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USMS ELECTION OPERATING GUIDELINES (As Amended through September 16, 2006)

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 USMS Board of Directors. 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—Annual event where USMS elects Officers or 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.
- O. Candidate—A person who has been slated by the Election Committee.
- P. Nominee—A person who has submitted a nomination, but has not yet been slated by the Election Committee.

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 in odd-numbered years and Directors in even-numbered years (See Articles 505: OFFICERS and 506: BOARD OF DIRECTORS).
- B. An Ad Hoc Election Committee shall be formed at the midyear BOD meeting in the Election year, and shall:
 - 1. Be confirmed by the BOD and be comprised of Zone Committee members and substitutes as follows:
 - a. A Chair of the Committee, who shall be either the Chair of the BOD Governance Committee 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. Two additional members, who shall be experienced HOD members neither seeking election, nor with relatives seeking election.
 - 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 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. Candidate letters of nomination and letters of reference may be published with the permission of the author.
- F. 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.
5. The committee may extend the nomination period two weeks for any office which has no nominees after the nomination period expires.

C. Nomination of Current Officers and Directors

1. Current Officers and Directors eligible for a second term seeking re-election shall submit a completed nomination packet.

D. Floor Nominations

1. Floor nominations shall be accepted at an early session of the HOD.
Each nomination from the floor requires a Delegate nominator and a Delegate to second the nomination.
2. The nominee shall confirm their willingness to run, as a candidate for the nominated position.
3. Following a nomination and second, the floor candidate(s) shall submit a completed nomination packet.
4. Each floor candidate's paperwork will be duplicated and distributed to the HOD to allow time for review prior to the Election.
5. Candidates nominated from the floor of the HOD shall be registered members of USMS prior to their nomination.
6. Floor nominations are not slated by the Zone or Election Committee.

E. A candidate may be nominated for more than one position.

F. Each candidate shall have three (3) minutes to speak after nominations close at convention. The time shall be monitored and enforced by a designated member of the Election committee.

G. An opportunity to meet informally with the candidates shall be provided at convention before the voting takes place.

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 and Director 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.

VII. Zone Endorsements

- A. Zones shall endorse none, one, or more candidates for the At-Large Director position from that zone.
- B. Endorsement of Director candidates shall proceed as follows:
 1. Only zone member Delegates shall be eligible to vote.
 2. The zone member running the election ("Zone Election Chair") shall present the list of nominees compiled by the Election Committee.
 3. 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.
 4. Following nominations:
 - a. Votes shall be taken by secret ballot.
 - b. Each zone member Delegate may cast a vote for or against endorsement of each individual candidate.
 - c. Each candidate receiving a majority of votes for endorsement shall be forwarded to the Election Committee for announcement during the election meeting.
 5. Following the announcement of the endorsement(s), there shall be a motion to destroy the ballots.
 6. The Zone member serving on the Election Committee shall act as an election observer to ensure adherence to election policies.

VIII.HOD Voting

- A. The Election shall be conducted during the first HOD meeting after the Zone meetings.
- B. Only Delegates present and certified shall be eligible to vote.
- C. For At-Large Director positions, the Election Committee shall announce the endorsements as reported from the Zone meetings.
- D. Any candidate running unopposed, after floor nominations have been closed, shall be elected by acclamation immediately following the nomination process.
- E. If voting is to proceed, the Committee shall conduct the Election 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.
- F. Following the announcement of the newly elected persons, there shall be a motion to destroy the ballots.

PART THREE: ELECTION PROCEDURES

APPENDIX A: SCHEDULE

I. In the Year Prior to the Election	
Zone Committee reviews and amends guidelines.	HOD Meeting
Announce the opening of the Election year and request for nominations.	HOD Meeting
II. Pre-HOD Actions During the Election Year	
Submit about nominations to Winter National Office Newsletter	Jan 15
Form the Ad Hoc Election Committee at the midyear BOD meeting.	Early Feb
Post election information on the Web Site.	Mar 1
Chair contacts current BOD members eligible for a second term to determine if they wish to continue in the same position.	Mar 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.	Mar 1 thru Apr 30
Request National Office send email to USMS HOD and LMSC leadership with election information.	Feb 15
Committee reviews applications, slates Officer candidates, notifies candidates, and publishes candidate information.	May 1 thru May 15
Accept nominations for any positions without candidates	May 15 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	
HOD nominations and floor nominations for all positions.	TBD
Zones meet to nominate and endorse Director candidates.	TBD
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 Board of Directors 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 list any other information you would like included.

<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 attachment:
 - 1. 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.

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. The nomination announcement shall be placed in appropriate issues of the National Office Newsletter
- B. Additional email announcements of the nomination deadline shall be made to appropriate audiences.

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. Letter of nomination
 - d. 2 Letters of reference (with the permission of the authors)
 - e. 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. . The Election Committee will host any formal Meet the Candidates Forums. Such forums will be held after HOD nominations and prior to voting. Attendance by the candidates shall be optional.
- B. Questions for the Meet the Candidates Forum shall be submitted by HOD members and should be directed to an office, not a specific candidate.
- C. There shall be at least one formal Meet the Candidates Forum for contested 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 may 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.