



On-Deck Coaching Guidelines and Information

Description: The U.S. Masters Swimming Coaches Committee offers On-Deck Coaching assistance for swimmers during warm-ups at National Championship Events and at the USMS Annual Meeting held in conjunction with the United States Aquatic Sports convention. Coaches monitor the sprint lanes during the early morning warm-ups at Nationals, giving swimmers start commands and timing sprints or pace repeats if requested. At Convention, coaches devise and conduct workouts for USMS delegates and attendees. All participating coaches are given a special USMS Coaches T-shirt, great for being recognized on deck. The On-Deck Coaching program has grown in popularity and participation, and we are now offering to help regional Masters organizations develop the program for regional events, such as the Zone Championships.

Procedures: Participating coaches are organized by a site coordinator, in conjunction with the On-Deck Coaching Coordinator. The On-Deck Coaching Coordinator makes assignments according to the availability of the volunteer coaches. On the day of the event, each coach is responsible for meeting at a predetermined area with the site coordinator when the announcement is made for On-Deck Coaches to gather. When in doubt, meet at one of the following places. For short course national meets, meet at the Lane 1 side of the pool between the two courses. For long course national meets, meet at the Lane 1 corner of the starting end. Coaches will then be distributed to their assigned sprint lanes when they open. Coaches wear visible, coordinated apparel items (typically the On-Deck Coaching T-shirt) to help swimmers recognize them. Coaches observe their assigned areas for safety and communicate with the swimmers, offering start commands for sprints or pace work as appropriate. If a swimmer requests sprint or repeat times, the coach should be prepared to help by bringing his or her own stopwatch.

Guidelines: While serving as an On-Deck Coach, each volunteer is expected to:

- 1) be on time
- 2) maintain professional appearance and conduct
- 3) refrain from using foul and inappropriate language
- 4) refrain from displaying advertisements or apparel promoting alcohol or tobacco products
- 5) refrain from offering technical advice unless asked, or unless there is a blatant safety or rules issue involved
- 6) remove the On-Deck Coaching T-shirt at the conclusion of the warm-up period

If you'd like any additional information about the USMS On-Deck Coach Program, or to sign up to help with on-deck coaching at the next Nationals or Annual Meeting, please contact the USMS Coaches Committee at coaches@usmastersswimming.org.