

**TABLE OF PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE  
USMS GLOSSARY AND PART 1 RULES OF COMPETITION**

**The following proposed amendments to the USMS Rules of Competition were submitted to the Rules Committee in accordance with Articles 601.2, 601.4.1, and 601.4.3.**

The committee action prior to the annual meeting is indicated as a recommendation to “adopt” or “reject”. Committee actions may be reconsidered at the annual meeting before presentation to the House of Delegates.

Amendments which are recommended for adoption by the committee require a majority vote of the House of Delegates to adopt. Amendments which are recommended for rejection by the committee require a 2/3 vote of the House of Delegates to adopt.

<b>Number</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Committee Action</b>	<b>HOD Action</b>
<a href="#"><u>R-1</u></a>	101.4.3	Modify "continuous turning action" language for backstroke	Recommend for Rejection	<b>Rejected</b>
<a href="#"><u>R-2</u></a>	102.5	Add provision and conditions for sanction reinstatement if withdrawn	Recommend for Rejection	<b>Rejected</b>
<a href="#"><u>R-3</u></a>	102.9.1	Modify requirements for composition of relay teams	Recommend for Rejection	<b>Rejected</b>
<a href="#"><u>R-4</u></a>	102.12.1	Modify to maintain consistency with other rule books	Recommend for Adoption	Adopted
<a href="#"><u>R-5</u></a>	103.2.1 103.3.1 108.1.1	Modify to require designation of a named referee prior to approval of a sanction	Recommend for Adoption	<b>Rejected</b>
<a href="#"><u>R-6</u></a>	103.3.1 103.3.2	Clarify the exact positions entitled to grant an exception regarding officials’ qualifications.	Recommend for Adoption as Amended	Adopted as Amended
<a href="#"><u>R-7</u></a>	Glossary 104.15.10	Modify administrative official definition and requirements for Nationals per rule book and common usage.	Recommend for Adoption	Adopted
<a href="#"><u>R-8</u></a>	104.15.10	Modify to reflect current USMS practices for selection of a meet referee and to remove working policy from the rule book	Recommend for Adoption as Amended	Adopted as Amended
<a href="#"><u>R-9</u></a>	105.1.7	Add provision and conditions for adjustment of times if a bulkhead pool measurement is non-compliant	Recommend for Rejection	<b>Rejected</b>
<a href="#"><u>R-10</u></a>	105.1.7	Modify to make consistent the need for bulkhead measurements for Top 10.	Recommend for Rejection	<b>Rejected</b>

**Pending USA Swimming Amendments that affect USMS Rules**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Committee Action</b>
<a href="#"><u>U-1</u></a>	103.8.6	Update the jurisdiction of the starting position	Accept
<a href="#"><u>U-2</u></a>	Glossary 107.1.1	Update the definition of disability	Accept
<a href="#"><u>U-3</u></a>	106.12	Modify to be consistent with World Aquatics terminology	Accept
<a href="#"><u>U-4</u></a>	102.13.4	Modify to be consistent with World Aquatics terminology	Accept

## PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE USMS GLOSSARY AND PART ONE

The following proposed amendments to the USMS Rules of Competition were submitted to the Rules Committee in accordance with Articles 601.2, 601.4.1, and 601.4.3. If adopted by the House of Delegates, these amendments will take effect on January 1, 2026.

R-1	101.4.3	Southeastern LMSC	page 4	Modify
<b>Committee Action: Recommended for Rejection</b>				
<b>HOD Action: Defeated</b>				

**101.4.3 Turns**—Upon completion of each length, some part of the swimmer must touch the wall. During the turn the shoulders may be turned past the vertical toward the breast, after which ~~an immediate continuous~~ a single arm pull or ~~an immediate continuous~~ a simultaneous double arm pull may be used to initiate the turn. ~~Once the body has left the position on the back, any kick or arm pull must be part of the continuous turning action.~~ The swimmer must have returned to a position on the back upon leaving the wall.

**Note:** The swimmer who turns past vertical ~~and, in a continuous motion, grabs~~ may grab the wall before pushing off with the feet while on the back. ~~is considered to have executed a “continuous turning action.”~~

**Rationale:** Removing the "continuous turning action" verbiage is a win for the swimmer (i.e., no meaningless DQs on backstroke turns) and a win for the stroke/turn judge (i.e., no pressure to interpret/misinterpret the moment of initiation or cessation of the stroke or kick). This is the only situation in our sport where a swimmer is disqualified specifically for being inefficient; i.e., there is no competitive advantage by violating the existing rule ... it is actually a competitive disadvantage.

**Rationale for rejection:** Making this change would not maintain consistency with other organizations/rulebooks. The Rules Committee felt that the current rule was widely understood and applied correctly.

R-2	102.5	Illinois LMSC	page 7-8	Add
<b>Committee Action: Recommended for Rejection</b>				
<b>HOD Action: Defeated</b>				

**102.5 Events**

*(Articles 102.5.1 through 102.5.8 are unchanged)*

**102.5.9** Notwithstanding the deadline in 102.5.7, if an approved sanction, over 4 weeks old, is withdrawn due to non-compliance with any section in articles 108 or 202, after receiving notification of withdrawal, the sanction may be reinstated provided the meet host corrects the issues in a timely manner and the changes don't harm or disadvantage any current or eligible participants. The Rules Committee Chair shall assess both the expediency of the changes and whether they cause harm or disadvantage.

**Rationale:** Sanction request procedures are complex, involving multiple layers of review by USMS volunteers to support meet hosts. Once a sanction request is approved, meet hosts proceed in good faith to deliver the event. We suggest a four-week grace period to identify errors in an approved sanction. If noncompliance with article 108 or 202 is discovered after this period, the meet host should be allowed to correct the issue and retain the sanction, even if changes occur within seven days of the event, provided these changes do not harm or disadvantage USMS members already entered or eligible. With respect to the one-week deadline for sanction changes: today's communication is primarily electronic. It is easy to share updates with athletes already planning on attending as well as to attract additional athletes who might reconsider attendance.

**Rationale for rejection:** The Rules Committee agreed that sanctions can be complex, but better education of LMSC sanctions chairs would be a better solution than adding this proposal to the USMS rule book. Additionally, there are changes coming to the sanctioning system that will likely render this proposal moot.

R-3	102.9.1	Southeastern LMSC	page 9	Modify
<b>Committee Action: Recommended for Rejection</b>				
<b>HOD Action: Defeated</b>				

**102.9 Relays**

**102.9.1** Relay teams shall not compete unattached. In all cases, relay teams must be composed of USMS members of the same club, which is a member of USMS. The exception to this rule is for relay-only meets, in which all members of a relay team must be members of USMS, but may be from different teams or registered as unattached.

*(Articles 102.9.2 through 102.9.10 are unchanged)*

**Rationale:** Numerous recommendations have surfaced, from our Board and from members at-large at our LMSC Annual Meeting, to enhance the USMS experience by conducting "relay meets" where unattached USMS swimmers, or members of smaller USMS clubs, could participate on relays together. Currently such a relay would be "exhibition", or would be disqualified, and none of the times posted by the participants (specifically the leadoff leg) would count as official times. This rule change would allow the relay to compete legally, which would enhance the overall experience and would allow the leadoff leg to count as an official time (thus being eligible for Top 10 and for USMS records).

**Rationale for rejection:** This proposal is in conflict with article 201.3.4 that precludes UC swimmers from participating in relays. The Rules Committee suggests this be revisited with input from other relevant committees (e.g., the Legislation Committee).

R-4      102.12.1      Officials Committee      page 15      Modify

<b>Committee Action:</b> <b>Recommended for Adoption</b>
<b>HOD Action:</b> <b>Adopted</b>

## 102.12      **Swimwear for Pool Competition**

### 102.12.1    **Design**

*(Articles 102.12.1A through 102.12.1D are unchanged)*

- E** No swimmer is permitted to wear or use any device or substance to enhance speed, pace, buoyancy, or endurance during a race (such as webbed gloves, fins, power bands, adhesive substances, snorkels, neoprene caps, etc.). The use of technology and automated data collection devices is permissible for the sole purpose of collecting data. Automated devices shall not be used to transmit data, sounds, or signals to the swimmer and may not be used to aid their speed. Goggles may be worn, and rubdown oil applied if not considered excessive by the referee. Medical identification items may be worn. Therapeutic elastic tape is prohibited. As a consequence of injury, it is permissible to tape not more than two fingers or toes. Any other kind of tape on the body is not permitted unless approved by the referee.

**Rationale:** To maintain consistency with other rule books. This section was added by USA Swimming in response to the availability of devices that could collect information on swimmer performance and be transmitted to coaches in real time, as well as receive information from coaches in real time. While this sort of technological doping may be less likely to occur in USMS competition, maintaining consistent standards across the two organizations is helpful for those wishing to set USA Swimming times in USMS competition, as well as providing a level field of play for USMS competitors.

R-5	103.2.1 108.1.1	Officials Committee	page 18 page 55	Modify Add
<b>Committee Action: Recommended for Adoption</b>				
<b>HOD Action: Defeated</b>				

## 103.2 Required Personnel

The minimum personnel at USMS-sanctioned Masters swimming meets or -recognized events shall include the following for each course:

### 103.2.1 Officials

- A **One referee**—The referee shall be designated by name prior to issuance of the meet sanction. The referee may also serve as a stroke and turn judge but shall not serve as starter.

*(Articles 103.2.1B, 103.2.1C and Note are unchanged)*

## 108.1 Sanctions

**108.1.1 Sanction Requirements**—Sanctions shall be issued, withheld, or withdrawn in accordance with article 202.1 and the following requirements:

- A Sanction applications shall be accompanied by the meet announcement.
- (1) The meet announcement shall include the statement “Sanctioned by (LMSC name) for USMS Inc.” and may include the statement “Sanction number \_\_\_\_.” Entry forms and programs may include these statements.
  - (2) The meet announcement shall include the name of the meet referee. Such person shall meet the requirements of article 103.3.1 including the granting of any required exception prior to the issuance of the sanction.

*(Renumber subsequent sub-sections)*

~~(23)~~ *(Unchanged)*

~~(34)~~ *(Unchanged)*

*(Articles 108.1.1B and 108.1.1C are unchanged)*

**Rationale:** To increase accountability of LMSCs and meet hosts. Currently, sanctions can be granted without designating a referee. In some cases, this has led to a “scramble” to obtain a meet referee (even under the pre-2025 qualification requirements). By requiring the meet referee designation to be included in the sanctioning document, any issues of referee certifications, qualifications, and exceptions can be resolved well prior to the meet. This is handled at the LSC level by USA Swimming, but given the relative size of the organizations, it is more appropriate for USMS to have a single national standard for this.



**B Officials**

**(1) Meet referee**

- (a) The meet host may nominate a meet referee subject to qualification standards established by the USMS Officials Committee.
- (b) This nomination is subject to approval by the chairs of the Championship and Officials Committees.
- (c) If there are no nominations from the meet host, the chairs of the Championship and Officials Committees shall jointly appoint the meet referee.
- (d) The meet referee shall develop a leadership team (lead administrative refereeofficial, head starter, and lead chief judge) and submit the names to the chairs of the Championship and Officials Committees for approval.

*(Articles 104.5.10B(2) through 104.5.10B(5) are unchanged)*

*(Articles 104.5.10C and 104.5.10.C are unchanged)*

**Rationale:** To conform to the remainder of the rule book and common usage. An administrative referee is normally only used for a prelims/finals meet, and national championships may never be prelims/finals per 102.5.5. Furthermore, the USMS rule book does not create or consider the responsibilities of the position of administrative referee (except in the Glossary), only an administrative official so the definition for administrative referee is unnecessary. An administrative official is the appropriate appointment level; it is what should be specified for a national championship. Adding the term “lead” to the administrative official and chief judge roles defines the level of seniority similar to the head starter; there may be additional administrative officials, starters, or chief judges, but one person acts as the leader of these functions.

R-8      104.5.10      Officials Committee      page 39      Modify

**Committee Action: Recommended for Adoption as Amended**

**HOD Action: Adopted as Amended**

**104.5.10 Personnel (also see article 103)**

*(Article 104.5.10A is unchanged)*

**B Officials**

**(1) Meet referee**

- (a) ~~The meet host may nominate a meet referee subject to qualification standards established by the USMS Officials Committee~~ The meet

referee shall be selected by the chairs of the Officials and Championship Committees, with feedback from the meet host and USMS staff. Minimum Qualifications for the meet referee shall be defined by Officials and Championship Committee policies.

- ~~(b) This nomination is subject to approval by the chairs of the Championship and Officials Committees.~~
- ~~(c) If there are no nominations from the meet host, the chairs of the Championship and Officials Committees shall jointly appoint the meet referee.~~
- ~~(db) The meet referee shall develop a leadership team (administrative referee, head starter, and chief judge) and submit the names to the chairs of the Championship and Officials Committees for approval.~~

~~(2) **Minimum requirements**—The minimum requirements for the following positions assigned for each session shall be:~~

- ~~(a) One deck referee for each course.~~
- ~~(b) One starter for each course.~~
- ~~(c) One chief judge for each course.~~

~~(3) **Sufficient number**—A sufficient number of stroke and turn judges shall be assigned in order to provide fair and equitable jurisdictions per article 103.10.4. Their assignments should meet the following minimum requirements:~~

- ~~(a) Two turn judges at each end of each course, each judge with a jurisdiction that does not exceed five lanes per judge.~~
- ~~(b) One stroke judge on each side of a 50-meter course.~~
- ~~(c) One official at the 15-meter mark of each course for all starts and turns except breaststroke.~~

~~(4) **Additional officials**—In addition to the officials listed above, it is strongly recommended that additional officials be assigned in order to provide adequate relief for all officials during each session. A sufficient number of officials shall be assigned to comply with USMS policies on staffing levels for Championship decksnational championship meets.~~

~~(5) **Certification**—All officials shall be certified by a USMS-approved certifying body in the capacity to which they are assigned.~~

*(Articles 104.5.10C and 104.5.10.D are unchanged)*

**Rationale:** 1) For 104.5.10B(1) - To reflect current USMS practice. With the evolution of the roles of the meet host, USMS staff, and Championship Committee in the conducting of USMS national championships, and the evolution of the USMS Officials certification program, the qualification needs for the championship meet referee have changed, particularly in 2024 and 2025. Starting with the 2024 Spring Nationals, meet hosts have increasingly looked to USMS

(staff and committees) to take the lead in identifying a meet referee best able to implement the style of meet and standards, protocols, and practices unique to USMS. While it is important to continue to have feedback from the meet director when they have opinions on a meet referee they would prefer to work with or have a history with, it is now less important for the meet referee to be a “local favorite” able to muster an entire deck of local officials. Adjusting the language to reflect this reality is necessary to match rules with desired practices. *Note: The renumbering of (d) to (b) is independent of the proposed language change in that section.*

2) For 104.5.10B(2) to 104.5.10B(4) - To remove working policy from rule book. The definition of the additional officials required to successfully execute a USMS national championship may be subject to change over time as best practices, policies, and protocols are revised. Staffing levels are an excessive level of detail for the rule book and should be managed in policy such as the existing Officials Committee policy in this regard.

*Proposed final text with all changes:*

**104.5.10 Personnel (also see article 103)**

*(Article 104.5.10A is unchanged)*

**B Officials**

**(1) Meet referee**

- (a)** The meet referee shall be selected by the chairs of the Officials and Championship Committees, with feedback from the meet host and USMS staff. Minimum qualifications for the meet referee shall be defined by Officials and Championship Committee policies.
- (b)** The meet referee shall develop a leadership team (administrative referee, head starter, and chief judge) and submit the names to the chairs of the Championship and Officials Committees for approval.

**(2) Additional officials**—A sufficient number of officials shall be assigned to comply with USMS policies on staffing levels for national championship meets.

**(3) Certification**—All officials shall be certified by a USMS-approved certifying body in the capacity to which they are assigned.

*(Articles 104.5.10C and 104.5.10.D are unchanged)*

**Committee Action: Recommended for Rejection**

**HOD Action: Defeated**

### 105.1.7 Pool Measurement

*(Articles 105.1.7A through 105.1.7E are unchanged)*

F When pre- or post-session measurements of a bulkhead pool, whose initial, all-lanes measurements on file with USMS were compliant with 106.2.1, indicate that one or more lanes are more than 1/8" less than the minimum pool length and facility management does not have the ability to move the bulkhead position into compliance in a timely manner, the meet host shall be allowed to adjust all times by a percentage equal to the largest pool length discrepancy. Such adjusted times shall be eligible for USMS Top 10 and records. If the largest pool length discrepancy is shorter than the minimum by less than 1/8", no adjustment is necessary, and times shall be eligible for USMS Top 10 and records.

**Rationale:** Every year, times from some meets conducted in bulkhead pools are not eligible for USMS Top 10 or records because the pool's bulkhead position is out of compliance. This rule does not set aside a meet host's responsibility to measure bulkhead pools before and after each session, but it does propose a procedure for calculating official times if the compliance problem cannot be remedied in a timely manner (similar to calculating official times when the primary or secondary timing systems fail).

No pool length adjustment is required if the pool length is within 1/8" of the minimum because a combination of operator error and lack of device precision likely introduce more variability than adjusting the times corrects for.

Wind-aided times in track and field events are eligible for records if the tail wind speed is less than 2 m/s even though research has shown a tail wind of 2 m/s results in 100 meter times being 0.1 seconds faster. This is analogous to this proposal because a tailwind "shortens" the track distance in a similar manner to a mis-placed bulkhead "shortening" the pool.

When considering the actual impact on final times, shortages do not significantly impact final times except under "extreme" situations of: a) pool length shortage, b) course, and c) race distance/swimmer speed such as: a) larger than .125" shortage, b) SCY/SCM, and c) race distances exceeding 20-30 minutes (1500/1650, coupled with a speed of 60 seconds/50 yards/meters).

**Rationale for rejection:** This proposal is in conflict with the currently published World Aquatics policies for Top Ten and world records related to pool measurements. Adopting this amendment would likely prevent USMS swimmers from being part of the World Aquatics Top Ten for masters and also from being ratified as world recorder holders when a swim is faster than the current Masters world record.

**Committee Action: Recommended for Rejection**

**HOD Action: Defeated**

### 105.1.7 Pool Measurement

*(Articles 105.1.7A and 105.1.7B are unchanged)*

- C If a movable bulkhead is used and the initial pool length certification for all lanes is on file, the length of the course must be confirmed by measuring the two outside competition lanes and a middle lane prior to the start of the meet and at the conclusion of each session for USMS records.

*(Articles 105.1.7D and 105.1.7E are unchanged)*

**Rationale:** To make consistent the need for bulkhead measurements for Top 10. Currently, if one swims in a USA swim meet or another AQUA member swim meet, bulkhead measurements are not needed for USMS Top 10.

**Rationale for rejection:** The committee was concerned that any records that were discovered upon Top 10 compilation at the end of season would no longer be eligible for records, as pool measurements would still be required for record applications. Additionally, the Rules Committee felt that this is a case where better education of meets hosts would be more appropriate than making changes in the rule book.

#### Other articles that would require changing in order to maintain consistency:

**108.1.1 Sanction Requirements**—Sanctions shall be issued, withheld, or withdrawn in accordance with article 202.1 and the following requirements:

- A Sanction applications shall be accompanied by the meet announcement.

*(Article 108.1.1A(1) is unchanged)*

- (2) The meet announcement shall include ONE of the following statements for each course used for competition during the meet:

*(Articles 108.1.1A(2)(a) through (c) are unchanged)*

- (d) The length of the competition course is in compliance and on file with USMS in accordance with articles 105.1.7 and 106.2.1, but as a bulkhead course, is subject to length confirmation. Eligibility of times for USMS ~~Top 10 and~~ records will be contingent on verification of bulkhead placement.

## Appendix A

### USMS POOL LENGTH REPORTING FORMS

For initial pool length certification as well as pool length confirmation for bulkhead pools

Maintaining pool length certification forms is an LMSC responsibility. Completed forms shall be sent to the LMSC Top 10 recorder. If a pool being considered for a sanctioned or recognized competition is **NOT** on file with the USMS National Swims Coordinator, the **Pool Length Certification Form** should be submitted prior to competition (ideally, before it is sanctioned or recognized). To add the pool to the USMS List of Measured Pools, email the **Pool Length Certification Form** to the National Swims Coordinator, TopTen@usmastersswimming.org. There are two constructions of **Racing Courses** (defined under USMS rules 106.3.1 and 106.3.2):

- **Permanent Course Walls** (article 106.3.1)—means the start/turn walls are **FIXED** and cannot be moved. These pools require a one-time measurement for **Certification** that the pool is in compliance with USMS Facility Standards, article 106.2.1, for times to be considered for USMS and World Aquatics Top 10 and records. The **Pool Length Certification Form** should be submitted for certification with every lane being measured.
- **Non-Permanent Course Walls** (articles 106.2.1F and 106.3.2) with one or more movable walls (aka “movable bulkheads”)—means that one or more of the course walls (start and/or turn) is **NOT** permanent. In this situation:
  - The **Pool Length Certification Form** must be used when submitting a pool of this type for **Initial Certification**, containing the measurements for every lane in the course, to establish the initial measurements in the USMS database, ¶
  - **AND** in addition, the **Bulkhead Placement Confirmation** form must then be submitted for **each** competition in that course (including the initial competition in that course) if the times are to be considered for USMS Records ~~and Top 10~~.

## **HOUSEKEEPING REPORT**

**Pursuant to article 601.1.2, housekeeping changes to the USMS Rules of Competition submitted and approved by the Rules Committee, with the concurrence of the vice president of administration, are reported to the House of Delegates in the annual report from the Rules Committee or in a subsequent report (if approved after the annual meeting). These changes will take effect on January 1, 2026.**

**There were no housekeeping changes to be reported prior to the 2025 annual meeting.**

**See associated Housekeeping Report for housekeeping changes made by the committee after the 2025 annual meeting.**



**Committee Action: Accept**

## Glossary

~~Disability-~~ a permanent physical or cognitive disability that substantially impacts one or more major life activities.

### 107.1 General

**107.1.1 Authority**—The USMS rules and regulations grant the referee the authority to modify the rules for the swimmer with a disability (see article 103.6.9). ~~Disability is defined as a permanent physical or cognitive disability that substantially limits one or more major life activities.~~ This section contains guidelines and suggestions for making such modifications.

**Rationale:** To move the definition of disability from article 107 to the Glossary, in alignment with the USA Swimming rule book.

## CHANGES TO CONFORM TO USA SWIMMING FACILITIES STANDARDS

**Pursuant to USMS article 601.4.3, changes USA Swimming article 103 (Facilities Standards) may be submitted by the Rules Committee with a recommendation for adoption by the USMS House of Delegates.**

**Committee Action: Accept**

### 106.12 Backstroke Ledge

The backstroke ledge shall conform to World Aquatics specifications when used in competition as follows:

**106.12.1** The ledge ~~may shall~~ be adjustable to 4 centimeters above or 4 centimeters below the water level and may not be used outside of this range. [M]

**106.12.2** The ledge shall be a minimum of ~~65-60~~ centimeters in length. [M]

**106.12.3** The ledge must be 8 centimeters in height, 2 centimeters at the width, with 10 degrees of slope. [M]

**106.12.4** The ledge shall not be used in water depth less than 4 feet (1.22 meters). [M]

**106.12.5** Should backstroke ledges be used, identical ledges shall be provided for all lanes. [M]

**Rationale:** To conform to World Aquatics regulations (article 16.1.11); USA-S rationale: mandated by World Aquatics.

## CHANGES TO CONFORM TO WORLD AQUATICS RULES

Pursuant to USMS Article 601.4.4, if amendments to the World Aquatics Masters Technical Rules are adopted between annual meetings of the House of Delegates, the corresponding portions of Part 1 shall be automatically adopted by USMS, except that such amendments may be altered, amended, repealed, or changed by a nine-tenths vote of the Rules Committee and a majority vote of the Executive Committee.

U-4      102.13.4      page 16      Modify

<b>Committee Action: Accept</b>
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### 102.13 Disqualifications

*(Articles 102.13.1 through 102.13.3 are unchanged)*

**102.13.4** ~~A~~The swimmer must ~~start and finish the race in the same lane~~remain and finish the race in the same lane in which they started.

**Rationale:** To conform to World Aquatics language (article 10.4); USA-S rationale: mandated by World Aquatics.