



**U.S. MASTERS  
SWIMMING**

**2017**  
**mini Rule Book**



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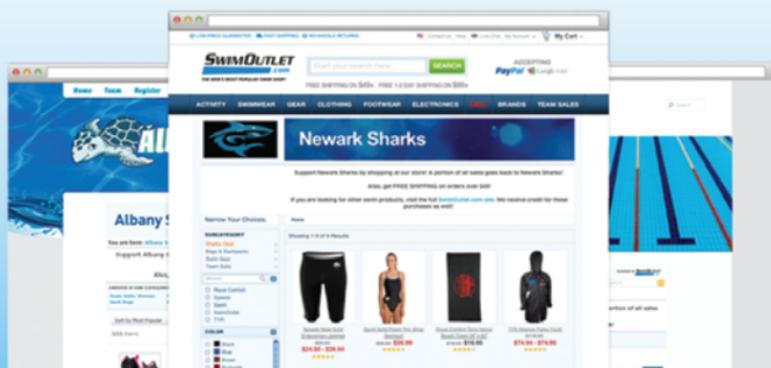
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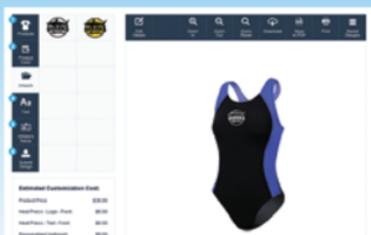


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2017

**U.S. MASTERS SWIMMING  
CODE OF REGULATIONS  
AND  
RULES OF COMPETITION**

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The most up-to-date version of this rule book is  
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**Cover Image:** Swimmers leap off the blocks at the start of a race during the 2016 Nationwide Spring National Championship held at the Greensboro Aquatic Center in Greensboro, N.C. Photo by Peter H. Bick.

This pocket-sized rule book contains the rules for swim meets in articles 101, 102, 103, 201, and 202 in the 2016 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 2017 USMS Rule Book:**

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- Appendix D Zone and LMSC Boundaries
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The USMS Mini Rule Book may be purchased for \$6:  
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## PART 1: SWIMMING RULES

All provisions under *Part 1: Swimming Rules*, unless otherwise specified, are effective beginning January 1, 2017, 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 may take and maintain their positions with at least one foot at the front of the starting platform or the deck, or in the water. On the starter’s command, “Take your mark,” each swimmer shall immediately assume the starting position with at least one foot at the front of the starting platform or the deck. Each swimmer starting in the water must take the position on the wall with at least one hand in contact with the wall or starting platform and one foot in contact with the wall. A swimmer starting in the water may face any direction.

#### 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 take their positions on the wall without undue delay.

**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. When using a backstroke ledge at the start, the toes of both feet must be in contact with the end wall or face of the touchpad. Bending the toes over the top of the touchpad is prohibited.

**101.1.3 STARTER**—See article 103.8 for starter equipment, preparation, optional instructions, start commands, false starts, warning signal, and deliberate delay or misconduct.

## **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 body shall be kept on the breast. The swimmer is not permitted to roll onto the back at any time except at the turn after the touch of the wall where it is permissible to turn in any manner as long as the body is on the breast when leaving the wall. 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, at any time prior to the first breast stroke kick, a single butterfly (dolphin) kick is permitted, 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. Scissors, alternating movements, or downward



butterfly (dolphin) kicks are 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 separated and simultaneously at, above, or below the water level. At the last stroke before the turn and at the finish, an arm stroke not followed by a leg kick is permitted. 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 except at the turn after the touch of the wall where it is permissible to turn in any manner as long as the body is on the breast when leaving the wall. Both arms must be brought forward simultaneously over the water and pulled back simultaneously under the water throughout the race.

**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 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 kick is permitted per arm pull, except that a single breaststroke kick is permitted prior to the turn and the finish without an arm pull. After the start and after each turn, a single breaststroke 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 separated and 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 separated and 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 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 an immediate continuous single arm pull or an immediate 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.

**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 that 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 rules for that stroke apply.

**101.7.3 Rules Pertaining to Relays**

**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.

**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** 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.

**G** Mixed relays shall consist of two men and two women who may swim in any order.

**101.7.4** See article 102.9 for additional relay rules.





## 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 nonsanctioned or nonrecognized activities will not be recorded for official purposes and cannot be used for LMSC rankings or USMS 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**— In pools of five lanes or more, a separate warm-up area must be made available to swimmers during the competition. 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 Dual-Sanctioned Meets**—If the meet is a dual-sanctioned meet with USA Swimming, the requirements of 102.4.1 may be adjusted depending on availability of warm-up space at the venue by agreement between the LMSC and LSC host clubs. If a continuous warm-up/warm-down lane(s) or area is not available in pools of five lanes or more, the entry information shall clearly state the availability of warm-up for USMS athletes. Once the entry information is published, changes which further restrict the availability of continuous warm-up/warm-down space are not permitted.

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

## **102.5 EVENTS**

**102.5.1** 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.

**102.5.2** Any event conducted must be offered for all age groups and both genders. Events may be repeated with the same stroke and distance as different event numbers at a meet. Any of the following events may be conducted.

### **A 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

### **A 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

**102.5.3** Nonconforming events may be offered in accordance with the provisions of article 202.1.1G(3). For open water and long distance events, see Part 3.

**102.5.4** All short course meters events, long course meters events, and national championships shall be conducted on a timed-finals basis. Other short course yards events may be conducted on a timed-finals basis or another basis (e.g., preliminary heats and finals). If events are conducted in a format other than timed finals, the entry information shall state the process for seeding, contesting the event, and determining the final places.

**102.5.5** Independent attempts to establish official times (“time trials”) are permitted only in USMS-sanctioned short course yards meets other than national championship meets. Time trials are not permitted in USMS national championship meets, short course meters, or long course meters meets. If time trials are offered, the meet announcement must state the events being offered and the format for the time trials.

**102.5.6** The order of events must be published in the meet announcement prior to the meet. (See article 102.11 for change of program or postponement.)

**102.6 EVENT LIMIT**

**102.6.1** A swimmer may compete in not more than six individual events per day.

**102.6.2** A swimmer shall not compete more than once in the same numbered individual event.

**102.6.3** If, 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 daily event limit.

**102.6.4** For events conducted in formats other than timed finals that require multiple swims (e.g., preliminary heats and finals), swimmers may compete in not more than three individual events per day.

**102.6.5** For events conducted in formats other than timed finals that require multiple swims (e.g., preliminary heats and finals), all swims (e.g., preliminary heats) are considered as part of the same individual event, not as multiple individual events.





**102.6.6** If time trials are offered in short course yards meets, any time trial events swum shall be included in the daily event limit. A swimmer may repeat, as a time trial, an individual event already swum during the meet on the same day or in the same meet.

**102.6.7** Any nonconforming events swum shall be included in the daily event limit.

### **102.7 ENTRIES**

**102.7.1** Each competitor shall enter with the full name as it appears on the USMS registration card.

**102.7.2** 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** Swimmers who will be competing only in relays must be entered in accordance with the procedures in the official meet entry information.

**102.9.5** 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.

**102.9.6** 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.





**102.9.7** The competing teams, first and last names of members, and their ages must be listed in the meet results.

**102.9.8** 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.

**102.9.9** See article 101.7 for additional relay rules.

**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., preliminary heats and finals). In such cases, the entry information shall state the process for seeding.

**B** Age groups and/or genders, as well as 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 slowest 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 swum 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 nor interfere with another competitor nor 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 CHANGE OF PROGRAM AND POSTPONEMENT**

**102.11.1** 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.

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

**102.11.3** The entry provisions and starting time of any event, meet, or portion thereof shall stand as stated in the meet announcement 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. Electronic notice must be sent no later than the entry deadline date stated in the meet announcement. 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 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.

**102.11.4 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 (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** Incomplete events will not be awarded or scored; however, times achieved in accordance with articles 103.17 and 103.18 up to the point of cancellation shall be considered official.

**F** 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).

## **102.12 SWIMWEAR FOR POOL COMPETITION**

### **102.12.1 Design**

**A** 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.

**B** Swimwear shall include only a swimsuit, no more than two caps, and goggles (a nose clip and ear plugs are allowed). Armbands or legbands shall not be regarded as parts of the swimsuit and are not allowed.

**C** In swimming competitions, the competitor must wear only one swimsuit in one or two pieces. All swimsuits shall be made from textile materials. For men, the swimsuit shall not extend above the navel nor below the knees, and for women, shall not cover the neck, extend past the shoulder nor extend below the knees.

(1) Exemptions to the foregoing restrictions may be granted to a swimmer, on a case-by-case basis, by the chair of the Rules Committee or designee. Exemptions will be granted for conflicts due to the swimmer's verified religious beliefs, verified medical conditions, or other reasons as deemed appropriate by the chair of the Rules Committee.

(2) Procedures for applying for an exemption will be established by the Rules Committee and posted on the USMS website.

(3) No exemption to these restrictions will be granted for a swimsuit that will give the swimmer a competitive advantage.

(4) The decision of the Rules Committee chair may be appealed only to the entire Rules Committee, whose decision shall be final and binding on all parties.

**D** Only swimsuits complying with FINA swimsuit specifications may be worn in any USMS sanctioned or recognized competition.



**E** No swimmer is permitted to wear or use any device or substance to enhance speed, pace, buoyancy, or endurance during a race (such as webbed gloves, fins, power bands, adhesive substances, snorkels, neoprene caps, etc.). Goggles may be worn, and rubdown oil applied if not considered excessive by the referee. Medical identification items may be worn. Any kind of tape on the body is not permitted unless approved by the referee.

**102.12.2 Advertising**—Products involving tobacco, alcohol, or pharmaceuticals containing substances 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.

### **102.13 DISQUALIFICATIONS**

**102.13.1** 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 (article 103.10.5B) or dual confirmation of false starts (article 103.8.6A–B), a disqualification is not signaled by raising one hand overhead.



**102.13.2** 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 one or both as to the reason for the disqualification. Failure to notify does not negate the disqualification.



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

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

**102.13.5** 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.

**102.13.6** 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.

**102.13.7** 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.



**102.13.8** 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 committing the foul.

**102.13.9** No swimmers are permitted to wear or use any device or substance to enhance speed, pace, buoyancy, or endurance during a race (such as webbed gloves, fins, power bands, adhesive substances, snorkels, neoprene caps, etc.). Goggles may be worn, and rubdown oil applied if not considered excessive by the referee. Medical identification items may be worn. Any kind of tape on the body is not permitted unless approved by the referee.

**102.13.10** Grasping the lane line or side wall to assist forward motion is not permitted.

**102.13.11** For relay disqualifications, refer to article 101.7.3.

**102.13.12** 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 given prior to the decision to disqualify, they shall be returned and given to the proper recipient(s), and if points have been scored by those disqualified, the event shall be rescored.

**102.13.13** Time and/or place officially recorded for a swimmer shall not be nullified for violations occurring subsequent to such performance.

**102.13.14** 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.

**102.13.15** Video replay footage from cameras approved in writing in advance of the competition by the chair of the USMS Officials Committee and, for a national championship meet, with the concurrence of the chair of the USMS Championship Committee, may be used to review stroke or turn infractions called on deck. The official(s) reviewing the video may only confirm the call made on deck, overrule the call, or advise the referee that the review proved inconclusive.

## **102.14 PROTESTS**

**102.14.1** The official results of any protested race shall not be announced, the affected awards shall not be given, and points shall not be allocated until the protest is resolved or is withdrawn in writing.

**102.14.2** 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.

**102.14.3** 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.

**102.14.4** 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.

**102.14.5** 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.

**102.15 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 MEET DIRECTOR**

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

**103.2 REQUIRED PERSONNEL**

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

**103.2.1 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.

**103.2.2 Timers**—Two timers per lane if semiautomatic or manual timing is used. One timer per lane if automatic timing is used.

**103.3 QUALIFICATION OF OFFICIALS**

**103.3.1** Referees shall be certified in this capacity by a USMS-approved certifying body (Appendix B). Starters or stroke and turn judges certified by one of these bodies may serve as referees if they receive training on specific duties of the referee.

**103.3.2** Starters and stroke and turn judges shall be certified in said capacities by a USMS-approved certifying body (Appendix B). However, uncertified officials may perform the duties of such positions if they receive training in the specified duties of their positions and are under the direct supervision of a certified official.

**103.4 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.

**103.5 MEET COMMITTEE**

The meet committee is appointed by the meet host. 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: obtaining a sanction; arranging for personnel, equipment, and supplies necessary for meet operation; ordering awards; arranging appropriate publicity and media coverage; processing entries; printing programs; preparing the facility; verifying proper certification of pool length as described in 105.1.7; completing record applications; 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:

**A** Shall have full authority over all officials.

**B** Shall assign and instruct all officials.

**C** 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.





**D** 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 disqualification.

**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.

**103.6.4** The referee shall assign marshals with specific instructions.

**103.6.5** The referee shall give a decision on any point where the opinions of the judges differ and shall have authority to intercede in a competition at any stage to ensure that the racing conditions are observed.

**103.6.6** The referee may assign two additional timers per lane dedicated to recording initial distances for USMS Top 10 purposes or may assign three additional timers per lane to record initial distances for world records. The swimmer may request such additional timers for this purpose.

**103.6.7** The referee shall make an immediate investigation when an apparent malfunction of the automatic or semiautomatic timing equipment has occurred to determine whether the swimmer finished in accordance with the rules and/or if there was an actual equipment malfunction.

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

**103.6.9** 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 shall not set precedent. It shall be the responsibility of the swimmer or a representative to notify the referee of the disability prior to competition.

**103.6.10** The referee shall establish the necessary administrative and officiating procedures to conform to article 102.10.3 and .4 when conducting events from alternate ends of a 50-meter course or conducting freestyle events longer than 200 meters two-to-a-lane.

**103.6.11** Refer to article 102.14 concerning protests.

**103.7 ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIAL**

**103.7.1** The administrative official shall be responsible to the referee for the supervision of the following:

- A** The entry and registration process.





- B Clerk of course.
- C Timing equipment operator.
- D Other administrative personnel.

**103.7.2** The administrative official shall be responsible to the referee for:

- A The accurate processing of entries and scratches.
- B Accurate seeding of heats.
- C Determination and recording of official time:
  - (1) Receiving and reviewing the automatic and/or semiautomatic timing results from the timing equipment operator and comparing primary timing results with the backup timing results to determine their validity.
  - (2) Receiving the times recorded by the head lane timers from the chief timer and using that data to the extent needed to determine the official time for each swimmer.
  - (3) Unless otherwise directed, notifying the referee whenever a time obtained by the primary timing system cannot be used as the official time.
  - (4) Recording disqualifications approved by the referee.
- D Determination of the official results.
- E Publication and posting of results of each event by gender and age group and scores (scores optional).

**103.7.3** The administrative official shall perform other duties assigned by the referee.

**103.8 STARTER**

**103.8.1 Equipment**—The preferred starting device shall be 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.

**103.8.2 Preparation**—The starter shall stand on the side of the pool within approximately 5 meters 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.
  - B Advise the heat that 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 may and maintain take their positions with at least one foot at the front of the starting platform or the deck and remain there. Swimmers starting in the water must take their positions on the wall with at least one hand in contact with the wall or starting platform and one foot in contact with the wall. 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 take their positions on the wall without undue delay (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," each swimmer shall immediately assume a starting position that maintains at least one foot at the front of the starting platform or at the front of the pool deck. A swimmer starting in the water must have at least one foot on the wall and 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.

**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(s) who have false started shall be disqualified upon completion of the race in accordance with article 102.13.2.

**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. 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 slightly behind 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 after the start and when turning or finishing, the swimmer complies with the 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 feet of the departing swimmer(s) as they leave the starting platform and the touch of the incoming swimmer(s), 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 Place Judge**—One or two place judges may be positioned on the side of the course near the finish to judge the order of finish of all swimmers. If two place judges are used, they shall independently record the order of finish of all swimmers. A place judge shall record a tie if a place distinction cannot be made. The referee, starter, or another official may also serve as a place judge. Judging results may only be used to corroborate the places determined by the ranking of official times or to determine places in the event of a malfunction. Judging may not be used to change the results produced by ranking the official times.

**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. When overhead video cameras replace timers, this responsibility shall be assigned to other meet personnel.

**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** Report and indicate on the timing recording form 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. When overhead video cameras replace timers, this responsibility shall be assigned to other meet personnel.

**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. When overhead video cameras replace timers, this responsibility shall be assigned to other meet personnel.

**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, pre-send the watch for inspection. Lane timers shall not clear their watches until the command, "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). The timing equipment operator shall also 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.

**103.12 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.

**103.13 MARSHALS**

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.

**103.14 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.

**103.15 RECORDER OF RECORDS**

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

**103.16 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.



## 103.17 TIMING EQUIPMENT

**103.17.1 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 whose start is activated by a starting device and stopped at the finish by the swimmer touching the touchpad.

**B Semiautomatic**—A timing system whose start is activated by a starting device 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.

**103.17.2 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 one of the following, listed in their preferred order of use:

- (1) Stationary overhead video cameras recording 100 images per second. The cameras must be fully integrated with the primary timing system.
- (2) Semiautomatic with three, two, or one button(s), each operated by a separate timer.
- (3) Manual with three, two, or one watch(es) per lane, each operated by a separate timer.

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



### 103.17.3 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 semi-automatic or manual timing is used, only valid times shall be used in calculating the official time. The times shall be determined as follows:

(1) If two of the three valid button times or two of the three valid watch times agree, the time of the two buttons or two watches in agreement shall be the time for that timing system.

(2) If three valid button times or three valid watch times disagree, the time of the intermediate button or intermediate watch shall be the time for that timing system.

(3) If only two valid button times or two valid watch times are available, the average of the two button times or the average of the two watch times shall be the time for that timing system. The digits representing thousandths of a second shall be dropped with no rounding.

(4) If only one valid button or one valid watch time is available, the time of that button or watch shall be the time for that timing system provided it is supported by other information.

**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 approximately .30 second or greater; or

(2) It is reported the swimmer missed the touchpad or had a soft touch.

**D Fully integrated, overhead video system backup**—If the backup system is a fully integrated, stationary overhead video system, the video camera time shall be the official time without adjustment in the event of a primary timing system malfunction.

**E Official time for a malfunction on a lane**—When a malfunction is confirmed on a lane, the official time for that lane shall be calculated using valid times reported by the secondary timing system (or the tertiary system in the event of a failure of the primary and secondary backup systems) in accordance with 103.17.3B and integrated with the accurate primary times in determining the results. (See 103.10.6 for the use of place judge rankings in the determination of official time.)

**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.

**G 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 1—Example of 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 ( $24.50 \div 8 = 3.0625$ ).
- Drop the digits after the hundredths place (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,  $52.12 + 3.06 = 55.18$ ).



## **103.18 OFFICIAL TIME**

**103.18.1** An official time shall be achieved in a USMS-sanctioned competition or a USMS-recognized event in accordance with all applicable rules (articles 202.1.1G(1) and 202.2.1E). It may be achieved in:

- A** Any 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** A time trial conducted in a USMS-sanctioned meet or USMS-recognized meet under the rules of the sanctioning organization.

**103.18.2** Upon a recommendation from the meet host, the meet referee may approve the automatic recording of individual initial splits and relay leadoff splits without the requirement for a written request subject to the following conditions:

- A** A Initial splits from specific individual events or from all individual events, with the exception of backstroke events, may be approved.
- B** Relay leadoff splits from specific relay events or from all relay events, with the exception of initial splits within a backstroke leadoff distance, may be approved provided that:
  - (1) Officials are assigned to judge the exchanges,
  - (2) Officials confirm that the second swimmer does not start in the water when automatic timing is used, and
  - (3) Officials confirm that the second swimmer does not invalidate the pad touch at the exchange by standing on an active pad.
- C** For national championship meets, the meet referee may approve automatic splits with the concurrence of the USMS Championship Committee.

**103.18.3** 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.

**103.18.4 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.

**103.18.5 Records and Top 10 Times Using an Automatic Primary Timing System**—Secondary and tertiary times may be used to determine the official time as follows when the automatic primary timing system fails, provided the procedures in 103.17.3B are followed. See 103.17.3D for overhead video backup.

**A** World records, USMS records, and USMS Top 10 times may be established when the times are reported by an automatic primary timing system,

**B** World records, USMS records, and USMS Top 10 times may be established when the automatic primary timing system fails if the times are reported by a semiautomatic secondary timing system using three, two, or one valid button(s).

**C** World records may be established when both the automatic primary and semiautomatic secondary systems fail (no valid button times) if the times are reported by a manual tertiary system with three valid watch times.

**D** USMS records may be established when both the automatic primary and semiautomatic secondary systems fail (no valid button times) if the times are reported by a manual tertiary system using a minimum of two valid watch times.

**E** USMS Top 10 times may be established when both the automatic primary and semiautomatic secondary systems fail (no valid button times) if the times are reported by a manual tertiary system using a minimum of one valid watch time.

**F** An initial distance or a relay leadoff leg may be used to establish world records, USMS records, or USMS Top 10 times when reported by an automatic primary timing system.

**G** An initial distance or a relay leadoff leg may be used to establish world records when the automatic primary timing system fails and the times are reported by a manual backup timing system with three valid watch times.

**H** USMS records shall not be established for initial distances and relay leadoff legs using a manual backup system when the primary system fails.



**I** An initial distance or relay leadoff leg may be used to establish USMS Top 10 times when the primary timing system fails and the times are reported by a manual backup timing system with a minimum of two valid watch times.

Note: If the secondary system is manual watches (no semiautomatic system), the requirements listed in 103.18.5C-E shall apply to the watch times.

**103.18.6 Records and Top 10 Times Using a Semiautomatic Primary Timing System**—Semiautomatic times are used to determine the official time as follows (or backup times when the semiautomatic primary timing system fails), provided the procedures in 103.17.3B are followed.

**A** World records may be established when the times are reported by a semiautomatic primary timing system with three valid button times.

**B** USMS records may be established when timed by a three-button semiautomatic primary timing system and the times are reported by three, two, or one valid button times.

**C** USMS Top 10 times may be established when timed by a minimum two-button semiautomatic primary timing system and the times are reported by three, two, or one valid button times.

**D** World records may be established when the three-button semiautomatic primary system fails (no valid button times) if the times are reported by a manual backup system with three valid watch times.

**E** USMS records may be established when the three-button semiautomatic primary system fails (no valid button times) if the times are reported by a manual backup system with three or two valid watch times.

**F** USMS Top 10 times may be established when the minimum two-button semiautomatic primary system fails (no valid button times) if the times are reported by a manual backup system with three, two, or one valid watch times.

**G** An initial distance or a relay leadoff leg may be used to establish world records when reported by a manual backup timing system with three valid watch times.

**H** USMS records shall not be established for initial distances and relay leadoff legs using a manual backup system when the primary system fails.

**I** An initial distance or relay leadoff leg may be used to establish USMS Top 10 times when the times are reported by a manual backup timing system with a minimum of two valid watch times.

**103.18.7 Records and Top 10 Times Using a Manual**



**Primary Timing System**—Manual times are used to determine the official time as follows, provided the procedures in 103.17.3B are followed.

**A** World records and USMS records may be established when the times are reported by a manual primary timing system with three valid watch times.

**B** USMS Top 10 times may be established when the times are reported by a manual primary timing system with a minimum of two valid watch times.

**C** An initial distance or a relay leadoff leg may be used to establish world records when the times are reported by a manual primary system with three valid watch times.

**D** USMS records shall not be established for initial distances and relay leadoff legs using a manual primary timing system.

**E** An initial distance or a relay leadoff leg may be used to establish USMS top 10 times when the times are reported by a manual primary system with a minimum of two valid watch times.

**103.18.8** Only those results from events conducted in pools officially certified for length in conformance with article 107.2.1 shall be acceptable for record applications or Top 10 submissions.

**103.18.9** 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 article 103.18.4.

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



**Table 2: Summary of timing requirements for world records, USMS records, and USMS Top 10 times.**

	<b>Automatic Primary Timing System</b>	<b>Semiautomatic Primary Timing System</b>	<b>Manual Primary Timing System</b>
<b>World Records</b>	Touchpad time		
	Semiautomatic backup time with three, two, or one valid button(s) if the touchpad fails	Three valid buttons	
	Manual backup time with three valid watches if the semiautomatic system fails (no valid buttons)	Three valid watches if the three-button semiautomatic system fails (no valid buttons)	Three valid watches
	Leadoff or initial split recorded by a touchpad		
	Leadoff or initial split recorded by three valid watches if the touchpad fails	Leadoff or initial split recorded by three valid watches.	Leadoff or initial split recorded by three valid watches.
<b>USMS Records</b>	Touchpad time		
	Semiautomatic backup time with three, two, or one valid button(s) if the touchpad fails	Three-button system with a time calculated using the procedure in 103.17.3B	
	Manual backup time with two valid watches if the semiautomatic system fails (no valid buttons)	Two valid watches if the three-button semiautomatic system fails (no valid buttons)	Three valid watches
	Leadoff or initial split recorded by touchpad		
<b>USMS Top 10 Times</b>	Touchpad time		
	Semiautomatic backup time with three, two, or one valid button(s) if the touchpad fails.	Two-button system with a time calculated using the procedure in 103.17.3B	
	Manual backup time with one valid watch if the semiautomatic system fails (no valid buttons).	One watch if the two-button semiautomatic system fails (no buttons)	Two valid watches
	Leadoff or initial split recorded by two valid watches if the touchpad fails.	Leadoff or initial split recorded by two valid watches.	Leadoff or initial split recorded by two valid watches.



### 103.19 SCORING

The following is recommended for all Masters swimming competition.

#### 103.19.1 Dual Meets

Individual events: 5-3-1-0

Relay events: 7-0

#### 103.19.2 Triangular Meets

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

Relay events: 8-4-0

#### 103.19.3 Other Meets

##### A 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.

**B LMSC Options**—For nonstandard meets, the LMSC and/or meet host may establish the scoring point values to suit the format of the meet. These point values shall be stated in the meet announcement.

**103.19.4 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.

**103.19.5 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.

#### 103.20 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.





## **ARTICLE 201: MEMBERSHIP AND REPRESENTATION**

### **201.1 MEMBERSHIP OF INDIVIDUALS**

All swimmers participating in events sanctioned by USMS, with the exception of events falling under articles 203.1.1B and 203.1.1C, 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**



**A Open Water One-Event Registration**—An LMSC may offer a single-event registration that allows an athlete to participate in a USMS-sanctioned open water event. Membership cards shall not be issued for one-event registration. One-event registrants must be considered unattached and agree to be governed by applicable USMS open water swimming rules and administrative regulations, except that their swims shall not be eligible for USMS open water awards and recognition. One-event registrants shall be identified as such in the meet results.



**B Pool 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 and USMS or world records, All-American status or any other USMS special awards; one-event registration forms must include the statement “Times swum under one-event registration are not eligible for USMS Top 10 or records consideration.” One-event registrations shall be identified as such in the meet results.

#### **201.1.4 Membership Application**

**A** Individuals may apply for membership through the USMS website or by obtaining an application form from the registrar of the LMSC. The LMSC shall provide a link

to an electronic membership card or issue a membership card upon request.

**B** All membership applications shall contain the language of the liability release as stated in the USMS policy (see USMS Guide to Operations, Sanctions section).

**201.1.5 Fee**—The annual membership fee and the one-event registration fee are 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 October 1 will receive membership valid through December 31 of the following year.

**201.2.2 Club Membership Application**—Clubs may apply for membership through the USMS website or by obtaining an application form from the registrar of the LMSC. Renewal forms will be accepted October 1 for the next registration year.

**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 is registered with the club Unattached through an LMSC. Swimmers registered with the club Unattached shall not complete in relays or score points in competition. Competing while registered with the club Unattached shall not be considered as representing a club for the purposes of 201.3.5.

**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. It is recommended that swimmers who intend to compete as unattached in a meet contact their registrar prior to the meet and request that their registration status be changed. The registrar shall change the club affiliation of the swimmer to the club Unattached and note the effective date.

**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 OF POOL EVENTS**

**202.1 SANCTIONS**

Times achieved at sanctioned events are considered for USMS 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. Sanction applications shall be accompanied by the entry form.

(1) The entry forms shall contain the language of the liability release as stated in USMS policy (see USMS Guide to Operations, Sanctions section). All swimmers, before participating, shall have signed the liability release.

(2) Event entry forms and programs must bear the statement “Sanctioned by (LMSC name) for USMS Inc.” Event entry forms and programs may include the statement “Sanction number \_\_\_\_\_.”

(3) Meet information shall include ONE of the following statements:

(a) The length of the competition course without a bulkhead is in compliance and on file with USMS in accordance with articles 105.1.7 and 107.2.1.

(b) The length of the competition course has been measured and is NOT in compliance with USMS articles 105.1.7 and 107.2.1: Times achieved in the meet will NOT be eligible for USMS Top 10 and records.

(c) The length of the competition course is not on file with USMS. Eligibility of times achieved in this meet will be contingent upon pool length measurement and approval with USMS; if bulkheads are present, their placement must also be confirmed by measurements at the meet (USMS articles 105.1.7 and 107.2.1).

(d) The length of the competition course is in compliance and on file with USMS in accordance with articles 105.1.7 and 107.2.1, but as a bulkhead course, is subject to length confirmation. Eligibility of times for USMS Top 10 and records will be contingent on verification of bulkhead placement.

(4) The sanction fee shall consist of a national fee established by the House of Delegates. Each LMSC may also establish a local fee.

**B** Entries shall not be accepted before the sanction has been granted. Paper forms shall not be distributed, online entry systems shall not be activated, and the event shall not be listed as sanctioned on the USMS Calendar of Events until the sanction has been granted.

**C** Approval of sanctions shall be made by the LMSC’s authorized representative, and a record thereof shall be retained for two years.



**D** 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.

**E** 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 further promotion of swimming, for an approved charity, or for the general welfare of the promoting organization as a whole.

**F** 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.

**G** 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.7.3, 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, article 307.2.2G–J, or that would typically result in the disqualification of participants as defined in article 102.13. 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 article 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.

**H** Pursuant to article 202.1.1A, after receiving a sanction application the sanctioning LMSC may transfer its sanctioning administration to another LMSC, provided both agree to the transfer in writing. All fees and sanction obligations under article 202.1.1 will be transferred to the accepting LMSC.

**I** 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 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 or approved by USA Swimming shall be considered for USMS 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 records and Top 10 times without formal application for recognition if the USMS member(s) register for the meet as USMS members. Times achieved by USMS members at the FINA World Masters Championships shall automatically be considered for USMS records and Top 10 without formal application for recognition and without further documentation. It is the responsibility of the swimmer to submit times obtained in recognized events with complete documentation to the appropriate LMSC 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. The recognition fee shall consist of a national fee established by the House of Delegates. Each LMSC may also establish a local fee.

**B** Approval of recognitions shall be made 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 further promotion of swimming, for an approved charity, or 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) Article 101 Starts, Strokes, and Relays or article 108 (Swimmers With a Disability)
- (2) Article 102.12.1 Swimwear Restrictions
- (3) Article 103.18.3 Timing Resolution
- (4) Articles 103.18.1, Official Time 103.18.2, 103.18.4, 103.18.5, and 103.18.7
- (5) Articles 105.1, 105.2.1, Records and Top 10 Times 105.2.2A, 105.3.2, 105.3.6A, and 105.3.8
- (6) Articles 107.2.1, Minimum Standards for Facilities 107.2.3A, 107.3, 107.11.1, 107.11.2, and 107.14
- (7) Relay leadoff split times that conform to articles 103.18.1 and 105.2.2A will be considered for events listed in article 102.5. USMS membership is not required for the other members of the relay team and the relay event itself need not conform to article 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 Education 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.





## DIFFERENCES BETWEEN USA SWIMMING AND USMS RULES

All provisions under Part 1 of USMS Swimming Rules are effective January 1, 2017 [USA-S provisions under Part One, the Technical Rules, are effective May 1, 2017]. USMS follows USA Swimming's Technical Rules, Articles 101, 102, and 105, with the following exceptions (USA Swimming and USMS rule 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 referee's long whistle indicates that the swimmer may take and maintain a position with at least one foot at the front of the platform or the deck. On the command, "Take your mark," the swimmer shall immediately assume the starting position with at least one foot at the front of the platform or the deck. A swimmer starting in the water must have one hand on the wall or starting platform and one foot on the wall and may face any direction. The backstroke start may be used as the in-the-water start during freestyle events but not for the freestyle portion of medley relay events. [USMS 101.1.1 and 101.5.1; USA-S Glossary "Forward Start" and 101.1.2]

**MS1.2 Butterfly**—The breaststroke kick may be used exclusively or interchangeably with the dolphin kick at any time during the race (for example, one breaststroke kick and multiple dolphin kicks may be used with each arm pull). Only one breaststroke kick is permitted per arm pull except that a single breaststroke kick is permitted prior to the turn and finish without an arm pull. After the start and after each turn, a single breaststroke kick is permitted 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 Relays**—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. In relay races involving in-the-water starts, a relay will be disqualified if the feet of a swimmer lose touch with the end of the course before the preceding teammate touches the wall. The relay team shall be disqualified even if the swimmer in default returns to the original starting point at the wall after the preceding teammate has touched the wall. [USMS 101.7.3E and F; USA-S 101.7.3E and G]

**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 305 and 306; USA-S 101.8]

## **MS2 Swimming Competition**



**MS2.1 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 shall not be the same person. The referee shall be certified as a referee by a USMS-approved certifying body. A referee who is certified as a stroke and turn judge or starter by a USMS-approved certifying body (including USA Swimming) shall receive training in the duties of a referee. Starters and stroke and turn judges who are uncertified shall receive training in the duties of their positions. One or two place judges may be positioned on the side of the course near the finish to judge the order of finish of all swimmers. However, place judge results may not be used to change the order of finish produced by ranking the official times. Note: USMS has a meet committee rather than a meet jury. [USMS 103.2, 103.3, 103.10.6, 102.10.5, 103.5, and 102.14.2; USA-S 102.10.3, 102.10.2, 102.9, and 102.23.3]

**MS2.2 Personnel at National Championship Meets**—The meet host shall appoint a meet referee, an administrative referee, a head starter, and a chief judge subject to qualification standards established by the USMS Officials Committee. Minimum stroke and turn judges include: at least two turn judges at each end of each course (jurisdiction not to exceed 5 lanes per judge), one stroke judge on each side of a 50-meter course, and one official at the 15-meter mark of each course for all starts

and turns except breaststroke. [USMS 104.5.10B; USA-S 102.10.5]

**MS2.3 Warm-up**— In pools of five lanes or more, a separate warm-up area must be made available to swimmers during the competition. 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. If the meet is a dual-sanctioned meet with USA Swimming, the requirements for continuous warm-up may be adjusted depending on availability of warm-up space at the venue by agreement between the LMSC and LSC host clubs. Once the entry information is published, changes which further restrict the availability of continuous warm-up/warm-down space are not permitted. [USMS 102.4.1 and 102.4.2; USA-S none]

**MS2.4 Relays**—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 102.3.7]

**MS2.5 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., preliminary heats and finals). If a format other than timed finals is used, competitors are limited to three individual events per day. Independent attempts to establish official times (“time trials”) are permitted only in USMS-sanctioned short course yards meets other than national championship meets [USMS 102.5 and 102.6; USA-S 102.2]

## **MS2.6 Seeding**

**MS2.6.1** Age groups and/or genders as well as events of the same distance 200 yards or longer may be combined during seeding so that no swimmer has to swim alone and lanes may be filled. At the meet referee’s discretion, events may be combined by distance and/or stroke. An empty lane is not required when combining events. [USMS 102.10.1B and 102.11.2; USA-S 102.1.4 and 102.7.2]



- MS2.6.2** 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 102.5.6]
- MS2.7 Counters**—A swimmer may appoint one counter in any individual event of 16 lengths or more, except the individual medley. [USMS 102.10.6A; USA-S 102.6A]
- MS2.8 Swimwear**—Medical identification items may be worn. Modesty wear is prohibited unless a medical or religious exemption has been granted by USMS. Only swimwear exemptions granted by USMS shall be eligible for consideration by a referee at USMS competitions. [USMS 102.12.1E, 102.13.9, and 102.12.1C(1); USA-S 102.8.1E and 102.8.1B[1]]
- MS2.9 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. Note: USMS does not regulate the number of logos on swimsuits, caps and goggles, does not prohibit wearing the insignia or name of another club or prohibit body advertising such as temporary tattoos or prohibit the advertising of political statements. [USMS 102.12.2; USA-S 102.8.3]
- MS2.10 Timing system designation**— USMS records may be established when both the automatic primary and semiautomatic secondary systems fail (no valid button times) if the times are reported by a manual tertiary system using a minimum of two valid watch times. USMS Top 10 times may be established when both the automatic primary and semiautomatic secondary systems fail (no valid button times) if the times are reported by a manual tertiary system using a minimum of one valid watch time. USMS Top 10 times may be established when the minimum two-button semiautomatic primary system fails (no valid button times) if the times are reported by a manual backup system with three, two, or one valid watch times. USMS records may be established when the three-button semiautomatic primary system fails (no valid button times) if the times are reported by a manual backup system with three or two valid watch times. USMS records may be established when the times are reported by a manual primary timing system with three valid watch times. USMS



Top 10 times may be established when the times are reported by a manual primary timing system with a minimum of two valid watch times. [USMS 103.18.5-103.18.7; USA-S 102.24.3A(3)]

## **MS 2.11 Records and Top 10**

- MS2.11.1** Record applications and Top 10 submissions shall not be accepted unless certification of course length accompanies them or is on file with USMS or FINA. Any person can be assigned to conduct the course measurement. [USMS 105.1.6A; USA-S 104.2.2C(3)(a)]
- MS2.11.2** 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. A bulkhead placement confirmation measurement is required for a USMS record set at events sanctioned or approved by USA Swimming. [USMS 105.1.1, 105.1.7E and 105.3.1; USA-S 104.2.1F]
- MS2.11.3** Relay leadoff split times will be considered for Top 10 times, provided the swimmers complete the event without being disqualified and the second swimmer does not start in the water. A relay leadoff split time will be considered for USMS records provided automatic timing is used. [USMS 103.18.1, 103.18.4, 105.2.2A, D, and E, 105.3.6A; USA-S 104.2.1E]
- MS2.11.4** If swimmers want their initial splits as part of a longer individual event to be submitted for records or Top 10 times, they must notify the referee, in writing, prior to the conclusion of the meet. (Exception: If the meet referee approves the automatic recording of splits with the concurrence of the meet host, a written request is not required.) 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 (when automatic timing is used). [USMS 103.18.1B(1), 103.18.1B(2), 103.18.1C, and 103.18.2; and 105.2.2B, C, D and E; and 105.3.6; USA-S none]
- MS2.11.5** 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, and a copy of the heat sheet. The heat sheet shall show the swimmer's name, heat number, and lane number in which the record was achieved. [USMS 105.3.8 and 103.18.5-103.18.74; USA-S 104.2.2C(2)]

**MS2.11.6** USMS records and top 10 times can only be made in fresh water. No records or top 10 times will be recognized in any kind of sea or ocean water. (USMS 105.2.4 and 105.3.5; USA-S None)

**MS2.12 Scratch procedures**—Swimmers or relay teams not reporting for or competing in an event are not penalized. [USMS 102.8.1; USA-S 102.4]

**MS2.13 Protests**—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 102.14.5 and 102.14.4; USA-S 102.23.5]

**MS2.14 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]

### **MS3 Facility standards**

**MS3.1 Water depth**—In pools with water depth 3 feet, 6 inches, to less than 4 feet at the starting end, the swimmer must start from the deck or from within the water. USMS does not have a rule for teaching racing starts or certifying swimmers for proficiency at performing racing starts. [USMS 107.2.3A(2); USA-S 103.2.3A and 103.2.2]



**MS3.2 Lane numbers**—The lanes shall be numbered from right to left as the swimmers face the course from the starting end of the pool except when the event starts at the turn end of the course (no change in lane numbering so that the lanes are numbered the same at both ends); mandatory for all meets. [USMS 107.4.3; USA-S 102.5.5 and 103.5.3]

**MS3.2 Water Temperature**—Water temperature from 25 to 28 degrees Celsius (77 to 82 degrees Fahrenheit) shall be maintained for competition. USMS does not address air temperature. [USMS 107.6; USA-S 103.7]

**MS4 Athlete protection policies**

**MS4.1** Except for video timing equipment, USMS does not address the use of cameras, including cell phone cameras, in the venue. [USMS none; USA-S 305.3]









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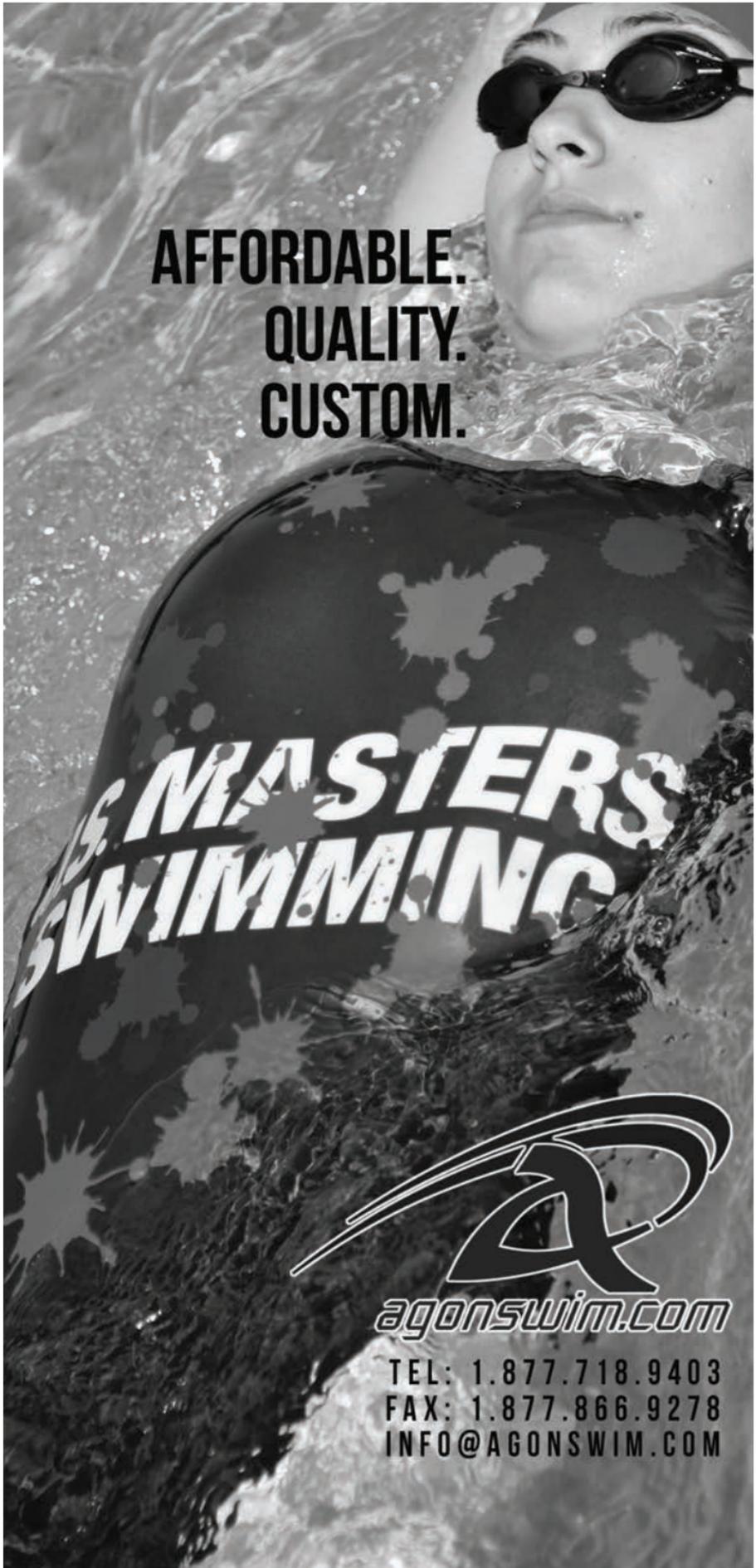
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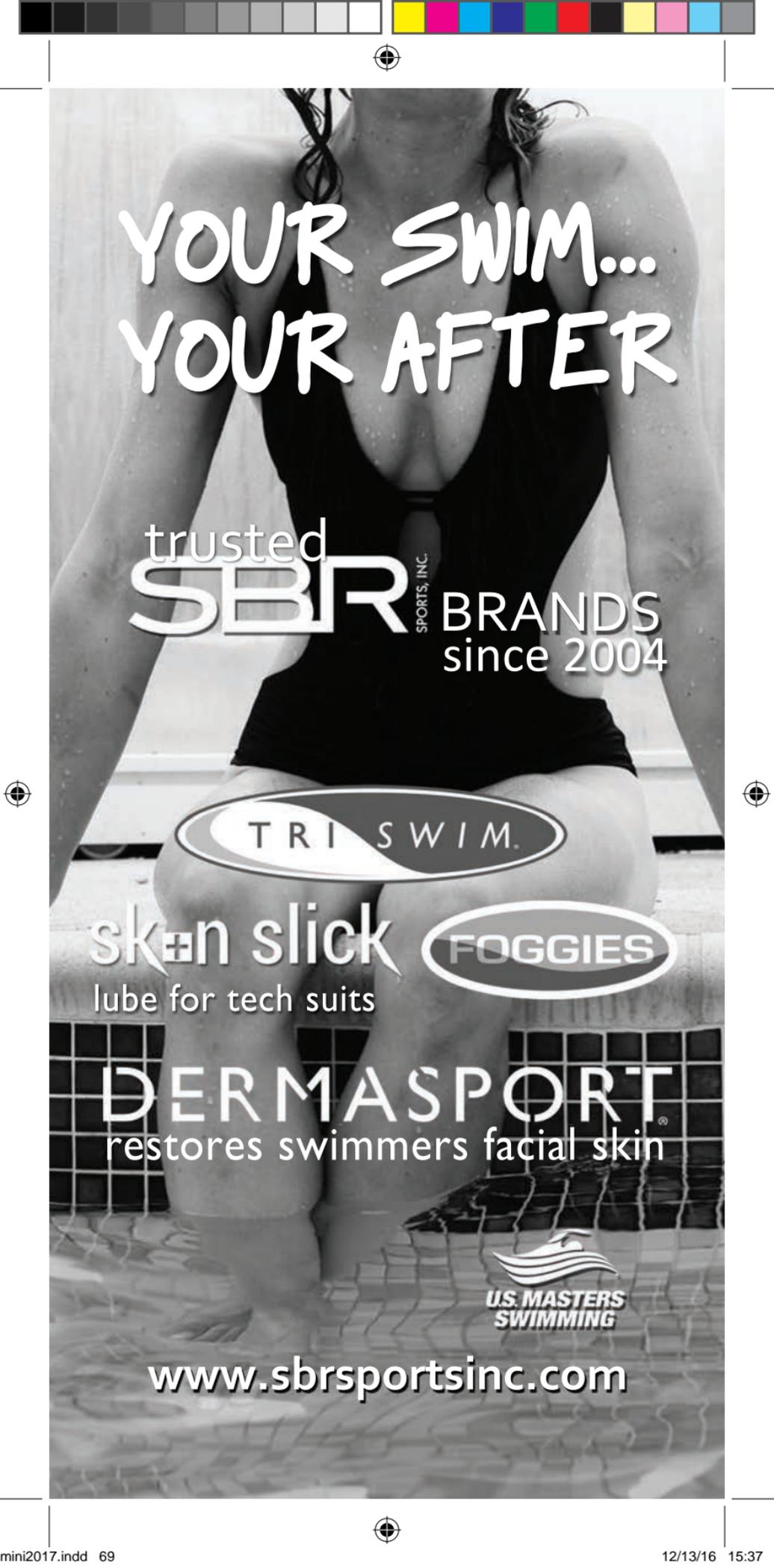
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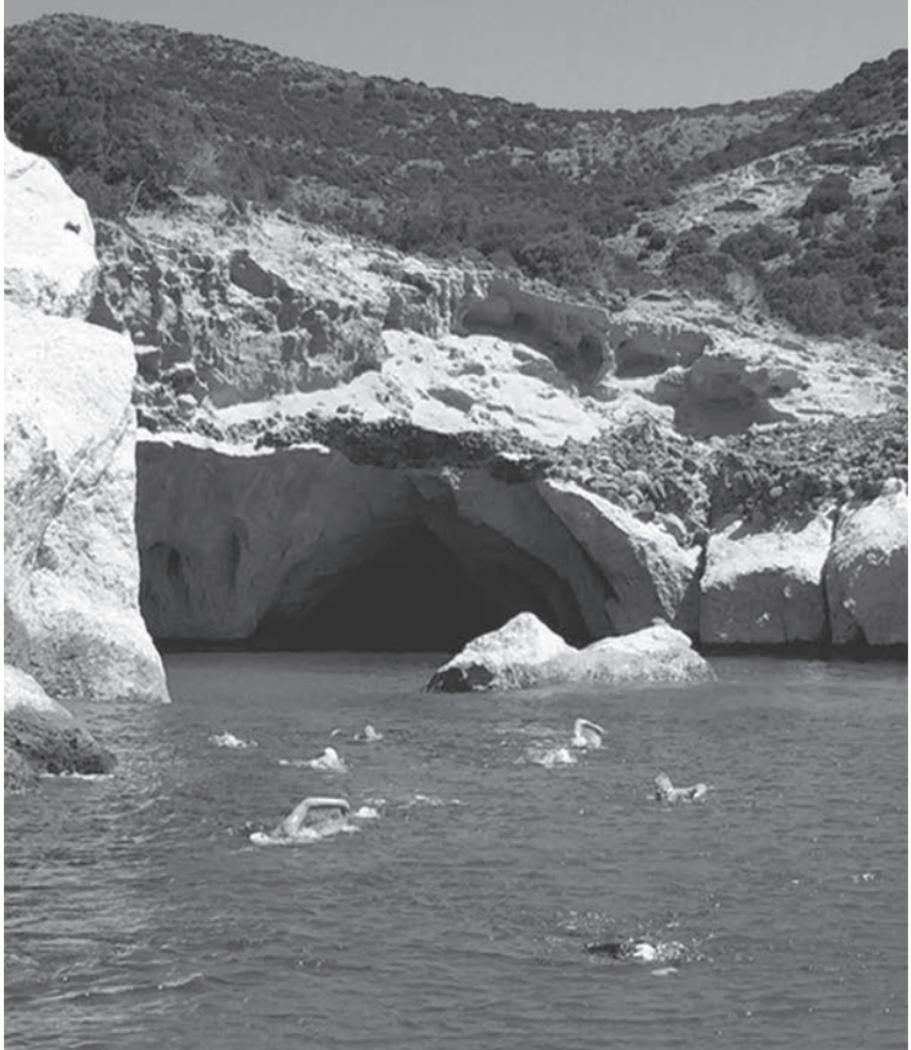


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