be found on the USMS website at: https://www.usms.org/-

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The USMS Long Distance Committee (LDC) appoints Event Liaisons to support the Event Director. Event Liaisons serve as the point of contact within USMS for the event.

Applicable Rules

National Championship events must be run in accordance with all Open Water and Long Distance Rules as found in Part 3 of the current U.S. Masters Swimming Rulebook.

Definitions

ePostal Event: A swimming competition conducted in multiple pool locations with results compiled in a central location. Five ePostal National Championship events are held each year: the 1-Hour, the 5K & 10K (held simultaneously), and the 3000-yard & 6000-yard (held simultaneously).

Team: Women, men, or mixed relay team.

Club: Member organization registered by USMS.

Event Host: The organization designated by the USMS LDC that agrees to conduct a USMS ePostal National Championship event according to the terms of the USMS Long Distance ePostal National Championship contract and the current Open Water and Long Distance USMS rules as found in Part Three of the current year's U.S. Masters Swimming Rule Book.

Event Director: The individual designated by the Event Host who is responsible for the overall operation of the event and serves as the main contact between the LDC and the Event Host.

LDC: Long Distance Committee

Liaison: A person (or persons), appointed by the LDC to work with the Event Director and is the primary point of contact with the LDC and USMS.

Club Assistant: The private company that provides the online entry and management program currently used by all USMS ePostal National Championships. It is important to note that the Event Director is required to use the full extent of the Club Assistant online entry and management services.

ePostal Timeline: The table in Attachment A is a timeline for the tasks necessary to conduct the ePostal Championship events, when they should be completed, and who is responsible for completing those

tasks. In this timeline the wording "Event Host" is used and refers to the Event Director and/or the Event Host.

1.1 Championship Contract

A well-run ePostal event should be enjoyable for the swimmers and provide official results and awards in an accurate and timely manner. The purpose of the USMS Championship Contract (Contract) is to ensure that a USMS ePostal National Championship event is conducted properly.

1.2 Championship Packet

All the results from an event are captured in the Championship Packet. The Championship Packet is an Excel workbook and includes worksheets for the Individual Men's and Women's Results, Relay Results, All-American Results, Relay All-American Results, USMS Records, Club Scores, Awards Order, Financial Statement, and Event Evaluation. The Event Liaisons will email the Championship Packet to the Event Director prior to the start of the event. Club Assistant creates results spreadsheets for the Individual Events and the Relays. The information in these spreadsheets should be merged into the appropriate worksheets in the Championship Packet. When complete, an Event's Championship Packet contains a complete record of the event.

1.3 Creating the Entry Form

The event entry form details all the information needed to register for the event, participate in the event, and order any event merchandise. The Event Director creates the entry form. The entry form must be approved by the Event Liaisons, Club Assistant, and the USMS National Office. Once the event has been approved, the Event Director and Event Liaisons work in partnership with Club Assistant to draft the online registration page that will appear on the USMS Calendar of Events and on the USMS National Championship Event Page. In partnership with Club Assistant and the national office, the Event Director and Event Liaisons work together to see to proper posting and promotion of the online registration page. See the timeline for the specific sequence of events.

1.4 Awards

For the 1-Hour ePostal, awards are given to the top ten finishers in each age group for men and women respectively and to the top six relay finishers in each relay age group for men's, women's, and mixed relays. For all other ePostal National Championship events, individual awards are given for the top six finishers in each age group and the top three finishers for relays. Awards for the 1-Hour ePostal event are based on data collected from participant entries from past 1-Hour ePostal events. That data supports a larger participant turnout for the 1-Hour ePostal events then the 5K/10K ePostal and 3000/6000-Yard ePostal events which in turn supports the awarding of more than just the traditional top six individual and top three relay awards. Note that a minimum of 1-6th place awards for individuals and a minimum of 1-3rd place awards for relay members in each age group are required for ePostal National Championship Events as stated in rules 307.10.1 and 307.10.2 as found in the USMS Rule Book.

For all events, USMS National Championship patches are given to first place finishers in both individual and relay events. Only one patch per event per participant will be awarded.

If an Event Director and Event Host chooses to use the standard USMS Long Distance medals, the Event Director and Event Host must use the awards order form, which describes how to order and pay for awards and return unused awards. Awards may be ordered elsewhere, but the LDC Chairperson and liaisons to the event must approve the design of these awards before the event. USMS National Championship patches must be used; these are ordered from USMS using the awards order form. In thinking of ordering awards: order more awards than necessary to accommodate corrections. The Event Director can return unused awards. In this instance it is better to have too many awards and have to return them, than to have to order more awards because there aren't enough to award.

1.5 USMS Surcharge

The Event Director must submit the USMS surcharge, check payable to USMS. This surcharge is \$1.00 per individual entrant for each event entered (the 5K & 10K, and the 3000 & 6000, are all separate events). The surcharge does not apply to relays.

1.6 ePostal Results

When the entry deadline for individual entries has passed, the Event Director and Event Liaisons must review the Preliminary Results using the reports from the Club Assistant web site for their event. The Event Director and Event Liaisons should also particularly check results to ensure that each reported swim matches the swimmer's capabilities, paying special attention to the top 10 finishers in each age group. If deemed necessary, the Event Director may request a copy of the form showing the recorded splits. Swimmers applying for USMS individual or relay records must submit their completed split sheets to the event director who shall review the split sheet and verify the record time/distance. The Event Director must report any perceived discrepancies to the LDC Chair and LDC Event Liaisons. Using the Club Assistant report, the Event Director can generate individual and relay results that are included in the Championship Packet. When all discrepancies and errors have been corrected, the Event Director formats the results and puts them into the appropriate worksheets in the Championship Packet.

After Event Director and Event Liaisons review the Championship Packet, the Championship Packet is sent to the LDC PARA Chairperson(s). The LDC PARA Chairperson(s) will convert the Preliminary Results in the Excel Championship Packet to a PDF format and send them to the USMS national office for posting on the USMS website. Preliminary Results will be posted for two weeks for review by the event entrants. At the time of posting, USMS will send an email to all swimmers stating that Preliminary Results are available on the website for review, giving the deadline for reporting errors to the Event Director, asking for changes in swimmer mailing address after submittal of entries, and reminding entrants that merchandise will be ordered and mailed when received.

After the two-week review period, the Event Director, Event Liaisons, and PARA Chairperson(s) will communicate regarding any corrections to the results. The PARA Chairperson(s) will make the necessary changes and submit the revised PDF documents to the national office for posting on the USMS national website as final results.

The Event Director, Event Liaisons, and PARA Chairperson(s) follow a similar process for relay results.

Individual All Americans and Club Scores will be entered into the Championship Packet when the Final Individual Results are completed. Relay All Americans will be entered after relay results are finalized.

The Event Director must submit results as formatted in the Championship Packet.

- Individual Results: Reported in order by gender (women than men) and age group (youngest to oldest). It includes age group, age group place, first and last name, age, club, USMS registration number, official time or distance, quality points (for 5K, 10K, 3000, and 6000 only), and USMS record indicator for every swimmer who breaks a USMS record.
- Relay Results: Reported in order by relay category (women, men, and mixed, in that order) and age group (youngest to oldest). It includes age group, age group place, club name and designation (A, B, etc.), official time/distance, names, ages, club, USMS registration number, official time/distance for each member of the team, and USMS record indicator for every relay team that breaks a USMS record.
- The order of Individual and Relay Results for the 1-Hour ePostal is from highest to lowest yardage in each age/gender category. The order of Individual and Relay Results for the 3000 & 6000 and 5K & 10K ePostal events is from fastest to slowest time for each age/gender category. If individuals or relays tie, the next individual or relay takes the place two (or more) places down (e.g., if two swimmers tie for third, the next swimmer is fifth; if four swimmers tie for second, the next swimmer is sixth).
- Club Results: Includes totals for men and women combined points, women's points, and men's points, in order, for each club.
- Club Results for the 1-Hour ePostal are calculated as the sum of the distance (in yards) of all
 individual swimmers of each club. Club size categories for the 1-Hour ePostal are based on the
 number of swimmers for each club and must be decided together by the Event Director and LDC
 Chair.
- No such size classification is made for the other ePostal events. Individual Results for the 5K, 10K, 3000, and 6000 events are calculated by quality points (the age group record divided by a swimmer's time, then multiplied by 1000), which is automatically calculated by the Club Assistant program. Club Results are calculated as the sum of the quality points from each individual swimmer for the club. There are no quality points for relays, so relays are not included.
- The Club Results report includes the club name, number of swimmers for the club, and the total distance or points. Club totals are shown in women, men, and combined categories.

Refer to the Appendix A for the specific timing of these tasks.

1.7 All-American/USMS Records

Swimmers who break or set an individual USMS record must submit their split sheets by the entry deadline, either by mail or a scanned version by email. The Event Director must review the split sheets of all individual record swims.

The Event Director must report first-place USMS member finishers and record breakers/setters in each age group, for both individual swims and relays, using the Excel forms contained in the Championship

Packet. International swimmers who are not USMS members must not be included in this tabulation, as only USMS members can be All Americans and record holders.

Club Assistant compares all individual times/distances against its USMS database and indicates which set new USMS records. However, their database is usually not updated for records set in the immediate past year, so the Event Director and Event Liaisons need to check these. Club Assistant does not keep a list of relay records, so these need to be checked as well. The LDC Records Chairperson will provide the Event Director and Event Liaisons with an updated list of records prior to creating Preliminary Results. The Event Director must send a complete copy of the individual entry form—including the split sheet—for each individual record swim to the Event Liaisons.

1.8 Awards to Participants

The Event Director and Event Host are responsible for distributing all individual and relay awards to each individual swimmer, at cost to the Event Host.

1.9 Financial Report

The purpose of this report is to provide information for planning and budgeting future ePostal events.

1.10 Eligibility

Swimmers must be members of USMS, or an equivalent FINA organization on the day of their swim. One Event (OEVT) entrants are not permitted in ePostal National Championships.

The 3000 & 6000 and 5K & 10K ePostal events each consist of two swims (3000 and 6000 and 5K and 10K, respectively). A swimmer who wishes to swim in both events must swim both events separately; however, a swimmer may request to use a split time to establish a national ePostal record.

The swimmer's age on December 31st of the event year determines the swimmer's age.

Same-gender relays must consist of three swimmers. Mixed-gender relays must consist of four swimmers, including two of each gender. All members of a relay team must be members of the same club or workout group.

Foreign swimmers who are members of a FINA organization and not USMS members may compete in ePostal events, but cannot hold USMS records or be considered for All-American or All-Star recognition.

1.11 Merchandise

The Event Host may offer souvenir T-shirts, swim caps, or other merchandise. For the ePostal events that consist of two swims (e.g., the 5K/10K), the Event Host should offer only one of each item. The design must include

- The exact title and year of the event (e.g., 2020 3000-Yard and 6000-Yard ePostal National Championships).
- The USMS logo or name spelled in full (the USMS logo can be found on the USMS website at https://www.usms.org/logos/content/standardlogos.
- The USMS sponsor logo, merchandise, or other details if required and stated by the contract.

All logos and merchandise designs must be approved by the USMS National Office.

The LDC recommends that the Event Host use a professional designer to develop the art work for the T-shirt. The designer should be able to recommend color combinations that work and also provide a budget estimate. The Event Host and Event Director should then verify the design with the printer and agree on price (the designer may be able to direct you to a printer). The LDC also recommends that the Event Director provide a picture on the merchandise page of the online entry form showing the T-shirt design, so that the artwork for the shirt design is available for event promotion.

1.12 Verification of Entries

For the 3000 & 6000 and 5K & 10K ePostal events, swimmers who enter both swims must have completed both distances (i.e., separate entries for the 5K and the 10K). The Event Director must verify that split times in the 6000 or 10K swims are not used for 3000 or 5K entries.

The Club Assistant program automatically checks for completion and errors, by not accepting incomplete entries or entries with large errors. The online entry system also usually eliminates erroneous name, age, and USMS number information and also calculates relay information, including age group and total distance/time.

Entry problems should be resolved immediately to avoid delaying the preliminary results reports.

The Event Director must carefully verify the information on all entries. At minimum, this must include:

- For record split sheets in the 1-Hour ePostal that the distance is tallied correctly. Occasionally, the timer will mark the last 50 swum and will inadvertently add 50 to the total, or will round up to the nearest 50 instead of rounding down to the nearest 5 yards. Errors such as the ones above may result in an unrealistic time for the last segment.
- For swims completed in meters in the 1-Hour ePostal, 3000, and 6000, the Club Assistant program will provide accurate conversion to yards that the event director must use in all situations. All other conversions are unacceptable.
- In questionable cases,
 - Compare performances with previous ePostal events; and/or
 - Verify times against times swum in other recent pool events (e.g., 1650 yd); and/or
 - Compare with other swimmers

The Event Director may request additional information from the swimmer to verify an entry. After such a request, if an entry still appears to contain erroneous information, the Event Director may refuse to accept the entry and may disqualify the swimmer. In such a case, the Event Director must notify the Event Liaisons before notifying a swimmer of entry refusal or disqualification.

When requesting information about entries, the Event Director must maintain a log of all emails, calls, and other communication. Any changes to the entry, including the split sheet, must be logged so that the adjustment can be traced if questions arise.

When in doubt about the validity of an entry, contact the Event Liaisons promptly.

1.13 Refusing Late Entries

The Event Director MUST accept only entries that are received before the entry deadline. Accepting late entries is unfair to the other swimmers. The online entry system does not allow late entries. Under extraordinary circumstances (the 2020 global coronavirus pandemic), the LDC reserves the right to extend the deadline at the request of the Event Director and Event Host.

1.14 Processing Awards and Merchandise

Award and merchandise processing includes:

- Ordering and receiving awards
- Ordering and receiving merchandise
- Preparing envelopes to send awards and merchandise
- Filling envelopes with awards and merchandise
- Sending awards and merchandise to participants

The Event Director should prepare for these activities as soon as preliminary results are available.

1.15 Ordering Awards

USMS provides, at a reasonable cost, gold, silver, and bronze medals for individual and relay swims to be awarded for 1st through 3rd places, and smaller bronze medals for places 4th through 10th places.

The best way to determine how many awards need to be ordered is to create an awards report similar to the merchandise report provided by the Club Assistant program. This would provide an awards count by swimmer and also the total count that could then be used to fill out the awards order form and fill the envelopes. Such a report is not available now from Club Assistant, but the LDC recommends that the Event Director create such a report using the method described below, also including merchandise information.

Step 1 – Set up the Awards & Merchandise Report

Start with the Individual Result Reports, which are separate for each swim (e.g., one for 5K and one for 10K) and thus will be modified into two separate spreadsheets. Retain columns for Distance, Gender, Age Group, Place, First Name, Last Name, Club, and Age. Add columns for patch, 1st place, 2nd place, 3rd place, small bronze, T-shirt, and caps. Set up the resulting report in landscape format to show all columns of the spreadsheet.

Step 2 – Enter Awards and Merchandise information

This step is best performed by two people. Open an Awards & Merchandise Report as created in step 1 (e.g., for the 5K) on a computer. If you have two computers, open the Relay Results Report on another computer. Starting at the top of the Relay Results Report, going relay by relay, person A reads the name, age and place information to person B, who enters award information in the Awards and Merchandise

Report for the event. In the first go-around through the women's and men's relays, there will be only "1" s in the spreadsheet.

When going through the Mixed Relays, some of the "1" s may have to be changed to "2" s. Now person A can go through the Individual Results (first eight columns of the report) and update the awards and merchandise information in the spreadsheet on the screen by including the Individual Results. This may result in a few more "2" s and a few "3" s. Note that there can only be "1" s in the patch column. The process is similar when there is only one computer available. In this case, person A will read the information from a printed version of the Relay Results.

Step 2 can now be repeated for the second event (in this example the 10K). It is tempting to add the 5K and 10K Awards and Merchandise Reports together, but this makes things more complicated without adding much benefit, and makes checking much harder. By simple column additions in the spreadsheet the total number of awards can now be determined. The merchandise information can now be entered by reading information from the Merchandise Report.

In their entries, some participants may have chosen to decline awards. Indicate this in the reports, and consider this when ordering awards. The LDC recommends that the Event Director order several more awards than necessary based on the count, as there may be mistakes of various kinds.

The Event Director should include a message/certificate in each envelope congratulating the swimmer and letting them know what award they have received.

1.16 Ordering Merchandise

The Club Assistant program generates a merchandise report that provides count and size information. This report shows each individual order as well as total counts.

Sometimes a swimmer who enters both events in the 3000 & 6000 and in the 5K & 10K will order merchandise for each one of the two events mistakenly assuming that the merchandise will be different for each event. When this happens, the Event Director should ask the swimmer's intent when the entry is received.

The Event Director should order merchandise as soon as possible, as merchandise orders can get delayed. The Event Director should also verify the design of the art work with the merchandise vendor(s) well ahead of deadlines so that any problems can be resolved early.

1.17 Preparing Envelopes

Before buying envelopes, inquire at your local post office to find whether it is economical to send awards using priority mail envelopes. If your club is a 501c3 corporation, you can save lots of money on postage; inquire with your local post office for details. For shipping just one medal, it is probably less expensive to use regular envelopes. For sending multiple awards, sturdy priority mail or flat rate envelopes might be better. For shipments that include a T-shirt, a Tyvek envelope is probably the best solution.

After acquiring envelopes, print address labels using a tool provided by the Club Assistant program. You will not need all labels, as you will probably not need to mail awards and/or merchandise to all

swimmers. Remember to print enough return address labels. Label the envelopes before filling with awards and merchandise. Make sure that labels stick, using tape if necessary.

Experience strongly recommends keeping envelopes in the same order as the individual results report, using plastic or cardboard storage boxes until mailing. For easier handling and mailing, keep envelopes for international participants separate.

1.18 Filling envelopes

Start by putting the different awards in boxes, preferably using a different color for each box. The Event Director may consider sticking small labels on each award indicating the event and place before filling the envelopes. Make labels for individual and relay placement for each event (thus, for a 5K & 10K event, you would need four different labels). Print enough "congratulation letters," and paper results if necessary. Now put awards, merchandise, and letters in the envelopes. If swimmers request a paper copy of the results, do this also when filling envelopes. This can best be done by three persons:

- Person A reads the awards that a participant will receive from the Awards and Merchandise Reports.
- Person B gathers the awards needed from the boxes and labels the awards.
- Person C puts the awards and merchandise in the envelopes.

Now put T-shirts into the Tyvek envelopes.

For very large events such as the 1-Hour ePostal, consider doubling the assembly line, i.e., one for women and one for men. Experience recommends putting the teams in separate rooms or even separate locations to maintain concentration. An Event Director may want to consider adding an auditor to verify the content of each envelope before it is sealed.

Finally, seal the envelope once filled. Envelopes may not seal properly because the contents are not flat, so use tape if necessary.

1.19 Mailing envelopes

Inquire at the local post office for their preferred way to mail envelopes to swimmers.

Some post offices may want you to drop off boxes with envelopes without postage and wait to pay for the total postage, others may want you to sort envelopes into different weight categories, and some may even invite you in the "back room" to help with the process.

1.20 Other communication with participants

Some swimmers will have not ordered merchandise, have not qualified for awards, and/or have declined awards. The LDC recommends that the event director send all such swimmers a "thank you" message that congratulates them on their participation, encourages them to participate in future ePostal events, asks them to promote participation in future ePostal events among their teammates, and provides them a link to the posted results on the USMS web site.

1.21 Club Awards

Appropriate awards may be given to the first, second, and third place club winners in each size division if warranted by the event entry. Club awards are not required.

1.22 Miscellaneous

The LDC requires the Event Director to keep general entry and any logged information for three years.

ATTACHMENT A

USMS ePostal Timelines

Event Tasks	Responsible Party	1-Hour ePostal	5K/10K ePostals	3000/6000 ePostals
Event Contract and timeline sent to Event Host.	LDC Chair			
Event Contract signed by Event Host, LDC Chair, and National Office Representative.	LDC Chair, Event Host, & NO	19-July	1-November	1-April
LDC Chair emails signed contract to event liaisons.	LDC Chair	2- August	15-November	15-April
ePostal Championship Packet, logo requirements, and sample draft entry form sent to Event Host and LDC liaisons.	PARA Lead(s)	17-August	1-December	1-May
Preliminary event logo sent from Event Host to LDC liaisons and USMS National Office.	Event Host	17-September	1-February	1-June
Event logo approved.	NO, LDC liaisons, & Event Host.	17-October	1-March	1-July
Draft entry (excluding merchandise link and online registration link) sent to local sanctions chair and LDC liaisons.	Event Host	19-October	3-March	3-July
Preliminary merchandise designs sent to LDC liaisons and USMS national office.	Event Host	19- October	3-March	3-July
Event entry form review and update complete.	LDC liaisons & Event Host	2-November	17-March	18-July
Merchandise designs approved.	NO	9-November	24-March	25-July
Event entry form officially sanctioned by local sanctions chair.	Local Sanctions Chair	15-November	30- March	31 July
Full event entry form with merchandise sent to USMS national office and Club Assistant.	Event Host	16- November	31-March	1-August
Event setup and online entry ready for testing.	Club Assistant	30-November	14-April	16-August
Event entry form approved.	NO	6-December	21-April	23-August
Club Assistant registration page test complete	CA, Event Host, & LDC liaisons	13-December	28-April	30-August
Club Assistant tutorial and all revisions to build/test mode completed by this date.	CA, LDC liaisons, & Event Host	16- December	1-May	1-September
Current event records sent to Club Assistant.	LDC liaisons& LDC Records Lead	23-December	8-May	8-September
Emails, publication schedule, and event posting completed by USMS national office.	NO	23-December	8-May	8-September
Event Registration must be ready to go live.	All involved	1-January	15-May	15-September
Event Runs		1-January- 28/29	15-May- 15-September	15-September- 15- November
Last day to submit individual entries		February 7 March	22-September	22-November
Last day to submit individual entries.		7-March	zz-september	ZZ-NOVember

Event Tasks	Responsible Party	1-Hour ePostal	5K/10K ePostals	3000/6000 ePostals
Preliminary Individual event results sent from Event Host to LDC liaisons and on to PARA Chairperson(s).	Event Host	11-March	26-September	26-November
Last day to submit relay entries.		14-March	29-September	29-November
PARA chairperson(s) to provide Preliminary Individual Results to USMS for posting on national website.	PARA lead(s).	14-March	29- September	29-November
Preliminary Relay Results sent from Event Host to LDC liaisons and on to PARA chairpersons(s)	Event Host	22-March	7-October	7-December
PARA chairperson(s) to provide Preliminary Relay Results to USMS for posting on national website.	PARA lead(s)	26-March	11-October	11-December
USMS surcharge (\$1/swimmer to USMS).	Event Host	28-March	13-October	13-December
Awards order.	Event Host	28-March	13-October	13-December
Corrections to Preliminary Individual Results submission completed.	Event Host	28-March	13-October	13-December
Final Individual Results submitted to the national office from LDC PARA chairperson(s).	PARA lead(s)	1-April	16-October	16-December
Awards to Event Host.	LDC awards lead	1-April	17-October	17-December
Individual All American and national records to LDC.	Event Host	2-April	17-October	17-December
Club Scores sent to LDC.	Event Host	6-April	21-October	21-December
Corrections to Preliminary Relay Results submission completed.	Event Host	9-April	25-October	26-December
Final Relay Results submitted to the national office from the LDC PARA lead(s).	PARA lead(s).	10-April	26-October	27-December
Club Scores sent to USMS National Office.	PARA lead(s)	11-April	26-October	26-December
Relay All Americans and national records to LDC	Event Host	14-April	30-October	30-December
New national records sent to USMS National Office.	LDC Records Lead	28-April	12-November	12-January
Awards and merchandise to swimmers.	Event Host	14-May	28-November	28-January
Unused awards returned with payment.	Event Host	22-May	5-December	5-February
Completed national championship packet including financial report to LDC liaisons.	Event Host	14-June	28-December	28-February
Event is completely wrapped up. All financial statements and awards have been reconciled. Event evaluation has been completed. All paperwork has been properly submitted to LDC and liaisons.	Event Host	28-June	11-January	11-March

All Timeline Dates are subject to slight change, based on how various dates fall on a weekly calendar (holidays, Sundays, etc.). The timeline is also subject to negotiation between the Event Host, LDC Chairperson, and Event Liaisons.

Note: Event Liaisons should cross check their national championship packet against Event Host's National Championship Packet to check for any errors and to make sure all information is correct.