

2020 U.S. Masters Swimming – Rules Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Tuesday, April 28, 2020

Meeting Time: 8:00 p.m. EST

Chair: Charles Cockrell

Vice Chair(s): Mollie Grover, Claire Letendre

Minutes recorded by: Julie Dusliere

Committee Members Present: 13

Carolyn Boak, Kathy Casey, Charles Cockrell, Julie Dusliere, Marilyn Fink, Christina Fox, Judy Gillies, Mollie Grover, Claire Letendre, Mark Marshfield, Barbara Protzman, Jessica Seaton, Jason Weis

Committee Members Absent: 1

Ian King

Ex Officio and EC present: 4

Bill Brenner (USMS National Office), Chris Colburn (VP of Administration), Steve Hall (USMS National Office), Teri White (USMS Officials Committee)

Ex Officio and EC absent: 2

Richard Garza (Legislation), Clark Hammond (USA Swimming Liaison)

Other Attendees: n/a

The meeting was called to order at 8:01 p.m. EST.

Introductions and General Updates

Charles welcomed everyone to the meeting and conducted roll call of those present.

Charles opened the discussion around the challenges and unique situation we are facing right now due to COVID-19. He shared that no decision has been made yet regarding this year's convention. However, the legislation committee has been asked to make an interpretation on whether convention could be run virtually; and the result was that yes convention could be held virtually if necessary.

Charles asked the committee members to think about what is currently being worked on and should convention move to a virtual scenario, that the committee might choose to send only critical items to the House of Delegates ["HoD"] this year. Bringing forward only the critical business that needs to be handled at this time could minimize the complexity of a virtual convention.

Charles shared that the USA Swimming Rules & Regulations Committee meeting, held the last weekend of May, will be a virtual meeting. Charles will attend.

There is no final decision yet on whether long course nationals scheduled for August will go ahead or not.

Chris Colburn shared brief updates from the USMS Board of Directors perspective. The national board is focused on supporting swimmers and coaches during this time. The board has also discussed contingency plans for how convention could take place, in partnership with the other organizations involved.

Bill Brenner shared brief updates from the USMS staff perspective. A contingency plan is required for September, should convention not be able to be held in person. USMS staff is evaluating the best platforms to utilize and train delegates on prior to convention.

Approval of Minutes from Winter Rules Committee Meeting

Charles asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the February committee call.

A motion to accept the minutes was made by Marilyn Fink.

The motion was seconded by Claire Letendre.

Committee members in favor of approving the February minutes – 13.

Committee members opposed – 0.

Abstentions – 0.

Verification of Times Project Update

Carolyn Boak and Kathy Casey gave the committee an update on the verification of times project.

- a) The current proposal would give the Championship Committee [“CC”] the option to require time verifications at Nationals. Implementation would be at the discretion of CC and could apply to all events in the meet or only designated events. CC could also specify the penalty for swimmers who swim slower than the National Qualification Time [“NQT”] and cannot produce valid verification. Examples of possible penalties include event placement, awards, and Top 10 eligibility.
- b) Important to note that use of time verification is at the discretion of the CC and an option available to the CC to utilize in order to encourage swimmers to be more honest in entry time submissions for Nationals. Intent for use is only at Nationals, particularly when the meet is very large (i.e. long course).
- c) The committee had a lengthy discussion about verification of times that included the following:
 1. Overview of USA Swimming process for verification which is now the SWIMS Database (no longer use OVCs);
 2. How time verification requirement would be triggered – all entries or missed NQTs during the meet;
 3. Method of verification of practice times / coach-recorded times;
 4. Need for administratively efficient processes around time verifications;
 5. Adequate notification to swimmers of the requirements and associated processes before the meet;
 6. Feasibility of practice times / coach-recorded times being included within the USMS database;
 7. Definition of “coach” within the rulebook and applicability to practice time verification process. Recommendation to term it a “workout time” that someone else observes and verifies [timer is on deck]. Workout time = time verified by an observer and signed. A consistent process / form for this type of time verification will need to be created; and
 8. Effect needed or expected from implementation of the time verification protocol at Nationals and the importance of a penalty for non-compliance.
- d) The committee determined that the CC will need to determine the procedures, process and events impacted by time verification well in advance of the respective meet and publish within the meet information.
- e) Action items and next steps for Verification of Times proposal:
 1. Carolyn/Kathy to add in language regarding the requirement to include within the official meet information packet.
 2. Kathy will draft a proposed “verifiable time” definition to be added to rulebook glossary.
 3. Carolyn/Kathy to send proposal to CC to solicit their thoughts and feedback and then bring it back to the committee for further discussion and decision on whether to advance it to the HoD.
 4. This topic will be included on the agenda for the committee’s next meeting (May).

Rulebook Part Two Reorganization

Marilyn Fink and Barb Protzman gave the committee an update on the rulebook part two project.

- a) A conference call was held several weeks ago among the three committees involved – Rules (Marilyn and Barb represented), Legislation, and Long Distance. All three committees are collaborating on this effort. The project is becoming more of a challenge as it is not as simple as moving text from one part of the rulebook to another due to jurisdiction and sanctioning language.
- b) This idea originated with the Volunteer Task Force. The thought process behind it was to streamline all pool-related information into one section (including sanctions, recognition relevant rules), all open water information into another section, and all administrative, membership, governance information into a third section. Each of the respective sections would have one committee responsible for all issues and interpretations. Rules Committee – pool. Long Distance Committee – open water. Legislation Committee – everything else.
- c) The combined task force has another meeting scheduled in the coming weeks and will assess the feasibility of this reorganization.
- d) If the process continues, the outcome will need to be a joint proposal between the Rules Committee and the Legislation Committee that both committees vote upon favorably and send to the HoD.
- e) The committee held a brief discussion about next steps and how to move forward with this project. Due to size and scope it might be prudent to take more time to work on it and wait for a future convention, particularly if this year's convention becomes virtual.
- f) Action items and next steps for Rulebook Reorganization Project:
 1. Marilyn will share the preliminary working documents, which include proposed language and changes, with the committee.
 2. This topic will be included on the agenda for the committee's next meeting (May).

MAAP (Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention) Guidelines

Charles and Claire provided the committee with an update regarding the USA Swimming MAPP policies. Charles plans to re-visit the topic with USA Swimming at the upcoming Rules & Regulations meeting in late May. The critical need is to clarify when the USA Swimming MAPP policies apply to USMS members/swimmers and when they do not [i.e. training/practice, dual-sanctioned meets].

Other Business

Charles has received questions regarding dual sanction on open water events. He will discuss with Clark Hammond at USA Swimming before the committee takes any action on updating relevant and applicable rules. Charles will report back to the committee on this topic at the next meeting.

New Business

None.

Other Information

Next meeting in late May. Mollie will assess committee member availability and schedule the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20p.m. EST.