
2019
U.S. MASTERS SWIMMING
CODE OF REGULATIONS
AND
RULES OF COMPETITION

Published by
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The most up-to-date version of this rule book is available online at:
usms.org/rules

Edited by the USMS National Office with assistance from the Rules, Legislation, Open Water, Long Distance, Records and Tabulation, and Championship Committees.

This is an official publication of United States Masters Swimming Inc., the national governing body for Masters Swimming in the United States. Additional copies of this book may be purchased at a cost of \$10 per copy for shipping and handling from the USMS National Office at the above address.

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On the Cover: Katarzyna Wilk of Las Vegas Masters swims the 100 free-style at the 2018 U.S. Masters Swimming Spring National Championship.
Peter H. Bick

Rule Book Dedication

Jeff Roddin joined USMS right after graduating from college in the early 90s. He started volunteering at the local level almost immediately and in 1997 became the registrar for the Potomac Valley LMSC, a position he still holds today.

A mechanical engineer for NASA, Jeff's detailed approach to everything he does has benefitted USMS members locally and through the national committees on which he's served, including Registration, Records and Tabulations, and Championship. Jeff has served on the Championship Committee for 18 years: first as a member, then four as vice-chair, and the past nine years as chair.

In his pursuit of excellence, Jeff has had a profound and lasting impact on our members. As a lifelong swimmer and competitor, he understands the hard work and commitment that Masters swimmers put into their training and fitness and, for those who attend a national championship, how important the experience is to them.

Under Jeff's leadership, the Championship Committee has worked tirelessly to ensure that athletes have top-tier competitive conditions when they attend a USMS National Championship. From choosing venues and working with hosts and officials, to overseeing national qualifying times, timelines, meet operations, and onsite services, Jeff leaves nothing to chance.

He's worked in partnership with the National Office to elevate the quality, visibility, and accessibility of our marquee events beyond the competitive aspect. He considers destination cities, local attractions, and planned activities critical to the success of the national championships.



Jeffrey Roddin

Not only is Jeff known for going above and beyond in everything he does, but also for his wicked sense of humor. His contributions have been recognized with national awards including the Dorothy Donnelly Service Award in 2010, the National Championship Meets Award in 2012, and the Ted Haartz Staff Appreciation Award in 2013.

It's with immense gratitude that we dedicate the 2019 Rule Book to Jeffrey Roddin.

Previous Rule Book Dedications

1989	June Krauser	2006	Pieter Cath
1992	Mary Lee Watson	2007	Pacific Masters XI FINA
1993	Kathrine Casey and Gail Dummer		World Masters Championships
1994	All USMS volunteers		Organizing Committee
1995	E. Kevin Kelly	2008	Steve Schofield
1996	Dorothy Donnelly	2009	Meg Smath
1997	Jack Geoghegan	2010	Bill Volckening
1998	USMS All-Americans	2011	Tracy Grilli
1999	F.H. "Ted" Haartz	2012	Esther Lyman
2000	Jim Matysek	2013	Rob Copeland
2001	Gene Donner and the staff of Gateway Printing	2015	June Krauser
2002	Nancy Ridout	2016	Rob Butcher
2003	Tom Boak	2017	Tom Taylor
2004	Joanne Tingley	2018	Anna Lea Matysek
2005	Walt Reid	2019	Jeffrey Roddin

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Organizing Principles

Preamble

United States Masters Swimming is an organization of sportswomen and sportsmen founded in 1970 and dedicated to the premise that the lives of participants will be enhanced through aquatic physical conditioning. USMS supports and encourages competitions among its members and those of other nations. This book establishes certain rules and regulations for the conduct of the organization, the participants and the competitors in the spirit of good sportsmanship.

Mission Statement

To promote health, wellness, fitness and competition for adults through swimming.

Vision Statement

USMS will be the premier resource for adult aquatic fitness in the United States and will make fitness through swimming available for as many adults as possible.

Goals and Objectives

- A** To encourage and promote improved physical fitness and health in adults.
- B** To offer adults the opportunity to participate in a lifelong fitness and/or competitive swimming program.
- C** To encourage organizations and communities to establish and sponsor Masters Swimming programs.
- D** To enhance fellowship and camaraderie among Masters swimmers.
- E** To stimulate research in the sociology, psychology, and physiology of Masters swimming.

Core Objectives

Service the membership.
Educate the membership.
Build the membership.

Major Changes for 2019

Gender: The Rules Committee shall develop, publish, and maintain, with the approval of the USMS Board of Directors, guidelines that address the eligibility of transgender athletes to earn official times and other forms of recognition in the male and female gender categories. Athletes who do not meet the eligibility guidelines shall be permitted to participate in competition in the gender that corresponds to their USMS registration without official recognition. Protests of eligibility to compete in a gender category shall be considered by the Rules Committee in accordance with USMS policy guidelines. Athletes shall be permitted to compete in the gender category that corresponds to their USMS registration pending a decision by the Rules Committee.

Cameras and Video Equipment: The use of cameras, including cell phone cameras and/or other recording devices, is prohibited behind the starting platforms during the start of races, including relay starts. The use of audio or visual recording devices, including cell phone cameras, is prohibited in changing areas, restrooms, and locker rooms. The sanctioning LMSC or the meet host may also impose further restrictions and shall include such information in the meet announcement. The meet referee may further restrict the use of cameras and video equipment during competition. Operation of a drone, or any other flying apparatus, is prohibited over the venue (pools, athlete/coach areas, and open-ceiling locker rooms) any time athletes, coaches, officials, and/or spectators are present. Any individual in violation of these restrictions may be barred from the venue by the meet referee or meet director.

Use of Tertiary Watch Times for USMS Records: In the event of both primary automatic and secondary semiautomatic malfunctions, USMS records may be established with a tertiary manual backup system consisting of a minimum of two valid watch times.

Therapeutic Elastic Tape: The use of therapeutic elastic tape is prohibited in USMS sanctioned or recognized meets. (This change codifies the current rule interpretation.)

Psychoactive Cannabinoids: Psychoactive cannabinoids are added to the list of products for which advertising on swimsuits and caps is prohibited. Offenders may be barred from competition until they comply with this rule.

15-Meter Marks: Fixed marks shall be placed on either the pool wall or deck surface adjacent to any outside lane at a distance of 15 meters from each end wall. These marks should also be used to correctly align the colored marks on the lane lines, but the fixed marks on the deck or walls take precedence for judging.

Backstroke Starting Ledges: If backstroke starting ledges are provided, then identical ledges must be provided for all lanes.

Glossary

- Administrative Referee**—an official certified as an administrative referee who supervises entries, seeding, determination of official times, results, and meet personnel assisting with these duties.
- Aggregate Time**—times achieved by four individuals in separate starts that are added together to arrive at a relay time for entry purposes.
- Anchored (Starting Platform)**—stable at all times without human aid.
- Arm**—that part of the body that extends from the shoulder to the wrist.
- Bulkhead**—moveable end wall of a course.
- Cable Swim**—a type of straightaway swim defined by a cable.
- Club**—an organization or group of permanent character that is a member of USMS, and that actively promotes and/or participates in Masters Swimming.
- College Club Swimming (CCS)**—A swimming program administered by USMS. CCS is the organization that unifies college club swimming programs across the country. CCS provides the rules, calendar of events, results database, and communications for CCS registered individuals and clubs.
- Corporation**—United States Masters Swimming Inc. (USMS).
- Course**—designated distance over which the competition is conducted.
- Long Course**—50 meters.
- Short Course**—25 yards or 25 meters.
- Deck-Entered**—all entries are accepted on the first or later day of that meet and subsequently seeded into events.
- Deck-Seeding**—with or without check-in, events seeded at the time of the event using entries received prior to or at the meet.
- Drafting**—in open water and long distance events, an individual swimming behind or next to a single swimmer or support craft for the purpose of taking advantage of the reduced water resistance.
- Dual Meet**—competition between two clubs.
- Dual-Sanctioned Meet**—A USMS sanctioned meet held in conjunction with a USA Swimming sanctioned meet in which swimmers from both organizations are competing together in the same session(s).
- Electronic Timing Chip**—used to trigger the timing system and may not be used as an audible pacing device in swimming.
- End of the Course**—designated wall for racing turns or finishes.
- Escort Craft**—boats or paddle boards that accompany swimmers in an open water swim for safety and logistical support, including the person or people that staff them.

Event—any clinic, demonstration, series of races in a given stroke and distance, or meet: including pool, long distance, and open water.

Event Director—the person responsible for the administration and conduct of the event.

Ex Officio Member—a committee member, appointed by virtue of an office or position held, who has participatory rights of membership but no vote.

FINA—Fédération Internationale de Natation (International Federation of Swimming).

Finish—the instant that a swimmer touches the wall at the end of the prescribed distance.

Finish Point—the physical location where the race terminates.

Fitness Events—events designed to encourage and enhance fitness.

First Day of Meet—day on which first competitive swimming event is conducted.

Foreign Swimmer—athlete member of a FINA member federation other than USMS.

Forward Start—an entry made while facing the course or a start made while in the water either facing the course or not facing the course.

Foul—an instance of obstruction, interference, collision, or equipment malfunction that prevents the successful completion of a race.

Grease—a substance used by swimmers to reduce friction or reduce the loss of body heat during a swim.

Heat—a division of an event in which there are too many swimmers to compete at one time.

Horizontal—parallel to the level surface of the water.

IOC—International Olympic Committee.

Initial Distance—that first portion of a race for which an official time may be recorded but which is not itself a completed event.

Lane—the specific area in which the swimmer is assigned to swim.

Lane Line—continuous floating markers attached to a line stretched from one end of the course to the other for the purpose of separating adjacent lanes.

Lane Markers—the guide lines on the bottom of the pool and in the center of the lanes running from one end of the course to the other.

Last Day of the Meet—day on which last competitive swimming event is conducted.

Leadoff—the first part of the relay event that is swum by a single team member.

Leg (Relay)—the part of the relay event that is swum by a single team member.

Length—the extent of the course from end to end.

LMSC—Local Masters Swimming Committee.

Manual Start—the start of any timing device by an individual in response to the same starting signal given to the swimmers.

Mark—(take your) starting position.

Masters Swimming—a program including training, competition, and other activities affiliated with United States Masters Swimming through the participation of USMS members or through a USMS sanction.

May—permissive, not mandatory.

Medical Identification Item—an item worn by a swimmer that identifies medical conditions, emergency contacts, or other information necessary to protect the health of the swimmer. Medical identification items are not considered part of swimwear.

Meet—an event or series of events held under sanction or recognition and conducted within 10 consecutive days at the same venue, except for postal meets.

Meet Announcement—document that sets forth required information about the meet, including the starting times, order of events, entry procedures, and other meet procedures as required by the rules and regulations.

Member—an individual, club, or organization registered with USMS.

Must—mandatory.

On the back—position of the body when the shoulders are at or past the vertical towards the back.

On the breast—position of the body when the shoulders are at or past the vertical towards the breast.

Paddler—a person on a paddle board or manually propelled craft who supports a swimmer or group of swimmers.

Pool—the physical facility in which the competition is conducted.

Postal Event—a swimming competition conducted in multiple pool locations with results compiled in a central location.

Preliminary Heats—competition in which a number of heats are swum to qualify the fastest swimmers for the finals.

Preseeding—events are seeded prior to the day of competition.

Propulsive—having the power to propel.

Recognized Events—the written acknowledgment by an LMSC for a designated competition conducted in conformance with relevant USMS rules, or a demonstration, clinic, or exhibition conducted by USMS member clubs, individual members, or organizations other than USMS in which both members and nonmembers may participate. Times or distances

achieved by members at recognized competitions will be considered for recording purposes by USMS.

Register—enroll as a member of USMS.

Safety Plans—written plans for the procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency or need for medical intervention.

Sanction—the written authorization of an LMSC to permit members to participate in a specific competition, demonstration, clinic, exhibition, or Swim-A-Thon®.

Scissors Kick—use of the top of the instep of one foot and the bottom of the other foot in the propulsive part of the kick.

Scratch—withdraw an entry from an event or fail to report to the assigned lane in the assigned heat.

Seeding—distributing swimmers among the required number of heats and/or lanes, based on submitted times.

Session—any portion of a pool meet distinctly separated from other portions of the meet by locale, time, day, or type of competition; i.e., first day and second day, morning and evening, etc., exclusive of a short break between events such as before the start of distance events or relays.

Shall—mandatory.

Should—recommended but not mandatory.

Soft Touch—a swimmer's touch that does not register a time at the point of contact with the touchpad.

Split Time—time recorded from official start to completion of an initial distance within a longer event.

Still Water—water contained within four walls or landlocked, having no perceptible current or movement other than that caused by wind or by swimmers.

Straightaway Swim—any swim of any length where the course shall be a straight, measured distance in stationary open water and defined by a cable with floats or a continuous marking system visible to the swimmer.

Submitted Times—those filed with an entry as having been previously achieved or reasonably estimated; also known as seed times.

Time Trial—a timed heat conducted within a meet where the swimmer races against the clock to establish an official time.

Timed Finals—competition in which only heats are swum and final placings are determined by the times achieved in the heats.

Touch—contact with the end of the course.

Turn—a point on the course where the swimmers reverse or change direction of the swim.

USA-S—USA Swimming Inc.

USAS—United States Aquatic Sports Inc.

USMS—United States Masters Swimming Inc.

Valid time—a time reported by a designated timing system without a confirmed malfunction and determined by the meet referee or designee to be accurate based on analysis of all reported times, observations by officials, and other relevant data.

Venue—geographical area and environs where a swim event is conducted.

Wall—the vertical portion of the pool, the contiguous surface of the deck and overflow gutters, the front portion of the starting block or platform, or the touchpad at the end of the course.

Warning Signal—a bell, whistle, air horn, or other appropriate audible device.

Wave—the second or subsequent start used if the start area cannot accommodate all contestants at the same time.

Will—consent to do, an expectation.

Workout Group—a subordinate organization (subgroup) of a USMS-registered club.

Zone—a geographic section of the country that includes all LMSCs within that section.

Notes
