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—An Open Water Guide to Operations shall be developed and published for the use of USMS open water officials and event hosts. The manner of implementation, governing policies, and management of the rules applying to open water swims shall be contained in this guide.

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

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. In addition, the following administrative rules apply:

301.3.1 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.

301.3.2 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.

301.4 Liability Release
Entry forms shall contain the exact language of the liability release according to article 204.

301.5 Age Determining Date
301.5.1 In an open water swim, the eligibility of a swimmer shall be determined by the age of the swimmer 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 swimmer shall be determined by the age of the swimmer 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 Courses

302.2.1 The Course
A The event director shall determine the course and type of start and finish.
B The course shall be measured and marked as accurately as feasible.
C Hazards on the course should be eliminated or marked wherever possible.

302.2.2 Water Conditions
A Water Temperature
(1) A swim shall not begin if the water temperature is less than 60° F. (15.6° C.), 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° F. (13.9° C.) unless a USMS-approved thermal plan is in place.
(3) A swim shall not begin if the water temperature exceeds 85° F (29.45° C.)

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 For swims starting from a platform or dock, the water depth shall be no less than 6 feet for the first 5 meters of the course. All swimmers in the pre-race safety meeting and before the start of each race/wave shall be advised of the depth of the water. Water depth markings on the starting platform or dock are recommended. The referee shall have this start area inspected for underwater hazards before the swim. The swim shall use an alternative method of starting if hazards cannot be eliminated.

302.2.4 Turns
A All turns shall be clearly indicated.
302.3

**B**o**u**y**s**

B Turns shall be directional, and 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. These buoys shall be non-directional and 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 and clearly defined.

### 302.3.5 Feeding Stations

A 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.

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

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

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

### 302.3 Straightaway Swim Courses

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.

### 302.4 Solo Swims

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

### 302.5 Cumulative Relays

#### 302.5.1 Cumulative relays are comprised 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.

#### 302.5.2 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. In the event of a tie, the relay with an individual member with the fastest or farthest swim shall be declared the winner or awarded the place.

#### 302.5.3 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 with the individual member with the fastest or farthest swim shall be declared the winner or awarded the place.
302.5.4 With the exception of National Championship events, the event director may allow special events in which members of an open water relay need not be from the same club.

302.6 Sequential Relays

302.6.1 Relays shall consist of two or more swimmers as specified on the entry form from the same USMS-registered club. 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.

302.6.2 Mixed-gender sequential relays shall consist of at least one swimmer of each gender is represented, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of relay members</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>minimum 1</td>
<td>minimum 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>minimum 2</td>
<td>minimum 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Article 303: Conduct of Competitive and Solo Open Water Events

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 results tabulated separately.

C If awards are given for competitive swims, they shall be of equal value for men and women.

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.

E With the exception of National Championships, requirements defined in article 303.1.1D 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 directors 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.

303.3 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 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 Swimmers may receive the following assistance from any escort craft:
   A Food or drink may be passed from escort craft to swimmer as long as deliberate contact is not made between the two.
   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 flotation or propulsion from any escort craft nor make intentional contact with any 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, receiving assistance by any drafting is prohibited. Swimmers must attempt to remain 3 meters or more from other swimmers, except 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 director 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 director, 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 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 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.
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**—In open water swims in which electronic chip timing is used, an independently operating backup timing system is required.

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 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, wristwatches and grease are also allowed.

B The swimmer shall wear only one swimsuit in one or two pieces. All swimsuits shall be made from textile materials. 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 U.S. Masters Swimming website.

(2) No exemptions to these restrictions will be granted for swim wear 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, arm bands 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

**303.8.1** There shall be an event director, referee, and safety director. The position of safety director shall not be combined with the duties of any other official or staff member.

**303.8.2** There shall be additional officials in numbers sufficient to operate the event in accordance with USMS open water rules and administrative regulations and may include scorer, announcer, clerk of course, starter, judges, inspectors, timers, safety and medical personnel.

### 303.7.3 Independent Safety Monitor

**A** An Independent Safety Monitor shall be approved by the LMSC sanctioning officer and shall be independent of the event organizing body.

**B** The Independent Safety Monitor shall be present at the event to assure that the approved safety plan is implemented and that adequate safety precautions are in place for existing conditions.

**C** The Independent Safety Monitor shall have the authority to revoke the sanction on the day of the swim if adequate safety precautions are not in place, and shall notify all participants of the revocation before the beginning of the swim if the event organizer proceeds with the swim.

### 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 Receive assistance by pulling, pushing, or resting on physical features on or near the course other than the bottom. Incidental contact shall not be a basis for disqualification.

303.9.6 Receive assistance by drafting 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.

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 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 shall be duly certified and made a matter of record by the sanctioning LMSC. The certification shall include:

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

303.11.2 Governing body sanctioning the event.

303.11.3 The course, including the name of the body of water, the starting and finishing points, and the measured distance.
303.12  Incomplete Race
303.12.1  The referee or event director shall determine if the start of a race is to be post-poned 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, article 303.9.2 may be waived and the order of finish of the swimmers on the course shall be deter-mined by the referee.

303.13  Protests
303.13.1  Any protest arising from a competition (other than National Championships—refer to article 307.7) shall be made to the event director within 30 minutes after the release of results for an open water event. If the protest is not resolved, the protestor may appeal in writing within 10 days of the swim for adjudication to the LMSC officers. If the LMSC does not satisfactorily resolve the protest, the protestor may appeal in writing for adjudication to the USMS Long Distance Committee chair.

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 conform to 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 swims 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 submit 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
Sequential 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 relay exchange is governed by articles 101.7.3C and 101.7.3F.

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 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 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 Multiple Swimmers per Lane

306.4.1 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)-(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.

306.5.3 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.

306.6 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 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.

306.7 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 Split Times

306.8.1 Split times from individual postal events may not be used for entry into a separate individual postal national championship event of a shorter distance.

306.8.2 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.

306.9 Integrity of Results in Postal Events

306.9.1 Each entrant in a postal event shall be responsible for the validity of the split times and/or the time/distance submitted.

306.9.2 Event directors shall have the discretion to 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.
306.10 Determination of Place

306.10.1 In distance-based events, the person swimming the fastest time shall be declared the winner. If two or more swimmers achieve the same time, a tie shall be declared.

306.10.2 In time-based events, the person swimming the farthest shall be declared the winner. If two or more swimmers swim the same distance, 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 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 one hour (in a pool 25 yards or longer)
H Postal 5 and 10 kilometer (each event swum separately on a 50-meter course in a pool)
I Postal 3000 and 6000 yard (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 and 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 team members shall be from the same USMS-registered club.

D All relay members shall also be entered in the individual event. Exceptions for open water events only are at the discretion of the event director and with the approval of the Long Distance Committee Chair.

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.

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.

307.3.5 Postal national championships may be awarded to an organization for consecutive years.
### National Championship Bid Rotation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Area 1</th>
<th>Area 2</th>
<th>Area 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>West</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2 mile cable Open water ≥6 mile Festival</td>
<td>1 mile Open water &gt; 3/≤6 mile</td>
<td>Open water &gt; 1/≤3 mile Open Water &gt; 9 mile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Open water &gt; 1/≤3 mile Open Water &gt; 9 mile</td>
<td>2 mile cable Open water ≥6 mile</td>
<td>1 mile Open water &gt; 3/≤6 mile Festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>1 mile Open water &gt; 3/≤6 mile</td>
<td>Open water &gt; 1/≤3 mile Open Water &gt; 9 mile</td>
<td>2 mile cable Open water ≥6 mile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>2 mile cable Open water ≥6 mile Festival</td>
<td>1 mile Open water &gt; 3/≤6 mile</td>
<td>Open water &gt; 1/≤3 mile Open Water &gt; 9 mile</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 307.4 Contract
A representative 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 event 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 after completion of the event in accordance with 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 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 forms used in the online entry system, shall be reviewed by a Long Distance Committee representative and the LMSC for content and sanctioning before distribution in accordance with the USMS contract.

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 director 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 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.

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  Escort craft may be permitted by the event director under the conditions in article 303.3.

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
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 (national 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.

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 calculated based on total club yardage for individual swims.

B Club point scoring for the 3000 and 6000-yard and 5 and 10-km 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 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 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. In national championship events with 1000 or more entrants, individual awards shall be awarded to at least the first ten 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 1000 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 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 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 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 participates in two age groups in the course of a year, the points earned shall be counted in the older 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.

308.1.2 To be considered for a national record, individual participants and relays must enter and complete the swim in a sanctioned event, with results 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 due to 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 307.2.3, 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 for cable swims may not be established by using a swimmer’s split time in an individual event.

308.1.7 Long distance national 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 At least two dedicated handheld watches are used to record the record split.
In Memoriam

Alaska
Yaro Mucha

Arizona
Michael Makarczyk
Lou Silverstein
Donald Van Rossen

Arkansas
Kurt Schmitt

Connecticut
Walter Avery

Florida
Ellen Bowen
Brud Cleaveland
Ralph Coxhead
Cliff Eastwood
Rick Gee
Paul Hutinger
Jan Mellberg
Gary Rodebaugh
Winnie Walter
Tom Whiteleather
Gertrud Zint

Florida Gold Coast
Roland (Sweeney) Arnow
June Krauser
Raife Snover

Georgia
Keith Vaden

Hawaii
Charles Ladley

Illinois
Bill Mulliken

Indiana
Chris Clarke
Elizabeth Dutton
Chester Jastremski
Lora Koepper

Inland Northwest
Keith Hampton

Metropolitan
Bruce Pye
William Ross
Gerson Sobel
Jonathan Sobel

Michigan
Elizabeth Arp

Missouri Valley
Flavia Mc Bride

North Carolina
Peter McGrain
Jamina Winston

Oregon
Ellen Dittebrandt
Earl Walter

Pacific
Berna Bennett
Steve Carlson
Karin Hurley
Kenneth Kimble
Lauren McCullough
Leonard (Bud) Meyer
Sally Morner
Carl Mortensen
Boris Ruebner
Frances Zeman

Potomac Valley
William Campbell
Harvey Geller
Jay Johnson
Clayton Joyner
Deborah Morrin-Nordlund
Lorraine Murphy

San Diego-Imperial
Tom Dowell
Janet Lamott
Gregory Smith

South Carolina
Bob Matysek

South Dakota
Max Gors

South Texas
Jasmine Monroy
Herbert Siegel

Southeastern
Chip Hastings
Elizabeth Kennedy

Southern Pacific
Tom Angell
Michael Ankeny
John Colvin
Martin DeLaney
Gary Mc Dowell
Maxine Merlino
Frank Reynolds
Peggy Sanborn

Wisconsin
Peter Maternowski