

# **USMS ELECTION OPERATING GUIDELINES**

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## **ELECTION GUIDELINES**

### **I. Purpose**

The purpose of the Election Operating Guidelines ("EOG") is to list and maintain in one place all of the election policies and procedures currently in existence in United States Masters Swimming, Inc. ("USMS"). EOG will be updated by the Election Committee at the convention in the year prior to an election. Copies will be made available to any USMS member through the National Office upon request.

### **II. General Information**

- A. Anyone serving on the Election Committee who is nominated for a National office or is related to someone nominated for a National office shall not participate in any Election Committee activity. The affected Zone shall appoint a temporary replacement to fulfill the Election Committee duties.
- B. The current Zone Chair shall appoint one of the current Zone Representatives to serve as Election Chair if the current Zone Chair chooses to run again.
- C. Exchange of documents between the Election Committee and other participants in the process shall be done by electronic media
- D. These guidelines may be modified during an election to allow for variations caused by uncontested elections, changes in expected convention schedules, and any other circumstance that may interfere with adherence to all the guidelines set forth.

### **III. Publications**

- A. A request for nominations shall be announced at the Convention, printed in the January/February SWIM magazine, posted on the USMS Web Site, and posted in the National Office Newsletter. The announcement will include the candidate qualification criteria.
- B. Information on the election shall be posted and regularly updated on the Election Section of the USMS Web Site. Notification of web site changes shall be posted on the "What's New" discussion forum. Candidate information to be published on the web site shall be limited to the candidate questionnaire and a digital picture.
- C. Information on the election shall be delivered to the national office by August 1 to be published in the convention packet. Published information shall be limited to the candidate questionnaire, resume, and picture. Candidates may be permitted to attach an addendum to their questionnaire if issues crucial to USMS have surfaced since the questionnaire was first written.
- D. Candidate letters of nomination, letters of reference, and endorsements by LMSCs may be published with the permission of the author. Evaluation forms shall remain confidential and shall be for Election Committee use only.

### **IV. Nominations**

#### **A. Nomination of Candidates**

1. The nomination period shall be from January 1 through March 31 of the election year.
2. Any USMS member may nominate a candidate for office.
3. The Election Committee shall develop a nomination packet which shall be posted on the election web site by December 1 of the year preceding the election. The packet may also be distributed by e-mail upon request. Contents of the packet shall be as follows:
  - a. Instruction sheet for nominees (including nominee qualification criteria)
  - b. Candidate questionnaire/consent-to-run form
  - c. Sample Evaluation Form
  - d. Copy of the Election Operating Guidelines
4. The completed packet shall be returned to the Election Chair by March 31 along with:
  - a. A letter of nomination from a USMS member

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- b. A one page resume
  - c. Two personal letters of reference
  - d. A letter of endorsement from the nominee's LMSC
  - e. Digital picture
5. Evaluation forms shall be sent to at least one Chair of a committee that each nominee has served on. It is recommended that the nominees should have been on these committees no longer than five years previously. These are to be returned by April 30.
- B. Nomination of Current Officers**
- 1. Current officers eligible for a second term are automatically nominated. The Election Committee Chair will contact each officer and verify that they wish to continue.
  - 2. When current officers are running for re-election and no other nominations are received, no other activity is required of the committee other than preparing information for the convention packet and updating the election web site.
  - 3. Current officers must submit Section One of the Candidate Questionnaire/Consent-to-Run Form, a one-page resume, and photo. Candidates may submit a full questionnaire if they choose.
- C. Floor Nominations**
- 1. Nominations will be accepted from the floor of the House of Delegates at the same time as the nominations for the candidates on the slate.
  - 2. Immediately following the nomination, Sections One and Two of the Candidate Questionnaire/Consent-to-Run Form must be submitted to the Election Chair. The candidate may also submit a fully completed questionnaire, a one-page resume and/or a picture (4 x 6 maximum size)..
  - 3. The candidate questionnaire and resume will be duplicated and distributed to the House of Delegates to allow time for review prior to the election. The picture will be placed on the display board with the other candidates.
  - 4. Candidates nominated from the floor of the House of Delegates shall be registered members of USMS prior to their nomination.
- D. A candidate may be nominated for more than one position, but may not be slated for more than one.**
- V. Candidate Qualification**
- A. All completed questionnaires and endorsements will be transmitted to each Nominating Committee member by May 1.
  - B. The Election Committee will evaluate nominees and prepare a slate of candidates by June 15.
  - C. Qualification Criteria**
    - 1. Candidates shall be registered members of United States Masters Swimming, Inc. (USMS) for the year when the election is held.
    - 2. Candidates shall have attended more than one USMS National Convention.
    - 3. Nominees should attend the current convention and should plan to attend all conventions during their tenure.
    - 4. Candidates shall have demonstrated leadership in USMS by holding various positions in the corporation. None of the positions shall be given weight over any others. These positions include, but are not limited to: a) Executive Committee Member, b) National Committee Chair (Standing or Ad-Hoc), d) Special Assignment, e) Project Leader in Committee, f) Zone Representative, or g) any other position which requires leadership abilities.
    - 5. Nominees should have the endorsement of their LMSC.
  - D. Procedures for Candidate Qualification

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1. The Election Chair shall not vote unless there is a tie vote on a candidate.
2. All candidates shall be evaluated by the described criteria regardless of what office they are running for.
3. The criteria for evaluation shall be applied to all candidates in an even-handed manner.
4. When an Election Committee member is unable to reach a conclusion as to the qualifications of a candidate, they should vote to put that candidate on the slate and let the House of Delegates decide whether to elect that person.
5. All candidates who meet the stated qualifications shall be placed on the slate.

## **VI. Campaign Policy**

- A. Publicity will be provided for the candidates on the election web site and in the convention packet. In addition, a display chart with the pictures of the candidates will be posted on-site in a visible area before and during the Convention.
- B. The Election Committee shall open an election thread on the USMS Discussion Forum to allow for an exchange of ideas between candidates, delegates, and other members of USMS.
- C. No mailings may be sent on behalf of a nominee in order to encourage a delegate's vote.
- D. Handouts, signs, stickers, pins or other promotional items may not be used or given at the convention on behalf of any nominee.

## **VII. Convention Nominations**

- A. The report of the Nominating Committee, floor nominations, nominating speeches, and acceptance speeches should be made at the first meeting of the House of Delegates.
- B. The Chair of the Nominating Committee will present the slate of nominees.
- C. The Chair will then call for nominations from the floor for each office.
- D. Each nomination requires a delegate nominator.
- E. Each nomination requires a delegate seconder who will not speak on behalf of the candidate.
- F. After nominations are closed, each candidate will be given a total of five (5) minutes during which time the nominator and/or candidate may speak.

## **VIII. Meet the Candidates Forum**

- A. There shall be a Meet the Candidates Forum in order for the voting delegates to familiarize themselves with the candidates unless current officers are running for re-election and no other nominations are received.
- B. The Election Committee will host the forum to be held Thursday evening of the Convention.
- C. It is recommended that the room be set up informally with the audience in a semi-circle and the candidates in front, but not on a podium and some type of refreshments be served.
- D. Candidates must be in attendance and make themselves available to answer questions. At the beginning of the forum, each candidate will be introduced by the moderator.
- E. A moderator will ask the questions and control the length of answers. Follow-up questions may be allowed from the floor.
- F. Questions may be submitted by email beginning August 1. Acceptance of email submissions will terminate two weeks prior to convention. There will be a question box placed at convention check-in on Wednesday which will be moved to the HOD on Thursday morning. Submissions will be terminated following candidate nominations. Questions should be directed to an office, not a specific candidate, and there should be questions for all positions up for election.
- G. The Election Committee will analyze and filter the questions. They will prepare a list of questions for the Meet the Candidates Forum.

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- H. Following the formal Meet the Candidates Forum, each candidate will be asked to remain for a half-hour to mingle and to be available for informal questioning from the delegates.

## **IX. Voting**

- A. The election of the officers shall be conducted during the House of Delegates session.
- B. If the current officers are standing for re-election and there have been no new nominations (either prior to convention or from the floor), then the current officers shall be retained by acclamation immediately following the nomination process.
- C. If voting is to proceed, the Nominating Committee will prepare ballots, conduct the election process, and clarify and announce the results.
- D. The initial vote will be taken for all offices simultaneously.
- E. Votes will be collected by roll-call of voting delegates and placed in the collection box.
- F. Election shall be by majority vote of the delegates voting. If there is not a clear majority for any candidate, the top two candidates will be retained and a second vote will be taken.

## **X. Election Guidelines for Zone Representative**

- A. The Zone Representative shall request nominations from each LMSC in the Zone by June 1 each election year.
- B. The Zone Representative shall appoint a delegate to accept nominations from the floor and to run the election if the Zone Representative is running again.

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## APPENDIX A: SCHEDULE

Pre-Convention Process	Deadline
Announce request for nominations at the Annual Meeting	Sep/Oct
Submit call for nominations to National Office Newsletter	Oct 1
Submit call for nominations to Jan/Feb issue of Swim Magazine	Oct 15
Post election information on the Election Web Site (part of USMS Web Site)	Dec 1
Contact current officers eligible for a second term to determine if they wish to continue in office	Jan 1
Accept nominations for office. Candidates for office must submit a completed Nomination Packet during this period in order to be considered for the slate.	Jan 1 thru Mar 31
Obtain evaluations from Committee Chairs nominees have served under	Apr 1 thru Apr 30
Election Committee evaluates candidates and chooses slate for election at convention	May 1 thru Jun 15
Notify candidates they have been selected for the slate and post candidate information on Election Web Site	Jul 1
Submit election information to National Office for convention packet	Aug 1
Email collection of questions for Meet the Candidates Forum. Email collection to be terminated 2 weeks prior to convention	Begin Aug 1
Convention Process	
Post election bulletin board and question box for Meet the Candidates Forum on-site at convention in visible location(s)	Wed
Nominations and speeches for candidates on the slate as well as nominations from the floor of the House of Delegates	Thu a.m.
Question box for Meet the Candidates Forum closed	Thu 12 noon
Meet the Candidates Forum	Thu 8 p.m.
Elections	Fri p.m.

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## APPENDIX B: NOMINATION PACKET INSTRUCTIONS TO NOMINEES

Congratulations on your decision to run for the USMS Executive Committee. In this packet you will find all the information you need to get through the nomination process. A copy of the USMS Election Operating Guidelines has been included to inform you of how the process works from the time nominations open on January 1 until the election at the USMS Annual Meeting. If you have any difficulty complying with the requirements of this packet, notify the Election Chair. Please note that all exchange of documents must be by email or other electronic media.

If you are a current officer running for re-election, your instructions are in the section titled **Current Officers**. New candidates who intend to be nominated for the pre-convention slate should begin reading at the section titled **Nomination Period**. If you are a candidate who will be nominated from the floor in the House of Delegates, your instructions are in the section titled **Floor Nominations**.

### Nomination Period

The nomination period is from January 1 through March 31 in the year when the election is held. To complete your nomination packet, please compile the following documents and return them by email to the Election Chair no later than March 31:

1. Completed **Candidate Questionnaire/Consent-to-Run** form. The questionnaire will be published on the USMS web site as well as in the convention packet.
2. A one page **Resume**. The resume will be published only in the convention packet.
3. A **Letter of Nomination** from a USMS member. This should be a simple declarative nomination without elaboration unless the nominator is also writing a letter of reference (see point #4 below).
4. Two (2) one page personal **Letters of Reference**. These letters may be from persons inside or outside of USMS. One of the Letters of Reference may be written by your nominator. In that case, include the nomination statement as the first sentence of the Letter of Reference. The Letters of Reference may be published with the consent of the authors. Please have the persons writing letters for you indicate at the bottom of the letter whether the letter may be published or not.
5. A **Letter of Endorsement** from your LMSC. The LMSC Letter of Endorsement may be published with the consent of the LMSC. Please have the person writing the letter for you indicate at the bottom of the letter whether the letter may be published or not.
6. Digital picture. The digital picture will be published on the USMS web site, in the convention packet, and posted on a board at convention.

### Evaluation Forms

Evaluation forms will be sent to at least one of the National Committee Chairs you have worked with as identified on your questionnaire. The Committee will endeavor to send forms to chairs you have worked with in the previous 5-year period. Evaluation forms will be due to the Election Chair no later than April 30. Evaluation forms shall remain confidential and shall be for Election Committee use only.

### Qualification of Candidates

The evaluation forms and documents submitted by nominees will be transmitted to the Election Committee who will evaluate the nominees and prepare a slate of candidates by June 15. The slate will be announced and the picture and questionnaire will be posted on the USMS web site.

Please review the following qualification criteria before submitting your nomination:

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1. Candidates shall be registered members of United States Masters Swimming, Inc. (USMS) for the year when the election is held.
2. Candidates shall have attended more than one USMS National Convention.
3. Nominees should attend the current convention and should plan to attend all conventions during their tenure.
4. Candidates shall have demonstrated leadership in USMS by holding various positions in the corporation. None of the positions shall be given weight over any others. These positions include, but are not limited to: a) Executive Committee Member, b) National Committee Chair (Standing or Ad-Hoc), d) Special Assignment, e) Project Leader in Committee, f) Zone Representative, or g) any other position which requires leadership abilities.
5. Nominees should have the endorsement of their LMSC.

## Current Officers

Current officers eligible and running for a second term must submit the following information by email to the Election Chair no later than March 31:

1. Section One of the **Candidate Questionnaire/Consent-to-Run Form**. Current officers may submit a full questionnaire for publication if they choose.
2. One page resume.
3. Digital picture.

## Floor Nominations

If you do not go through the early nomination process, you may still be nominated from the floor of the House of Delegates during the nomination session. Immediately after your nomination, you must submit the following information to the Election Chair:

1. Sections One and Two of the **Candidate Questionnaire/Consent-to-Run Form**. You may submit a full questionnaire if you choose.
2. One page resume (optional).
3. A 3 x 5 or 4 x 6 picture (optional).

Your resume and questionnaire will be duplicated and distributed to delegates to allow time for review prior to the election. The picture will be placed with the display board containing the other members of the slate.

## In Conclusion

Thank you for considering running for the USMS Executive Committee. The nomination process and enclosed guidelines are intended to make the election process fair and consistent for all candidates. If you have any problems, please don't hesitate to contact me.

(Insert name & contact information of Election Chair)  
Election Chair

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## **APPENDIX B: NOMINATION PACKET CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE/CONSENT-TO-RUN**

*Please fill out the following questionnaire/consent-to-run form. You may use as much space as you choose in answering your questions. Slate candidates and current officers should return this form by email with your other documents to the Election Chair by March 31. Floor Candidates must return this form immediately after your nomination.*

### **SECTION ONE: Consent-to-Run (All candidates must fill out this section)**

1. Name: (Insert answer here)
2. LMSC: (Insert answer here)
3. Consent-to-Run: I (insert name here) am interested in running for the office of USMS:  
 President  Vice President  Secretary  Treasurer  Zone Chair

### **SECTION TWO: Candidate Qualification (New candidates for the slate and floor candidates must fill out this section)**

1. Please list the USMS National Conventions you have attended as a delegate:  
(Insert answer here)
2. Please list USMS committees that you have served on. Include the dates you were on the committees and the names of the committee chairs you served under.  
(Insert answer here)

### **SECTION THREE: Issues (Candidates for the slate must fill out this section)**

1. Why are you interested in this position and why do you believe you would be a good candidate?  
(Insert answer here)
2. What do you consider to be the major issues facing USMS now and in the future. As a member of the USMS Executive Committee, how would you address these issues.  
(Insert answer here)
3. Please list any other experience that relates to your qualifications for office.  
(Insert answer here)
4. Please write a short summary statement that will be posted on the display board with your picture at convention. If you choose, you may repeat (or point to) a paragraph from one of your other answers.  
(Insert answer here)

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## APPENDIX C: EVALUATION FORM

*Please fill out the following Evaluation Form completely and return by email to the Election Chair by April 30.*

**Candidate's Name:** (Insert name here)

**Name of Evaluator:** (Insert name here)

**Committee:** (Insert committee name here)

**In what way do you know this candidate?**

(Insert answer here)

**How long have you known this candidate?**

(Insert answer here)

**How have you worked together?**

(Insert answer here)

**For each attribute fill-in the level (1-5) that applies to the nominee, with 1 being low (least favorable) and 5 high (most favorable). If you feel that you do not have the knowledge of the nominee about an attribute, fill in NA.**

- 1. Has been active at the national level.
- 2. Has been active at the local level.
- 3. Has demonstrated a working knowledge of USMS policies and practices.
- 4. Takes initiative, independently originates or develops ideas.
- 5. Interacts effectively with others.
- 6. Understands and deals effectively with individual differences.
- 7. Uses tact and diplomacy in getting agreement in difficult situations.
- 8. Listens to others and accepts their expertise.
- 9. Expresses self in an organized, understandable, and concise manner.
- 10. Perceives communication from others appropriately.
- 11. Communicates regularly and effectively with others in LMSC/Committees.
- 12. Plans and organizes activities effectively.
- 13. Completes assignments promptly.
- 14. Sets and accomplishes objectives effectively.
- 15. Delegates and shares duties.
- 16. Is dependable.
- 17. Retains composure during a crisis.
- 18. Demonstrates enthusiasm, drive, and energy.
- 19. Demonstrates flexibility.
- 20. Demonstrates leadership ability.

**Other comments about this candidate:**

(Insert answer here)

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## APPENDIX D: SUGGESTED PROCEDURES FOR COUNTING VOTES

### Personnel

The minimum personnel needed to count the ballots are:

- 1) 1 Vote Caller
- 2) 2 Vote Recorders
- 3) 2 Observer/Proof Readers
- 4) 2 Vote Counters

Other members of the Election Committee may participate in the counting or observing in any fashion the Election Chair requires.

### Counting Process

The following procedure will be followed to count the votes:

- 1) Count one office at a time.
- 2) Divide the ballots into piles of ten (10) ballots each.
- 3) The vote caller calls out the vote for each ballot.
- 4) The recorders record the count on separate tally sheets.
  - a) If a ballot does not have any candidate selected for an office the “**abstained**” block shall be marked.
  - b) If a ballot has more than one candidate selected for the same office—the block marked “**bad ballot**” for that office only shall be marked.
  - c) If a ballot has a write-in for a candidate, the vote shall be recorded on a separate line on the tally sheet for that office.
- 5) After each set of ten ballots, the recorders will make sure they have recorded ten total votes.
- 6) After all ballots are recorded, the vote counters will count the votes for each candidate and compare the totals from each tally sheet.
- 7) If the counts are the same, then the results are determined. If the counts are different, repeat steps three (3) through seven (7) for that office.
- 8) Repeat steps three (3) through seven (7) until votes are counted and verified for all offices.

### Run-Offs

If an office does not have a majority winner (>50% of valid votes cast), in accordance with the EOG, a new vote will be held between the top two candidates from the first vote, and the recount will be done using the counting process specified above. Any ballots marked during the run-off for eliminated candidates will be marked as "bad ballots."