
2020
U.S. MASTERS SWIMMING
CODE OF REGULATIONS
AND
RULES OF COMPETITION

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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.

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On the Cover: Upper left: Peter H. Bick, 2017 Summer Nationals. Upper Right: Peter H. Bick, 2019 Open Water Nationals. Lower left: Donald Miralle, 2019 Summer Nationals. Lower right: 2017 Adult Learn-to-Swim, William Kolb

Rule Book Dedication

Ralph Davis has served U.S. Masters Swimming as a national-level volunteer for two decades. His service includes appointments on the Audit, Finance, and Investment Committees, and four terms as USMS Treasurer on the Board of Directors. He's also served the Michigan LMSC in the various capacities of treasurer, vice chair, and chair since 1997, for which he was recognized with the Dorothy Donnelly Service Award in 2010.

Davis's commitment to his LMSC and to USMS is legendary, and volunteers and staff members who have served alongside him know him as a mentor and friend, and someone with a strong desire to give back without expecting anything in return. He's also known for his quiet wisdom and the ability to listen while others discuss an issue, then clearly see and suggest a solution. He does this with good will and a sense of humor, and in the spirit of focusing on the needs of the organization and its mission over any individual.

Davis's accomplishments are many, but one that has had a significant effect on USMS's growth and success over the past decade is the creation of the Investment Committee in 2010 and subsequent Investment Policy and Investment Spending Policy. Before that, USMS's investments were yielding small percentages on short-term CDs. Between 2011 and 2018, USMS's investment account grew by nearly 40 percent.



Ralph Davis

With this increase in income, USMS has been able to steadily improve and expand program and service offerings to the membership. Davis has also been instrumental in helping the organization shift from being all-volunteer run to having a professional staff. He was honored in 2011 with the Ted Haartz Staff Appreciation Award for his stewardship of organizational finances through the onboarding of a full-time professional controller.

In addition to his financial acumen (he has more than 40 years in financial management) he's a forward thinker who looks for ways to engage new volunteers and give them opportunities to grow in their volunteer experience with USMS. He's always quick to recognize a fellow volunteer or colleague for an accomplishment.

USMS wouldn't be where it is today without Davis's wisdom and guidance, and we dedicate our 50th Anniversary Rule Book to him with immense gratitude.

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
		2020	Ralph Davis

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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 2020

Swimwear Restrictions: The rules clarify that all swimwear must meet FINA specifications. Specifically, zippers, ties, and other fasteners are prohibited, with the exception of a waist tie. (Article 102.12.1)

Qualification of Officials: Qualification of officials (i.e., certification) is addressed in policy by the USMS Officials Committee. (Article 103.3)

Relay Entries: The rules clarify that the meet director must establish a procedure for compliance with article 102.9.5, which requires that the relay entry list the name of the club, each swimmer's full name (as it appears on the USMS membership card), age, and, for mixed relays, gender. Per article 102.9.5, the name of the leadoff swimmer must also be clearly designated. The rules clarify that the meet referee is responsible for instructing officials on compliance with article 102.9.6, which requires that first and last names of eligible relay swimmers, their ages, and order of swimming be submitted to the clerk of course or head lane timer. Article 102.9.6 also requires that changes in competing swimmers or the order of swimming must be declared to the head lane timer prior to the start of the relay heat in which the relay team is entered and no changes are permitted thereafter. (Articles 102.9.5 and 102.9.6)

Annual Budget: The annual budget is now approved by the BOD instead of the HOD. However, the HOD will be given a preview of the budget at or before the Annual Meeting. (Article 506.3.6)

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.

