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# PART 3: OPEN WATER AND LONG DISTANCE SWIMMING RULES

## ARTICLE 301: Administration

### 301.1 Organization

The conduct and organization of open water and long distance swimming for Masters shall be governed by USMS through its Long Distance Committee and LMSCs. The chair and committee members shall be appointed as provided in articles 507.1 and 507.1.7.

### 301.2 Guide to Operations

**301.2.1 Open Water Guide to Operations**—The Open Water Committee shall maintain the *Open Water Guide to Operations* for the use of USMS open water officials and event hosts. The guide shall contain the manner of implementation, governing policies, and management of the rules applying to open water swims.

**301.2.2 Postal Guide to Operations**—The Long Distance Committee shall develop and maintain a USMS Postal Guide to Operations. The guide shall contain the manner of implementation, governing policies, and management of the rules applying to postal swims.

### 301.3 Membership, Representation, and Sanctions

Membership, representation, and sanctions for open water and long distance events shall be governed by all applicable rules under articles 202 and 203.

### 301.4 Age Determining Date

In open water and postal swims, the eligibility of a swimmer shall be determined by the age of the swimmer on December 31 of the year of competition, except for 18-year-olds, who must be 18 on the day that they swim.

## ARTICLE 302: Open Water Events

### 302.1 Events

An open water event is composed of one or more swims of any distance conducted in an open body of water, either natural or manmade. The distances shall be the same for both men and women.

**302.1.1** Open water events shall be composed of individual and/or relay swims.

**302.1.2** At the discretion of the event host, open water events may include clinics or other swimming activities.

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**302.1.3** At the discretion of the event host, open water events may be competitive (article 303) and/or noncompetitive (article 304).

### 302.2 Open Water Courses

#### 302.2.1 The Course

- A** The event host shall determine the course and type of start and finish.
- B** The event host shall measure and mark the course as accurately as feasible.
- C** The event host should eliminate known hazards on the course wherever possible. Known hazards that cannot be eliminated shall be marked and reported to all participants.

#### 302.2.2 Water Conditions

##### **A Water Temperature**

- (1) A swim shall not begin if the water temperature is less than 60.8° Fahrenheit (16° Celsius), unless heat-retaining swimwear is required of all swimmers or a USMS-approved thermal plan is in place.
- (2) A swim in which heat retaining swimwear is required of all swimmers shall not begin if the water temperature is less than 57° Fahrenheit (13.9° Celsius) unless a USMS-approved thermal plan is in place.
- (3) A swim of 5 kilometers or greater shall not begin if the water temperature exceeds 85° Fahrenheit (29.45° Celsius). A swim of less than 5 kilometers shall not begin if the water temperature exceeds 87.8° Fahrenheit (31° Celsius).

**B Water Quality**—If water quality meets the standards of the local testing authority, the water quality will be deemed acceptable.

#### 302.2.3 Starting Line

**A** The starting line shall be specifically designated and clearly defined.

**B** Water depth for swims starting from a platform (dock, pier, or ship):

- (1) For platforms .75 meter or less above the water surface, the water depth shall be no less than 2 meters for the first 5 meters of the course.
- (2) For platforms more than .75 meters above the water surface, the water depth shall be a safe depth for the first 5 meters of the course as determined by the referee. Swimmers must enter the water feet first.
- (3) The referee shall inform all swimmers before the start of each race/wave of the water depth at the start. Water depth markings on the starting platform or dock are recommended. Before the swim, the referee shall have this start area inspected for underwater hazards and ensure that the starting protocol is safe. The swim shall use an alternative method of starting if hazards cannot be eliminated or the start cannot be safe.

#### 302.2.4 Turns

**A** All turns shall be clearly indicated.

**B** Turn buoys shall be passed on the right or left as stated in the pre-swim instructions.

- C Guide buoys may be used between turns to help swimmers navigate. Swimmers may pass these buoys on either side, except for floats on a straightaway swim course or when otherwise directed by the referee.

#### 302.3.5 Finish Line

- A The finish line shall be specifically designated, clearly defined, and easily visible from the water to swimmers approaching the finish.

#### 302.3.5 Feeding Stations

- A Feeding stations shall be fixed in position and shall safely accommodate the number of swimmers and feeders.

- B Feeding stations shall be located on the inner or outer boundaries of the course.

- C Number of feeding stations for swims without individual escorts:

(1) For swims 5 kilometers or shorter, feeding stations are optional.

(2) For swims longer than 5 kilometers but shorter than 10 kilometers, at least one feeding station is required.

(3) For swims 10 kilometers or longer, there shall be at least one feeding station every 2.5 kilometers.

- D For swims requiring individual escorts, feeding stations are optional.

#### 302.3 Straightaway Swim Courses

- A The course shall be a straight, measured distance within plus or minus 6 inches, in stationary open water and defined by a cable with floats or a continuous marking system visible to the swimmer. Floats on the course shall be a maximum of 10 meters apart.

- B The course shall be certified by a licensed surveyor, every year if the turning points are not permanent and every five years if they are.

#### 302.4 Cumulative Relays

302.4.1 Cumulative relays are composed of groups of swimmers from the same USMS-registered club entered in the individual swim. Cumulative relay swims may be contested on a total time/distance or point system basis.

302.4.2 **Time/Distance Basis**—A specified number of swimmers on each relay shall be considered in the computations for club scoring. The relay whose specified number of swimmers has the lowest cumulative time or the greatest cumulative distance shall be declared the winner. A similar method shall be used to determine second, third, and subsequent places.

302.4.3 **Point Basis**—Points are awarded on the basis of overall finishing position, with one point for first place, two points for second place, etc. The points of specified relay members are added, and the lowest cumulative score determines the winning relay; the second lowest score, the second place, etc.

302.4.4 With the exception of National Championship events, the event host may allow special events in which members of an open water relay need not be from the same club.

**302.5 Sequential Relays**

**302.5.1** Relays shall consist of two or more swimmers from the same USMS-registered club as specified in the entry information. The relay members shall rotate in the same order throughout the event. The time or distance each swimmer is required to spend in the water shall be specified in the entry information. The changeover to the new swimmer shall be made within one minute after the completion of the previous swimmer's leg. In the exchange in open water relays, physical contact must be made between the two swimmers.

**302.5.2** Mixed-gender sequential relays shall consist of at least one swimmer of each gender, as follows:

<b>Total number of relay members</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
2	1	1
3	minimum 1	minimum 1
4	2	2
5	minimum 2	minimum 2
6	3	3

**302.5.3** With the exception of National Championship events, the event host may allow special events in which members of an open water relay need not be from the same club.

**Article 303:  
Conduct of Competitive Open Water Events**

**303.1 Scoring Divisions**

With the exception of national championship events, scoring divisions are at the discretion of the event host and may be separated by gender, age group, swimwear, specialty categories, or any other method suitable to the swimmers served.

**303.1.1** Scoring divisions shall be subject to the following:

- A** Scoring divisions shall be the same for men and women.
- B** Separate scoring divisions may be contested at the same time, with results tabulated separately.
- C** If awards are given, they shall be of equal value for men and women and for all age groups.
- D** With the exception of national championships, requirements defined in articles 307.7.5 and 307.7.6 may be waived by the Long Distance Committee chair to facilitate the development of new or revised awards systems.

**303.1.2** Standard USMS gender scoring divisions consist of:

- A Individual**—Open, women, and men.
- B Relay**—Women, men, and mixed.

- 303.1.3** Standard USMS age group scoring divisions consist of:
- A Individual**—Open and 18–24, 25–29, 30–34 ... (five-year age groups as high as necessary).
  - B Relay**—Open and 18+, 25+, 35+... (10-year age groups as high as necessary), the age of the youngest relay member determining the age group.
- 303.1.4** Standard USMS swimwear scoring divisions consist of category I and category II swimwear as defined in article 303.7.

### **303.2 Safety**

- 303.2.1** Event hosts shall develop and maintain a written safety plan that must be reviewed by the LMSC authorized representative. Safety plans shall then be included in the sanction application and must be approved by USMS before issue of the sanction.
- 303.2.2** Swims must conform to the written and approved safety plan, except where conditions warrant modification.

### **303.3 Escorted Swims**

- 303.3.1** In any event for which it has been arranged that an escort craft will accompany each swimmer throughout the event, all swimmers shall be accompanied by such an escort craft. If the escort craft becomes disabled or cannot continue to accompany the swimmer, the swimmer may:
- A** Stay in the water near the disabled escort craft until a replacement arrives,
  - B** Join another escort craft that is accompanying only one other swimmer until another escort craft arrives, or
  - C** Exit the water.
- 303.3.2** Swimmers may receive the following assistance from any escort craft:
- A** Food or drink may be passed from escort craft to swimmer.
  - B** The escort craft may also assist the swimmer with navigation, including verbal and written communication.
- 303.3.3** Swimmers shall not receive the following assistance from any escort craft:
- A** Swimmers shall not receive forward progress from any escort craft.
  - B** Drafting directly behind the escort craft shall not be permitted when other open water is readily available.
  - C** Escort craft shall not obstruct other swimmers in the race.
- 303.3.4** If a swimmer's escort craft becomes disabled as per article 303.3.1, an escort craft for another swimmer may assume responsibility for the swimmer with the disabled escort craft, subject to the following conditions:
- A** Any one escort craft may escort no more than two swimmers.
  - B** The two swimmers must stay within 3 meters of each other. Failure to stay within 3 meters shall result in immediate disqualification of the second swimmer assigned to the escort craft and the immediate exit of that person from the water.
- 303.3.5** In any swim in which individual escorts are required and motorized escorts are allowed, drafting from any craft or other swimmers is prohibited. Swimmers must attempt to remain 3 meters or more from other swimmers, except

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when rounding buoys, when overtaking other swimmers when space is not readily available, when unescorted at the start and finish of the swim, and when the swimmer's escort craft becomes disabled as per articles 301.3.1 and 303.3.4. Incidental or accidental incursion into the 3-meter zone of another swimmer shall not be the basis for disqualification.

**303.3.6** In any swim in which individual escorts are required and nonmotorized escorts are used, the event host may choose to allow drafting or prohibit drafting in accordance with article 303.3.5.

### 303.4 Starts

#### 303.4.1 Types

**A Stationary**—Swimmers start from a platform or in the water behind the starting line.

**B Running**—Swimmers line up a short distance from the water behind a marked line. At the starting signal, the swimmers run into the water and swim the prescribed course.

**C Wave**—At the discretion of the event host, swims may be started in waves in which each wave is separated at the start from other waves by a time interval. Swimmers' times shall be adjusted by the starting time interval and their order of finish shall be determined on the basis of the adjusted time.

**303.4.2 Starting Signal**—The starting signal shall be both audible and visible.

**303.4.3 Straightaway Events**—A stationary water start shall be used in straightaway events.

### 303.5 Seeding

**303.5.1** When practical, swimmers shall be seeded by their 1500 meters/1650 yards times. The manner of seeding swimmers without times shall be at the discretion of the event host and stated in the event information.

**303.5.2** When wave starts are used in straightaway swims, the swimmers shall be seeded in order of time, with the fastest swimmers receiving the preferred positions in seeded order. If subsequent rows are needed, they shall be seeded in a similar method.

**303.5.3** Events for different age groups and genders may be combined to allow the swimmers to compete at the same time.

### 303.6 Finishes

#### 303.6.1 Types

**A In-Water**—The swimmer shall have finished the swim when any part of the swimmer touches a vertical surface or crosses the finish line after completion of the prescribed distance. If visual judging is used, order of finish shall be determined as the swimmer touches the vertical surface or crosses the finish line. If electronic chip timing is used, order of finish shall be determined when the timing chip is registered by the electronic timing system or when the independent backup timing system is activated.

**B Out-of-Water**—Swimmers shall leave the water, as defined by the course, and proceed to the finish line. If visual judging is used, order

of finish shall be determined as the swimmer's chest crosses the finish line. If electronic chip timing is used, order of finish shall be determined when the timing chip is registered by the electronic timing system or when the independent backup timing system is activated.

**303.6.2 Straightaway Events**—An in-water finish shall be used in straightaway events.

**303.6.3** When a final time has been submitted to the nearest second, .99 second shall be added to the time submitted. When a final time has been submitted to the nearest tenth of a second, .09 shall be added to the time submitted.

**303.6.4 Backup Timing and Judging**—In open water swims in which electronic chip timing is used, an independently operating backup timing and judging system is required.

### **303.7 Swimwear for Open Water Events**

Swimwear allowed for open water events is defined below. It is the swimmer's responsibility to understand the appropriate swimwear allowed at a particular event.

#### **303.7.1 Rules for All Swimwear for Open Water Events**

**A Design**—Swimsuits shall be nontransparent and conform to the current concept of the appropriate. The referee shall have the authority to bar offenders from competition until they comply with this rule.

**B Advertising**—Products involving tobacco, alcohol, or pharmaceuticals containing substances banned under IOC or FINA rules may not be advertised, but the advertiser's name only may be used. Offenders may be barred from competition until they comply with this rule.

#### **303.7.2 Rules for Category I Swimwear for Open Water Events**

**A** Swimwear shall include only a swimsuit, cap or caps (including those made of neoprene when the water temperature is not greater than 78 degrees Fahrenheit), and goggles. Swim caps shall be defined as head gear conforming to a traditional swim cap design and shall not extend to protect the neck and shoulders. Nose clips, ear plugs, and wristwatches are also allowed.

**B** The swimmer shall wear only one swimsuit in one or two pieces. All swimsuits shall be made from textile materials and not contain clasps or zippers. For both men and women, the swimsuit shall not cover the neck and shall not extend past the shoulder nor below the ankles.

**C** Exemptions to the restrictions in articles 303.7.2A–B may be granted to a swimmer, on a case by case basis, by the chair of the Long Distance Committee or designee. Exemptions will be granted only for conflicts due to the swimmer's verified religious beliefs or verified medical conditions.

(1) Procedures for applying for an exemption will be published by the Long Distance Committee and posted on the USMS website.

(2) No exemptions to these restrictions will be granted for swimwear that would give a swimmer a competitive advantage.

(3) The decision of the Long Distance Committee chair may be appealed only to the entire Long Distance Committee, whose decision shall be final and binding on all parties.

**D** Swimmers are not permitted to wear or use any device or substance to help their speed, pace, navigation, buoyancy, or endurance during a swim (such as wetsuits, webbed gloves, fins, snorkels, buoyant armbands, audio players, etc.). Medical identification items may be worn. Any kind of tape on the body or flat armband is not permitted unless approved by the referee. Any devices used to maintain body heat are not permitted, except for those listed in article 303.7.2A.

### 303.7.3 Rules for Category II Swimwear for Open Water Events

**A** Swimwear that does not meet the requirements for category I swimwear shall be considered category II swimwear. Swimwear may include a swimsuit or wetsuit, cap or caps, goggles, armbands, and rash guards. Nose clips, ear plugs, wristwatches, and grease are also allowed.

**B** Wetsuits, neoprene caps, or any other heat-retaining swimwear may be allowed at the discretion of the event director when the water temperature is not greater than 78 degrees Fahrenheit.

**C** Swimmers are not permitted to wear or use any additional device or substance to help their speed, pace, navigation, buoyancy, or endurance during a swim (such as webbed gloves, fins, snorkels, audio players, etc.), except in designated events where all swimmers may use similar devices or substances. Medical identification items may be worn. Any kind of tape on the body is not permitted unless approved by the referee.

## 303.8 Officials and Staff

### 303.8.1 There shall be an event director, safety director, and referee

**A Event Director**—The event director is responsible for the overall operation of the event. The event director shall be responsible for:

- (1) Securing the sanction and permit(s) for the event.
- (2) Determining the course.
- (3) Recruiting and approving personnel assignments for all event staff.
- (4) Ensuring that the necessary staff for the conduct of the event are at their respective posts.
- (5) Advising the referee to modify the manner in which the swim is conducted, change the course and/or distance, delay the start, and/or stop a swim in progress if circumstances warrant.
- (6) Cancelling the swim if circumstances warrant.

**B Safety Director**—The safety director is responsible for overseeing all aspects of event safety. The position of safety director shall not be combined with the duties of any other staff member or official. The safety director shall be responsible for:

- (1) Completing and complying with the approved safety plan
- (2) Checking that the entire course, especially the start and finish areas, is safe and free of obstructions.
- (3) Arranging that sufficient suitable water craft, equipment, and safety staff are available during the swim.
- (4) Briefing and assigning safety staff.



- (5) Advising the referee to modify the manner in which the swim is conducted or change the course and/or distance.
- (6) Delaying the start and/or stopping a swim in progress if circumstances warrant.

**C Referee**—The referee is responsible for the fair conduct of the swim. The referee shall be responsible for:

- (1) All officials, including instructing and assigning officials, enforcing all applicable rules, deciding all questions related to the conduct of the swim, and adjudicating protests.
- (2) Ensuring that all swimmers are briefed about safety procedures, the course, site-specific rules, and other necessary information about the conduct of the swim.
- (3) Barring, removing, or taking other appropriate action with any swimmer who acts in an unsporting or unsafe manner within the swimming venue.
- (4) Disqualifying any swimmer violating event or USMS rules or safety procedures.
- (5) Modifying the manner in which the swim is conducted, changing the course or distance, delaying the start, or stopping a swim in progress if circumstances warrant.

**303.8.2** There shall be additional officials and staff in numbers sufficient to operate the event in accordance with USMS open water rules and administrative regulations.

**303.8.3** Safety directors and referees shall be certified in these capacities by a USMS-approved certifying body. If a certifying official becomes indisposed, other officials or staff may perform the duties of such positions if they receive training in the specified duties of their positions and are under the direct supervision of the event director.

### **303.9 Disqualifications**

A disqualification can be made only by the referee, the starter, or a judge within whose jurisdiction the infraction has been committed. Swimmers shall be disqualified if they:

- 303.9.1** Or their personal escort intentionally delay the progress of another swimmer. Accidental contact, especially at the start, shall not be considered a disqualification. However, the flagrant disregard of another swimmer's rights shall result in disqualification.
- 303.9.2** Fail to complete the prescribed course.
- 303.9.3** Fail to complete the prescribed course within the preannounced time.
- 303.9.4** Fail to follow race rules.
- 303.9.5** Make forward progress by pulling, pushing, or maintaining contact on physical features and/or craft on or near the course, other than the bottom near the start and finish and at specified locations. Event hosts may choose to prohibit deliberate contact between swimmers and craft and physical features if it has been announced in the event information.
- 303.9.6** Draft in swims in which drafting is prohibited.
- 303.9.7** Violate rules on escorted swims as described in article 303.3.3 or receive similar assistance from any craft on the course.

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**303.9.8** Receive unauthorized assistance at the start or finish.

**303.9.9** Violate swimwear rules.

**303.9.10** Swim in a manner in which personal safety is jeopardized.

**303.9.11** Act in an unsporting or unsafe manner within the swimming venue.

### **303.10 Swimmers with Disabilities**

**303.10.1** The referee may modify any rule and the event director may modify any swim management procedure for a swimmer who has a disability. Any such modification shall affect only the current event and does not set precedent.

**303.10.2 Definition**—Disability is defined as a permanent physical or cognitive disability that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

### **303.10.3 Responsibilities**

**A Athlete**—The athlete (or the athlete’s coach) is responsible for notifying the event host, prior to the competition, of any disability of the athlete and of the requested modification. The swimmer/coach shall provide any assistant(s) or equipment if required.

**B Referee or event director**—The referee or event director shall devise such modifications that allow the swimmer to participate as long as they conform to safety requirements. No modifications shall be granted that will give a swimmer a competitive advantage.

**303.10.4** Recommendations for allowable modifications are described in the *Open Water Guide to Operations*.

### **303.11 Incomplete Swim**

**303.11.1** The event director, safety director, or referee shall have the authority to determine if the start of a race is to be postponed. The referee and/or safety director shall have the authority to stop a race in progress. Only the event director shall have the authority to cancel a swim or event.

**303.11.2** If a race is stopped and swimmers are removed from the water for their safety, the referee shall determine if the swim is to be restarted or considered official. If the referee determines the swim to be official, article 303.9.2 may be waived and the referee shall determine the order of finish of the swimmers on the course.

**303.11.3** In swims with cutoff times, the entry information shall state whether swimmers who have not finished by the cutoff time will be advanced to the finish line, considered to be officially finished, or disqualified.

### **303.12 Protests**

**303.12 .1** Any protest arising from an open water event (other than national championships—refer to article 307.7) shall be made to the event referee within 30 minutes after the release of results at the venue. If results are not released in a timely manner, a protest may be made to the event director in writing within three days after all swimmers are notified of the release of results. If the protest is not resolved, the protester may appeal in writing promptly to the LMSC. If the LMSC does not satisfactorily resolve the protest, the protestor may appeal in writing promptly to the USMS Long Distance Committee chair.

## ARTICLE 304: Conduct of Noncompetitive Open Water Swims

### 304.1 Noncompetitive Swims

Noncompetitive swims are those in which swimmer placement is not included in results.

**304.1.1** Conduct of noncompetitive swims shall be at the discretion of the event host, as long as they conform to article 301, 302.2.2, 303.2, and 303.8.

**304.1.2** At the discretion of the event director, noncompetitive swims may provide timing as a courtesy to swimmers who desire to know their finish time.

## ARTICLE 305: Conduct of Long Distance Pool Events

### 305.1 Events

Long distance pool events shall consist of individual and/or relay competitions. The distances shall be the same for both men and women.

### 305.2 Definitions

A long distance pool event is any swimming event that contains distance-based swim(s) more than 1650 yards (1508.8 meters) in length or a time-based swim(s) equal to or longer than 60 minutes in time.

### 305.3 Pool

A long distance pool swim may be based on the time to swim a fixed distance or the distance swum over a fixed time. These swims may be conducted in a designated pool or as a postal event.

**305.3.1 Event Host**—The event host shall have the discretion to decide the time/distance of the swim(s) and, in the case of postal swim(s), the size(s) of the pools in which the event is to be swum.

**305.3.2 Distance-Based Swims**—The object of a distance-based swim is to determine who can swim a specific distance in the shortest amount of time.

**305.3.3 Time-Based Swims**—The object of a time-based swim is to determine who can swim the greatest distance in a given time period.

**305.3.4 Postal**—A postal event is a competition in which swimmers participate at a place of their choosing and submit the time or distance achieved to a central location for tabulation.

### 305.4 Cumulative Relays

Cumulative relays are composed of groups of swimmers from the same USMS-registered club entered in the individual swim. Cumulative relay swims may be contested on a total time/distance or point system basis.

### 305.5 Sequential Relays

Sequential relays shall consist of two or more swimmers from the same USMS-registered club as specified in the entry information. The relay members shall rotate in the same order throughout the event. The time or distance each swimmer is required to spend in the water shall be specified in the entry information. The composition of mixed-gender sequential relays is governed by 302.5.2. Relay exchanges are governed by articles 101.7.3C and 107.3.F.

**305.6 Age Groups**

Age groups in individual and relay events for men and women shall be the same as the standard USMS age group scoring divisions (listed in article 303.1.3).

**305.7 Awards**

If awards are given, they shall be of equal value for men and women and for all age groups.

**305.8 Protests**

Any protest arising from a long distance pool event (other than National Championships—refer to article 307.7.9) shall be made to the referee within 30 minutes after the release of results at the venue. If results are not released in a timely manner, a protest may be made to the event director in writing within 3 days after all swimmers are notified of the release of results. If the protest is not resolved, the protester may appeal in writing promptly to the LMSC. If the LMSC does not satisfactorily resolve the protest, the protestor may appeal in writing promptly to the USMS Long Distance Committee chair.

**ARTICLE 306:  
Conduct of Postal Events****306.1 Rules**

Long distance events conducted in pools must comply with all applicable pool event rules in Part 1 of the rule book, except as noted in article 306.

**306.2 Pool Size**

**306.2.1** Events shall be swum in a pool at least 25 yards in length.

**306.2.2** Requirements for pool certification (article 105.1.6) and pool measurement (article 105.1.7) shall not apply to postal events.

**306.3 Officials**

**306.3.1** There shall be at least one adult acting as a referee and starter present at all times, having no additional responsibilities during the swim other than acting as a timer if necessary.

**306.3.2** Each swimmer shall have a timer who shall time and count lengths by recording split times for every two lengths during the swim. A timer may also serve as referee and starter if necessary. One person may serve as timer for no more than two swimmers at the same time.

**306.4 Eligibility**

All swimmers in national championship postal events must be currently registered members of USMS or a FINA-member national governing body on or before the day of their swim.

**306.5 Multiple Swimmers per Lane**

**306.5.1** No more than two swimmers shall share a lane.

**306.5.2** Drafting shall not be permitted.

**306.5.3** When two swimmers are sharing the same lane, they shall conform to articles 102.10.4A(6)(a)–(b).

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**306.6 Timing**

- 306.6.1** A stopwatch or electronic timing system shall be used to time the event.
- 306.6.2** Cumulative split times must be recorded to the nearest second.
- 306.6.3** When a final time has been submitted to the nearest second, .99 second shall be added to the time submitted. When a final time has been submitted to the nearest tenth of a second, .09 second shall be added to the time submitted.

**306.7 Determining Distances in Time-Based Events**

- 306.7.1** Distances shall be determined by multiplying the total lengths swum by the length of the pool and adding the last completed 5-yard/meter increment.
- 306.7.2** If the size of the pool is not designated, all distances shall be reported in yards.
- 306.7.3** If distances are to be reported in yards and the event is swum in a metric pool, the distances shall be determined to the last completed meter converted to yards by multiplying 1.0936 times the number of meters completed and rounding off the distance to the last completed 5-yard increment.

**306.8 Determining Times in Short-Course Distance-Based Events**

- 306.8.1** Swimmers may choose to swim events in 25-meter pools, swimming the same nominal number of meters as yards.
- 306.8.2** Times done in 25-meter pools shall be reported as if swum in a 25-yard pool, by dividing times by 1.0936 and integrating them with 25-yard times.

**306.9 Split Times**

- 306.9.1** Split times from individual postal events may not be used for entry into a separate individual postal national championship event of a shorter distance.
- 306.9.2** Split times from individual postal events may not be used as part of a relay entry into a separate relay postal national championship event of a shorter distance.

**306.10 Integrity of Results in Postal Events**

- 306.10.1** Each entrant shall be responsible for the validity of the split times and/or the final time/distance submitted.
- 306.10.2** Event hosts may request additional verification of completion from any entrant and may request that the Long Distance Committee chair refuse to accept, or disqualify, any entry that appears to contain erroneous information.

**306.11 Determination of Place**

- 306.11.1** In distance-based events, the person or relay swimming the fastest time shall be declared the winner. If two or more swimmers achieve the same time, a tie shall be declared.
- 306.11.2** In time-based events, the person or relay swimming the farthest shall be declared the winner. If two or more swimmers swim the same distance, a tie shall be declared.

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**ARTICLE 307:  
Open Water and  
Long Distance National Championships**

**307.1 Rules**

Open water and long distance championship events shall be governed by articles 301, 302, 303, 305, and 306. In addition, the following rules apply specifically to championships.

**307.2 Open Water and Long Distance Championship Events**

**307.2.1** The Long Distance Committee shall award open water national championships as:

- A** Individual championships,
- B** Multichampionship swim festivals,
- C** A combination of A and B, or
- D** Any other configuration that enhances the value of USMS open water championships.

**307.2.2** At the discretion of the Long Distance Committee, national championship events may be awarded in the following categories:

- A** One mile Sprint Distance Championship (quarter-mile straightaway or open water course).
- B** Two miles Cable Championship (quarter-mile straightaway).
- C** Open water Middle Distance Championship (greater than 1 mile and less than or equal to 3 miles).
- D** Open water Long Distance Championship (greater than 3 miles and less than 6 miles.)
- E** Open water Marathon Distance Championship (greater than or equal to 6 miles and less than 9 miles).
- F** Open water Ultra Marathon Distance Championship (greater than or equal to 9 miles).
- G** Postal 1 hour Championship (in a pool 25 yards or longer).
- H** Postal 5 and 10 kilometer Championship (each event swum separately on a 50-meter course in a pool).
- I** Postal 3000 and 6000 yard Championship (each event swum separately on a 25-yard or 25-meter course in a pool)
- J** Other national championship events and distances may be awarded at the discretion of the Long Distance Committee chair

**307.2.3 Rules Pertaining to Cumulative Relays**

- A** Cumulative relay competitions shall be contested in postal championships and may be contested in other championships. Recognized relays shall be three-person women's relays, three-person men's relays, and four-person mixed gender relays with two women and two men. Exceptions for open water national championships may be granted by the Long Distance Committee chair.

- B** Age groups for relay swims shall be the same as those listed in article 303.1.3B.
- C** All relay members shall also be entered in the individual event. Exceptions for open water events only are at the discretion of the event host and with the approval of the Long Distance Committee chair.
- D** All team members shall be from the same USMS-registered club.
- E** Competitors shall be allowed to swim in only one same-gender and one mixed-gender relay event per event.

### 307.3 Site Selection

The manner of site selection for national championships shall be at the discretion of the Long Distance Committee and shall depend upon the championship structure chosen under article 307.2. Should a bidding system be selected, it shall be accomplished in the following manner.

- 307.3.1** Suitable bids shall comply with all applicable USMS swimming and open water and long distance rules, policies, and procedures.
- 307.3.2** All bids shall be submitted to the chair of the Long Distance Committee no later than July 1. If no timely suitable bid is received, the committee shall continue to solicit bids.
- 307.3.3** Championships shall be awarded by the Long Distance Committee one to three years in advance of the national championship event.
- 307.3.4** A three-area award system may be followed for the bidding of open water championships (see Appendix D for map and description of areas). In this system, suitable bids from a qualifying area shall receive preference over bids from other areas.

<b>National Championship Bid Rotation</b> (see 307.2.2 for distance definitions)			
Year	Area 1 West	Area 2 Central	Area 3 East
2016	Middle Distance Ultra-Marathon Distance	2-mile cable Marathon Distance	Sprint Distance Long Distance Festival
2017	Sprint Distance Long Distance Festival	Middle Distance Ultra-Marathon Distance	2-mile cable Marathon Distance
2018	2-mile cable Marathon Distance	Sprint Distance Long Distance Festival	Middle Distance Ultra-Marathon Distance
2019	Middle Distance Ultra-Marathon Distance	2-mile cable Marathon Distance	Sprint Distance Long Distance Festival

**307.4 Contract**

Representatives of the host organization that is the successful bidder of an open water and long distance championship event shall sign a written contract with USMS, which specifies the responsibilities of the event host and of USMS.

**307.5 Financial**

**307.5.1** The host organization shall agree to underwrite the full event expenses, including but not limited to the following:

- A** Costs associated with the event (setting up the course, supplies, equipment, etc.).
- B** Cost of all national championship event awards (medals and patches) and/or other appropriate awards.
- C** A fee per individual entrant in the championship swim (or a fee per individual entrant in each championship swim in an event with multiple championship swims) and a performance bond shall be determined by the Long Distance Committee and paid to USMS. All or a portion of the performance bond shall be returned to the host organization, based upon compliance with the conditions set forth in the event contract.
- D** Any other costs that may be reflected in national championship event contracts.

**307.5.2** Complete financial statements shall be forwarded to the Long Distance Committee chair on the championship forms provided.

**307.6 Entry Fee**

The Long Distance Committee shall determine the individual and relay entry fees for open water and postal national championships.

**307.7 Rules of Conduct**

**307.7.1 Event Host**—The event host shall follow the applicable swimming and open water and long distance rules of USMS and the policies and procedures established by the Long Distance Committee with regard to the planning and execution of the requirements for a national championship.

**307.7.2 Entry Forms**—A Long Distance Committee representative and an LMSC representative shall review entry forms, including paper forms and forms used in the online entry system, for content and sanctioning before distribution.

**307.7.3 Officials**—In addition to the officials required by article 303.8, the following officials are required for national championship events:

- A** The Long Distance Committee shall appoint an event liaison to assist the event host in planning, to ensure that the event is conducted in accordance with the contract, to ensure that all rules are observed, and to evaluate the event.
- B** For open water events, a turn judge shall be located at each change of direction in the course. The turn judge shall:
  - (1) Be positioned in clear view of the turn to ensure that all swimmers complete the turn as indicated in the event information and as directed at the pre-race briefing.



- (2) Record any violation of the turn procedures, and
- (3) Report such violation to the referee.

#### **307.7.4 Eligibility**

Swimmers with one-event registrations shall not be eligible to compete in open water and postal national championships, nor shall they be eligible for records, All-American status, or any other USMS special awards.

**307.7.5 Age Groups**—Age groups in open water swims shall be the standard USMS age groups in article 303.1.3.

#### **307.7.6 Swimwear**

- A** Only swimmers wearing category I swimwear as defined in articles 303.7.1 and 303.7.2 may compete in national championship swims.
- B** At the discretion of the event host, swimmers wearing category II swimwear as defined in articles 303.7.1 and 303.7.3 may participate in events containing national championship swims, but shall be excluded for the purposes of articles 307.8 through 308.1. In addition, category II competitors shall have a separate start time.

#### **307.7.7 Assistance During the Race**

- A** Feeding is permissible, but use of alcohol or illegal drugs is forbidden.
- B** Escort craft may be permitted by the event director under the conditions in article 303.3.

#### **307.7.8 Protests**

- A** Any protest arising from an open water championship event shall be made to the referee within 30 minutes after the release of results at the venue. If results are not released in a timely manner, a protest may be made to the event director in writing within three days after all swimmers are notified of the release of results. If the protest is not resolved, the protester may appeal in writing promptly to the Long Distance Committee chair.
- B** Any protest arising from a postal championship event shall be made to the event director in writing three days after all swimmers are notified of the release of results. If the protest is not resolved, the protester may appeal in writing promptly to the Long Distance Committee chair.

### **307.8 Results**

Individual and relay results and records (when appropriate) shall be tabulated and distributed to the Long Distance Committee chair and all participants in the event. Date of birth shall not be included in published results or results distributed to participants.

**307.8.1** Individual results shall be tabulated electronically by gender and age group in order of finish. Women's results shall be shown first, followed by men's results. For each swimmer, the following information must be reported in this order:

- A** Age group place.
- B** Swimmer's name (as it appears on the USMS membership card).
- C** Age.
- D** Club (official USMS club abbreviation).

- E USMS number.
- F Official time/distance.
- G Special information (USMS records, overall place, place among gender, etc.).

**307.8.2** Relay results shall be tabulated electronically by gender and age group in order of finish. Women's results shall be shown first, followed by men's results, then mixed-gender relays last. For each relay, the following information must be reported in the order designated on the results forms in the championship packet for that event:

- A Age group place
- B Team's full name (USMS club followed by blank, A, B, etc.)
- C Official time/distance for the team
- D Names, ages, and official time/distance for each member of the team.
- E Special information (national records, overall place, place among gender, etc.).

### **307.9 Club Scoring**

Club scores shall be officially tallied for national championship postal events. At the discretion of the event host, club scoring may be officially tallied for national championship open water events.

#### **307.9.1 Scoring**

- A Club scoring for the 1-hour swim postal national championships shall be calculated based on total club yardage for individual swims.
- B Club point scoring for the 3000- and 6000-yard and 5- and 10-kilometer postal national championships shall be calculated using a formula, approved by the Long Distance Committee, based on percentage of time differences from the age group national record times.
- C Club scoring for the other national championships shall be calculated based on point value for placing in individual swims. Points shall be scored to 10 places (11-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1).

**307.9.2 Categories**—Club scoring shall be tabulated for women's, men's, and combined categories.

**307.9.3 Divisions**—Up to four divisions may be recognized for purposes of club scoring based on the number of swimmers entered from each club in the event. The number of entrants from a club that shall constitute division I (very large), division II (large), division III (medium), and division IV (small) shall be determined by the Long Distance Committee chair and the event host after the event entry deadline.

#### **307.10 Awards**

**307.10.1** National championship medals or other appropriate awards approved by the Long Distance Committee chair shall be awarded at least to the first six place winners of individual championships in each age group. In national championship events with 1,000 or more entrants, individual awards shall be awarded to at least the first 10 place winners of individual championships in each age group.

- 307.10.2** National championship medals or other appropriate awards approved by the Long Distance Committee chair shall be awarded to the members of at least the first three place winners of relay championships in each age group. In national championship events with 1,000 or more entrants, awards shall be awarded to the members of at least the first six place winners of relay championships in each age group.
- 307.10.3** A USMS championship patch shall be awarded to each individual champion and each member of a championship relay. An individual champion shall receive only one patch per event.
- 307.10.4** Appropriate awards approved by the Long Distance Committee chair may be awarded to the first, second, and third place club winners in each division if warranted by the size of the event entry. Club awards are not required.
- 307.11 All-American**
- 307.11.1** The highest placing USMS member in each age group of each individual open water and long distance pool national championship event shall qualify as a USMS Long Distance All-American for the calendar year in which the event was conducted.
- 307.11.2** The members of the highest placing USMS relay in each age group of each open water and long distance pool national championship event shall qualify as USMS Long Distance Relay All-Americans.
- 307.11.3** The event host shall submit the name, age, date of birth, club affiliation, time or distance, and USMS membership number for each competitor achieving All-American status to the Long Distance Committee chair.
- 307.12 All-Star Team**
- A USMS All-Star Team shall be selected each calendar year from the official results of the USMS open water and postal national championship events.
- 307.12.1** A swimmer shall earn points for a top 10 finish in each open water and long distance national championship event in the following manner: 1st: 11 points, 2nd: 9 points, 3rd: 8 points, 4th: 7 points, 5th: 6 points, 6th: 5 points, 7th: 4 points, 8th: 3 points, 9th: 2 points, 10th: 1 points.
- 307.12.2** To be eligible for the All-Star Team, a swimmer shall compete in at least three events, of which one shall be an open water event and one shall be a postal event.
- 307.12.3** Ties shall be allowed.

## **ARTICLE 308: Records**

### **308.1 Records**

- 308.1.1** Individual and relay USMS records will be maintained in quarter-mile straightaway swims (1-mile and 2-mile) and time/distance pool events (1-hour, 3000-yard, 6000-yard, and 5- and 10-kilometer postal).
- 308.1.2** To be considered for a USMS record, individual participants and relays must enter and complete the swim in a sanctioned event conducted in compliance with USMS rules.

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- 308.1.3** When a record attempt has been timed to the nearest second, .99 second shall be added to the time submitted. When a record attempt has been timed to the nearest tenth of a second, .09 second shall be added to the time submitted.
- 308.1.4** USMS records for cable swims may not be established by using a swimmer's split time in an individual event.
- 308.1.5** USMS records for postal swims may be established by using a swimmer's split time in an individual event if:
- A** The split is swum as an initial distance within an event,
  - B** The swimmer completes the full distance of the event,
  - C** The intent to record a split time is brought to the attention, in writing, of the event director at the time of entry in the longer event, and
  - D** A stopwatch or electronic timing system is used to record the record split in accordance with article 306.5.