

U.S. Masters Swimming

Dec 2022

Election Operating Guidelines

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USMS ELECTION OPERATING GUIDELINES

(As Amended through FALL 2022)

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

I. Purpose

The purpose of the Election Operating Guidelines is to list and maintain in one place all the election policies and procedures currently in existence in U.S. Masters Swimming, Inc. ("USMS"). The guidelines will be updated by the Elections Committee and the USMS Board of Directors. The current EOG is posted on the USMS website.

II. Definitions

- A. Annual Meeting – Annual Meeting of the HOD held pursuant to Part 5 Article 504.3.
- B. BOD—USMS Board of Directors.
- C. Candidate—A person who has been slated by the Committee.
- D. Chair—Chair of the Election Committee.
- E. Committee—The Election Committee responsible for running the Election defined in 506.7.6.
- F. Delegate—A member of the HOD who has been certified at the Annual Meeting.
- G. Director(s)—Members of the BOD, elected pursuant to Part 5 Article 506.2
- H. Election—Held at the Annual Meeting of USMS where the HOD USMS elects Officers or Directors.
- I. EOG—Election Operating Guidelines. The guidelines, policies, and procedures that govern Elections.
- J. HOD—USMS House of Delegates.
- K. HOD Packet—Packet of information, which is prepared for Delegates prior to the Annual Meeting of the HOD.
- L. Incumbent-A director or officer who is running for reelection for the same currently held position
- M. Nominee—A person who has submitted a nomination but has not yet been slated by the Committee.
- N. Officer(s)—Officer(s) of USMS, elected pursuant to Part 5 Article 505.2.
- O. Part 5—Organization and Bylaws. Part 5 of the USMS Code of Regulations and Rules of Competition.
- P. Slate—The Candidates who have met all qualifications and put forth by the Committee.
- Q. USMS—U.S. Masters Swimming, Inc.

III. Election Policies

- A. Parts One and Two of the EOG contain the policies that govern Elections.
- B. If situations occur during an Election year in which compliance with these policies would not be in the best interest of USMS, the BOD may suspend policies provided 2/3 of the BOD members approve.
- C. Election policies may be amended by a simple majority vote of the BOD.

IV. Election Procedures

- A. The EOG Appendices contain the procedures that implement the election policies.
- B. If situations occur during an election year in which compliance with these procedures would not be in the best interest of USMS, the Committee may adjust these procedures provided such adjustment is in compliance with the governing policies. The Committee shall inform the BOD of all such adjustments.
- C. Election procedures may be amended by a simple majority vote of the BOD.

PART TWO: ELECTION POLICIES

I. General Information

- A. Pursuant to Part 5, USMS shall hold an Election of Officers in odd-numbered years and Directors in even-numbered years (See Articles 505: OFFICERS and 506: BOARD OF DIRECTORS).
- B. The Elections Committee shall be formed per Article 506.7 and 506.7.6 and shall:
 - 1. Be appointed by the president, confirmed by the BOD, and be comprised of Delegates neither seeking election nor be related to any election candidate.
 - 2. Be responsible for running the Election according to rules set out in Part 5 as well as the EOG.
 - 3. Be augmented by Delegates during the Annual Meeting, should the need arise. Any additional support personnel will not be considered as Election Committee members.
- C. All communications between the Committee and the Candidates shall be handled by the Chair or by designated Committee members.
- D. Election Committee Members may not nominate or endorse any candidate.
- E. All Election related dates can be found in Appendix A: Schedule.

II. Publications

- A. Information regarding the Election shall be published and regularly updated using appropriate USMS communication media.
- B. The announcements containing the request for nominations for the Officers and Directors shall include the candidate qualification criteria.
- C. The Candidate Questionnaire/Consent-To-Run Form, letter of nomination and letters of reference will be published without the specific permission of the author.
- D. Information regarding the Election and Candidates shall be included in the Annual Meeting information and shall appear on the Web Site and shall conform to the USMS Privacy Policy.
- E. All information gathered by the Committee shall be considered confidential. Any disclosure of this information shall be in accordance with the EOG or by specific direction of the BOD.

III. Campaign Policies

- A. Publicity shall be provided only by USMS for the Candidates prior to and during the Annual Meeting.
- B. The Committee shall provide opportunities for Delegates to meet Candidates via online videos and during the Meet the Candidates session of the Annual Meeting.
- C. Mailings shall not be sent on behalf of a Candidate
- D. Handouts, signs, stickers, pins, or other promotional items shall not be used or given at the Annual Meeting on behalf of any Candidate.

IV. Nomination Policies

- A. The Committee shall develop a nomination packet prior to the nomination period.
- B. Nomination of Candidates
 - 1. Unless otherwise specified, nominations for Officers and Directors shall follow the same process.
 - 2. Any USMS member, except for an Elections Committee member, may nominate a Candidate for an Officer position.
 - 3. Any USMS member, except for an Elections Committee member, may nominate a Candidate for a Director position. The nominator shall be a member from within the zone of candidacy.

4. The Committee may extend the nomination period for any office that has no Nominees after the nomination period expires. The time for any extension shall be determined by the Committee and announced at the time of the extension.
5. Each Candidate seeking election shall submit a completed nomination packet by the indicated deadline.
6. An individual may be nominated for more than one position; however, if nominated for more than one position, the nominee must choose only one position to stand for election and inform the Elections Committee of their decision prior to the nomination deadline.

C. Nomination of Current Officers and Directors (Incumbent)

1. Current Officers and Directors eligible for a second term who are seeking re-election shall submit a completed nomination packet (including letters of nomination and reference).
2. Officers and Directors eligible for re-election to their current position are responsible for notifying the Chair that they will be seeking another term, and they must submit a completed nomination packet.
3. In the event a director registers in a new zone prior to the next election, they will be considered an incumbent and their zone of candidacy will be their new zone.

D. Floor Nominations

1. Floor nominations shall be accepted during the first session of the Annual Meeting of the HOD. Each nomination from the floor requires one Delegate to nominate and one Delegate to second the nomination.
2. The Nominee shall confirm their willingness to run as a Candidate for the nominated position.
3. Following a nomination and second, the floor Candidate(s) shall submit to the Secretary an electronic copy of the completed nomination packet. The nomination packet of a floor nominee must be in the hands of the Election Committee Chair within one hour following the nomination.
4. Candidates nominated from the floor of the HOD shall otherwise meet the qualifications set forth in Article V. below.
5. Each floor nominee's paperwork will be reviewed by the Committee to verify compliance with the EOG. If in compliance, the nominee will be added to the slate of candidates. The new candidates' packet will be posted on the USMS website.
- 6. The newly slated candidate(s) will participate in the Meet-the-Candidates session scheduled during a future HOD.

V. Candidate Qualification Criteria

- A. Each Candidate shall be a member in good standing of USMS for the year when the Election is held.
- B. Each candidate running for an at-large position shall be a member of an LMSC within the zone of candidacy.
- C. Each Candidate shall have attended one or more Annual Meetings in the preceding five (5) years.
- D. Each Candidate shall plan to attend the Annual Meeting for the Election in which they are standing for election and shall plan to attend all Annual Meetings during their tenure.
- E. Each Candidate must submit an attestation of truthfulness when they submit a consent to run form.

VI. Slating Policies

- A. The Committee shall validate that all candidate qualification criteria have been met.
- B. Officer and Director Candidates shall be slated by the Committee.
 1. The Chair shall not vote to slate a candidate unless there is a tie.
 2. All Candidates who meet the stated qualifications shall be placed on the Slate.
 3. The Committee shall not slate a Candidate for more than one position.

VII. HOD Voting

- A. Elections shall be conducted early in the annual meeting after the Meet-the-Candidate sessions.
- B. Only Delegates present (in person or virtually present) and certified shall be eligible to vote.
- C. Any Candidate running unopposed, after floor nominations have been closed, shall be elected by acclamation.
- D. If voting is to proceed, the Committee, with the assistance of the USMS National Office, shall conduct the Election, as follows:
 - 1. The Election ballots shall be distributed to all eligible delegates via the voting platform used for the Annual Meeting.
 - 2. The Candidate receiving a majority of the votes cast shall be the winner.
 - 3. If no Candidate for a position receives a majority (more than 50% of valid votes cast), a run-off vote shall be held between the two Candidates receiving the most votes.
 - 4. If a run-off vote is necessary, the names of the run-off candidates will be announced. A new ballot will be sent to eligible delegates.
 - 5. Election results shall be announced to the HOD.

PART THREE: ELECTION PROCEDURES

APPENDIX A: SCHEDULE

I. In the Year Prior to the Election	Date(s)
Committee reviews and may propose amendments to the EOG.	
Committee considers any proposed amendments to the EOG.	
II. Committee Actions During the Election Year	
Submit information about nominations to the USMS Newsletter. Request republication in successive newsletters.	1 st newsletter after Jan 1
Election Committee members are appointed after the Annual Meeting.	
Deadline to post election information on the Web Site.	Mar 1
Nomination Packet Submission Dates - To be considered for slating, nominees must submit a completed nomination packet. The Chair must acknowledge receipt of the nomination packet for each nominee.	Mar 1 thru Apr 30
If there are no candidates for a position, the Chair shall notify the USMS National Office. The National Office shall publicize that the nomination window has reopened for XXX position. The Committee shall accept nominations for the open position.	Early May through May 31
Committee reviews nomination packets to determine if a candidate is to be slated. The Chair shall notify each candidate of the outcome of the review process.	May 1 thru May 15
Candidates shall be notified to contact the National Office to schedule an online Meet the Candidate video.	June 1
Submit FINAL slated candidate packet information to National Office for inclusion in the Annual Meeting information.	No later than Aug 1
III. Annual Meeting Process	
Floor nominations for all positions.	Day 1 Annual Meeting
Slate floor nominees. Submit packet information for publication	Day 1 Annual Meeting
Meet the Candidates	TBD
Elections	TBD

APPENDIX B: INSTRUCTIONS TO NOMINEES

March 1, <insert year>

Dear Nominee,

Congratulations on your decision to run for an elected USMS Board of Directors position. 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 ("EOG") has been included to inform you of how the process works from the time nominations open 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 the relevant submission dates can be found in the EOG schedule.

The nomination period occurs in the year when the election is held and applies to all elected Board of Director positions (Officers and Directors). To complete your nomination, fill out the Nominee Questionnaire/Consent-to-Run form with appropriate attachments and return them by email to the Chair of the Election Committee. Please review the qualification criteria in the EOG before submitting your nomination.

If you do not meet the deadline for the regular nomination process, you may still be nominated through the floor nomination process. There will be floor nominations during a to-be-determined meeting of the House of Delegates for. Immediately after your floor nomination, you must submit the Candidate Questionnaire/Consent-to-Run form with appropriate attachments to the Chair of the Election Committee. Your nomination packet will be available to Delegates to allow time for review prior to the election.

Thank you for considering running for an elected USMS Board of Directors position. The nomination process and enclosed guidelines are intended to make the election process fair and consistent for all nominees. If you have any problems, please don't hesitate to contact me.

<Insert name of the Chair of the Elections Committee
Chair of the Election Committee
elections@usmastersswimming.org

APPENDIX C: NOMINEE QUESTIONNAIRE/CONSENT-TO-RUN FORM

All nominees must complete the entire questionnaire. You may use as much space as you choose in answering your questions. Candidates shall return this form **by email** with your other attachments. Send the completed packet to the Chair of the Election Committee (<insert name of Election Chair>, <insert email address>), by **April 30**, <insert election year>. Candidates nominated from the floor must send a completed packet via email to the BOD secretary within one hour of the floor nomination.

Section One: Consent-to-Run

Name: <Insert name here>

LMSC: <Insert LMSC here>

Consent-to-Run: I, <insert name here>, am interested in running for (**check one**):

Officer Positions

- President
- Vice President of Administration
- Vice President of Community Services
- Vice President of Local Operations
- Vice President of Programs
- Secretary
- Treasurer

Director Positions

- BOD member from Breadbasket Zone
- BOD member from Colonies Zone
- BOD member from Great Lakes Zone
- BOD member from Northwest Zone
- BOD member from Ocean Zone
- BOD member from South Central Zone
- BOD member from Southeast Zone
- BOD member from Southwest Zone

Section Two: Candidate Qualifications

I am a member in good standing of USMS in this election year: Yes No

I have attended one or more Annual Meetings in the preceding five(5) years: Yes No

I am planning to attend the HOD Meeting for this election year: Yes No

I am Planning to attend all HOD Meetings during my tenure in office: Yes No

Please list the USMS National HOD Meetings you have attended, including the dates of attendance:

<Insert answer here>

Section Three: Questions

Why are you interested in this position and why do you believe you would be a good candidate?

<Insert answer here>

What do you consider to be the major issues facing USMS now and in the future? As a person holding an elected position within USMS, how would you address these issues?

<Insert answer here>

Please list USMS committees on which you have served. Include the dates you were on the committees and the names of the committee chairs under whom you served:

<Insert answer here>

Please list any other experience that relates to your qualifications for the position.

<Insert answer here>

Please list any other information you would like included.

<Insert answer here>

Please write a short summary statement that will be posted on the display board with your photograph at the HOD Meeting

<Insert answer here>

Attestation: I hereby attest to the best of my knowledge all information submitted is true. I realize that failure to answer truthfully may disqualify me as a candidate.

Section Four: Attachments

All nominees, including those running for re-election must submit the following attachments. All documentation other than pictures should be in Word format.

1. A **photograph in jpg format.**
2. A **Letter of Nomination.** For Officer Candidates the nomination letter shall be from any USMS member, regardless of zone affiliation. For the Director Candidates, the nomination letter shall be from a USMS member registered in the Zone that the candidate is running. This should be a simple declarative nomination without elaboration unless the nominator is also writing a letter of reference (see point #2 below). The Letter of Nomination shall be published with the candidate packet.
3. 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 shall be published with the candidate packet. Please see the attached letter template.

APPENDIX D: PROCEDURES FOR PREPARING THE ELECTION AND BALLOTS

Procedures for counting votes shall vary depending on how many simultaneous offices are elected and how many Candidates have been nominated. Below are a variety of methods for counting. Decisions on how to proceed shall be made as the election takes shape.

Ballots

- A. An electronic ballot will be prepared by the USMS National Office.
 - 1. All contested offices and candidates shall appear on the ballot.
 - 2. Officers shall appear in the following order: President, VP of Administration, VP of Community Services, VP of Local Operations, VP of Programs, Secretary, and Treasurer.
 - 3. Directors shall appear in the following order: Breadbasket, Colonies, Great Lakes, Northwest, Oceana, South Central, Southeast, and Southwest.
 - 4. Candidates within each office category shall appear in alphabetical order by last name.
 - 5. Ballots shall be distributed to all official delegates.
 - 6. All delegates must provide a current email address before the Annual Meeting begins in order to receive a ballot.
- B. Run-Offs
 - 1. If a position does not have a majority winner (more than 50% of valid votes cast), a run-off vote will be held between the top two Candidates in that position.
 - 2. New electronic ballots shall be prepared for the run-off election(s) and will show only the run-off Candidates.
 - 3. The ballot shall be sent to all delegates.

Election

- 1. The election shall use the same electronic voting platform that is used for the Annual Meeting.
- 2. The National Office will provide all registered delegates with the election ballot during the designated Election session of the Annual Meeting.
- 3. The election poll will be open for 30 minutes.
- 4. If a position does not have a majority winner, a member of the Committee will announce to the HOD that there will be a run-off election and will announce the run-off candidates and the position(s). The Committee will consult with the National Office who will prepare a new ballot. The Run-Off election will begin as soon as the new ballot has been prepared and sent to the delegates. The run-off ballot will be open for 30 minutes.
- 5. Election results will be available as soon as all balloting has ended. The Committee will announce the results.

APPENDIX E: PUBLICITY AND CAMPAIGN PROCEDURES

Procedures for publicity and campaigning may vary depending on how many simultaneous offices are elected and how many Candidates have been nominated. Below are a variety of methods for publicity and campaigns. Some are mandated in policy and shall be executed regardless of the complexity of the election. Decisions on how to proceed with optional activities shall be made as the election takes shape.

I. Nomination Announcements

- A. Announcements shall be placed no later than late February in as many USMS communication vehicles as possible. They shall also be posted on the Elections page of the USMS website.
- B. Nomination packets may be downloaded from the [Election Section of the USMS Web Site](#) or can be requested from the Election Chair via email, elections@usmastersswimming.org.

II. USMS Web Site

- A. The Web Site shall contain information on the Election. The quantity and detail will depend on the complexity of the Election. The Web Site will be continuously updated during the Election year and will contain:
 - 1. Announcements regarding the opening of nominations.
 - 2. The Nomination Packet that includes the Instructions to Candidates and Questionnaire/Consent-to-Run form.
 - 3. A link to the description of Officers and Directors in the USMS Rule Book Section 505.
 - 4. Completed candidate packets (after the nominees have been slated by the Committee).
 - 5. Election activities held during the Annual Meeting will be updated as the information becomes available.
- B. Announcements shall be posted on the Elections page of the USMS website.

III. Annual Meeting Information

- A. The Annual Meeting information will contain the report of the Committee.
- B. The report shall contain:
 - 1. A report on the election process.
 - 2. A schedule of Annual Meeting election activities.
 - 3. Candidate information for all BOD members being elected during the Annual Meeting. That information shall include where available:
 - a. Questionnaire/Consent-to-Run Form
 - b. Letter of nomination
 - c. 2 Letters of reference or one letter of reference and one combination nomination/reference letter.
 - d. Photograph

IV. Annual Meeting Publicity

- A. The Election Committee may place posters at USMS check-in, the hospitality suite, and HOD meeting rooms. The posters may contain a photograph of the Candidate and include a short statement from their questionnaire.
- B. Candidates are not allowed to distribute handouts, signs, stickers, pins, or other promotional items.

APPENDIX F: MEET THE CANDIDATES PROCEDURES

A Meet the Candidates Forum will be held prior to the election. The format for the Forum will be dependent upon the number of candidates and the number of contested offices.

I. Meet the Candidates Forum – in person or via zoom

- A. The Election Committee is the host for the Meet the Candidates (MTC) Forum.
- B. The MTC forum shall be held during the Annual Meeting. The forums will be held after floor nominations and prior to voting. Candidates should attend. Attendance by a candidate may be in person or virtually.
- C. Questions for the MTC Forum may be submitted to the Committee by credentialed delegates. The submitted questions shall be directed to a particular office, not to a specific candidate.
- D. For the office of President, there shall be a Meet the Candidates Forum.

II. Meet the Candidates Videos

All Candidates should record a MTC video. The candidates must contact the National Office to schedule a zoom recording session for the MTC video. The video length will be approximately 5-8 minutes. Candidates will be notified by the Committee to schedule their video. The videos will be posted on the Elections page of the USMS website.

The format of the videos will generally be the following:

- A. The candidate will begin the video by introducing themselves and stating the office for which they are running. The candidate might want to provide some background information about why they qualify to run for their position. The introduction should be limited to 3 minutes.
- B. The candidate will choose 2 questions from a sample list of questions provided by the Elections Committee. The answer for each question should be limited to 2 minutes.
- C. The following are a few examples of possible questions:
 - 1. What strengths do you bring to this position?
 - 2. What is motivating you to run for the BOD? What skills do you bring to your position?
 - 3. What can USMS do to balance its financial needs with the needs of the members?
 - 4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of USMS? Why is USMS unique?
 - 5. How can USMS increase membership?