

USMS & USA Swimming Dual-Sanctioned Pool and Open Water Events

Session 13B, Saturday, 4:00 PM to 5:15 PM

Overview of requirements and best practices for planning and running events sanctioned by both USMS and USA-S.



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Presenters and Panelists



Robn Smith
SP LMSC

Relay Session Coordinator,
LMSC Vice Chair,
LMSC Sanction Chair



Trey Taylor
NC LMSC

Director of Competitive Swimming, Gaston
Gators



David Miner
NC LMSC

USMS Open Water Coordinator



Douglas Sayles
NE LMSC

Relay 2026 Co-Chair

New England LMSC Membership
Coordinator & Past Chair

Event Director of Championship & Charity
Pool & Open Water Events



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Session Agenda

- Overview & Introduction
- Dual-Sanctioned Pool Meets
 - Event Director
 - LMSC Sanction Chair
- Dual-Sanctioned Open Water Events
 - Event Director
 - Open Water Referee (USMS), Officials (USA-S)
 - Open Water Safety Coordinator
 - LMSC Sanction Chair
 - LMSC Open Water Chair/Long Distance Chair
- Panel Discussion & Q&A
- Next Steps



Why Dual Sanction?

- Allows both USMS and USA Swimming members to participate in the same event
- Increases event entries and revenue for host
- For pool events, allows USMS members to set AQUA world records and top ten times and USMS records and top ten times
- For open water events, can allow USMS members who are new to open water racing to participate in shorter races



WORLD
AQUATICS



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USMS/USA-S Dual Sanctioned Pool Events

Trey Taylor — Gaston Gators, NCMS



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Agenda

- Panelist Introduction
- What is a Dual-Sanctioned Meet
- Basic Principles: Core Rule Differences
- Swimmer Representation: Affiliation
- Admin Requirements
- Facility Requirements
- Questions



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What is a Dual-Sanctioned Meet?



Combined Competition

A USMS sanctioned meet conducted simultaneously with a USA Swimming sanctioned meet. It bridges the two organizations for a unified, large-scale event.



Shared Sessions

Swimmers from both organizations compete together in the exact same heats and sessions, maximizing pool time, resources, and competition.



Dual Sanctions

Requires official event sanctions from both U.S. Masters Swimming and USA Swimming, both of which must be acquired by the host organization.



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Basic Principles: Core Rule Differences

- **Distinct Rule Sets:** USA-S athletes compete strictly under USA-S rules, while USMS athletes compete under USMS rules.
- **No Dual Competition:** No swimmer is permitted to compete under both sanctions at the same time
- **Clear Definitions:** The Meet Announcement must clearly state both sanctions and the terms of competition.
- **Sanction Process:** Depending on LSC, the USMS sanction may be required BEFORE the LSC will grant a sanction.



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Swimmer Representation

Single Affiliation:

Swimmers holding current memberships in both USA Swimming and USMS must select **only one** organization to represent for the entire duration of the competition.

Declared Intent:

Swimmer must choose one when entering the meet, no mid meet changes are allowed. Any 18+ swimmer competing as a USA-S Swimmer is required to go through “Recon” and be APT certified



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Admin Requirements

- **Host Organization:** Both sanctions must be held by the meet director before the start of the event
- **Streamline the Application:** It is strongly recommended the same person submit for both sanctions (using the same meet announcement format)
- **Officials Requirements:** Officials should cover rule differences during the briefing for each session that has athletes from both federations
- **Results Submissions:** Meet directors should be aware of submission requirements (Top 10, Records, etc...) and prepare for software hurdles.



Facility Requirements



Pool Databases

Verify the facility is in both the USMS and USA-S Certified Courses Database (ease of use update from USMS coming soon)



Fixed-Wall Courses

If the facility is in the USMS Database and operates as a fixed-wall course, no additional measurements are required.



Bulkhead Courses

For moveable bulkhead courses, placement must be confirmed according to the “pool length certification form” (bulkhead placement confirmation)



Dual Sanctioned Pool Meets Sanction Chair

Robin Smith
Southern Pacific LMSC



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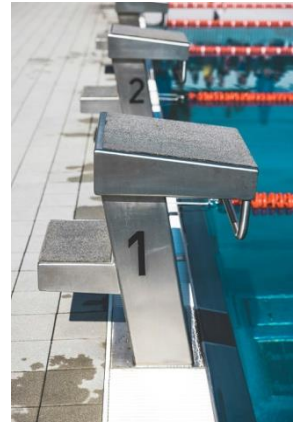
Agenda

- **Role of LMSC Sanction Chair in Pool Meets**
- **Best Practices**
- **References and Resources**



Role of LMSC Sanction Chair

- Provide information and education
- Communicate with Event Host/Event Director
- Review the Event details in accordance with USMS rules and standards
 - **Event Announcement (combined or separate)**
 - **Event Registration Form/Process (usually separate)**
- Approving the USMS specific “roadmap” for the Event
 - **How will Masters swimmers participate in meet?**



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Best Practices for Sanction Chair



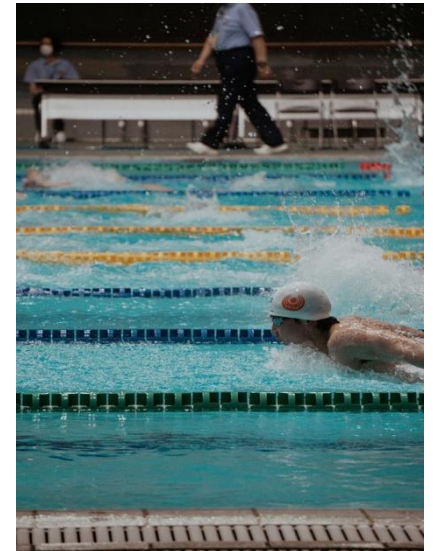
- Be familiar with USMS Rules, USA Swimming Rules, and Dual Sanctioned Meet requirements
- Communicate with Event Host/Event Director early
 - **Certified Pool Measurements and Bulkhead?**
- Identify the order of the two sanctions
 - USA Swimming First, **USMS Second**
 - **USMS First**, USA Swimming Second



Best Practices for Sanction Chair



- Does the Event Announcement contain key USMS verbiage
 - **Timed finals rule** - prelims count as timed finals (*USMS Rule Book Article 102.5.5*)
 - **No time trials rule** for LCM and SCM courses (*USMS Rule Book Article 102.5.6*)
 - Warmup lane/instructions for USMS swimmers



Best Practices for Sanction Chair



- **Declaration of Intent Form** if competing as USMS
- Approving the “roadmap” for the Event
 - **Is the Event Safe and Fair for USMS participants?**



DECLARATION OF INTENT

To swim a dual-sanctioned meet as a Masters swimmer

MEET INFORMATION

Name _____
Location _____
Dates _____
USMS Sanction Number _____

SWIMMER INFORMATION

Name _____
USMS Number _____
USMS Club _____
Events entered _____

Instructions

This form (ALL pages) must be completed prior to competition.

Complete two copies. Give one copy to the meet director prior to competition and one copy to the LMSC Top Ten Recorder.

It is the responsibility of the swimmer to complete and submit this paperwork.

I hereby declare my intent to swim this dual sanctioned meet as a Masters swimmer.



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Resources and References



- **USMS Rule Book (Appendix A Dual Sanctioned Meets)**

<https://www.usms.org/volunteer-central/us-masters-swimming-rule-book>

- **USMS Guide to Local Operations (Including Forms and Templates)**

<https://www.usms.org/volunteer-central/guide-to-local-operations/lmsc-operations/sanction-chairs>

<https://www.usms.org/volunteer-central/guide-to-local-operations/lmsc-operations/sanction-chairs/dual-sanctioning-a-usa-swimming-meet>

- **Sanction Application Process (Dual Sanctioned Meet)**

<https://www.usms.org/volunteer-central/guide-to-local-operations/event-management/pool-meet-management/sanction-application-process>



Dual Sanctioned Open Water Events - Event Director

David Miner
USMS Safety Coordinator



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Open Water Event Directors

Open water event directors have a lot on their plate when planning and running an open water event. One of the decisions they must make is how they plan on getting the event sanctioned and who they plan on sanctioning the event with (USMS and/or USA Swimming).



Open Water Event Directors

Type of Open Water Event

- **What type of open water event are you hosting?**
 - Primarily a USMS open water event that wants to allow some under 18-year-olds to participate? For example: A USMS club or a USMS member wants to put on a 1-mile and 2.4-mile open water race and would like to be able to have some age group (under 18) kids participate.
 - Primarily a USA-S open water event that wants to allow some adults to participate? For example, a USA-S club wants to put on a 1-mile open water race and invite local USA-S clubs to participate. They would also like to have some adults participate (parents of the kids mostly).
 - The work and requirements involved in sanctioning the event aren't any different between the two scenarios, but how you run your event may be different in some ways. These decisions may affect your sanction choices.



Open Water Event Directors

Event Sanctioning

- What is required for a USMS and a USA Swimming sanction?
- USMS:
 - Completed USMS Safety Plan Application
 - NOTE: On this application is a YES or NO question... "Dual Sanctioned with USA Swimming." Just by saying YES, doesn't automatically get you a USA-S sanction. You must complete all USA-S open water sanction requirements to get a USA-S open water sanction.
 - <https://www.usms.org/volunteer-central/guide-to-local-operations/event-management/open-water-event-management>
 - Completed detailed course map
 - This should include, course layout and swim direction, buoys, safety personnel, start and finish location, medical tent location, and anything else pertinent to your event.



Open Water Safety Plan Application

Event Information

General Information

Name of Host: [Click here to enter host name.](#)

Name of Event: [Click to enter event name.](#)

Event Location: [Click to enter location.](#)

City: [Click to enter city.](#) State: 2 character [LMSC: LMSC-Abrv.](#)

Event Dates: [Start Date through End Date](#)

Length of Swim(s): [Click here to enter text.](#)

Dual Sanctioned with USA-Swimming: [Yes or No](#)

Key Event Personnel

Event Director: name [Phone: 000-000-0000](#) [E-mail: Click to enter e-mail address](#)

Referee: name [Phone: 000-000-0000](#) [E-mail: Click to enter e-mail address](#)

Certified Safety Director: name [Phone: 000-000-0000](#) [E-mail: Click to enter e-mail address](#)

Pre-Race Safety Meeting (required): all officials & safety personnel must attend

Tentative date: [Click here to enter a date.](#) Time: [Enter time.](#)

Tentative agenda: [Click here to enter agenda.](#)

Pre-Race Swimmer Meeting (required): all officials & swimmers must attend to participate in race

Tentative date: [Click here to enter a date.](#) Time: [Enter time.](#)

Tentative agenda: [Click here to enter agenda.](#)

Course & Event Conditions

The Course

Body of water: [Choose one](#) Water type: [Choose one](#) Water depth from: [from](#) to: [to](#)

Course: [Choose an item.](#)

If open course, indicate the agency used to control the traffic while swimmers are on the course.

Agency name: [Click here to enter agency.](#) How to contact during event: [Phone # or radio channel](#)

Expected water conditions for the swimmers: (marine life, tides, currents, underwater hazards): [Click here to enter text.](#)



Open Water Event Directors

Event Sanctioning USMS cont.



- A USMS certified open water safety director and certified open water referee
 - <https://www.usms.org/volunteer-central/guide-to-local-operations/event-management/officials/training-and-certification/open-water-certification-programs>
- **Details about the event.**
 - Location, date, time, body of water, race distances, timing, rules, registration process, awards, food, etc.
- **Method for taking registrations, such as online registration**
 - **NOTE:** Run Signup and Club Assistant (online registration platforms) soon will be required use (one of the other) because both allow for registrants to confirm and validate current USMS membership and require each registrant to sign the USMS waiver during the registration process.



Open Water Event Directors

Event Sanctioning USMS cont.



- Completing the formal online sanction request
- Log into your USMS Dashboard: <https://www.usms.org/events/event-central/event-dashboard>
 - Once your sanction is submitted with all required documents and personnel, your LMSC Sanctions Chair and Open Water Chair (if you have one) will get notification. They will review and work with you on your event. Once they approve your sanction request, it goes to the USMS Open Water Coordinator for final review and approval.
- Follow all USMS Open Water rules in the USMS Rule Book
 - <https://www-usms-hhgdctfafngha6hr.z01.azurefd.net/-/media/usms/pdfs/volunteer%20central/rule%20book/part%203.pdf?rev=2043b52db4294d1b916dbbe6f190fe9d&hash=B589666BC31112817AD74CCB40994C51>
- For more information about sanctioning an open water event with USMS, see ARTICLE 203 in the USMS Rule Book



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Open Water Event Directors

Event Sanctioning USA Swimming



- **USA Swimming**
 - **Reviewing the online USA-S Open Water Meet Information and Guidelines**
 - Getting Started
 - Safety
 - Sanctioning
 - Rules
 - Referees
 - <https://www.usaswimming.org/swimmers-parents/swimmers/open-water#meet-resources>
 - **Completing the Open Water Meet Announcement**
 - <https://www.usaswimming.org/docs/default-source/open-water-resources/2020-open-water-meet-announcement-template.pdf>



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Open Water Event Directors

Event Sanctioning USA Swimming cont.



- **Completing the Open Water Meet Application**
 - <https://fs22.formsite.com/usaswimming/form108/index.html>
 - NOTE: If you've already completed the USMS Safety Plan Application, much of the same information is required for a USA-S sanction. You can cut and paste much of it when completing the USA-S application.
- **Following the USA-S rules for open water referees**
 - You may have already reviewed this when you started your planning, but making sure you meet these requirements is important
 - <https://www.usaswimming.org/docs/default-source/open-water-resources/usa-swimming-minimum-standards-guidelines-for-officials.pdf>



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Open Water Event Directors

Event Sanctioning USA Swimming cont.

- Follow the USA-S open water rules in their rule book
 - https://www.usaswimming.org/docs/default-source/governance/governance-lsc-website/rules_policies/rulebooks/2026-rulebook.pdf
- Note the differences between USMS and USA-S rules
 - https://www.usaswimming.org/docs/default-source/governance/governance-lsc-website/rules_policies/rulebooks/2026-rulebook.pdf



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Dual Sanctioned Open Water Events - Sanction Chair

Robin Smith
Southern Pacific LMSC



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Agenda

- **Role of LMSC Sanction Chair in Open Water Events**
- **Role of LMSC Open Water / Long Distance Chair**
- **Best Practices**
- **References and Resources**



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Role of LMSC Sanction Chair

- Provide information and education
- Communicate with Event Host/Event Director
 - **Specifics regarding race start and race finish**
- Review the Event details in accordance with USMS rules and standards
 - **Event Announcement (combined or separate)**
 - **Event Registration Form/Process (usually separate)**
- Approving the USMS specific “roadmap” for the Event
 - **How will Masters swimmers participate?**



Role of LMSC Open Water/Long Distance Chair

- **Review all documents** to be submitted (if possible) and then the final documents actually submitted in USMS Sanction request
 - **Event Announcement**
 - **Event Registration**
 - **Safety Plan**
 - **Course Map**



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Best Practices for Sanction Chair

- Be familiar with USMS Rules (Part 3), USA Swimming Rules (Part Seven), and Dual Sanctioned Meet requirements
- Communicate with Event Host/Event Director early
 - Check-in Procedure & Body Marking differences for USMS swimmers
 - **Nail Check rule**  
- Identify the order of the two sanctions
 - **Remind Event Director that USMS has a two-part Sanction approval process for Open Water Events**



Best Practices for Sanction Chair

- Does the Event Announcement contain key USMS verbiage and USMS information?
 - **Warmup area/instructions for USMS swimmers**
 - Declaration of Intent Form if competing as USMS (rarely used in open water)
- Approving the “roadmap” for the Event
 - **Is the Event Safe and Fair for USMS participants?**



Resources and References



- **USMS Rule Book (Appendix A Dual Sanctioned Meets)**

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Managing Dual-Sanctioned Open-Water Events: Recent Insights

Douglas Sayles
New England LMSC



Waterman Eco-Challenge 2026

Dual-Sanctioned Open Water Swim



<https://watermanecochallenge.com/>

Roger Wheeler State Beach - Narragansett, RI

Saturday July 18, 2026

Waterman Eco-Challenge Ocean Swim — 400M, 1 mile, and 5K distances.
Part of a popular annual multisport (run, swim, paddle) event seeking
NGB sanctioning of the swim for the first time in its 16-year history.

Meet announcement URL: <https://bit.ly/wec-owmeetannouncement26>



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Takeaways from USA-S/USMS Dual-Sanctioned Open Water Meet: Popular 16-Year-Old Multisport Event Sanctioning for First Time

- USMS grants sanctions and insures a non-member host organization; USA-S does not.
- USA-S requires a medical director (USMS does not) but does not define their expertise or responsibilities.
- Unlike USMS-sanctioned pool meets, sanctioned OW events require a USMS-certified referee and safety director.
- USA-S has SafeSport/MAAPP and APT requirements; USMS does not.
- USA-S has nail length verification and more specific body marking requirements than USMS.
- USA-S & USMS officials requirements differ (roles, certifications). Consult your head referee to devise an officials and volunteer plan that works for your event.
- USMS One-Event and USA-S Single Event membership registration prices and processes differ.
- USA-S & USMS membership eligibility confirmation processes differ. USA-S manually verifies eligibility. RunSignup has a hardcoded, unchangeable USMS discount that limits event director's pricing flexibility.
- Dual-sanctioning misconceptions (e.g., that USA-S & USMS swimmers can't swim in the same swim wave).
- Local recognition versus NGB open-water results reporting requirements and age determination dates, which in some respects doesn't matter if your open-water meet is not a championship or qualifying event.
- Obsolete/conflicting information from New England LSC and USA-S national office staff.



SafeSport & Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy

SAFESPORT / MAAPP: All applicable adults participating in or associated with this meet acknowledge that they are subject to and must comply with the USA Swimming [Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy](#) (MAAPP) as a condition of participation. Reasonable best efforts will be made to implement MAAPP-compliant procedures appropriate to a USA Swimming-sanctioned swim competition conducted as part of a larger multisport event at a public state beach.

- **Athlete Protection Training (APT):** Except for Single-Meet members, all other USA Swimming participants age 18 or older must have completed [Athlete Protection Training](#). This requirement does not apply to the U.S. Masters Swimming participants.
- **Recording Devices:** Use of audio or visual recording devices, including cell phones, is not permitted in restrooms or changing areas.
- **Deck Changing is Prohibited:** Changing into or out of a swimsuit, in all or part, when wearing just one suit is limited to private or semi-private spaces such as a bathroom, locker room, or designated changing area.
- **One-on-One Interactions:** Except in emergencies, one-on-one interactions between an adult and a minor event participant must be within an observable and interruptible distance of another adult. Event personnel may conduct sweeps of bathrooms and changing areas to ensure compliance.
- **Reporting Violations:** Observed or suspected MAAPP violations should be reported to New England Swimming SafeSport Chair Susan Pascale-Frechette, this meet's SafeSport coordinator, onsite or at (401) 965-0813, or via one of the reporting options listed at <https://www.usaswimming.org/protect>.





Wrap Up/ Q&A

Don't be afraid to ask. If you're
thinking it, someone else probably is
too!

Next Steps / **Take Action**



- ✓ What is your top takeaway from each presentation in this session?
- ✓ What is one thing that you can act on before the end of this year by December 31, 2026 in your LMSC?
- ✓ What is one thing that you would like to initiate in 2027 in your LMSC?





Thank You!

Slides, Resource Links, and Panelist
Bios will be posted on the USMS
website.

Panelist Bios



Robin Smith – Robin is the Vice Chair and Sanction Chair for the Southern Pacific LMSC. As head of the Meet Operations Committee in Southern Pacific, she trains and mentors new Event Directors for Pool and Open Water Events. Robin works with all Southern Pacific Event Directors to ensure a quality, safe, and fair experience for everyone. She also communicates with the Southern California Swimming LSC to coordinate dual sanctioned pool and open water events.

As a veteran Sanction Chair, she has been a resource for new and experienced sanctions chairs and coordinators in other LMSCs. And she has held additional volunteer roles in Southern Pacific over the past 15 years including Secretary, Open Water Chair, Fitness Education Chair, and Meet Operations.

Robin previously served on the USMS Board as Vice President of Programs and has been a member of multiple committees including Investment, Long Distance, and Fitness Education. Robin is a Level 3 USMS Certified Coach and a USMS Certified ALTS Instructor. She swims and coaches for Irvine Novaquatics Masters.



Panelist Bio



Trey Taylor – Trey Taylor is the Director of Competitive Swimming for the Gaston Gators (Gaston Aquatics) in Gastonia, North Carolina. A long-time competitive swim coach with extensive administrative and operational experience, he holds ASCA Level 3, USMS Level 4, and USA Swimming certifications. Trey is a Kerry O'Brien Award winner who most recently served as the USMS Southeast Zone Director and is a Board Member for the North Carolina Swimming Hall of Fame, having also previously served as the Chair of NC Masters Swimming.

He recently oversaw the successful merger of the Gaston Gators into Gaston Aquatics as a dedicated non-profit division. With a strong focus on team administration, facility operations, and advanced workout design; Trey brings a wealth of hands-on, dual-program expertise to the pool deck.



Panelist Bios

David Miner

- USMS Open Water Coordinator for the past 8+ years
- USMS Level 3 Coach
- USMS Certified Open Water Safety Director
- USMS Certified Open Water Referee
- ASCA Level 3 Coach
- Former owner of Swim Without Limits, a business that ran open water swim events in two different states
- Former head coach of the Sarasota Sharks Masters
- Avid water enthusiast including paddling, open water swimming, scuba diving
- Avid hiker and adventurer



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Panelist Bios



Douglas Sayles – A former age-group and collegiate swimmer, Douglas joined USMS in 2009 and was first elected to the New England LMSC Board in 2012 as registrar. He served as NELMSC board chair and now serves as membership coordinator. A member of New England Masters Swim Club, Douglas coached and administered SwimRI for many years, and he is a USMS-certified Level 3 coach and Adult Learn-to-Swim instructor. He also directs LMSC and zone championship meets, the New England College Club & Masters Swimming Meet, Swim Across America's Rhode Island Open Water Swim, and helps coordinate the biennial USMS Boston Education Weekend. Nationally, Douglas is a member of and has chaired the LMSC Development Committee and the Colonies Zone, and has served on the Legislation, Membership, and Governance Committees. He has co-chaired, presented at, and helped plan the USMS Volunteer Relay and has been a member of the USMS House of Delegates since 2012. His honors include the USMS Ted Haartz Staff Appreciation Award, Dorothy Donnelly Service Award, NELMSC Distinguished Service Award, Contributor of the Year Award, and induction into the NELMSC Hall of Fame. In 2026, Douglas co-founded SwimWise LLC. Email: douglas.sayles@swimri.org

