

What works for YOU?

Starting a Masters Team: *Finding a Good Fit*

Why do you want to start a team?

- There is an available pool that has no team
- There's a community that needs to be served
- My current team stinks
 - Bad hours, coaches, fees, conditions, etc.
- I want money, power, and adulation!

Your Assets

- Swimming experience (good and bad)
- Coaches you've learned from
- Connections in the community
- USMS Coaching Certification classes
- Creativity and communication skills

You Don't Have to be a Great Swimmer

- But you do need to be willing to
 - Learn
 - Communicate
 - Inspire
 - Organize
 - Lead

Coaching requires...

- Knowledge about the sport
- Being positive and encouraging
- Wanting to help others
- Understanding your athletes
- Building a community
- Committing to continual learning as the sport evolves

A wooden sign with a rough, torn edge, featuring the text "NO IGNORANT JERKS NEEDED!" in a bold, black, serif font. The sign is positioned on the right side of the slide, overlapping the blue background.

NO IGNORANT JERKS NEEDED!

First Steps

- Identify the need
- Take responsibility
- Prepare for a great experience
- Be open to help from others

Resources

- USMS Resources (details to come)
- Your skill set and experience
- Your personality and social skills
- Good fit with facility and community partners
- Continuing education and self-investment

Types of USMS Programs

- Stand-alone, nonprofit USMS Club
- Stand-alone, for-profit USMS Club
- Combined USA Swimming age-group and USMS Club
- Facility-owned and managed Club
 - YMCA, Municipal Recreation Center, etc.
 - Fitness Business (private or franchise gyms, etc.)
 - University program
 - NOTE: *Such programs may also be workout groups operating under regional USMS Club rather than independent Clubs*

Considerations

- Autonomy
 - Business owner vs. employee/contractor
 - Renting space vs. programming
 - Teaming up with an existing team at another facility (being a branch)
- Identity
 - Name, logo, approach
- Financial
 - Business owner vs. employee/contractor
 - Income: Dues/fundraising vs. hourly wage vs. per-swimmer pay
 - Liabilities: Pool rental, insurance/safety, websites, materials



Facility-based Club Considerations

- They provide:
 - Coach's pay
 - Pool space/scheduling
 - Advertising/recruiting
 - Financial management
 - Lifeguards & safety infrastructure
 - USMS registration
- You provide:
 - Coaching (workouts, meet support, independent recruiting)
 - Team communication
- Downsides
 - They may control branding and philosophy
 - You're probably not getting rich

A Good Match

- Philosophies
 - Competition (number of meets, competitive focus, etc.)
 - Diversity
 - Training bandwidth
 - Adult Learn to Swim?
 - Triathlon? Open water?
 - Fitness swimmers?
 - High-level competition?
 - Community involvement

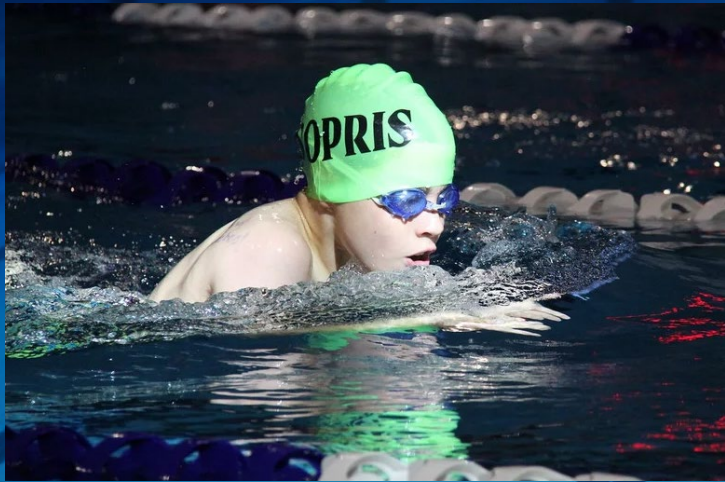


Revenue Considerations

- Pay base: per hour vs. per swimmer vs. revenue sharing
- Fund raising or crowdfunding
 - Team merchandise, YouTube channels
- Special for-profit offerings
 - ALTS classes; clinics for swimmers, triathletes, or runners, etc.
 - Host swim meets, run timing systems
 - Supplemental programs (Endless pool lessons, etc.)
- Multiple jobs
 - Coach high school, age-group, college as well
 - Lifeguard, pool maintenance, personal training, lessons, etc.

USA Swimming Age-Group with USMS

- Board of Directors, usually parents
- Age-group usually central, with Masters subordinate
- Existing brand and infrastructure
- New member feed from former age-groupers



Stand-alone Club

- Pros

- Potential for more revenue!
- Satisfaction
- Autonomy and independence
- Possible tax advantages (if you meet IRS non-profit rules)

- Cons

- Business infrastructure
- Administrative workload
- Staffing and paying employees/contractors



Tax-Exempt Status

- See USMS and IRS websites for detailed instructions
- Links in PowerPoint presentation you can download

Tax-Exempt Status for Non-Profit Organizations

Federal recognition

Application for recognition of exemption from federal tax can be made under section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue code. Taxes will not have to be paid on membership dues, but this will not exempt any income that is not related to your tax-exempt purpose. It is recommended that a CPA, tax consultant, or lawyer who has specific knowledge of tax-exempt nonprofit organizations, be consulted to determine under which subsection your group should file:

- 501(c)(3) Educational, religious, etc. - includes Amateur Sports.
- 501(c)(4) Civic Leagues, Social Welfare Organizations - Promotion of community welfare; charitable, educational or recreational.
- 501(c)(7) Social and Recreation Clubs.

There are some distinct advantages to each category. The following are pros and cons, found through experience, by some Masters organizations. For specifics, contact a tax specialist as described above.

- The 501(c)(3) classification is the only one in which a gift is tax deductible to the donor. Children's organizations, and those devoted entirely to competitive sports, have the best chance of attaining this classification.

Additional Resources

- USMS “Starting a Masters Swim Program”
 - <https://www.usms.org/-/media/usms/pdfs/coaches/building%20a%20masters%20swim%20program.pdf>
- USMS “Introduction to Adult Swim Programs”
 - <https://www.usms.org/admin/adultprogramresources.pdf>
- IRS rules for tax-exempt organizations
 - <https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/charitable-organizations/exemption-requirements-501c3-organizations>
- SWIMMER Magazine & “Streamlines” web content
- Other coaches
 - USMS Coaches Committee
 - LMSC Officers and LMSC Coaches Chair
 - USMS Club Central
(<https://www.usms.org/club-central>)



Workout Groups

- Established USMS Club provides:
 - Existing infrastructure and branding (websites, logos, merchandise, etc.)
 - USMS Club Finder listing
 - Extended membership base for relays and camaraderie
- Workout group usually provides:
 - Facility and workout times
 - Dues collection
 - Communication

Additional Program Needs

- Support staff (paid or volunteer)
 - Coaches
 - Committee chairs (newsletter, social, publicity, competition, etc.)
 - Admin/technical (accounting, web/media, legal, etc.)

- Safety & liability

- Lifeguards
- Equipment
- Procedures to reduce risk
- Liability insurance

(USMS insurance automatically covers teams that meet requirements)



Safety

- Eyes on the pool, ALWAYS!
- Equipment ready and nearby (AED, backboard, rescue tubes, etc.)
- Posted rules and procedures
 - Swim lane and pool entry etiquette
 - Dry land, locker room, and parking lot safety policies
 - AED and safety equipment signage
 - Location to share with EMS (911) prominently posted
- Emergency Action Plan (EAP) accessible
- HIPAA-compliant health and medical info (attached to swim bags?)

Making a Living as a Coach

- Requires commitment, effort, and time
- Good planning
- Time management
- People management
- Focus

It's the best job you'll ever have!



USMS Resources

- Club Central: <https://www.usms.org/club-central>
- Coaches Committee
- LMSC Coaches Chair
- SWIMMER Magazine
- Streamlines online articles
- USMS YouTube videos
- Other local coaches



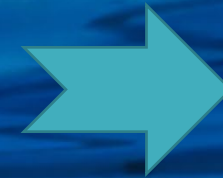
Do What Works...for YOU!

- There's no single "correct" way to start a Masters team
- Work with what you have
- Collaborate with others
- Remember that coaches are the bedrock of our sport

Enjoy the process!

Your coaching journey

- Embrace your roots
- Be a lifelong learner
- Cherish the growth process
- Recognize/acknowledge your contributions
- Take pride in your passion!



Successful coaches...

- Are passionate about swimming
- Care about helping people
- Appreciate their athletes
- Celebrate everyone's accomplishments
- See the value in every swimmer

Keys to Success

- Be a swimming evangelist!
 - Recruit everywhere! (Pools, beaches, triathlons, running clubs, gyms, etc.)
 - Be an asset to your community (ALTS, volunteering, public speaking, etc.)
- Partner with win-win philosophy
 - Bring revenue and good will to facilities
 - Make life better for everyone your program touches
- Treat swimmers as cherished gifts
 - “Nobody cares how much you know—until they know how much you care!”
 - Be unfailingly kind, inclusive, and welcoming to every type of swimmer
 - Make workouts so much fun that everyone will tell their friends

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Good luck in your coaching career!



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Start a Team Video

Terry Heggy

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/t1o8dnc25et7yfl/AADSxfsVeqyiy7ANrUYomv1Ha?dl=0>

An underwater view of a swimming pool. The water is a deep blue color. Lane lines are visible on the pool floor, extending from the foreground towards the background. The ceiling of the pool is visible at the top, showing a grid of lights or structural elements. The overall scene is dimly lit, creating a serene and focused atmosphere.

Team Communication:
Spread the word!

Why Communicate?

- Build and retain membership
 - Potential swimmers need to find you
 - Current members need to feel valued
- Build team identity
- Share critical information
 - Practice times & locations
 - Events (competitions, social, etc.)
 - Technique and tips

Tools

- Website
- Social media
- Newsletters/email blasts
- Signage
- Traditional media

Website

- Location (including map)
- Contact info
- Calendar (Practice times, meets, parties)
- Fees & membership requirements (USMS)
- Coach bios
- Awards and recognition

Social Media Options

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- TikTok
- NextDoor
- Yelp...and many constantly-evolving others!

Social Media & Email

- Event announcements
- Club business (minutes, treasury reports, etc.)
- Etiquette/procedures (incl. pandemic rules)
- Tips & technique
- Event results
- Surveys

Social Media & Email Extras

- Medical/nutritional/workout information
- Call for volunteers (USMS, LMSC, Club)
- Links to articles/videos/books
- Links to sponsors & affiliates
- Athlete profiles/personal stories

Signage

- Flyers/brochures...everywhere!
 - Pool, local gyms, races, health fairs, stores, doctors offices, triathlon clubs, age-group, sporting goods stores, retirement communities
- On-site signage
 - Club & membership info, practice details, directions to lockers/pool/parking, etc.

Other Publicity

- Traditional media
 - Press releases (newspapers, radio, influencers)
- Community offerings
 - Stroke clinics, adopt-a-highway, retirement home concerts, neighborhood fair booths
- Corporate wellness outreach

USMS Resources

- Club Finder
 - Priority placement and marketing support
- Free Club Banner
- USMS Logo Merchandise
- Team Store
 - Logo merchandise through USMS sponsors

Considerations

- Honor your identity: put logo on everything
- Keep it short: Too much competition for views
 - Bullet points rather than long paragraphs
- Ask team what info they desire
- Provide value in every communication
- Share info there isn't time for in practice

Resources

- <https://www.usms.org/-/media/usms/pdfs/coaches/building%20a%20masters%20swim%20program.pdf>
 - Pages 28-31
- Club finder: <https://www.usms.org/clubs>
- USMS Partners: <https://www.usms.org/about-usms/partners>