



*United States  
Masters Swimming*

 *2008 Rule Book*

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**UNITED STATES MASTERS  
SWIMMING  
CODE OF REGULATIONS  
AND  
RULES OF COMPETITION**

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This pocket-size rule book contains the rules for swim meets in articles 101, 102, 103, 201, and 202 in the 2009 USMS rule book. In addition, it contains the “Differences Between USMS and USA Swimming Rules” from Appendix B of the rule book.

**The additional articles and the appendices in the 2008 USMS rule book:**

**Part 1 Swimming Rules**

- 104 National Championship Meets
- 105 Records, Top Ten Times and All-American Recognition
- 106 Health and Safety Regulations for Competition
- 107 Facilities Standards
- 108 Guidelines for Officiating Swimmers with a Disability in USMS Meets

**Part 2 Administrative Regulations of Competition**

- 203 Liability Release

**Part 3 Long Distance Swimming Rules**

- 301 Administration
- 302 Events
- 303 Conduct of Open Water Meets
- 304 Conduct of Pool Meets
- 305 National Long Distance Championships
- 306 Records

**Part 4 Participation, Conduct, Hearings and Appeals**

- 401 Participation
- 402 Conduct of Members
- 403 Hearings and Appeals

**Part 5 United States Masters Swimming Inc.:  
Organization and Bylaws**

- 501 Membership
- 502 Local Masters Swimming Committee (LMSC)
- 503 Zones
- 504 House of Delegates
- 505 Officers
- 506 Board of Directors
- 507 Committees and Appointments
- 508 Financial Policy
- 509 Parliamentary Authority
- 510 Indemnification
- 511 Dissolution

**Part 6 Amendment Procedures**

- 601 Amendments

**Appendices**

- Appendix A Records
- Appendix B Information for Meet Directors and Officials
- Appendix C National and International Masters Swimming Schedule
- Appendix D Zone and LMSC Boundaries
- Appendix E USMS Directory
- Appendix F USMS History

The 2008 USMS Rule Book may be purchased for \$10:  
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# **PART 1:**

## **SWIMMING RULES**

All provisions under *Part 1: Swimming Rules*, unless otherwise specified, are effective beginning January 1, 2008, and until changed. Rules in effect on the first day of a meet shall govern throughout the meet.

*Part 1: Swimming Rules* is based upon articles 101, “Individual Strokes and Relays,” 102, “Conduct and Officiating of All Swimming Competition,” and 105, “Guidelines for Officiating Swimmers with a Disability in USA Swimming Meets,” of the USA Swimming Technical Rules, which, as amended, will govern all Masters swimming competitions.

All competitive swimming events held under corporate sanction shall be conducted in accordance with the following rules, which are designed to provide fair and equitable conditions of competition.

It is not the purpose of the *Code of Regulations and Rules of Competition* of United States Masters Swimming (the national governing body) contained herein to set standards of care for the safety of the swimmer. Safety considerations should be addressed by the swimmer, the swim coach, and the local public entity or pool owner in whose facility events are held.

### **ARTICLE 101:**

#### **Starts, Strokes And Relays**

##### **101.1 Starts**

**101.1.1 Forward Start**—The forward start may be taken from the starting block, the pool deck, or a push from the wall. At the commencement of each heat, the referee shall signal to the swimmers by a short series of whistles to remove all clothing except for swimwear, followed by a long whistle indicating that they should take their positions with at least one foot at the front of the starting platform, the edge of the pool, or on the wall before the command “Take your mark.” Those starting in the

water must have at least one hand in contact with the wall or starting block.

### 101.1.2 **Backstroke Start**

**A Starting commands**—At the commencement of each heat, the referee shall signal to the swimmers by a short series of whistles to remove all clothing except for swimwear. At the referee's first long whistle, the swimmers shall immediately enter the water and at the second long whistle shall return without undue delay to the starting position.

**B All courses**—The swimmers shall line up in the water facing the starting end with both hands placed on the gutter or on the starting grips. Standing in or on the gutter, placing the toes above the lip of the gutter or bending the toes over the lip of the gutter before or after the start is prohibited.

## 101.2 **Breaststroke**

**101.2.1 Start**—The forward start shall be used.

**101.2.2 Stroke**—After the start and after each turn when the swimmer leaves the wall, the shoulders must be at or past the vertical toward the breast. The swimmer is not permitted to roll onto the back at any time. Throughout the race the stroke cycle must be one arm stroke and one leg kick in that order.

All movements of the arms shall be simultaneous and in the same horizontal plane without alternating movement.

The hands shall be pushed forward together from the breast on, under or over the water. The elbows shall be under water except for the final stroke before the turn, during the turn and for the final stroke at the finish. The hands shall be brought back on or under the surface of the water. The hands shall not be brought back beyond the hip line, except during the first stroke after the start and each turn.

During each complete cycle, some part of the swimmer's head shall break the surface of the water. After the start and after each turn, the swimmer may take one arm stroke completely back to the legs. The head must break the surface of the water before the hands turn inward at the widest part of the second stroke.

**101.2.3 Kick**—After the start and after each turn, a single butterfly (dolphin) kick, which must be followed by a breaststroke kick, is permitted during or at the completion of the first arm pull, following which,

all movements of the legs shall be simultaneous and in the same horizontal plane without alternating movement.

The feet must be turned outwards during the propulsive part of the kick. A scissors, flutter or downward butterfly (dolphin) kick is not permitted except as provided herein. Breaking the surface of the water with the feet is allowed unless followed by a downward butterfly (dolphin) kick.

- 101.2.4 Turns and Finish**—At each turn and at the finish of the race, the touch shall be made with both hands simultaneously at, above or below the water level. The head may be submerged after the last arm pull prior to the touch, provided it breaks the surface of the water at some point during the last complete or incomplete cycle preceding the touch.

### **101.3 Butterfly**

- 101.3.1 Start**—The forward start shall be used.

- 101.3.2 Stroke**—After the start and after each turn, the swimmer's shoulders must be at or past the vertical toward the breast. The swimmer is permitted one or more leg kicks, but only one arm pull under water, which must bring the swimmer to the surface. (Note: After the start and after each turn, only one breaststroke kick is allowed prior to the arm pull that brings the swimmer to the surface.) It shall be permissible for a swimmer to be completely submerged for a distance of not more than 15 meters (16.4 yards) after the start and after each turn. By that point, the head must have broken the surface. The swimmer must remain on the surface until the next turn or finish. From the beginning of the first arm pull, the body shall be kept on the breast. Both arms must be brought forward over the water and pulled back simultaneously.

- 101.3.3 Kick**—All up and down movements of the legs and feet must be simultaneous. The position of the legs or the feet need not be on the same level, but they shall not alternate in relation to each other. The breaststroke or whip kick may be used exclusively or interchangeably with the dolphin kick while doing the butterfly stroke at any time during the race. Only one breaststroke or whip kick is permitted per arm pull, except that a single breaststroke or whip kick is permitted prior to the turn and the finish without an arm pull. After the start and after each turn, a single breaststroke or

whip kick is permitted prior to the first arm pull. A scissors kicking movement is not permitted.

**101.3.4 Turns**—At each turn the body shall be on the breast. The touch shall be made with both hands simultaneously at, above or below the water surface. Once a touch has been made, the swimmer may turn in any manner desired. The shoulders must be at or past the vertical toward the breast when the swimmer leaves the wall.

**101.3.5 Finish**—At the finish, the body shall be on the breast and the touch shall be made with both hands simultaneously at, above or below the water surface.

#### **101.4 Backstroke**

**101.4.1 Start**—The backstroke start shall be used.

**101.4.2 Stroke**—Standing in or on the gutter, placing the toes above the lip of the gutter, or bending the toes over the lip of the gutter immediately after the start is not permitted. The swimmer shall push off on the back and continue swimming on the back throughout the race. Some part of the swimmer must break the surface of the water throughout the race, except it shall be permissible for the swimmer to be completely submerged during the turn, at the finish and for a distance of not more than 15 meters (16.4 yards) after the start and each turn. By that point, the head must have broken the surface of the water.

**101.4.3 Turns**—Upon completion of each length, some part of the swimmer must touch the wall. During the turn the shoulders may be turned past the vertical toward the breast, after which a continuous single arm pull or a continuous simultaneous double arm pull may be used to initiate the turn. Once the body has left the position on the back, any kick or arm pull must be part of the continuous turning action. The swimmer must have returned to a position on the back upon leaving the wall.

**Note:** The swimmer who turns past vertical and, in a continuous motion, grabs the wall before pushing off with the feet while on the back is considered to have executed a “continuous turning action.”

**101.4.4 Finish**—Upon the finish of the race, the swimmer must touch the wall while on the back. The body may be submerged at the touch.

## **101.5 Freestyle**

**101.5.1 Start**—The forward start or the backstroke start shall be used.

**101.5.2 Stroke**—In an event designated freestyle, the swimmer may swim any style, except that in a medley relay or individual medley event, freestyle means any style other than butterfly, breaststroke or backstroke. Some part of the swimmer must break the surface of the water throughout the race, except it shall be permissible for the swimmer to be completely submerged during the turn and for a distance of not more than 15 meters (16.4 yards) after the start and each turn. By that point the head must have broken the surface.

**101.5.3 Turns**—Upon completion of each length, the swimmer must touch the wall.

**101.5.4 Finish**—The swimmer shall have finished the race when any part of the swimmer touches the wall after completing the prescribed distance.

## **101.6 Individual Medley**

The swimmer shall swim the prescribed distance in the following order: the first one-fourth, butterfly; the second one-fourth, backstroke; the third one-fourth, breaststroke; and the last one-fourth, freestyle.

**101.6.1 Start**—The forward start shall be used.

**101.6.2 Stroke**—The stroke for each one-fourth of the designated distance shall follow the prescribed rules for each stroke.

### **101.6.3 Turns**

**A** Intermediate turns within each stroke shall conform to the turn rules for that stroke.

**B** The turns when changing from one stroke to another shall conform to the finish rules for the stroke just completed, and shall be as follows:

**(1) Butterfly to backstroke**—The swimmer must touch as described in article 101.3.5. Once a legal touch has been made, the swimmer may turn in any manner, but the shoulders must be at or past the vertical toward the back when the swimmer leaves the wall.

**(2) Backstroke to breaststroke**—The swimmer must touch the wall while on the back. Once a legal touch has been made, the swimmer may turn in any manner, but the shoulders must be at or past the vertical toward the breast when the swimmer leaves the

wall and the prescribed breaststroke form must be attained prior to the first arm stroke.

- (3) **Breaststroke to freestyle**—The swimmer must touch as described in article 101.2.4. Once a legal touch has been made, the swimmer may turn in any manner.

**101.6.4 Finish**—The swimmer shall have finished the race when any part of the swimmer touches the wall after completion of the prescribed distance.

## **101.7 Relays**

**101.7.1 Freestyle Relay**—Four swimmers on each team, each to swim one-fourth of the prescribed distance using any desired stroke(s). Freestyle finish rules apply.

**101.7.2 Medley Relay**—Four swimmers on each team, each to swim one-fourth of the prescribed distance in the following order: first, backstroke; second, breaststroke; third, butterfly; fourth, freestyle. Rules pertaining to each stroke used shall govern where applicable. At the end of each leg, the finish rule for each stroke applies in each case.

### **101.7.3 Rules Pertaining to Relay Races**

- A** No swimmer shall swim more than one leg in any relay event.
- B** When automatic relay takeoff judging is used, all swimmers must touch the touchplate or pad in their respective lanes at the end of the course to have finished their legs of the relay race.
- C** A swimmer other than the first swimmer shall not start until the previous swimmer's leg has been concluded.
- D** If a team member other than the swimmer designated to swim a particular leg jumps into or enters the pool in the area where the race is being conducted and before all swimmers of all teams have finished the race, both the offending swimmer and relay team shall be disqualified.

**Note:** An exception may be granted to a relay team member who wishes to enter the water to start from the water; this swimmer shall notify the starter and be careful not to disturb or interfere with another swimmer or the timing system pad when in use.

- E** All relay team members shall leave the water immediately upon finishing their legs, except for the last member.

**Note:** Swimmers who cannot exit the water quickly

enough to prevent interference with automatic officiating equipment may be allowed to hold on to the lane line until all relays have finished, allowing them to exit the pool more slowly or via the ladders at the conclusion of the race.

- F** Mixed relays shall consist of two men and two women who may swim in any order.
- G** Competitors shall be allowed to swim only once per meet in each of the following relays: men's/women's 200 medley, 400 medley, 200 freestyle, 400 freestyle and 800 freestyle; and mixed 200 medley, 400 medley, 200 freestyle, 400 freestyle and 800 freestyle.
- H** The team of a swimmer whose feet have lost contact with the starting platform (ground, deck or wall) before the preceding teammate touches the wall shall be disqualified.

## **ARTICLE 102: Swimming Competition**

### **102.1 Eligibility**

**102.1.1** To be eligible for competition, including participation in warm-ups, members must be 18 years of age or over.

**102.1.2** USMS Members may participate in non-USMS aquatic activities, meetings, exhibitions, demonstrations, etc. without jeopardy to their eligibility to swim in USMS competition. However, any times achieved in non-sanctioned or non-recognized activities will not be recorded for official purposes and cannot be used for LMSC rankings or national Top 10 times, All-American status or qualification times for USMS national championship meets.

### **102.2 Age Determining Date**

**102.2.1** For short course yards, the eligibility of a participant for a particular age group shall be determined by the age as of the last day of the meet.

**102.2.2** For short course meters and long course meters, the eligibility of a participant for a particular age group shall be determined by the age as of December 31 of the year of competition.

### **102.3 Age Groups**

#### **102.3.1 Individual Events**

18–24, 25–29, 30–34, 35–39, 40–44, 45–49, 50–54, 55–59, 60–64, 65–69, 70–74, 75–79, 80–84,

85–89, 90–94, 95–99, 100–104... (five-year age groups as high as is necessary).

### **102.3.2 Relay Events**

**A Short course (25) yards**—18+, 25+, 35+, 45+, 55+, 65+, 75+, 85+, 95+... (10-year increments as high as is necessary). The age of the youngest relay team member shall determine the age group. Relay teams must swim in the oldest age group for which they are eligible.

**B Short course (25) meters and long course (50) meters**—72–99, 100–119, 120–159, 160–199, 200–239, 240–279, 280–319, 320–359, 360–399... (40-year increments as high as is necessary). The aggregate age of the four relay team members shall determine the age group.

### **102.4 Warm-up/Warm-down**

**102.4.1 Availability**—If there is no other warm-up/warm-down area available in pools of five lanes or more, one lane shall be set aside for warm-up/warm-down during the conduct of the meet. If there is no other warm-up/warm-down area available in pools of four or fewer lanes, swimmers shall be allowed to swim to the other end of the pool at the end of each heat, and a warm-up/warm-down period shall be offered at least once during each half-hour of competition.

**102.4.2 Procedure**—Swimmers must enter the pool feet first in a cautious and controlled manner. Diving shall be permitted only in the designated lanes. No hand paddles are allowed.

### **102.5 Events**

In planning any meet, careful consideration must be given the demands to be made upon swimmers, officials and spectators, in that order. Meets should be planned to terminate within a reasonable period of time each day. Planning should provide for adequate meal and rest breaks and sheltered rest areas.

Any of the following events may be conducted. Any event conducted must be offered for all groups and both genders. For open water and long distance events, see article 302.

#### **102.5.1 Short Course (25) Yards**

50-100-200-500-1000-1650 yards freestyle  
50-100-200 yards backstroke  
50-100-200 yards breaststroke  
50-100-200 yards butterfly  
100-200-400 yards individual medley  
200-400-800 yards freestyle relay

200-400-800 yards mixed freestyle relay  
200-400 yards medley relay  
200-400 yards mixed medley relay

### **102.5.2 Long Course (50) Meters and Short Course (25) Meters**

50-100-200-400-800-1500 meters freestyle  
50-100-200 meters backstroke  
50-100-200 meters breaststroke  
50-100-200 meters butterfly  
100\*-200-400 meters individual medley  
200-400-800 meters freestyle relay  
200-400-800 meters mixed freestyle relay  
200-400 meters medley relay  
200-400 meters mixed medley relay  
\* short course meters only

### **102.6 Event Limit**

A swimmer may compete in not more than five individual events per day (or three individual events if the meet is a trials/finals format). If, however, due to conditions beyond the control of meet officials, an event or events are postponed to a subsequent day of the meet, such postponed events shall not be included in the five (or three) events per day limitation.

### **102.7 Entry Fees**

Entry fee policies for local Masters events shall be set by the LMSC.

### **102.8 Scratch Procedures**

It is the swimmer's responsibility to be informed of the meet starting time and to report to the proper meet authorities promptly upon call. Meet announcements and advance information shall specify check-in and scratch procedures for individual and relay events.

**102.8.1 Penalties**—Any swimmer or relay team not reporting for or competing in an event shall not be penalized.

### **102.9 Relays**

**102.9.1** Relay teams shall not compete unattached. In all cases, relay teams must be composed of USMS members of the same club, which is a member of USMS.

**102.9.2** Clubs entering two or more relay teams in an event shall designate them on the entry blank as team A, team B, etc.

**102.9.3** The best time or aggregate time of each relay team shall be entered on the entry blank for seeding purposes, and no change in time shall be permitted.

- 102.9.4** On the relay card, relay teams must list the name of the club, the full name (as it appears on the USMS membership card), the age and for mixed relays the gender of each relay member. The name of the leadoff swimmer must be clearly designated.
- 102.9.5** First and last names of eligible relay swimmers, their ages and order of swimming shall be submitted to the clerk of course or to the head lane timer. Any changes in names of the competing swimmers or their order of swimming must be declared to the head lane timer prior to the start of the relay heat in which such relay team is entered. No changes will be permitted thereafter.
- 102.9.6** The competing teams, first and last names of members, and their ages must be listed in the meet results.

## **102.10 Lane Assignments – Seeding – Counters**

### **102.10.1 Seeding Principles for Masters Competition**

- A** All short course meters events, long course meters events and national championships shall be conducted on a timed-final basis. Other short course yards events may be conducted on a timed-final basis or other basis (e.g., trials/finals). In a trials/finals format, competitors shall be limited to three individual events per day.
- B** Age groups, genders and events of the same distance 200 yards or longer may be combined so that no swimmer has to swim alone and lanes may be filled.
- C** It is recommended that when swimmers are seeded by time and not by age groups, the fastest two swimmers in each age group should not be seeded into outside lanes. It is recommended that they be moved inward one lane or given the center lanes in the next slowest heat, whichever is the more appropriate placement.
- D** Seeding at meets other than national championship meets may be either fast-to-slow or slow-to-fast. Seeding may differ for sprint and distance events (events 400 yards or longer) within a meet. Women's and men's heats may be alternated in the distance events. The meet information shall state the seeding for all events.
- E** Heat and lane assignments for events of 200 meters or less shall be available to all competitors at least five minutes prior to the start of the event.

### 102.10.2 Heat and Lane Assignments

- A Seeding within heats**—Within each heat, lanes shall be assigned in order of submitted times (fastest to slowest) in accordance with the following pattern:

Ten Lanes: 5-6-4-7-3-8-2-9-1-10

Nine Lanes: 5-6-4-7-3-8-2-9-1

Eight Lanes: 4-5-3-6-2-7-1-8

Seven Lanes: 4-5-3-6-2-7-1

Six Lanes: 3-4-2-5-1-6

Five Lanes: 3-4-2-5-1

Four Lanes: 2-3-1-4

- B Minimum number of swimmers per heat**—When there are two or more heats there shall be a minimum of three swimmers or relay teams seeded into the first heat. The fastest heat shall be filled first, then the next fastest heat, etc.
- C Fast-to-slow seeding**—The first heat of each event shall be composed of the swimmers with the fastest submitted times, the second heat composed of the next fastest swimmers, etc.
- D Slow-to-fast seeding**—The last heat of each event shall be composed of the swimmers with the fastest submitted times, the next-to-last heat composed of the next fastest swimmers, etc.

### 102.10.3 Seeding of Events in a 50-Meter Course

- A Seeding of 50-meter events in a 50-meter course**—Fifty-meter events swim in a 50-meter course shall be seeded as provided above. If the event is started at the turning end of the course no change in the lane numbering shall be made; i.e., the lanes shall be numbered the same on both ends of the course.

- B Starting heats from alternate ends of the course**—If only one course is available and the pool depth is adequate at both ends of the course, the meet director may choose to start heats from alternate ends of the course.

- (1) In 50-meter events, the in-the-water heat may be instructed to wait in the water after the finish until the next heat has been started.
- (2) In events 100 meters and longer, the next heat may be started when the in-the-water heat is within a half-length of the finish.
- (3) If the pool depth is different at alternate ends of the course, the meet director may choose to start men's events at one end of the course and women's

events at the alternate end of the course. Men's and women's heats shall alternate.

- (4) If the pool depth is the same at alternate ends of the course, men's and women's heats may alternate.

#### **102.10.4 Two-to-a-Lane Seeding in Distance Freestyle Events**

##### **A General principles of seeding two-to-a-lane**

###### **(1) Options to swim two-to-a-lane**

- (a) At the discretion of the meet director, competitors in the freestyle events over 200 meters may be required to swim two-to-a-lane when only one course is available for the event. The meet information shall state the criteria under which such events are to be swum two-to-a-lane.
- (b) When competitors have an option of swimming two-to-a-lane, the heats with two competitors per lane will be completed before the heats with a single competitor per lane.
- (c) If there are not enough swimmers to fill all heats with two swimmers in each lane, those swimmers with the fastest submitted times may be seeded one-to-a-lane.

###### **(2) Men's/women's events**

- (a) If men and women compete under the same event number, they shall be seeded by time without regard to gender.
- (b) If men and women compete under different event numbers, they shall be seeded separately by time.
- (c) If men and women compete under different event numbers, men's and women's heats should be alternated.

- (3) **Heat designations**—Heats shall be numbered consecutively without using alphabetical characters (e.g., no "A" and "B" heats). Heats shall be referred to as "odd" or "even" numbered heats. Odd and even heats shall be paired when seeding two-to-a-lane.

- (4) **Reporting to the clerk of course**—Swimmers in both odd and even heats shall be asked to report to the clerk of course (or to the starting area) at the same time.

- (5) **Starting procedure**—The starter shall call the odd heat to the starting block first. As soon as the odd heat is under way, swimmers in the even heat shall

be called to the starting blocks. The even heat shall be started as soon as practical after the odd heat.

**(6) Lane etiquette**

- (a) The starter shall instruct the swimmers to swim on one side of the lane during the entire race (i.e., no “circle” swimming).
- (b) Obstructing another swimmer by swimming across the lane or otherwise interfering with the swimmer shall disqualify the offender, subject to the discretion of the referee, and the disqualified offender shall be removed from the lane as soon as practical.

**(7) Timing**—Separate timing shall be required for each swimmer.

**B Methods of seeding two-to-a-lane** (either method is recommended)

**(1) Swimmers of similar speed in the same heat**

- (a) **Heat and lane assignments**—Lanes shall be assigned as in article 102.10.2.
- (b) **Pairing of heats**—After lanes are assigned, heats shall be arranged in pairs beginning with either the slowest or fastest heats, at the meet director’s discretion. The fastest heat within each pair shall be designated as the odd heat and the next-fastest heat as the even heat.

In the following example, for a six-lane pool, “1” refers to the fastest swimmer, “2” to the next-fastest swimmer, etc.

	Lane					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Odd Heat	5	3	1	2	4	6
Even Heat	11	9	7	8	10	12

**(2) Swimmers of similar speed in the same lane**—

Groups of swimmers equal in number to twice the number of lanes of the pool (e.g., groups of 12 swimmers for a six-lane pool) shall be created. Each group of swimmers shall be divided into odd and even heats. The fastest swimmer in each group shall be assigned to a middle lane in the odd heat. The second-fastest swimmer shall be assigned to the same middle lane in the even heat. The remaining swimmers shall be assigned to lanes in accordance with article 102.10.2A.

In the following example, for a six-lane pool, “1”

refers to the fastest swimmer, “2” to the next-fastest swimmer, etc.

	Lane					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Odd Heat	9	5	1	3	7	11
Even Heat	10	6	2	4	8	12

**102.10.5 Places**—Places shall be determined on a time basis, subject to the order of finish within each heat. Any ties resulting from the procedure used shall be declared officially tied for awards and points, with no further attempt made at resolution.

**102.10.6 Counters**

- A** A swimmer in any individual event of 16 lengths or more, except the individual medley, may appoint one counter to call lengths or indicate lengths by visual sign.
- B** Verbal counters shall be limited to one per swimmer and shall be stationed at the end of the course opposite the starting end. They may use watches and signal intermediate times to the swimmer.
- C** If visual counters are used, they may be stationed at the end or either side of the pool beyond the halfway point toward the end of the course opposite the starting end. Visual counters may be lowered into the water at the end of the swimmer’s lane, provided that, in the opinion of the referee, they neither physically aid the swimmer or interfere with another competitor or present any safety hazard.
- D** The count may be in ascending or descending order.
- E** In the event of official or counter error, it is the responsibility of the swimmer to complete the prescribed distance.

**102.11 Awards**

When two or more swimmers tie for any place, duplicate awards shall be given to each swimmer. In such cases, no awards shall be given for the place or places immediately following the tied positions. If two tie for first place, no award for second place; if three tie for first place, no awards for second and third, and so on.

**102.12 Scoring**

The following is recommended for all Masters swimming competition.

### **102.12.1 Dual Meets**

Individual events: 5-3-1-0

Relay events: 7-0

### **102.12.2 Triangular Meets**

Individual events: 6-4-3-2-1-0

Relay events: 8-4-0

### **102.12.3 Other Meets**

Individual events:

four-lane pools: 5-3-2-1

five-lane pools: 6-4-3-2-1

six-lane pools: 7-5-4-3-2-1

seven-lane pools: 8-6-5-4-3-2-1

eight-lane pools: 9-7-6-5-4-3-2-1

nine-lane pools: 10-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1

ten-lane pools: 11-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1

Individual point values shall be doubled for relays.

**102.12.4 Ties**—Where two or more swimmers tie for any place in any event, the points credited to such place or places, if any, next in order shall be equally divided among the swimmers; i.e., if two tie for first place, the points to be credited to first and second place shall be added and divided by two. Each tying swimmer will receive half of the total points for first and second places. If three tie for first place, the points credited to first, second and third places shall be added and divided by three, and so on for four or more tying for first place. The same is true for those tying for second place, third place and whatever places there may be.

**102.12.5 Disqualifications**—When a relay team or individual swimmer is disqualified, the subsequent places will move up accordingly and points will be awarded to conform to the new places.

## **102.13 Change Of Program And Postponement**

**102.13.1** The order of events, as stated in the meet announcement, shall not be changed. The announced arrangement of heats in any event shall not be added to or altered, except by the authority of the referee to the extent of consolidating the heats.

**102.13.2** At the meet referee's discretion, events may be combined by distance and/or stroke.

**102.13.3** The entry provisions and starting time of any event, meet or portion thereof shall stand as stated in the meet announcement (except as permitted in article 102.13.3) and may not be changed to an earlier time or date unless written notice of such change is

delivered to all affected swimmers or their coaches. If mailed, such notice must be postmarked no later than the entry deadline date stated in the meet announcement, and if lack of time prohibits mail notification, all affected swimmers must voluntarily agree in writing that they have been notified and are in accord with such change. Affected swimmers or coaches may and should file a written protest with the referee prior to the running of the event or the meet if they do not agree to such change in time or date.

#### **102.13.4 Postponement or Cancellation**

- A** If, prior to the start of a meet or event, unusual or severe weather or other conditions preclude the possibility of safely and effectively conducting a meet or event, the meet committee (see article 103.5) may cancel or postpone it.
- B** Should a meet or event have actually commenced, and in the judgment of the referee cannot safely and effectively continue because of weather conditions or for some other compelling reason, the meet or event may be suspended at the referee's sole discretion until conditions warrant continuance. If circumstances do not warrant continuance, the referee may cancel the meet or event or postpone it to a future date or time, with the approval of the meet committee.
- C** A decision to cancel or postpone shall be final.
- D** Should an event have actually commenced but be terminated prior to an official finish and be postponed to another time or date, it shall then be conducted among the swimmers who were officially competing in the event at the time of termination.
- E** Entry fees for teams or swimmers may be refunded, in whole or part, at the discretion of the meet committee, upon cancellation of a meet or particular event. The decision of the meet committee on refunding may be appealed to the officers of the LMSC (local or regional meets) or the USMS Championship Committee (national championship meets).

#### **102.14 Swimwear**

- 102.14.1 Design**—The swimsuits worn for competition shall be nontransparent and conform to the current concept of the appropriate. The referee shall have authority to bar offenders from competition until they comply with this rule.

**102.14.2 Advertising**—Products involving tobacco, alcohol or pharmaceuticals containing drugs banned under IOC or FINA rules may not be advertised, but the advertiser's name only may be used. Offenders may be barred from competition until they comply with this rule.

## **102.15 Disqualifications**

**102.15.1** A disqualification can be made only by the official within whose jurisdiction the infraction has been committed. The referee, stroke, turn or relay takeoff judge, upon observing an infraction, shall immediately raise one hand overhead. If the official does not do so, there shall be no disqualification. When there is dual confirmation of relay takeoffs (103.10.5B) or dual confirmation of false starts (103.8.6A and B), a disqualification is not signaled by raising one hand overhead.

**102.15.2** The referee or designated official making a disqualification shall make every reasonable effort to seek out the swimmer or the swimmer's coach and inform them as to the reason for the disqualification.

**102.15.3** Any swimmer who acts in an unsportsmanlike or unsafe manner within the swimming venue may be considered for appropriate action or penalty by the referee.

**102.15.4** A swimmer must start and finish the race in the assigned lane.

**102.15.5** Standing on the bottom during a freestyle race shall not disqualify a swimmer, but the swimmer must not leave the pool, walk or spring from the bottom. Standing on the bottom during any other stroke shall result in disqualification.

**102.15.6** Obstructing another swimmer by swimming across the lane or otherwise interfering with the swimmer shall disqualify the offender, subject to the discretion of the referee.

**102.15.7** Dipping goggles in the water or splashing water on the competitor's face or body prior to the event shall not be considered as entering the pool unless the referee finds that such action is interfering with the competition.

**102.15.8** Should a foul endanger the chance of success of a swimmer(s), the referee may allow the affected competitor(s) to reswim the event. In the case of collusion to foul another swimmer, at the referee's discretion, the swimmer for whose aid the foul

was committed may be disqualified, as well as the swimmer doing the fouling.

- 102.15.9** Swimmers are not permitted to wear or use any device or substance to help their speed, pace or buoyancy during a race. Goggles may be worn and rubdown oil applied if not considered excessive by the referee.
- 102.15.10** Grasping the lane line or side wall to assist forward motion is not permitted.
- 102.15.11** For relay disqualifications, refer to article 101.7.3.
- 102.15.12** The time, place and/or initial splits of any swimmer or relay team disqualified either during or following an event shall not be recorded in the results of that event. If awards have been made prior to the decision to disqualify, they shall be returned and made to the proper recipient(s), and if points have been scored by those disqualified, the event shall be rescored.
- 102.15.13** Time and/or place officially recorded for a swimmer shall not be nullified for violations occurring subsequent to such performance.
- 102.15.14** A swimmer who misrepresents a seed time, causing a significant delay of the meet, may be disqualified at the discretion of the referee. The disqualified swimmer shall be removed from the lane as soon as practical.

#### **102.16 Protests**

- 102.16.1** The official results of any protested race shall not be announced, the affected awards shall not be given and points scored shall not be allocated until the protest is resolved or is withdrawn in writing.
- 102.16.2** Protests affecting the eligibility of any swimmer to compete or to represent an organization in any race shall be made in writing to the meet director or referee before the race is held, and if the meet committee deems it advisable, the swimmer may compete under protest and it shall be so announced before the race. The meet committee shall immediately refer such protest to the LMSC officers (local meets) or championship meet protest committee (national championship meets; see article 104.5.9B) having jurisdiction for adjudication at the earliest possible time.
- 102.16.3** Protests against judgment decisions of starters and stroke, turn and relay takeoff judges can only be

considered by the referee, and the referee's decision shall be final.

**102.16.4** Protests concerning interpretation of the rules in *Part 1: Swimming Rules* and the *Glossary* shall be submitted in writing (on paper or in an electronic file), within 10 days to the USMS Rules Committee chair, who shall issue a decision in writing (on paper or in an electronic file) within five days of the date of receipt of such protest, unless the USMS Rules Committee chair notifies the parties that the issue must come before the entire committee. The ruling shall be final and binding on all parties.

**102.16.5** Any other protest arising from the competition itself shall be made within 30 minutes after the race in which the alleged infraction took place. If the protest is not resolved immediately, the protester shall at that time file a written protest with the chair of the LMSC or the chair's representative having jurisdiction over the event. If the LMSC does not satisfactorily resolve the protest within 10 days, the protester may appeal in writing to the USMS Rules Committee chair within the next five days for final adjudication, whose decision shall then be binding on all parties.

### **102.17 Tobacco Products**

Smoking and use of other tobacco products is prohibited on the pool deck, in locker rooms, in spectator seating and standing areas, and in all areas used by swimmers during the meet and during the warm-up periods in connection with the meet.

## **ARTICLE 103: Meet Procedures**

### **103.1 Required Personnel**

The minimum personnel at USMS sanctioned Masters swimming meets or recognized events shall include the following for each course:

#### **103.1.1 Officials**

- A One referee**—The referee may also serve as a stroke and turn judge, but shall not serve as starter.
- B One starter**—The starter may also serve as a stroke and turn judge.
- C Two stroke and turn judges**—At least two people shall perform these duties during competition.

**103.1.2 Timers**—Two timers per lane if automatic timing

is not being used. One timer per lane if automatic timing is used.

### **103.2 Certification Of Officials**

The referee shall be certified as a stroke and turn judge, starter or referee by USA Swimming, USMS, YMCA or any other USMS-approved certifying body (Appendix B).

### **103.3 Reporting Of Officials And Meet Personnel**

All officials and meet personnel accepting an invitation to work at a swim meet should arrive promptly and report immediately to the meet director or meet referee.

### **103.4 Meet Director**

The meet director shall be the chair of the meet committee and is responsible for the overall operation of the meet.

### **103.5 Meet Committee**

Appointed by the meet sponsor. The committee consists of a minimum of the meet director, referee or starter, and a participating athlete, as appointed by the meet director prior to the start of the meet. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to: ordering awards; obtaining a sanction; preparing the facility; arranging for personnel, equipment and supplies necessary for meet operation; processing entries; printing programs; arranging appropriate publicity and media coverage; preparing and distributing a summary of results within 14 days after the meet; and filing an LMSC report.

### **103.6 Referee**

**103.6.1** The referee shall have full authority over all officials and shall assign and instruct them; shall enforce all applicable rules and shall decide all questions relating to the actual conduct of the meet, the final settlement of which is not otherwise assigned by said rules; can overrule any meet official on a point of rule interpretation or on a judgment decision pertaining to an action that the referee has personally observed.

**103.6.2** The referee has the authority to disqualify a swimmer(s) for any violation of the rules that the referee personally observes and, except for false starts, shall at the same time raise one hand overhead. If the referee does not make such a signal, there shall be no penalty.

**103.6.3** The referee shall signal the starter before each race that all officials are in position, that the course is clear and that the competition can begin; shall assign marshals with specific instructions.

**103.6.4** The referee shall give a decision on any point

where the opinions of the judges differ; shall have authority to intercede in a competition at any stage to ensure that the racing conditions are observed.

**103.6.5** When automatic or semiautomatic officiating equipment is used and an apparent malfunction occurs, it shall be the referee's responsibility to make an immediate investigation to determine whether the swimmer finished in accordance with the rules and/or if there was an actual equipment malfunction.

**103.6.6** The referee may prohibit the use of any device that disrupts or interferes with the meet, such as a laser pointing device or artificial noisemaker.

**103.6.7** The referee may modify any rule for a swimmer who has a disability. Any such modification shall be in accordance with article 108, shall affect only the current meet and does not set precedent. It shall be the responsibility of the swimmer or a representative to notify the referee of the disability prior to competition.

**103.6.8** When conducting events from alternate ends of a 50-meter course or conducting freestyle events longer than 200 meters two-to-a-lane, the referee shall establish the necessary administrative and officiating procedures to conform to article 102.10.

**103.6.9** Refer to article 102.16 concerning protests.

### **103.7 Administrative Referee**

The administrative referee shall resolve errors in entries and seeding, make adjustments as required and verify timing (see articles 103.11.4, 103.12.4C–F), verify record documentation and perform other duties as assigned by the meet referee.

### **103.8 Starter**

**103.8.1 Equipment**—A loudspeaker start system conforming to article 107.14, with or without an underwater recall device, and an electronic strobe signal visible to all manual timers and for forward and backstroke starts, shall be the preferred starting device. A .22 caliber starting pistol may be used.

**103.8.2 Preparation**—The starter shall stand within 10 feet of the starting end of the pool and, upon signal from the referee, shall assume control of the swimmers until a fair start has been achieved.

**103.8.3 Optional Instructions**—The starter may:

**A** Announce the event (recommended).

**B** Advise the heat when a swimmer will be attempting to achieve a time at an initial distance.

- C For backstroke event starts, give the command, “Place your feet.”

#### **103.8.4 Starts (see article 101.1)**

#### **103.8.5 Start Commands**

- A At the commencement of each heat, the referee shall signal to the swimmers by a short series of whistles to remove all clothing except for swimwear, followed by a long whistle indicating that they should take their positions with at least one foot at the front of the starting platform, the edge of the pool or on the wall and remain there. In backstroke and medley relay events, at the referee’s first long whistle, the swimmers shall immediately enter the water and at the second long whistle shall return without undue delay to the starting position (article 101.1.2).
- B When the swimmers and officials are ready, the referee shall signal with an outstretched arm to the starter that the swimmers are under the starter’s control.
- C On the starter’s command “Take your mark,” the swimmers shall immediately assume their starting position with at least one foot at the front of the starting platform, the edge of the pool or on the wall. Swimmers starting in the water must have at least one hand in contact with the wall or starting platform. When all swimmers are stationary, the starter shall give the starting signal.
- D When a swimmer does not respond promptly to the command “Take your mark”, the starter shall immediately release all swimmers, upon which the swimmers may stand up, step off the blocks, or leave the wall.

#### **103.8.6 False Starts**

- A Any swimmer starting before the starting signal is given shall be disqualified if the referee independently observes and confirms the starter’s observation that a violation occurred. Swimmers remaining on the starting blocks shall be relieved from their starting positions with the “Stand up” command and may step off the blocks. The starter shall restart the race upon signal by the referee.
- B If the starting signal has been given before the disqualification is declared, the race shall continue without recall. If the referee independently observes and confirms the starter’s observation that a violation occurred, the swimmer or swimmers who have

false started shall be disqualified upon completion of the race in accordance with 102.15.2.

- C If the recall signal is activated inadvertently, no swimmer shall be charged with a false start and the starter shall restart the race upon signal by the referee.
- D A swimmer who would otherwise be charged with a false start may be relieved of the charge if the false start was caused by the swimmer's reaction to the "Stand up" command.
- E A swimmer shall not be disqualified for an illegal starting position at the start if the race is permitted to proceed. Enforcement of the correct starting position is the responsibility of the starter.

**103.8.7 Warning Signal**—With the exception of relays, in events 500 yards or longer the starter or a designee shall sound a warning signal over the water at the finish end of the lane of the leading swimmer when that swimmer has two lengths plus 5 yards or 5 meters to swim. As an alternative, a bell warning signal may be given over each lane by a lane judge or timer in that lane.

**103.8.8 Deliberate Delay or Misconduct**

- A The starter shall report a swimmer to the referee for delaying the start, for willfully disobeying an order or for any other misconduct taking place at the start, but only the referee may disqualify a swimmer for such delay, willful disobedience or misconduct.
- B The referee shall disqualify a swimmer who fails to appear at the starting platform ready to swim in time for the initial start of the heat.

**103.9 Recall Rope Operator**

The duty of the recall rope operator shall be to immediately, upon sounding of the false start signal, activate the quick-release mechanism of the recall rope so that the recall rope drops across the course.

**103.10 Judges**

Shall have jurisdiction over the swimmers immediately after the race has begun.

**103.10.1 Chief**—An overall "chief judge" may assign and supervise the activities of all stroke, turn and takeoff judges and may report their decisions, or, if desired, any judging category may have a designated "chief." Any "chief" may act as liaison for the judges and may serve simultaneously in one of

the judging positions, and shall assign those judges within the category.

**103.10.2 Stroke Judges**—Shall operate on both sides of the pool, preferably walking abreast of the swimmers during all strokes except freestyle, during which events they may leave poolside, at the referee's discretion; shall ensure that the rules relating to the style of swimming designated for the event are being observed; and shall report any violations to the referee on signed slips detailing the event, the heat number, the lane number, and the infraction observed.

**103.10.3 Turn Judges**—Shall operate on both ends of the pool; shall ensure that when turning or finishing the swimmer complies with the turning and finishing rules applicable to the stroke used; and shall report any violations to the referee on signed slips detailing the event, the heat number, the lane number and the infraction observed.

**103.10.4 Jurisdiction of Stroke and Turn Judges**—Before the competition begins, the referee shall determine the respective areas of stroke and turn responsibility and jurisdiction, which may include joint, concurrent and coordinated responsibility and jurisdiction. The referee shall ensure that all swimmers shall have fair, equitable and uniform conditions of judging.

**103.10.5 Relay Takeoff Judges**

- A** Relay takeoff judges shall be assigned by the referee and shall stand so that they can clearly see both the touch of the incoming swimmer(s) and the feet of the departing swimmer(s) as they leave the starting platform, and shall judge whether the swimmer is in contact with the platform when the incoming swimmer touches the end of the pool.
- B** If dual relay takeoff judging is used, the lane and side takeoff judges shall independently report infractions in writing without the use of the infraction hand signal. A relay shall be disqualified only if the lane takeoff judge has reported an infraction and the assigned side takeoff judge has confirmed the same infraction.
- C** When automatic relay exchange judging equipment is in use, the system printout will provide the information to judge relay exchanges. Integrated backup timing cameras may be reviewed by the referee to confirm the automatic system's results.

When backup timing cameras are not available, the referee will determine the confirmation process.

**103.10.6 Infraction Signal**—Either the referee or the stroke, turn or relay takeoff judge shall immediately raise one hand overhead with open palm upon observing an infraction within that judge’s jurisdiction. If the official does not do so, there shall be no disqualification.

**Exception:** Relay takeoff judges as outlined in article 103.10.5B.

### **103.11 Timers**

**103.11.1 Chief Timer**—The chief timer shall:

- A** Assure the assignment of lane timers to lanes and the designation of one timer on each lane to be the head lane timer.
- B** On the starting signal, start a watch(es) on every race. The time of this watch shall be used if a lane timer’s watch fails.
- C** Be responsible for delivering all stopwatch times, including those of disqualified swimmers, to the timing judge.

**103.11.2 Head Lane Timer**—The head lane timer shall:

- A** Determine whether the swimmer or relay team is present and in the correct lane, heat and event, and that relay swimmers are swimming in the order listed.
- B** Determine and record stopwatch times or the absence of a swimmer or the relay team seeded in that lane.
- C** Assign one timer to take relay splits and initial distance times if requested by the chief timer.
- D** Determine and report if the swimmer has delayed in touching or has missed the touchpad at the finish, or there is reason to believe the semiautomatic or manual times may be inaccurate.

**103.11.3 Lane Timers**—Officials assigned as lane timers may simultaneously operate two dissimilar devices (one watch and one button) but not two similar devices (two watches or two buttons). It is not within a lane timer’s jurisdiction to judge if the swimmer’s touch conforms to the applicable finish rules or if a relay takeoff infraction has occurred unless assigned concurrent responsibility as a lane timer and turn judge or relay takeoff judge. Each timer shall:

- A** Be in position at the start to have an unobstructed

view and shall start the watch at the instant of observing the visual starting signal. If the visual starting signal is not observed, the watch shall be started upon hearing the sound of the starting signal.

- B** Stand directly over the assigned lane at the finish to observe a touch above, at or below the surface of the water and stop the watch and/or push the semiautomatic system button when any part of the swimmer's body touches the wall.
- C** Report the watch time to the head lane timer or the designated recorder; report if a late or missed pad touch is observed; and, if requested, present the watch for inspection. Lane timers shall not clear their watches until a command to "clear watches" is given or the referee signals that the next heat is ready to start.

**103.11.4 Timing Equipment Operator**—The timing equipment operator shall be responsible for the automatic or semiautomatic timing equipment, including the electronic starting system and scoreboard (if used), and shall advise the referee of any system problems that might affect the accuracy of times or whenever the touchpad is observed to have failed to record the finish when the swimmer completed the race. The timing equipment should be placed so that the operator is able to observe the finish of each race.

**103.11.5 Timing Judge**—Under the direction of the referee, the timing judge shall determine the official time for each swimmer as follows:

- A** Receive and review the automatic and/or semiautomatic timing results from the timing equipment operator and compare primary timing results with the backup timing results to determine their validity.
- B** Receive the times recorded by the head lane timers from the chief timer and use those times to the extent needed to determine the official time for each swimmer.
- C** Notify the referee whenever a time obtained by the primary timing system cannot be used as the official time.
- D** Record disqualifications approved by the referee. A written record of all disqualifications signed by the referee shall be given to the recorder.

**103.11.6 Recorder**—The recorder shall:

- A Record the official times and disqualifications.
- B Determine the official order of finish.
- C Post results, or otherwise make them available to the competitors, of each event by gender and USMS age group as promptly as possible after the completion of each event.
- D Determine the score of the meet (optional).

## 103.12 Timing Equipment

**103.12.1 Timing System Definitions**—Every race in a swimming competition shall be timed with one or more of the following systems, listed in their preferred order of use.

- A **Automatic**—A timing system started by an electric impulse generated by a starting device or a transducer capable of detecting a gun report and stopped at the finish by the swimmer touching the touchpad.
- B **Semiautomatic**—A timing system started by an electric impulse generated by a starting device or transducer capable of detecting a gun report and stopped by buttons pushed by timers at the finish touch of the swimmer.
- C **Manual**—A timing system operated by individual lane timers, each of whom operates a stopwatch that is both started and stopped by the timer as described in article 103.11.3. Only digital-readout-type hand-held battery-powered watches designed for timing purposes shall be used.

**103.12.2 Timing System Designation**—Timing systems shall be designated in the order in which results are used as follows:

- A **Primary system**—The primary system shall determine the official time of each swimmer unless a comparison of the primary with secondary and/or tertiary system times indicates a malfunction of the primary system. A primary system shall always be in place and shall consist of one of the following, listed in their preferred order of use:
  - (1) Automatic timing.
  - (2) Semiautomatic, with three or two buttons per lane, each operated by a separate timer.
  - (3) Manual, with three or two watches per lane, each operated by a separate timer.
- B **Secondary system**—If manually operated watches are not the primary system, a secondary system of precedence equal to or lower than the primary

system shall be used. The secondary system may be:

- (1) Backup timing cameras recording a minimum of 100 images per second. The cameras must be fully integrated with the timing system.
- (2) Semiautomatic with one, two or three buttons, each operated by a separate timer.
- (3) Manual with one, two or three watches per lane, each operated by a separate timer.

**C Tertiary system**—Unless the primary system consists of stopwatches or the secondary system includes at least one stopwatch per lane, a tertiary system of at least one stopwatch per lane shall be provided.

**103.12.3 Timing Resolution (Timing Accuracy)**—All timing systems, including stopwatches, shall have a resolution of .01 second. Times from all systems shall be recorded to hundredths of a second. The digits representing thousandths shall be dropped with no rounding.

**103.12.4 Determination of Official Time**

**A Automatic timing**—When recorded by properly operating automatic timing equipment, the pad time shall be the official time.

**B Semiautomatic or manual timing**—Whenever semiautomatic or manual timing is used, the official time shall be determined as follows:

- (1) If two of the three button or watch times agree, that shall be the time for that timing system.
- (2) If all three buttons or watches disagree, the time of the intermediate button or watch shall be the time for that timing system.
- (3) If only two button or watch times are available, the time shall be the average of those two button or watch times. The digits representing thousandths of a second shall be dropped with no rounding.
- (4) If only one button or watch time is available, the time of that button or watch shall be the time for that timing system.

**C Primary timing system malfunction**—A primary timing system malfunction may have occurred if:

- (1) The difference between the time obtained by the primary system and the backup system(s) is more than .30 second.
- (2) A late or missed touch is reported by an official observing the finish.

- D Adjustment for the timing system difference—**When the referee determines that there is a malfunction of the primary timing system, the backup time(s) shall be adjusted for the timing system difference prior to integrating them with accurate primary times in establishing the official times and determining the order of finish. The adjustment for timing system difference may be incorporated into the automatic or semiautomatic system by design or may be determined by calculating the consistent average difference between the primary and backup systems used at that meet.
- E Adjustment for malfunction on a lane—**When a malfunction is confirmed on a lane, the backup times for that lane shall be adjusted by calculating the average difference between valid primary and valid backup times of the other lanes in that heat or, if necessary, using times from heats immediately preceding and/or following that heat. This shall be done by adding, or subtracting when appropriate, that average difference to the valid backup time of the lane where the malfunction occurred.

**Table 1—Example (Lane Malfunction):**

Systems used:

Primary—Automatic

Secondary—Semiautomatic, three buttons (intermediate button time shown in bold)

Tertiary—Manual, one watch

Lane	Primary Pad Time	Button A	Button B	Button C	Watch Time	Pad Minus Middle Button	Official Time
1	52.21	52.07	<b>52.12</b>	52.14	52.04	.09	52.21
2	52.18	<b>52.01</b>	51.91	52.06	51.95	.17	52.18
3	51.05	51.01	50.97	<b>51.00</b>	50.95	.05	51.05
4	51.04	50.78	<b>50.88</b>	50.93	50.84	.16	51.04
5	51.96	51.30	<b>51.35</b>	51.38	51.27	*.61	**51.46
6	51.65	<b>51.57</b>	51.56	51.59	51.55	.08	51.65
7	52.27	<b>52.13</b>	52.18	<b>52.13</b>	52.10	.14	52.27
8	51.87	51.58	<b>51.75</b>	51.89	51.65	.12	51.87

\*More than .30 second difference, late touch confirmed.

\*\*Adjustment calculation: Add the differences between pad and intermediate button time, excluding the malfunctioning lane (total = .81). Divide total by the number of valid lanes to determine the average (.81 ÷ 7 = .11571). The digits after hundredths are dropped (leaving a timing system difference of .11 for the above example). Add the timing system difference to the valid backup time for the malfunctioning lane (51.35 + .11 = 51.46, the official

time for lane five).

- F Adjustment for malfunction equally affecting an entire heat**—When, because of an early or late start, or other equipment or operator malfunction, the time of the automatic or semiautomatic primary timing system is equally incorrect for all lanes in a heat, but the order of finish and thus the absolute difference of time between the swimmers is accurate, the times of the primary system shall be adjusted by calculating the average difference between the primary times and the valid backup times and adding, or subtracting when appropriate, that difference to the primary times of every lane in that heat.

**Table 2—Example (Heat Malfunction)**

Systems used:

Primary—Automatic (late manual start confirmed)

Secondary—Semiautomatic, three buttons (button times not valid)

Tertiary—Manual, one watch (valid)

Lane	Primary Pad Time	Watch Time	Watch Time Less Pad Time	Heat Adjustment	Official Time
1	52.12	55.14	3.02	+3.06	55.18
2	51.56	54.61	3.05	+3.06	54.62
3	51.09	54.18	3.09	+3.06	54.15
4	50.12	53.18	3.06	+3.06	53.18
5	49.78	52.90	3.12	+3.06	52.84
6	49.06	52.06	3.00	+3.06	52.12
7	52.21	55.30	3.09	+3.06	55.27
8	52.92	55.99	3.07	+3.06	55.98

Adjustment calculation: Add the differences between the pad and watch times (total = 24.50). Divide the total by the number of lanes to determine an average ( $24.50 \div 8 = 3.0625$ ). The digits after hundredths are dropped (leaving a heat adjustment of 3.06). Add the adjustment factor for the late start of the primary system to each pad time to obtain the official time for that lane (e.g., lane one,  $52.12 + 3.06 = 55.18$ ).

### 103.13 Official Time

**103.13.1** An official time shall be achieved in a USMS-sanctioned competition or a USMS-recognized event in accordance with all applicable rules. It may be achieved in:

- A** A timed heat.
- B** An initial distance within a longer event or relay, provided the swimmer:
- (1) Notifies the meet referee in writing of the intent to

record an initial split time prior to the conclusion of the meet,

- (2) Makes the written request prior to the swim for relay leadoff splits and for initial backstroke distances in individual backstroke events,
- (3) Completes the initial distance with a legal finish and
- (4) Completes the event without being disqualified.

**C** A relay leadoff leg provided the swimmers complete the event without being disqualified.

**D** The swimmer's relay leadoff split shall not count if the second swimmer starts in the water.

**103.13.2 Official Time**—An official time for an event or stroke can be achieved only in that event or stroke, or in an initial distance of such event or stroke (e.g., backstroke time must be achieved in a backstroke event or a butterfly time can be achieved in an individual medley event). Regardless of the stroke(s) used, times achieved in freestyle events can be recorded only as freestyle times.

**103.13.3** The official time to establish records and Top 10 times can be achieved only in accordance with the following timing methods:

<b>Timing method</b>	<b>Official time level</b>
Automatic timing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• World records, USMS national records and USMS Top 10 times</li> <li>• Initial splits for all purposes</li> <li>• Relay lead-off times for all purposes</li> </ul>
Three watches or semi-automatic with three buttons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• World records, USMS national records and USMS Top 10 times</li> <li>• Initial splits and relay leadoff times for world records only</li> </ul>
Two watches or semi-automatic with two buttons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• USMS Top 10 times</li> </ul>

**103.13.4** Only those results from events conducted in pools in conformance with 107.2.1 shall be acceptable for record applications or Top 10 submissions.

**103.13.5** Except when the primary system consists of watches, backup timing shall be provided for all competitors. No swimmer shall be required to reswim a race due to equipment failure that results in unrecorded or inaccurate time or place. It is the meet director's responsibility to provide the proper timing systems so that swimmers can

expect to achieve official times that will satisfy the requirements of 103.13.3.

**103.13.6** A backup time adjusted for system timing errors in accordance with the methods described in articles 103.12.4C–F may be used as an official time equal to the level of the timing system to which it has been adjusted.

**103.13.7** Secondary and tertiary times shall be recorded but shall not be used except to corroborate or correct missing or inaccurate primary/secondary results.

#### **103.14 Clerk Of Course**

The clerk of course shall be provided with a list of the names of all swimmers in all events, including relay swimmers in the order in which they will swim.

#### **103.15 Marshals**

Shall wear identifying attire and enforce warm-up procedures and maintain order in the swimming venue. The marshal shall have full authority to warn or order to cease and desist, and, with the concurrence of the referee, to remove or have removed from the swimming venue anyone behaving in an unsafe manner or using profane or abusive language, or those whose actions are disrupting the orderly conduct of the meet.

#### **103.16 Announcer**

The announcer shall make any announcements requested by the referee, the clerk of course or the meet management. Announcements may include:

Event

Number of heats

Lane, name and club affiliation of competitors

Results

#### **103.17 Recorder Of Records**

Shall obtain from the official recorder all times made in each event, shall have proper application forms and shall duly process all record claims as set forth in article 105.

#### **103.18 Press Steward**

The press steward shall obtain from the clerk of course and the recorders the names of all swimmers in each event and the results of each finish with times or record performances, and shall keep the press and TV personnel thoroughly informed on all details of the competition during the meet.

# **PART 2: ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS OF COMPETITION**

## **ARTICLE 201: Membership And Representation**

### **201.1 Membership Of Individuals**

All swimmers participating in events sanctioned by USMS must be members of USMS registered through their LMSC or members of their nation's recognized Masters swimming governing body.

**201.1.1 Eligibility**—Swimmers age 18 and over are eligible and may apply for membership in USMS.

**201.1.2 Annual Membership**—Individual membership is for the period January 1 through December 31 of each year. Swimmers applying for membership for the following year on or after November 1 shall be issued a membership card valid from the registration date through December 31 of the following year. Swimmers may register unattached or may affiliate with a club that is already registered for the same year for which the swimmer is registering.

**201.1.3 One-Event Registration**—An LMSC may offer a single-event registration that allows an athlete to participate in ONE event sanctioned by that LMSC. Membership cards shall NOT be issued for one-event registration. One-event registrants must be considered unattached and agree to be governed by the rules and regulations of USMS, except that their times shall not be considered for Top 10 tabulation, national or world records, All-American status or any other USMS special awards. One-event registrants shall be identified as such in the meet results.

### **201.1.4 Membership Application Forms**

**A Membership application forms**—Individual membership application forms may be obtained from the registrar of the LMSC. The form, fully completed, shall be submitted with the applicable fee to the registrar of the LMSC or an official des-

ignee of the LMSC, who shall issue a membership card.

- B Liability release**—All membership application forms shall contain the exact language of the liability release according to article 203.1. The language shall not be modified in any way.

**201.1.5 Membership Fee**—The annual membership fee is composed of the following elements:

- A** A national fee established by the Board of Directors or the House of Delegates.
- B** A local fee established by the LMSC.

## **201.2 Membership Of Clubs**

Member clubs are organizations or groups of permanent character currently registered with USMS through its LMSCs and that actively promote and participate in Masters swimming.

**201.2.1 Annual Membership**— Annual membership for clubs is from the date of registration through December 31 of that year; however, a club applying for membership on or after November 1 will receive membership valid through December 31 of the following year. An LMSC shall not place any restrictions on the formation of clubs.

**201.2.2 Club Membership Forms**—Membership forms for clubs may be obtained from the registrar of the LMSC. Renewal forms will be accepted September 1 for the next registration year. The completed form shall be submitted with the applicable fee to the registrar of the LMSC. The National Office shall issue a certificate of club membership.

**201.2.3 Membership Fee**—The annual membership fee is composed of the following elements:

- A** A national fee established by the Board of Directors or the House of Delegates.
- B** A local fee established by the LMSC.

**201.2.4 Changing LMSC Affiliation**—A club wishing to change its LMSC affiliation must approve such change by a majority vote of its general membership at a regular club meeting or at a special meeting called for that purpose, with the vote duly certified by the club's president and secretary. The transfer also must be approved by a majority vote of the officers of the club's current and proposed LMSCs. If approved, the transfer shall be effective 60 days after receipt of written notice by the National Office.

### **201.3 Representation**

- 201.3.1** There shall be only one USMS membership per individual permitted at any time.
- 201.3.2** In order for a swimmer to compete as a representative of a club, that club must be a member in good standing of an LMSC and USMS for the year a swimmer is registering.
- 201.3.3** A swimmer shall register in the LMSC in which the club being represented is located. The swimmer need not reside within the LMSC territory.
- 201.3.4** An unattached swimmer is an individual member who does not represent a USMS club.
- 201.3.5** A swimmer shall not represent any club in competition for 60 consecutive days before transferring affiliation to another club, unless this transfer takes place at the time of annual registration. A swimmer may declare unattached status at any time without written application.
- 201.3.6** All applications for changes of membership (including transfers) must be accompanied by a reasonable fee to be determined by USMS and the LMSC in which the swimmer will register for change of membership.

### **201.4 Travel Permits**

- 201.4.1** A USMS membership card shall serve as a valid travel permit.
- 201.4.2** Written permission to compete in a foreign country may be obtained from that country's national Masters swimming chair or the chair's designee.
- 201.4.3**—Any foreign swimmers requesting an invitation to participate in USMS events may have such invitation extended only by the USMS president or the president's designee.

## **ARTICLE 202: Sanction/Recognition**

### **202.1 Sanctions**

Times achieved at sanctioned events are considered for USMS national records, USMS Top 10 times, and FINA world records. All swimmers entered in sanctioned events shall be USMS members, or shall have valid travel permits or their equivalents, or shall have other acceptable proof of current Masters membership.

- 202.1.1 Sanction Requirements**—Sanctions shall be issued, withheld or withdrawn in accordance with

the following:

- A** Applications for sanction shall be made to the LMSC within which the event is to be held, and applications shall be accompanied by a copy of the entry form and applicable fee.
  - (1)** The entry forms shall contain the language of the liability release as stated in article 203.1. The language may only be modified by naming the sanctioning LMSC, sponsoring USMS club(s) and/or additional insured(s) following “UNITED STATES MASTERS SWIMMING INC.” All swimmers, before participating, shall have signed the liability release.
  - (2)** Entry forms and programs must bear the statement “Sanctioned by (LMSC name) for USMS Inc. Sanction number: \_\_\_\_\_.”
  - (3)** The sanction fee shall be established by the LMSC.
- B** All sanctions shall be signed by the LMSC’s authorized representative, and a record thereof shall be retained for two years.
- C** Sanctions issued to one organization cannot be transferred to another. Any sanctions so transferred shall be void for all purposes, and the LMSC may deny further sanctions to any organization violating this provision.
- D** No sanction may be issued to any organization whose interest in sports and games is purely commercial, or where the event is to be promoted solely for the profit or the advertising value to be derived therefrom. Any income derived from sanctioned events must be used for the general welfare of the promoting organization as a whole.
- E** No sanction of any event shall be granted with the word “Olympic” or any derivative thereof used in any manner in connection with said event unless consent is obtained from the USOC.
- F** All sanctioned events are subject to the following conditions:
  - (1)** The conduct of a sanctioned event shall be in strict compliance with applicable USMS swimming rules and administrative regulations, or when the sanctioned event is held simultaneously in conjunction with a USA Swimming sanctioned meet, with applicable USA Swimming rules and administrative regulations.
  - (2)** In order to be in compliance with FINA rule C.7.2,

an LMSC may grant exceptions to specific USMS swimming rules and administrative regulations when sanctioning a FINA Masters World Championship.

- (3) Sanctioned events may include nonconforming swimming events so long as they are conducted in a safe manner. Nonconforming swimming events are events not defined in article 102.5 or that would typically result in the disqualification of participants as defined in article 102.15. USMS records and Top 10 times shall not be maintained in nonconforming events except for initial distances and relay leadoff split times for distances that are also events defined in 102.5.
  - (4) Sanctioned events may be conducted in facilities not meeting the dimensional tolerance for required pool length, but the results of those events shall not count for USMS records and Top 10. It must be noted in the meet information that events conducted in these facilities are noncompliant.
  - (5) All swimmers shall submit with their entries copies of their current membership cards or travel permits, or supply proof of current Masters membership acceptable to the LMSC; however, at the discretion of the meet director and exclusive of national championship meets, a swimmer may enter indicating “number pending,” as long as proof of membership is presented prior to the swimmer’s participation in the event.
  - (6) A swimmer’s valid affiliation and age must be displayed after the name on the heat sheet or in the program.
- G** A further sanction may be denied to any organization that has failed to conduct such event in accordance with applicable USMS swimming rules and administrative regulations, or as stated on the entry form.

## **202.2 Recognized Events**

Times achieved at recognized events shall be considered for USMS national records and Top 10 times if a designated USMS observer is present and verifies in writing that the conduct of the competition conforms to the relevant USMS swimming rules and administrative regulations. USMS membership is not required for swimmers entered in recognized events. Times achieved by USMS members at events sanctioned by USA Swimming shall be considered for USMS National records and Top 10 times without formal application for recognition. Times achieved by USMS members at events

sanctioned by a FINA member federation shall be considered for USMS National records and Top 10 times without formal application for recognition if the USMS member(s) register for the meet as USMS members. It is the responsibility of the swimmer to submit times obtained in recognized events with complete documentation to the appropriate LSMC Top 10 recorder and the Records and Tabulation Committee chair.

**202.2.1 Recognition**—Recognition shall be issued, withheld or withdrawn in accordance with the following:

- A** Application for recognition of events within the jurisdiction of USMS shall be made to the LMSC within which the event is to be held, and applications shall be accompanied by the recognition fee.
- B** All recognitions shall be signed by the LMSC's authorized representative, and a record thereof shall be retained for two years.
- C** Recognition issued to one organization cannot be transferred to another. Any recognition so transferred shall be void for all purposes, and the LMSC may deny further recognition to any organization violating this provision.
- D** No recognition may be issued to any organization whose interest in sports and games is purely commercial, or where the event is to be promoted solely for the profit or the advertising value to be derived therefrom. Any income derived from recognized events must be used for the general welfare of the promoting organization as a whole.
- E** The conduct of a recognized event shall conform to relevant USMS swimming rules and administrative regulations including, but not limited to, the following:
  - (1) Articles 101 Strokes and Relays or Article 108 (Swimmers with a Disability) Starts,
  - (2) Article 103.12.3 Resolution Timing
  - (3) Articles 103.13.1, 103.13.2, 103.13.3, 103.13.4, and 103.13.6 Time Official
  - (4) Articles 105.1, 105.2.1, 105.2.2A, 105.3.2, and Top 10 Times Records

105.3.7A, and 105.3.10.

- (5) Articles 107.2.1, Minimum Standards for Facilities 107.2.3A, 107.3, 107.11.1, 107.11.2, and 107.13
- (6) Relay leadoff split times that conform to 103.13.1 and 105.2.2A will be recognized for events listed in 102.5. USMS membership is not required for the other members of the relay team and the relay event itself need not conform to 102.5.
- F Further recognition may be denied to any organization that has failed to conduct said competition in accordance with applicable USMS swimming rules and regulations, or as stated on the entry form.
- G Recognition for any meet held outside the jurisdiction of USMS, and not sanctioned by a FINA member federation, shall be obtained from the Executive Committee.

### **202.3 Fitness Events**

Fitness events are USMS events approved by the USMS Fitness Committee, LMSCs or clubs. Participants shall be USMS members or obtain one-event registrations to participate in these events. A fitness event shall be a sanctioned event or performed in an organized/supervised practice.

# APPENDIX B: INFORMATION FOR MEET DIRECTORS AND OFFICIALS

## USMS-Approved Certifying Bodies

USMS approves USA Swimming USMS (through its LM-SCs), YMCA, Federation of High School Swimming Officials, College Swimming Officials Association (NCAA) and San Diego–Imperial LMSC as organizations for certifying officials.

## Enforcement Of Rules

USMS rules shall be applied uniformly regardless of age.

## Differences Between USA Swimming And USMS Rules

All provisions under Part 1 of USMS Swimming Rules are effective January 1, 2009 [USA-S provisions under Part One, the Technical Rules are effective May 15, 2009]. USMS follows USA Swimming’s Technical Rules, Articles 101, 102 and 105, with the following exceptions (USMS and USA Swimming References in brackets):

### MS1 Starts, Strokes, and Relays

**MS1.1 Forward start**—The forward start may be taken from the starting block, the pool deck or a push from the wall. The forward start or the backstroke start shall be used for freestyle events. The starter’s long whistle indicates that the swimmer must take a position with at least one foot at the front of the platform, the edge of the pool, or on the wall before the command “Take your mark”. The backstroke start may be used as the in-the-water start during freestyle events. [USMS 101.1.1 and 101.5.1; USA-S 101.1.2]

**MS1.2 Butterfly**—The breaststroke or whip kick may be used exclusively or interchangeably with the dolphin kick at any time during the race. However, when the breaststroke or whip kick is used, the arms must be recovered over the top of the water with each breaststroke or whip kick, except after the last such kick before the turn or finish. After the start and after each turn, if the breaststroke or whip kick is used, only one kick is allowed prior to the arm pull that brings the swimmer to the surface. [USMS 101.3.2 and 101.3.3; USA-S 101.3.2 and 101.3.3]

**MS1.3 Backstroke**—Note: The swimmer who turns

past vertical and, in a continuous motion, grabs the wall before pushing off with the feet while on the back is considered to have executed a “continuous turning action”. [USMS 101.4.3; USA-S 101.4.3]

**MS1.4 Relay**—Relay swimmers who cannot exit the water quickly enough to prevent interference with automatic officiating equipment may hold on to the lane line until all relays have finished, allowing them to exit the pool more slowly or via the ladders at the conclusion of the race. [USMS 101.7.3E; USA-S 101.7.3E]

**MS1.5 Long Distance Swimming**—Pool Events are governed by Open Water and Long Distance rules. There is no provision for leaving the water for brief periods during the swim. [USMS 302.4 and 304; USA-S 101.8]

## **MS2 Swimming Competition**

**MS2.1 Relay**— First and last names of eligible swimmers, their ages and order of swimming shall be submitted to the clerk of course or to the head lane timer. [USMS 102.9.5; USA-S 102.4.7]

**MS2.2 Personnel**—The minimum personnel at USMS sanctioned or recognized Masters swimming meets shall include the following: one referee, one starter, two stroke and turn judges, two timers per lane (if automatic timing is not being used). The referee and starter may double as stroke and turn judges, but the referee and starter may not be the same person. The referee shall be certified as a stroke and turn judge, starter or referee by a USMS-approved certifying body. Note: USMS does not use place judges. [USMS 103.1 and 103.2; USA-S 102.12.3]

**MS2.3 Warm-up**— If there is no other warm-up/warm-down area available in pools of five lanes or more, one lane shall be set aside for warm-up/warm-down during the conduct of the meet. In pools of four or fewer lanes, swimmers shall be allowed to swim to the other end of the pool at the end of each heat and a warm-up/warm-down period must be offered at least once during each half hour of competition. [USMS 102.4.1; USA-S none]

**MS2.4 Timed finals**—All Masters events held in meters pools (short course or long course) are conducted on a timed-final basis. Short course yards meets, except for national championships, MAY be conducted on a basis other than timed finals (e.g.,

trials/finals basis). If trials/finals are offered, competitors are limited to three individual events per day. [USMS 102.10.1 and 102.6; USA-S 102.2]

## **MS2.5 Seeding**

**MS2.5.1** Age groups, genders, and events of the same distance 200 yards or longer may be combined so that no swimmer has to swim alone and lanes may be filled. [USMS 102.10.1B; USA-S 102.1.4 and 102.8.2]

**MS2.5.2** Seeding at meets other than national championship meets may be either fast-to-slow or slow-to-fast. Seeding may differ for sprint and distance events. [USMS 102.10.1D; USA-S 102.5.4A]

## **MS2.6 Records and Top Ten**

**MS2.6.1** Record applications and Top Ten submissions shall not be accepted unless certification of course length accompanies them or is on file with USMS or USA Swimming. [USMS 105.1.6A; USA-S 104.2.2C(3)(a)]

**MS2.6.2** USMS records may only be established by USMS members in sanctioned or recognized competition. Because swimmers from different age groups and genders may compete in the same heat or event, winning the heat or event is not required to establish a record. [USMS 105.1.1; USA-S 104.2.1F]

**MS2.6.3** Relay leadoff split times will be considered for records or Top Ten times, provided the swimmers complete the event without being disqualified, and provided automatic timing is used. [USMS 103.13.1, 103.13.3, and 105.2.2A and D; USA-S 104.2.1E]

**MS2.6.4** If swimmers want their initial splits as part of a longer individual event to be submitted for records or Top Ten times, they must notify the referee, in writing, prior to the conclusion of the meet. However, for backstroke initial splits and relay leadoff legs to count, notification must be made prior to the swim so that officials may verify that a legal finish was performed at the initial distance and that for relays the second swimmer did not start in the water. [USMS 103.13.1B(1) and (2); 103.13.1D; and 105.2.2B, C, and E; USA-S none]

**MS2.6.5** Required documentation for USMS records includes the referee's signature, as well as the printout from the automatic or semiautomatic (with three buttons) timing equipment or the time

card bearing times and signatures from three timers. [USMS 105.3.8; USA-S 104.2.2C(2)]

**MS2.7 Scratch procedure**—Swimmers or relay teams not reporting for or competing in an event are not penalized. [USMS 102.8.1; USA-S 102.3]

**MS2.8 Protest**—Protests arising from competition shall be made within 30 minutes after the race in which the alleged infraction took place. If the protest is not resolved immediately, the protester shall at that time file a written protest with the chair of the Local Masters Swimming Committee (LMSC) or the chair's representative having jurisdiction over the event. If the LMSC does not satisfactorily resolve the protest within 10 days, the protester may appeal in writing to the USMS Rules Committee chair within the next five days for final adjudication, whose final decision shall then be binding on all parties. Protests concerning interpretation of the rules in Part 1: Swimming Rules and the Glossary shall be submitted in writing (on paper or in an electronic file) within 10 days to the USMS Rules Committee chair. [USMS 102.16.5 and 102.16.4; USA-S 102.11.5]

**MS2.9 Eligibility**—The eligibility of a participant for a particular age group will be determined for all meters meets (both short course and long course) by the swimmer's age as of December 31 of the year of competition. For short course yards meets, eligibility will be determined by the swimmer's age as of the last day of the meet. [USMS 102.2; USA-S 205.2.2]

### **Dual Sanctioned Events**

The following shall govern the conduct of combined, parallel, and interwoven meets, hereinafter known as dual sanctioned events, between members of United States Swimming and United States Masters Swimming.

In the event of a claim by a third party, including participants and spectators, alleging bodily injury and/or property damage arising from the conduct of a dual sanctioned event, USA-S and USMS will notify Risk Management Services Inc. as soon as practicable. Any conflicts or request for interpretations shall be resolved by the executive directors of USA-S and USMS.

All competitors in dual sanctioned events must be members of USA Swimming, USMS or both. Competitors who are members of both must select one organization with which to compete for the entire meet, in advance of competition. Dual

membership cannot be used to exceed the daily event limits imposed by either organization. Automatic recognition of times achieved by a USMS swimmer competing in the USA-S portion is still available.

Dual sanctioned events must have sanctions from both USA-S and USMS. Both sanctions must be held by the host organization. The host organization cannot be required to accept a participant from either USMS or USA-S that would otherwise be barred from participation by their respective organizations. USMS records and Top 10 submissions must comply with all USMS documentation requirements.

**Combined Meets**—With the consent of all hosting teams and the LSC and LMSC, a combined meet may be sanctioned by both USA-S and USMS with all swimmers competing according to USA-S rules. This mechanism allows the meet hosts to seed the event as they normally would, based upon times, with USA-S and USMS members combined in heats without specific lanes allocated to one organization or the other. There are restrictions, however. A divider must separate members of each organization. A lane line is sufficient to achieve the separation. This does preclude, for example, swimming two-to-a-lane with a member of each organization in the same lane. Warm-up and warm-down should be conducted in separate lanes. Relay teams must consist of members of the same organization.

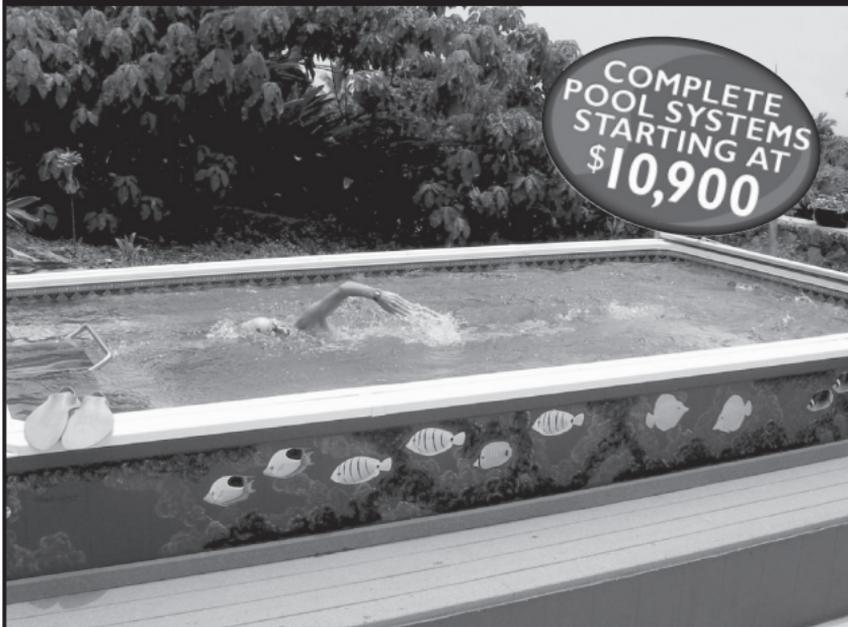
**Parallel Meets**—The two meets may be swum in parallel by assigning some lanes to USMS competitors and a different set of lanes to USA-S competitors. If possible, separate stroke and turn officials for each set is preferred. It is permissible to adjust, for example, the makeup of the USMS heats so that competitors in a given heat have approximately the same seed times. Each organization's rules apply to its members.

**Interwoven Meets**—The two meets may be swum with complete heats of swimmers from both organizations. There is no need for separate stroke and turn officials. Each organization's rules apply to its members.

**Warm-up and Warm-down**—Members of each organization must use separate warm-up and warm-down lanes throughout the meet, including the periods prior to and after the actual competition.



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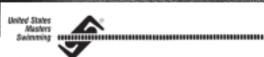
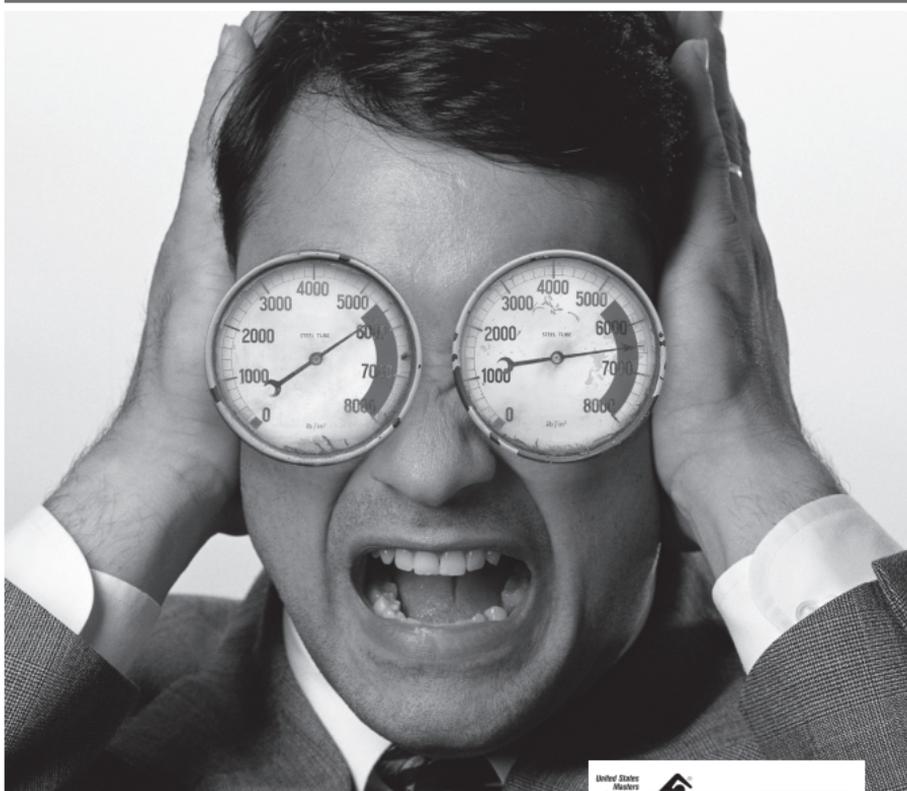
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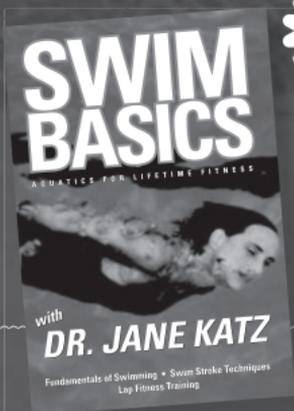
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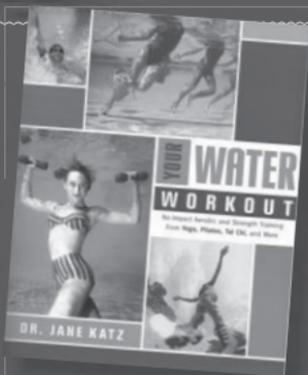
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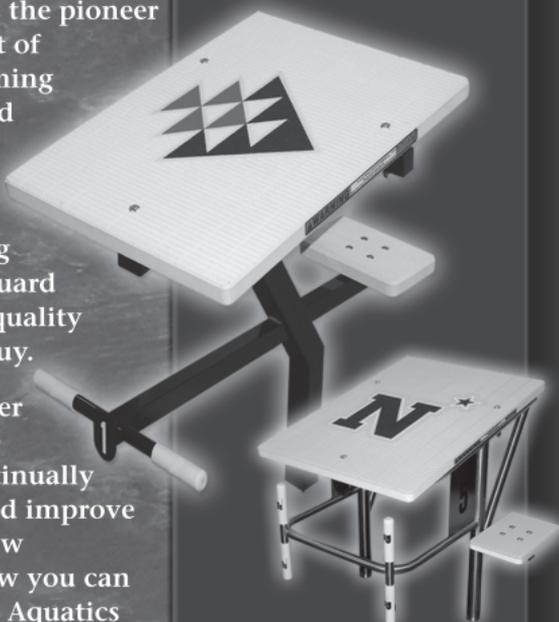


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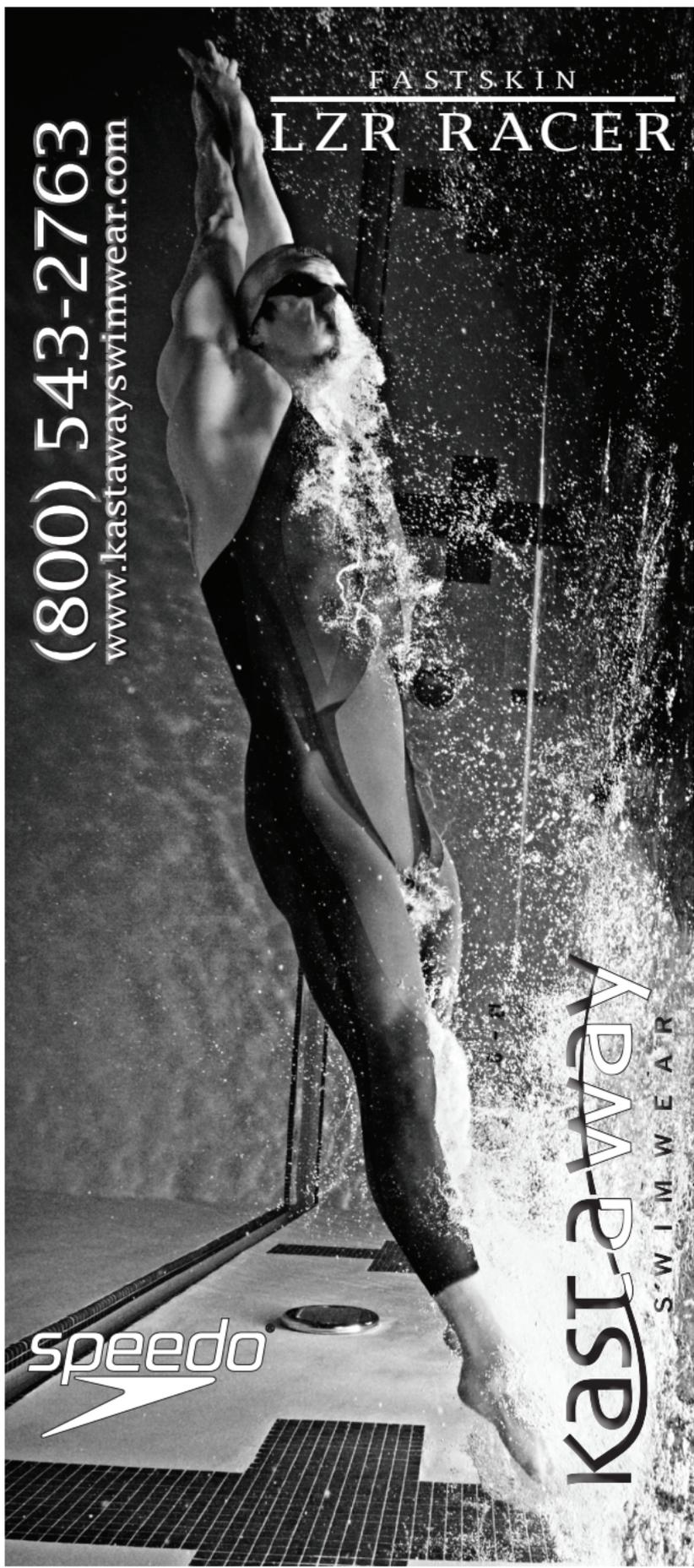


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