



# On-Deck Coaching Guidelines and Information

**Description:** The U.S. Masters Swimming Coaches Committee offers On-Deck Coaching assistance for swimmers during warm-ups at National Championship Events and at the annual United States Aquatic Sports (USAS) Convention. Coaches monitor the sprint lanes during the early morning warm-ups at Nationals, giving swimmers start commands and timing sprints or pace repeats if requested. At Convention, coaches devise and conduct workouts for convention attendees. All participating coaches are given a special USMS Coaches T-shirt, great for being recognized on deck. The On-Deck Coaching program has grown in popularity and participation, and we are now offering to help regional Masters organizations develop the program for regional events, such as the Zone Championships.

**Procedures:** Participating coaches are organized by a site coordinator, in conjunction with the On-Deck Coaching Coordinator. The On-Deck Coaching Coordinator makes assignments according to the availability of the volunteer coaches. On the day of the event, each coach is responsible for meeting at a predetermined area with the site coordinator when the announcement is made for On-Deck Coaches to gather. When in doubt, meet at one of the following places. For short course national meets, meet at the Lane 1 side of the pool between the two courses. For long course national meets, meet at the Lane 1 corner of the starting end. Coaches will then be distributed to their assigned sprint lanes when they open. Coaches wear visible, coordinated apparel items (typically the On-Deck Coaching T-shirt) to help swimmers recognize them. Coaches observe their assigned areas for safety and communicate with the swimmers, offering start commands for sprints or pace work as appropriate. If a swimmer requests sprint or repeat times, the coach should be prepared to help by bringing his or her own stopwatch.

**Guidelines:** While serving as an On-Deck Coach, each volunteer is expected to:

- 1) be on time
- 2) maintain professional appearance and conduct
- 3) refrain from using foul and inappropriate language
- 4) refrain from displaying advertisements or apparel promoting alcohol or tobacco products
- 5) refrain from offering technical advice unless asked, or unless there is a blatant safety or rules issue involved
- 6) remove the On-Deck Coaching T-shirt at the conclusion of the warm-up period

If you would like any additional information about the U.S. Masters Swimming On-Deck Coaching program, please contact On-Deck Coaching Coordinator Chris Colburn via email at [chriscolburn@usms.org](mailto:chriscolburn@usms.org), or by phone at 630-335-4162.