

## **Sanctions/Recognitions**

### **General Information**

Sanctioning and recognizing events is a crucial function of the LMSC. Care must be taken to ensure the event hosts follow the requirements of article 202 in the USMS rule book. Each LMSC should have a sanctions chair responsible for all phases of the process, including early scheduling to avoid conflicts or overlaps, and follow-up with the Top 10 Recorder to ensure meet results are submitted in a timely manner. There must be good two-way communication.

**ALL** competitors in sanctioned events must be USMS members or a member of a FINA-recognized national governing body for Masters swimming. This is necessary for the safety and enjoyment of the swimmers, for liability and excess personal accident insurance coverage to be in force, and for official consideration of performances. Times achieved at sanctioned events, conducted in strict compliance with all mandatory swimming rules of the USMS rule book, as defined in Part 1, shall be considered for USMS national records, USMS Top 10 times, and FINA world records. For additional information on insurance coverage, refer to the “Insurance Swim Meet Coverage Grid” in this handbook.

In recognized events, swimmers are not required to be USMS members. Only USMS members are covered by liability and excess personal accident insurance. For additional information on insurance coverage, refer to the “Insurance Swim Meet Coverage Grid” in this handbook. Times achieved at events may be considered for USMS national records and Top 10 times if the event has been granted recognition and 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. Times achieved by USMS members at events sanctioned by USA Swimming shall be considered for USMS national records and Top 10 times without formal application for recognition. Times achieved by USMS members at events sanctioned by USA Swimming or a FINA member federation shall be considered for USMS national records and Top 10 times without formal application for recognition if the USMS member(s) register for the meet as USMS members. It is the responsibility of the swimmer to submit times obtained in recognized events, along with complete documentation, to the appropriate LMSC Top 10 Recorder and the LMSC Sanctions Chair.

Sanctioned and recognized events should be assigned consistent, identifying numbers. A suggested numbering system is XXY-000, where XX is the LMSC numerical code, Y is the last digit of the current year, and 000 the consecutive numbering. Recognized events may be indicated by “R” in the number. Open water events may be indicated by “OW” in the number. For example:

- 560-OW001 would be assigned to the first open water event sanctioned in the Alaska LMSC during 2010
- 050-005 would be assigned to the fifth sanctioned pool meet during 2010
- 390-R003 would be assigned to the third recognized pool meet during 2010

Your LMSC should develop a sanctions/recognitions packet to supply to organizations requesting sanction or recognition, which should include:

- The application for sanction or recognition
- Suggestions for warm-up and warm-down
- Guidelines for preparing the entry form and meet results
- Certificates of insurance (if requested)
- “Report of Occurrence” form (used to report **ALL** incidents, no matter how minor)

A copy of the current USMS rule book is **required** to be available at the event (all registered USMS clubs receive a copy of the rule book). The meet host should be made aware that the rule book may be obtained from the National Office for \$10. Some LMSCs purchase a modest quantity of the rule books for such a purpose. Other welcome information for the meet host includes current records, application for national records, official relay cards, and a brief description of USMS insurance coverage.

#### Online Event Entry – Preliminary Guidance To Sanctions Chairs

Before issuing a sanction for an event that will utilize online entry, the Sanctions Chair must receive assurance of the following from the event host:

- The online entry system must include the language of the liability release set forth in USMS Rule 203.1, or 301.3 for open water events, and an affirmative method for indicating acceptance of the liability waiver (e.g., “I accept” button). The liability release and acceptance should be designed in such a manner that it is clear to the entrant that he or she is accepting the terms of the liability release.

## ***U. S. Masters Swimming***

---

- The online entry system must operate such that the entrant may not proceed to completion of the entry without affirmatively clicking acceptance of the liability waiver.
- Records that evidence acceptance of the liability release must be maintained by the event director or sanctioning LMSC for at least the period of the personal injury or wrongful death statute of limitations, whichever is longer, for the state in which the event takes place. The last search of such statutes of limitations in 2004 revealed that the longest state period was six years.
- The online entry system must include a method for determining within reason that the entrant is the person accepting the liability release.
- The event director must verify that the entrant/participant is a USMS member, consistent with USMS Rule 202.1.1F(5). This may include such methods as electronic verification of the USMS membership number or requiring participants to show their USMS membership cards prior to participating on the day of the event.
- While in-person signing of the liability release on the day of the event is not required, sanctions chairs and event directors are free to include this requirement for extra assurance of compliance with the release requirement.
- USMS National Championships (both pool and long distance) shall allow entrants to register for the event on paper even if online entry is utilized.

### Other important points:

- See article 202.1.1A(1) for adding additional insureds to the liability release statement.
- The liability release must appear **EXACTLY** as in article 203.1, including **CAPITALIZATIONS**.
- A copy of the registration card, or proof of registration acceptable to the LMSC, must accompany all entries.
- There must be at least two officials. The referee must be certified as a stroke and turn judge, starter, or referee by USA Swimming, YMCA, or any other USMS-approved certifying body (see appendix B of the USMS rule book for the complete list of approved certifying bodies).
- All pools used in competition must be in strict compliance with mandatory facilities standards, including pool length, in order for times to be accepted for USMS Top 10 and record consideration. A “Pool Length Certification Form” must be on file with USMS or attached with the “Application for Sanction” or “Application for Recognition.” However, sanctions and recognitions may be issued for events contested in pools that do *not* meet minimum USMS facilities standards. In these cases, results cannot be considered for USMS Top 10 and records. Meet information for contests in such pools, including meet entry forms and programs, must clearly state “**Times achieved at this competition will not be submitted for USMS Top 10 or record consideration.**”
- In addition, pools using a moveable bulkhead must also have their length verified after each session. “Pool Length Certification Forms” from each session must be included with any USMS record application and with results sent to the LMSC Top 10 Recorder and LMSC Sanctions Chair.
- Application for sanction/recognition of events within the jurisdiction of USMS shall be made to the LMSC within which the event is to be held, or in the case of open water sanctions, to the LMSC where the event originates.
- All sanctions and recognitions shall be signed by the LMSC’s authorized representative, and a record thereof shall be retained for 2 years.
- Sanctions and recognitions issued to one organization cannot be transferred to another. No sanction or 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.
- If no separate facility is available, provisions for warm-up/warm-down **MUST** be made as follows (see page 9 of this section of the handbook):
  - In pools of five lanes or more, one lane shall be set aside for continuous warm-up/warm-down during the conduct of the meet.
  - In pools of fewer than five 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.

USMS, through the LMSC, has an obligation to its swimmers to ensure a well-run and properly reported competition. The sanctions chair should be aware of the past performance of meet hosts and call particular attention to any prior deficiencies. Further sanctions and recognitions may be denied to an organization failing to live up to its obligation to conduct such events in accordance with applicable USMS swimming rules and administrative regulations or as stated on the entry form.

**Note:** For open water events, there is a separate application for sanction.

For all competitions, only Risk Management Services, Inc. may issue the additional insured endorsements.

## **Combined, Parallel, and Interwoven Meets**

The number of inquiries as to what mechanisms are available for combining USA Swimming and USMS swimming meets has been increasing. The reasons for combining these meets are many, ranging from the limited availability of pool time and officials to the desire to promote the sport as a lifelong activity. There are several ways of accomplishing this goal within the rules and insurance policies of each organization. This document outlines these options.

It is assumed that all competitors are a member of either USA Swimming, USMS, or both. Those that are members of both must select one organization with which to compete for the entire meet. Dual membership cannot be used to exceed the daily event limits imposed by either organization. Automatic recognition of times achieved by a USMS swimmer competing in the USA-S portion is still available.

Any of the joint meets described below must have sanctions from both USA Swimming and USMS. Both sanctions must be held by the host organization. The host organization cannot be required to accept a participant from either USMS or USA Swimming that would otherwise be barred from participation by their respective organizations.

USMS Record and Top 10 submissions must comply with all USMS documentation requirements.

### **Combined Meets**

With the consent of all (co-)hosting teams and the LSC and LMSC, a combined meet may be sanctioned by both USA Swimming and USMS and all swimmers competing according to USA Swimming rules. This mechanism allows the meet host(s) to seed the event as they normally would, based upon times, with USA Swimming and USMS members combined in heats without specific lanes allocated to one organization or the other. There are restrictions however. A divider must separate members of each organization. A lane line is sufficient to achieve the separation. This does preclude, for example, swimming two-to-a-lane with a member of each organization in the same lane. Warm-up and warm-down should be conducted in separate lanes. Relay teams must consist of members of the same organization.

### **Parallel Meets**

The two meets may be swum in parallel by assigning some number of lanes to USMS competitors and a different set to USA Swimming competitors. If possible, separate stroke and turn officials for each set is preferred. It is permissible to adjust, for example, the makeup of the USMS heats so that competitors in a given heat have approximately the same seed times. Each organization's rules would apply to their members.

### **Interwoven Meets**

The two meets may be swum with complete heats of swimmers from both organizations alternating. There would be no need for separate stroke and turn officials. Each organization's rules would apply to their members.

## **Guidelines for Warm-Up/Warm-Down**

To ensure the safety of all swimmers during the warm-up and warm-down period, we ask that you read and practice the following suggestions:

### **Competition Pool(s)**

1. During the first 30 minutes of the warm-up period all lanes should be used for general swimming. After the first 30 minutes, one or more lanes may be designated as sprint lanes. In sprint lanes, swimmers swim in one direction only down the center of the lane. A dive off the blocks or a backstroke start is permitted only in the sprint lanes. Swimmers should leave the sprint lane when they reach the end of the pool.
2. All other lanes are for continuous swimming in a circle pattern, with swimmers staying as close to the right side of the lane as is practical. Swimmers should be considerate of others, by swimming in a speed-appropriate lane and allowing other swimmers space at the walls to turn. Lanes should be designated slow, medium, and fast. No dives, backstroke starts, or jumping entry is permitted in these lanes at any time during warm-ups. "No Diving" signs must be posted on the blocks for these lanes.
3. At no time during warm-up shall swimmers be permitted to enter any lane by jumping into the water from the sides or ends of the pool. Swimmers must enter the pool feet first in a cautious manner. Diving is permitted only from the blocks in the designated sprint lanes.
4. At the referee's discretion, swimmers may be disqualified from competition for diving into the pool during warm-up.
5. No hand paddles are allowed. Kickboards and pull buoys may be permitted.
6. Swimmers are requested to leave the pool when they have finished their warm-up to provide other swimmers an opportunity for adequate warm-up.
7. It is recommended that:
  - A. Marshals at each end of the pool monitor and enforce these safety guidelines.
  - B. An announcer facilitate the conduct of the warm-up.
  - C. A qualified lifeguard be on duty throughout the warm-up period.

### **Warm-Up/Warm-Down During Competition**

1. The same safety regulations as stated above are enforced, except there need not be a sprint lane. However, if space permits, one sprint lane may be available and marked appropriately.
2. If there is no other warm-up/warm-down area available in pools of five lanes or more, one lane must 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 may 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 (article 102.4.1).
3. Swimmers must enter the pool feet first in a cautious and controlled manner. Diving shall be permitted only in the designated lanes (article 102.4.2 of the USMS rule book).