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USMS ELECTION OPERATING GUIDELINES (As Amended through December 8, 2004)

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

I. Purpose

The purpose of the Election Operating Guidelines is to list and maintain in one place all of the election policies and procedures currently in existence in United States Masters Swimming, Inc. ("USMS"). The guidelines will be updated by the Zone Committee at the annual meeting of the House of Delegates in the year prior to an election. Copies will be made available to any USMS member through the National Office upon request.

II. Definitions

- A. USMS—United States Masters Swimming, Inc.
- B. Part 5—Organization and Bylaws. Part 5 of the USMS Code of Regulations and Rules of Competition.
- C. BOD—USMS Board of Directors.
- D. HOD—USMS House of Delegates.
- E. Meeting—The Annual Meeting of the HOD.
- F. Delegate—A member of the HOD who has been certified at the Meeting.
- G. HOD Packet—Packet of information, which is prepared for Delegates prior to the Meeting.
- H. Officer(s)—Officer(s) of USMS, elected pursuant to Part 5 Article 505.2.
- I. Director(s)—Members of the BOD, elected pursuant to Part 5 Article 506.1.4.
- J. Election—Bi-annual event where USMS elects Officers and Directors.
- K. EOG—Election Operating Guidelines. The guidelines, policies, and procedures that govern Elections.
- L. Committee—The Ad Hoc Election Committee responsible for running the Election.
- M. Chair—Chair of the Election Committee.
- N. Web Site—Election Section of the USMS Web Site.

III. Election Policies

- A. Parts One and Two of EOG contain the policies which govern the elections.
- B. If situations occur during an election year in which compliance with these policies would not be in the best interest of USMS, the Committee may amend or suspend these policies if 2/3 of the members of the BOD approve.

IV. Election Procedures

- A. The EOG Appendices contain the procedures which implement the election policies.
- B. If situations occur during an election year in which compliance with these procedures would not be in the best interest of USMS, the Committee may adjust these procedures provided such adjustment is in compliance with the governing policies.

PART TWO: ELECTION POLICIES

I. General Information

- A. Pursuant to Part 5, USMS shall hold an Election of Officers and Directors bi-annually in odd-numbered years (See Articles 505: OFFICERS and 506: BOARD OF DIRECTORS).
- B. An Ad Hoc Election Committee shall be formed at the annual BOD meeting in the year prior to the Election year, and shall:
 - 1. Be confirmed by the HOD and be comprised of Zone Committee members and substitutes as follows:
 - a. A Chair of the Committee who shall be either the Vice President for Local Operations who is neither seeking election, nor with relatives seeking such election, or an experienced USMS leader who is neither seeking election, nor with relatives seeking such election, as needed.
 - b. One member from each Zone, who shall be either the Zone Representative neither seeking election, nor with relatives seeking such election, or a HOD member neither seeking election, nor with relatives seeking election, as needed to ensure that each Zone is represented.
 - 2. Be responsible for running the Election according to rules set out in Part 5 as well as the EOG.
 - 3. Be augmented by HOD members during the Meeting, should the need arise.
- C. All communications between the Committee and the candidates shall be handled by the Chair or by designated Committee members.
- D. All election related dates are located in Appendix A.

II. Publications

- A. Information on the Election shall be published and regularly updated using all appropriate USMS communication media.
- B. The announcements containing the request for nominations for the Officers and Directors shall include the candidate qualification criteria.
- C. Information on the Election shall be posted and regularly updated on the Web Site and shall conform to the USMS Privacy Policy.
- D. Information on the Election shall be published in the HOD Packet.
- E. Candidates may be permitted to attach addendums to their questionnaires after the nomination deadline.
- F. Candidate letters of nomination, and letters of reference may be published with the permission of the author.
- G. All information gathered by the Committee shall be considered confidential. Any disclosure of this information shall be in accordance with the EOG or by specific direction of the BOD.

III. Campaign Policies

- A. Publicity shall be provided for the candidates prior to and during the Meeting.
- B. The Committee shall provide opportunities for HOD members to meet and question candidates during the Meeting.
- C. Mailings shall not be sent on behalf of a candidate in order to encourage a Delegate's vote.
- D. Handouts, signs, stickers, pins or other promotional items shall not be used or given at the Meeting on behalf of any candidate.

IV. Nomination Policies

- A. The Committee shall develop a nomination packet prior to the nomination period.
- B. Nomination of Candidates
 - 1. Unless otherwise specified, nominations for Officers and Directors shall follow the same process.
 - 2. Any USMS member may nominate a candidate for an Officer position.
 - 3. Any USMS member of a Zone may nominate a candidate for a Director position from that Zone.
 - 4. Each candidate seeking election shall submit a completed nomination packet.
- C. Nomination of Current Officers and Directors
 - 1. Current Officers and Directors eligible for a second term are automatically nominated, provided they meet Candidate Qualifications.
 - 2. Each candidate seeking re-election shall submit a completed nomination packet.
- D. Floor Nominations
 - 1. Floor nominations shall be accepted immediately following the presentation of the Committee report in the HOD.
 - 2. Each nomination from the floor requires a Delegate nominator, who shall be allowed to speak for one (1) minute on behalf of the candidate.
 - 3. Each nomination from the floor requires a Delegate to second the nomination.
 - 4. The nominee shall confirm their willingness to run, as a candidate for the nominated position.
 - 5. Following a nomination and second, the floor candidate(s) shall submit a completed nomination packet.
 - 6. Each floor candidate's paperwork will be duplicated and distributed to the HOD to allow time for review prior to the Election.
 - 7. Candidates nominated from the floor of the HOD shall be registered members of USMS prior to their nomination.
- E. A candidate may be nominated for more than one position.

V. Candidate Qualification Criteria

- A. Candidates shall be members in good standing of USMS for the year when the Election is held.
- B. Candidates shall have attended more than one Meeting in the preceding five (5) years.
- C. Candidates shall plan to attend the Meeting for the Election year in which they are standing for election, and shall plan to attend all Meetings during their tenure.
- D. Candidates for Director shall be a resident and a member of the Zone from which they are seeking election.

VI. Slating Policies

- A. The Committee shall validate that all candidate qualification criteria have been met.
- B. Officer candidates shall be slated by the Election Committee.
 - 1. The Chair shall not vote unless there is a tie vote on a candidate.
 - 2. All candidates who meet the stated qualifications shall be placed on the Slate.
 - 3. The Committee shall not slate a candidate for more than one position.
- C. Director candidates shall be slated by their respective Zones.

1. The Committee shall provide the Zone Representative complete documentation on all qualified candidates.
2. Zones may slate one or more candidates for Director.
3. Zones shall not slate Officer candidates for Director positions.
4. The Zone Representative shall prepare a slate of Director candidates during the Zone Meetings and present the slate of Director candidates to the Chair.

VII. HOD Meeting Nominations

- A. The report of the Committee and floor nominations, shall be made at an early session of the Meeting.
 1. The Chair shall present the Slate of candidates.
 2. The Chair shall then call for nominations from the floor for each position.

VIII. HOD Voting

- A. The Election shall be conducted during the Meeting.
- B. Only Delegates shall be eligible to vote.
- C. Any candidate running unopposed, after floor nominations have been closed, shall be elected by acclamation immediately following the nomination process.
- D. If voting is to proceed, the Committee shall conduct the Election process as follows:
 1. Votes shall be taken by secret ballot.
 2. The initial vote shall be taken simultaneously for all positions.
 3. For each contested position, the Election winner shall be the individual receiving a majority of the valid votes cast for that position.
 4. If a contested position does not have a majority winner (more than 50% of valid votes cast), a run-off vote shall be held between the top two candidates from the first vote.
 5. Once the tabulation of the votes is completed, the names of the persons elected to each position (or the candidates for a run-off vote, if necessary), shall be announced to the HOD. The vote tallies shall not be announced.
- E. Following the announcement of the newly elected persons, there shall be a motion to destroy the ballots.

IX. Zone Meeting Nomination and Voting Policies

- A. Voting shall be conducted during the zone meetings that occur in conjunction with the Meeting.
- B. Nomination and Slating of Director candidates shall proceed as follows:
 1. Only zone member Delegates shall be eligible to vote.
 2. The report of the Election Committee and floor nominations shall be made during the Zone Meetings.
 3. The zone member running the election ("Zone Election Chair") shall present the list of nominees compiled by the Election Committee.
 4. The Zone Election Chair shall then call for nominations from the floor. Each nomination from the floor requires a zone member Delegate nominator. Each nomination from the floor requires a zone member Delegate to second the nomination.
 5. After nominations are closed, at the discretion of the Zone, each Director candidate shall be given time during which the nominator and/or candidate may speak.
 6. Following nominations, slating shall be done as follows:
 - a. Votes shall be taken by secret ballot.

- b. Each zone member Delegate may cast a vote for or against slating each individual candidate.
 - c. Each candidate receiving a majority of votes for slating, shall be included on the slate presented to the HOD for election.
 - d. If no candidate receives a majority (more than 50% of valid votes cast), a run-off vote shall be held between the top two candidates from the first vote.
 - e. Once the tabulation of the votes is completed, the slate shall be announced to the zone meeting. The vote tallies shall not be announced.
7. Following the announcement of the slated person(s), there shall be a motion to destroy the ballots.
 8. The Zone member serving on the Election Committee shall act as an election observer to ensure adherence to election policies.
- C. Voting policies for the election of Zone Representatives shall be set by the respective Zones.

PART THREE: ELECTION PROCEDURES

APPENDIX A: SCHEDULE

I. In the Year Prior to the Election	
BOD forms the Committee during the convention BOD meeting.	Wed
HOD confirms the Committee members.	Thu
Zone Committee reviews and amends guidelines.	HOD Meeting
Announce the opening of the Election year and request for nominations.	HOD Meeting
Submit call for nominations to National Office Newsletter.	Oct 15
Submit call for nominations to Jan/Feb issue of the national publication.	Oct 15
Post election information on the Web Site.	Dec 31
II. Pre-HOD Actions During the Election Year	
Post announcement on the home page of the Web Site.	Jan 1
Chair contacts current BOD members eligible for a second term to determine if they wish to continue in the same position.	Jan 1
Accept nominations. Candidates must submit a completed Nomination Packet during this period in order to be considered for the slate. The Chair shall acknowledge receipt of the packet for each candidate.	Jan 1 thru Apr 30
Committee reviews applications, slates Officer candidates, notifies candidates, and publishes candidate information.	May 1 thru May 31
Continuous publication of candidate information to the HOD through email newsletters and web site postings.	May 31 thru September
Submit election information to National Office for inclusion in the HOD packet.	Aug 1
III. HOD Meeting Process	
Post election information in prominent places as soon as USMS registration begins.	Wed
Zones meet to nominate and slate Director candidates.	Thu
HOD nominations and floor nominations for all positions.	Thu
Meet the Candidates opportunities.	TBD
Elections	TBD

APPENDIX B: INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

<insert opening day of nomination period>

Dear Candidate,

Congratulations on your decision to run for an elected USMS position. In this packet you will find all the information you need to get through the nomination process. A copy of the USMS Election Operating Guidelines ("EOG") has been included to inform you of how the process works from the time nominations open until the election at the USMS Annual House of Delegates Meeting. If you have any difficulty complying with the requirements of this packet, notify the Election Chair. Please note that the relevant submission dates can be found in the EOG schedule.

The nomination period occurs in the year when the election is held and applies to all elected Board of Director positions (Officers and Directors). To complete your nomination, fill out the Candidate Questionnaire/Consent-to-Run form with appropriate attachments and return them by email to the Chair of the Election Committee. Please review the qualification criteria in the EOG before submitting your nomination.

If you do not go through this nomination process, you may still be nominated through the floor nomination process. There will be floor nominations during zone meetings for Directors and in the House of Delegates for all positions. Immediately after your floor nomination, you must submit the Candidate Questionnaire/Consent-to-Run form with appropriate attachments to the Chair of the Election Committee. Your documents will be duplicated and distributed to Delegates to allow time for review prior to the election. The photograph will be placed with the display board containing the other members of the slate.

Thank you for considering running for an elected USMS Board of Directors position. The nomination process and enclosed guidelines are intended to make the election process fair and consistent for all candidates. If you have any problems, please don't hesitate to contact me.

<Insert name & contact information of the Chair of the Election Committee>
Chair of the Election Committee

APPENDIX C: CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE/CONSENT-TO-RUN FORM

All candidates must complete the entire questionnaire. You may use as much space as you choose in answering your questions. Candidates should return this form **by email** with your other attachments to the Chair of the Election Committee (<insert name of Election Chair>, <insert email address>), by **April 30**, <insert election year>. Candidates nominated from the floor must return this form with attachments immediately after nomination.

I. Section One: Consent-to-Run

Name: <Insert name here>

LMSC: <Insert LMSC here>

Consent-to-Run: I, <insert name here>, am interested in running for (**check one**):

Officer Positions

- President
- Vice President for Member Services
- Vice President for Community Services
- Vice President for National Operations
- Vice President for Local Operations
- Secretary
- Treasurer

Director Positions

- BOD member from Breadbasket Zone
- BOD member from Colonies Zone
- BOD member from Dixie Zone
- BOD member from Great Lakes Zone
- BOD member from Northwest Zone
- BOD member from Oceana Zone
- BOD member from South Central Zone
- BOD member from Southwest Zone

II. Section Two: Candidate Qualifications

I am a member in good standing of USMS in this election year: Yes No

I am planning to attend the HOD Meeting for this election year: Yes No

I am Planning to attend all HOD Meetings during my tenure in office: Yes No

I am a resident and a member of the Zone from which I seek election (Director Candidates only):
 Yes No N/A

Please list the USMS National HOD Meetings you have attended, including the dates of attendance:

<insert answer here>

III. Section Three: Questions

Why are you interested in this position and why do you believe you would be a good candidate?

<Insert answer here>

What do you consider to be the major issues facing USMS now and in the future. As a person holding an elected position within USMS, how would you address these issues?

<Insert answer here>

Please list USMS committees on which you have served. Include the dates you were on the committees and the names of the committee chairs under whom you served:

<insert answer here>

Please list any other experience that relates to your qualifications for the position.

<Insert answer here>

Please write a short summary statement that will be posted on the display board with your photograph at the HOD Meeting

<Insert answer here>

IV. Section Four: Attachments

A. **All** candidates must submit the following attachments:

1. A one page **Resume**. The resume will be published only in the HOD Packet.
2. A **photograph**. For slate candidates, this must be in digital format and will be published on the USMS web site, in the HOD Packet, and posted on a board at HOD Meeting. Floor nominees must furnish a print.

B. New candidates (i.e. those not running for re-election) must also submit the following attachments:

1. A **Letter of Nomination** from any USMS member (for Officer candidates) or any Zone Member (for Director candidates). This should be a simple declarative nomination without elaboration unless the nominator is also writing a letter of reference (see point #2 below). The nomination statement shall be published in the HOD Packet.
2. Two (2) one page personal **Letters of Reference**. These letters may be from persons inside or outside of USMS. One of the Letters of Reference may be written by your nominator. In that case, include the nomination statement as the first sentence of the Letter of Reference. The Letters of Reference may be published in the HOD Packet with the consent of the authors. Please have the persons writing letters for you indicate at the bottom of the letter whether or not the letter may be published.

APPENDIX D: PROCEDURES FOR PREPARING AND COUNTING BALLOTS

Procedures for counting votes shall vary depending on how many simultaneous offices are elected and how many candidates have been nominated. Below are a variety of methods for counting. Decisions on how to proceed shall be made as the election takes shape.

I. Paper Ballots

A. Paper ballots shall be prepared ahead of time and distributed as follows:

1. All offices and candidates being voted on during a HOD session shall appear on the same ballot.
2. Officers shall appear in the following order: President, VP for Member Services, VP for Community Services, VP for National Operations, VP for Local Operations, Secretary, Treasurer.
3. Directors shall appear in the following order: Breadbasket, Colonies, Dixie, Great Lakes, Northwest, Oceana, South Central, Southwest.
4. Candidates within each office category shall appear in alphabetical order.
5. Ballots shall be distributed to all Delegates.
6. Any Delegate without a ballot should obtain one from the Corporate Secretary.
7. Ballots shall be collected in a box during a roll-call vote of the HOD.

B. Personnel Required

1. The minimum personnel needed to count the ballots are:
2. Vote Caller
3. 2 Vote Recorders
4. 2 Observer/Proof Readers
5. Vote Counters
6. Other members of the Election Committee or HOD may participate in the counting or observing in any fashion the Chair of the Election Committee requires.
7. The Election Committee members may be augmented by HOD members should the complexity of the election require.

C. Counting Process shall proceed as follows:

1. Count one office at a time.
2. Divide the ballots into piles of ten (10) ballots each.
3. The vote caller calls out the vote for each ballot.
4. The recorders record the count on separate tally sheets.
 - a. If a ballot does not have any candidate selected for an office the "no vote cast" block shall be marked.
 - b. If a ballot has more than one candidate selected for the same position—the block stating "invalid ballot" for that position only shall be marked.
 - c. If a ballot has an indeterminate marking for any or all elected positions, the block stating "invalid ballot" for each such affected position shall be marked.
 - d. If a ballot has a write-in for a candidate, the vote shall be recorded on a separate line on the tally sheet for that position.
5. After each set of ten ballots, the recorders will make sure they have recorded ten total votes.

6. After all ballots are recorded, the vote counters will count the votes for each candidate and compare the totals from each tally sheet.
7. If the counts are the same, then the results are determined. If the counts are different, repeat steps three (3) through seven (7) for that position.
8. Repeat steps three (3) through seven (7) until votes are counted and verified for all positions.

D. Run-Offs

1. If a position does not have a majority winner (more than 50% of valid votes cast), a run-off vote will be held between the top two candidates from the first vote, and the recount will be done using the counting process specified above.
2. New ballots shall be prepared for the run-off election(s), which show only the run-off candidates.

II. Electronic Voting

A technology subcommittee of the Communications Committee will be doing a feasibility study to determine if voting and ballot counting can be done electronically in the HOD. Their initial report is due the beginning of January in time for the Executive Committee mid-year meeting January 6–9, where the convention schedule is set. The use of electronic voting and ballot counting shall be determined based on the feasibility study and the complexity of the voting process.

APPENDIX E: PUBLICITY AND CAMPAIGN PROCEDURES

Procedures for publicity and campaigning may vary depending on how many simultaneous offices are elected and how many candidates have been nominated. Below are a variety of methods for publicity and campaigns. Some are mandated in policy and shall be executed regardless of the complexity of the election. Decisions on how to proceed with optional activities shall be made as the election takes shape.

I. Nomination Announcements

- A. Announcement of the opening of nominations shall first be made during the HOD meeting in the year prior to the election.
- B. Announcements shall also be placed in the Fall issue of the National Office Newsletter, the January/February issue of the national publication, and on the Web Site home page.
- C. Content of the announcement shall be as follows:

"United States Masters Swimming will hold an election during the <insert election year> Annual Meeting of the House of Delegates ("HOD"). All Officer and Director positions on the Board of Directors ("BOD") are up for election. The nomination period shall be from <insert start of nomination period> through <insert end of nomination period>.

Nominations will be accepted for the following Officer positions on the BOD: President, Vice President for Member Services, Vice President for Community Services, Vice President for National Operations, Vice President for Local Operations, Secretary, and Treasurer. Nominations will also be accepted for Director positions from each Zone. Nominations for Officers and Directors shall follow the same process. Explanation of the duties of these BOD members can be found in the <insert year> USMS Code of Regulations and Rules of Competition (Articles 505: OFFICERS and 506: BOARD OF DIRECTORS) and on the Election Section of the USMS Web Site.

To be eligible for nomination, candidates shall: 1) be members in good standing of United States Masters Swimming, Inc. for the year when the Election is held; 2) have attended more than one USMS National HOD Meeting in the preceding five (5) years; and 3) plan to attend the HOD Meeting for the Election year in which they are standing for election, and plan to attend all HOD Meetings during their tenure. Candidates for Director shall be a resident and a member of the Zone from which they are seeking election.

Nomination packets may be obtained from the Election Section of the USMS Web Site (<insert Election Site URL>) or by contacting the Election Chair, <insert Election Chair name>, <insert Election Chair email address>."

II. USMS Web Site

- A. The Election Section of the USMS web site shall contain information on the election. The quantity and detail will depend on the complexity of the election. The site will be continuously updated during the election year and will contain:
 - 1. Announcement of the opening of nominations.
 - 2. Nomination Packet containing the Instructions to Candidates and Questionnaire/Consent-to-Run form.
 - 3. Election schedule.
 - 4. Description of Officers and Directors duties.
 - 5. Candidate Information (questionnaires, photographs, nomination letters).
 - 6. Description of HOD meeting election activities.
 - 7. Election Results.
- B. Announcements shall be posted on the USMS home page for major election activities.

- C. An election Discussion Forum shall be opened where candidates can post opinions concerning the major issues facing USMS. This forum will be viewable by the public, but only candidates will be able to post messages.
- D. Candidates may choose and/or the Election Committee may ask for opinions on significant issues facing USMS to be used as addendums to their questionnaires and be posted on the Election Site.

III. National Office Newsletter

- A. In addition to the nomination announcement in the Fall issue, there will be a reminder in the Winter issue for candidates to get their nominations in by the deadline.
- B. The Spring and Summer issues may also contain election announcements, depending on the publication dates.

IV. Email Newsletter

- A. The Election Committee may choose to distribute election information to the HOD through an email newsletter.

V. HOD Packet

- A. The HOD Packet will contain the report of the Election Committee.
- B. The report shall contain:
 - 1. A report on the election process.
 - 2. Schedule of HOD meeting election activities.
 - 3. Candidate information for all BOD members being elected during the HOD meeting. That information shall include where available:
 - a. Questionnaire/Consent-to-Run Form
 - b. Addendum to questionnaire
 - c. Resume
 - d. Letter of nomination
 - e. 2 Letters of reference (with the permission of the authors)
 - f. Photograph
 - 4. Posters with candidates pictures.
 - 5. Content of the report may be adjusted in the case of uncontested elections.

VI. HOD Meeting Publicity

- A. Posters shall be placed at USMS check-in, the hospitality suite, and HOD meeting rooms. The posters shall contain a photograph of each candidate with a short statement from their questionnaire.

APPENDIX F: MEET THE CANDIDATES PROCEDURES

Procedures for meeting candidates during the HOD annual meeting may vary depending on how many simultaneous offices are elected and how many candidates have been nominated. Below are a variety of methods for presenting candidates to the Delegates. Decisions on how to proceed shall be made as the election takes shape. For some elections, it may be useful to combine methods.

I. Uncontested Elections

In cases of uncontested races, the Election Committee may choose to limit "meet the candidate" opportunities. HOD members will learn about the candidates through the Questionnaire/Consent-to-Run Form, addendums to the questionnaire, and other pre-HOD meeting publicity.

II. Formal Meet the Candidates Forum

- A. If logistics allow, there shall be formal Meet the Candidates Forum(s) in order for the Delegates to familiarize themselves with the candidates.
- B. The Election Committee will host the forum to be held after HOD nominations and prior to voting.
- C. Questions for the Meet the Candidates Forum shall be submitted by HOD members at a place to be specified. Submissions will be terminated following candidate nominations. Questions should be directed to an office, not a specific candidate, and there should be questions for all positions up for Election.
- D. The Election Committee will analyze and filter the questions, and shall prepare a list of questions for the Meet the Candidates Forum.
- E. It is recommended that the room be set up informally with the audience in a semi-circle and the candidates in front, but not at a podium. It is further recommended that some type of refreshments be served.
- F. Candidates must be in attendance and shall make themselves available to answer questions. At the beginning of the forum, each candidate will be introduced by the moderator.
- G. A moderator will ask the questions and control the length of answers. Follow-up questions may be allowed from the floor.
- H. Following the formal Meet the Candidates Forum, each candidate will be asked to remain for a half-hour to mingle and to be available for informal questioning from the Delegates.
- I. It is recommended that, regardless of how many offices are contested, there shall be at least one formal meet the candidates forum for Presidential nominees.

III. Informal Meet the Candidates Opportunities

When an election involves a large number of candidates, a formal meet the candidates forum may not be informative, because of a lack of time for all candidates to speak. Therefore, a variety of opportunities shall be planned to meet with candidates.

- A. Sufficient periods of unopposed time during the HOD meeting shall be allocated for these informal meetings, including meal periods and evenings.
- B. Questioning shall include pre-submitted questions as well as follow-up questions.
- C. Groupings of offices may be employed for expediency.
- D. The Election Committee may consult with the candidates during the planning, but shall reserve the right to make the final decisions.