

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 507.1.8.

301.2 OPEN WATER GUIDE TO OPERATIONS

301.2.1 Guide to Operations—The Long Distance Committee, with input from the Open Water Committee, shall develop and maintain a USMS Open Water Guide to Operations. The manner of implementation, governing policies and management of the rules in Part 3 shall be contained in this guide.

301.2.2 All participants in national championship postal events (as defined in article 305.7.2.2 G–I) must be currently registered members of USMS or a FINA-member national governing body on or before the day of their swim. Athletes with one-event registrations are not eligible for national championship postal events.

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 201, 204 and 205. In addition, the following administrative rules apply:

301.3.1 One-event registrants shall not be eligible to compete in national championship open water swims, nor shall they be eligible for records, All-American status or any other USMS special awards.

301.4 LIABILITY RELEASE

Entry forms shall contain the exact language of the liability release according to article 204.1 and 204.1.2.

301.5 AGE DETERMINING DATE

301.5.1 In an open water swim, the eligibility of a participant shall be determined by the age of the participant as of the last day of the event, except for 18-year-olds, who must be 18 on the day that they swim.

301.5.2 In a postal swim, the eligibility of a participant shall be determined by the age of the participant as of the day of the swim.

**ARTICLE 302:
OPEN WATER EVENTS****302.1 EVENTS**

An open water event is comprised 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 comprised of individual and/or relay swims.

302.1.2 At the discretion of the event director, clinics or other swimming activities may be included as part of open water events.

302.1.3 At the discretion of the event director, open water events may be competitive and/or noncompetitive.

302.2 OPEN WATER SWIMS**302.2.1 Straightaway Swims**

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 yards apart.

B Course measurement—If permanent fixed and stationary markers are used, a course needs to be certified once every five years. If a course has no permanent stationary markers, it must be certified by a licensed surveyor annually.

302.2.2 Other Open Water Swims—The event director shall determine the course and type of start for open water swims, keeping in mind the safety of the swimmers. The course shall be measured as accurately as possible. The distances shall be the same for both men and women and may be contested at the same time with separate results tabulated. Age groups and other classifications may also be swum at the same time, but again tabulated separately.

302.2.3 Solo Swims—Solo open water swims, consisting of one or a select number of swimmers, may be sanctioned and should conform to the rules stated under article 303.11.

302.3 CUMULATIVE RELAYS

302.3.1 Cumulative relays are comprised of groups of swimmers entered in the individual swim. Cumulative relay swims may be contested on a total time/distance or point system basis.

302.3.2 Time/Distance Basis—A specified number of contestants on each relay shall be considered in the computations for team scoring. The relay whose top specified number of swimmers have the lowest cumulative time or the greatest cumulative distance shall be declared the winner. A similar method will be used to determine second, third and subsequent places. In the event of a tie, the relay with an individual member who finished nearest to first place shall be declared the winner or awarded the place.

302.3.3 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. In the event that two or more relays score the same number of points, the relay that has the swimmer who won or finished nearest to first place shall be declared the winning relay.

302.4 SEQUENTIAL RELAYS

Relays shall consist of two or more swimmers as specified on the entry form. 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 on the entry form. 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. The event director, with the concurrence of the chair of the Long Distance Committee, 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

3

303.1 SCORING DIVISIONS

With the exception of national championship events, scoring divisions are at the discretion of the event director 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** For competitive swims, separate scoring divisions may be contested at the same time, with separate results tabulated.
 - C** If awards are given for competitive swims, they shall be of equal value for all scoring divisions.
 - D** For the purposes of national championships, awards and recognition, only standard USMS scoring divisions—used singly and in combination—shall be eligible. Specific applications of scoring divisions are found in the applicable rules under articles 307.7.4 and 307.7.5.
- 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+ ... (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 STANDARDS

As conditions and courses vary, it is the responsibility of each swimmer to know and follow the safety standards necessary for protection from foreseeable dangers. The event director can assist this endeavor by:

303.2

- 303.2.1 Obtaining necessary permits/approvals from the U.S. Coast Guard, park authorities, lifeguard associations, etc.
- 303.2.2 Providing accurate maps with course descriptions, course markings and other pertinent information, including but not limited to, anticipated water temperature and general water conditions, with entry forms and event information packets.
- 303.2.3 Planning for possible medical evacuations.
- 303.2.4 Assigning rescue/aid personnel and craft.
- 303.2.5 Planning for escort paddlers or craft. Personal escorts should be considered for open water swims.
- 303.2.6 Making provisions for controlling escort craft and access of nonrace craft into the race area.
- 303.2.7 Briefing all contestants, coaches, managers, trainers and event officials.
- 303.2.8 Planning for possible cancellation, postponement and/or modification of the event.
- 303.2.9 Considering use of fluorescent or brightly colored caps to assist in identification and visibility of swimmers in open water events.
- 303.2.10 Informing swimmers of the anticipated water temperature, specific weather and water conditions, and known hazards.

Note: LMSCs are encouraged to use USMS safety guidelines and precautions for the conduct of open water and long distance events, as well as develop their own, provided they are not in conflict with USMS rules, policies or procedures. Visit www.usms.org/longdist/safety.pdf.

303.3 ESCORTED SWIMS

- 303.3.1 In any event for which it has been arranged that an escort craft or paddler will accompany each swimmer throughout the event, all swimmers shall be accompanied by such an escort paddler or craft. If the escort paddler or craft becomes disabled or cannot continue to accompany the swimmer, the swimmer may stay in the water near the disabled escort craft until a replacement arrives, join another escort craft that is accompanying only one other swimmer until another escort craft arrives or exit the water.
- 303.3.2 If a swimmer's escort becomes disabled as per article 303.2.1, an escort for another swimmer may assume responsibility for the swimmer with the disabled escort, subject to the following conditions:
 - A Any one paddler or 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 and the immediate removal of that person from the water.
- 303.3.3 Swimmers may receive the following assistance from the escort:
 - A Food or drink may be passed from escort to swimmer as long as deliberate contact is not made between the two.
 - B The escort may also assist the swimmer with navigation, including verbal and written communication.
- 303.3.4 Swimmers shall not be assisted by escort craft as follows:

- A Swimmers shall not receive flotation or propulsion from any escort craft nor make intentional contact with any craft.
- B Drafting (swimmer swimming directly behind the escort) shall not be permitted when other open water is readily available.
- C Escort boats shall not obstruct other swimmers in the race.

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.

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.

303.4.4 **Wave Starts**—At the discretion of the event director, swims may be started in waves in which each wave is separated at the start from other waves by a set 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.

303.5 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 director, as stated in the event entry sheet.

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 **In-the-Water**—The swimmer shall have finished the swim when any part of the swimmer touches a vertical surface or crosses a specifically designated finish line after completion of the prescribed distance. Order of finish shall be determined as the swimmer touches the vertical surface or crosses the finish line. Place judges and timers shall position themselves accordingly.

303.6.2 **Out-of-the-Water**—Swimmers shall leave the water, as defined by the course, and proceed to a specifically designated finish line. Order of finish shall be determined as the swimmer's chest crosses the finish line. Place judges and timers shall position themselves accordingly.

303.6.3 **Straightaway**—An in-the-water finish shall be used in straightaway events.

303.6.4 Electronic Timing/Incorporating Chip Timing

- A **Backup timing**—In open water swims in which the event director pro-

vides electronic timing/chip timing, an independent operating backup timing system is required.

- B Order of finish**—For both in-water and out-of-water finishes, the 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.

303.7 SWIMWEAR FOR OPEN WATER EVENTS

Swimwear allowed for open water events is defined below and is not impacted by decisions of FINA, USA Swimming or Part 1 of USMS rules. 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 drugs 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 (which may include those made of neoprene) 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, wristwatches and grease are also allowed.
- B** The competitor shall wear only one swimsuit in one or two pieces. All swimsuits shall be made from textile materials. For men, the swimsuit shall not extend above the navel nor below the knees, and for women, shall not cover the neck, extend past the shoulder nor extend below the knees.
- C** Exemptions to the restrictions in articles 303.7.2A and 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 U.S. Masters Swimming 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, buoyancy or endurance during a swim (such as wetsuits, webbed gloves, fins, snorkels, buoyant armbands, etc.). 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, arm bands and rash guards. Nose clips, ear plugs, wristwatches and grease are also allowed.
- B** Wetsuits or any other heat-retaining swimwear may be allowed at the discretion of the event director when the water temperature does not exceed 78 degrees Fahrenheit. Any published results or records must clearly indicate which swimmers wore wetsuits.
- C** Swimmers are not permitted to wear or use any additional device or substance to help their speed, buoyancy or endurance during a swim (such as webbed gloves, fins, snorkels, etc.), except in designated events where all swimmers may use similar devices or substances. Any kind of tape on the body is not permitted unless approved by the referee.

303.8 OFFICIALS

- 303.8.1** There shall be an event director, referee, safety coordinator, scorer, announcer, clerk of course, starter and a sufficient number of judges, inspectors, timers and medical personnel to ensure a properly run open water event.
- 303.8.2** The clerk of course shall ensure that all entrants in open water events are visibly marked with their entrant numbers.
- 303.8.3** Official craft shall be placed in a position in open water events to best observe yet not physically hinder the swimmers.

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 willfully or 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** Receive assistance by pulling or resting on the escort or safety craft, cables, line markers, buoys or buoy lines. Incidental contact shall not be a basis for disqualification.
- 303.9.6** Violate rules on escorted swims as described in articles 303.3.3 and 303.3.4 or receive similar assistance from any craft on the course.
- 303.9.7** Receive unauthorized assistance at the start or finish.
- 303.9.8** Violate swimwear rules.
- 303.9.9** Swim in a manner in which their personal safety is jeopardized.
- 303.9.10** Act in an unsportsmanlike or unsafe manner within the swimming venue.

303.10 SWIMMERS WITH DISABILITIES

303.10.1 The event director may modify any rule or race 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 director, 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 Event director—The 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 further described in the Open Water Guide to Operations.

303.11 SOLO OPEN WATER SWIM

This swim must be sanctioned by the LMSC in which it originates and conducted in accordance with all pertinent rules and regulations. If more than one swimmer is attempting to swim, only one sanction need be issued. All times achieved in solo open water swims should be duly certified and made a matter of record by the sanctioning LMSC. The certification should include:

303.11.1 Each swimmer’s name, age, gender and membership number.

303.11.2 Governing body sanctioning the event.

303.11.3 Course, including the name of the body of water, the starting and finishing points, and the measured distance.

303.11.4 Verification and documentation that all rules were observed and the swimmer(s) either completed or failed to complete the distance.

303.12 INCOMPLETE RACE

303.12.1 The referee shall determine if the start of a race is to be postponed or canceled, or if a race in progress is to be stopped.

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

**ARTICLE 304:
CONDUCT OF NONCOMPETITIVE OPEN WATER EVENTS****304.1 NONCOMPETITIVE EVENTS**

Noncompetitive events are those that contain swims that are not scored for placement. At the discretion of the event director, the event may also include competitive swims.

304.1.1 Conduct of noncompetitive swims shall be at the discretion of the event

director, as long as they are conducted according to the safety standards in article 303.2.

304.1.2 Competitive swims included in a noncompetitive event shall be conducted according to the rules in article 303.

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

ARTICLE 305: 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 Director—The event director 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 send the time or distance achieved to a central location for tabulation.

305.4 CUMULATIVE RELAYS

Cumulative relays are comprised of groups of swimmers entered in the individual swim. Cumulative relay swims may be contested on a total time/distance or point system basis.

305.5 SEQUENTIAL RELAYS

Relays shall consist of two or more swimmers as specified on the entry form. 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 on the entry form. The changeover to the new swimmer shall be made as soon as practical after the completion of the previous swimmer's leg. The exchange is governed by articles 101.7.3C and 101.7.3H. The event director, with the concurrence of the chair of the Long Distance Committee, may allow special events in which members of an open water relay need not be from the same club.

305.6

305.6 AGE GROUPS

Age groups in individual events for men and women shall be the same as those listed in article 303.1.3A.

305.7 AWARDS

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

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 in the capacity of a starter/timer/referee who shall be present at all times, having no other responsibilities during the period of the swim.

306.3.2 Each swimmer shall have a counter to record split times for every two lengths during the swim for both time-based and distance-based events. One person may serve as a counter for a maximum of two swimmers per heat.

306.4 MULTIPLE SWIMMERS PER LANE

304.4.1 In pools that are less than 50 meters, no more than two swimmers shall share a lane.

306.4.2 Drafting shall not be permitted.

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

306.4.4 In pools that are 50 meters or longer, the referee shall establish procedures to prevent drafting if more than two swimmers are competing per lane.

306.5 TIMING

306.5.1 A stopwatch or electronic timing system shall be used to time the event.

306.5.2 Cumulative split times must be recorded to the nearest second.

306.6 DETERMINING DISTANCES IN TIME-BASED EVENTS

306.6.1 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.

306.6.2 If the size of the pool is not designated, all distances shall be reported in yards.

306.6.3 If distances are to be reported in yards and the event is swum in a metric pool, the distances shall be determined in meters and 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.

306.7 DETERMINING TIMES IN SHORT-COURSE DISTANCE-BASED EVENTS

- 306.7.1** Swimmers may choose to swim events in 25-meter pools, swimming the same nominal number of meters as yards.
- 306.7.2** 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.

306.8 INTEGRITY OF RESULTS IN POSTAL EVENTS

- 306.8.1** Each entrant in a postal event shall be responsible for the validity of the figures and the time/distance submitted.
- 306.8.2** Event directors shall have the discretion to request additional verification of completion from any entrant and may refuse to accept, or disqualify, any entry that appears to contain erroneous information.

306.9 DETERMINATION OF PLACE

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

**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** At the discretion of the Long Distance Committee, open water national championships may be awarded in a form determined in the best interest of USMS open water swimming, including:
- A** Individual championships distributed across the country.
 - B** Multichampionship swim festivals.
 - C** A combination of A and B as deemed appropriate.
 - 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 (quarter-mile straightaway or open water course)
 - B** Quarter-mile straightaway (2 miles)
 - C** Open water (greater than 1 and less than or equal to 3 miles)
 - D** Open water (greater than 3 and less than 6 miles)
 - E** Open water (greater than or equal to 6 miles and less than 9 miles)

- F** Open water (greater than or equal to 9 miles)
- G** Postal one hour (in a pool 25 yards or longer)
- H** Postal 5 and 10 kilometer (each event swum separately in a 50-meter pool)
- I** Postal 3000 and 6000 yard (each event swum separately in a 25-yard or 25-meter 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 men and women relays and four-person mixed-gender relays.
- B** Age groups for relay swims shall be the same as those listed in article 303.1.3A.
- C** All team members shall be from the same USMS-registered club.
- D** All relay members shall also be entered in the individual event, except at the discretion of the event director.
- E** Competitors shall be allowed to swim in only one same-gender and one mixed-gender relay event per event.
- F** The age of the youngest relay member determines the age group of the relay: 18+, 25+, 35+... 95+.
- G** A swimmer who ages up during the duration of an event and swims the individual event twice may swim on one same-gender and one mixed-gender relay in each age group.
- H** Mixed-gender relays may be entered, provided at least one swimmer of each gender is represented as follows:

Total number of relay members	Women	Men
2	1	1
3	minimum 1	minimum 1
4	2	2
5	minimum 2	minimum 2
6	3	3

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** Bids shall be due, in writing, to the Long Distance Committee chair no later than 45 days prior to the annual meeting.
- 307.3.2** Championships shall be awarded by the Long Distance Committee, typically

at the annual meeting, one to three years prior to the championship being held.

307.3.3 Events not awarded at the annual meeting may be awarded by the Long Distance Committee chair.

307.3.4 Suitable bids shall comply with all applicable USMS swimming and open water and long distance rules, policies and procedures.

307.3.5 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.

307.3.6 Postal national championships may be awarded to an organization for consecutive years.

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP BID ROTATION			
Year	Area 1 West	Area 2 Central	Area 3 East
2011	1 mile Open water >3/<6 mile	Open water > 1/≤3 mile Open Water > 9 mile	2 mile cable Open water ≥ 6 mile
2012	2 mile cable Open water ≥6 mile	1 mile Open water > 3/<6 mile	Open water > 1/≤3 mile Open Water > 9 mile
2013	Open water >1/≤3 mile Open water >9 mile	2 mile cable Open water ≥ 6/<9 mile	1 mile Open water > 3/<6 mile
2014	1 mile Open water >3/<6 mile	Open water >1/≤3 mile Open water >9 mile	2 mile cable Open water ≥6/<9 mile

307.4 CONTRACT

A representative of the sponsoring 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 sponsoring 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 event and a performance bond shall be paid to USMS. All or a portion of the performance bond shall be returned to the sponsoring 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

307.5.2 Complete financial statements shall be forwarded to the Long Distance Committee chair after completion of the event in accordance with the championship forms provided.

307.6 ENTRY FEE

The entry fees for open water and long distance national championships shall be approved by the Long Distance Committee.

307.7 RULES OF CONDUCT

307.7.1 Event Director—The event director 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—Entry forms, including paper forms and online entry system, shall be reviewed by a Long Distance Committee representative and the LMSC for content and sanctioning prior to distribution in accordance with the USMS contract.

307.7.3 Officials—In addition to the officials required by article 303.7, the following officials are required for national championship events:

A The Long Distance Committee shall appoint an event evaluator to aid the event director, to ensure that the event is conducted in accordance with the contract and to ensure that all rules are observed.

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 on shore or on the water in clear view of the turn to ensure that all swimmers complete the turn as indicated in the competition information documents 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 Individual Age Groups—Age groups in individual open water swims for men and women shall be 18–24, 25–29, 30–34 ... (five-year age groups as high as necessary).

307.7.5 Relay Age Groups—Age groups in relay open water swims for men, women and mixed relays shall be 18+, 25+... (10-year age groups as high as necessary), the age of the youngest relay member determining the age group.

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 director, 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 Paddlers and escort boats may be permitted by the event director.

307.7.8 Protests—Any protest arising from a competition shall be made to the event director within 30 minutes after the release of results for an open water event or 14 days after the release of results for a postal event. If the protest is not resolved, the protester may appeal in writing within 10 days for final adjudication to the Long Distance Committee chair, whose decision shall then be final and binding on all parties.

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 (last name first, 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 (national records, overall place, place among men, 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.

307.9 CLUB SCORING

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

307.9.1 Scoring

A Club scoring for the one-hour swim shall be based on total club yardage for individual swims.

B Club point scoring for the 3000 and 6000 yard and 5K and 10K postal

national championships shall be calculated based on a predetermined formula, approved by the Long Distance Committee, to fit the age group national record times for each gender.

- C Club scoring for the other national championships shall be 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 director 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.

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.

307.10.3 A USMS championship patch shall be awarded to each individual champion and each scoring 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 shall be awarded to the first, second and third place club winners in each division if warranted by the size of the event entry.

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 team 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 director 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 in accordance with the USMS event contract.

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 long distance 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:

22 points, 2nd: 18 points, 3rd: 16 points, 4th: 14 points, 5th: 12 points, 6th: 10 points, 7th: 8 points, 8th: 6 points, 9th: 4 points, 10th: 2 points.

- 307.12.2** To be considered 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** If a swimmer scores points in one age group and ages up to another age group in the course of a year, the points earned shall be transferred up to the new age group. If a swimmer swims the same event in two different age groups, only the higher finish will be counted.
- 307.12.4** Ties shall be allowed.

ARTICLE 308: RECORDS

308.1 RECORDS

- 308.1.1** Individual national records will be maintained in quarter-mile straightaway swims (1-mile and 2-mile) and time/distance pool events (one-hour, 3000-yard, 6000-yard, and 5- and 10-kilometer postal). Relay national records shall be maintained in all of these quarter-mile straightaway swims and long-distance pool events. The records shall be for three-person men's and women's relays and four-person mixed relays.
- 308.1.2** Record times shall be swum in a sanctioned event and shall be routed through the event host to the Long Distance Committee chair.
- 308.1.3** With the exception of the quarter-mile straightaway swims specified in article 307.2.2, no national records will be maintained in open water events because of differences in courses, currents and other physical factors.
- 308.1.4** Open water and long distance records shall only be permitted from events conducted in compliance with articles 307.7.3B and 307.7.6A of the USMS rule book.
- 308.1.5** 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.
- 308.1.6** Long distance national records 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 a scheduled event,
 - B** The swimmer completes the full distance of the scheduled event without being disqualified,
 - 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** At least two dedicated handheld watches are used to record the record split.
- 308.1.7** Split times from individual postal events may not be used as part of a relay entry into a separate relay postal event of a shorter distance or for entry into a separate individual postal event of a shorter distance.

