

mini 2026 Rule Book



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2026

U.S. MASTERS SWIMMING CODE OF REGULATIONS AND RULES OF COMPETITION

U.S. Masters Swimming was founded in 1970 and remains dedicated to the premise that the lives of participants will be enhanced through swimming. This book establishes certain rules and regulations for the conduct of the organization, the participants, and the competitors. The most up-to-date version of this rule book is available online at: www.usms.org/rules.

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United States Masters Swimming
8388 South Tamiami Trail, Suite 221
Sarasota, FL 34238
Telephone: (941) 256-8767
Email: volunteer@usmastersswimming.org

Edited by the USMS National Office with assistance from the Rules, Legislation, Long Distance, Records and Tabulation, and Championship Committees.

This is an official publication of United States Masters Swimming Inc., the national governing body for Masters Swimming in the United States. Additional copies of this book may be purchased at a cost of $8 for shipping and handling from the USMS National Office at the above address.

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On the Cover:

This pocket-sized rule book contains the rules for swim meets in articles 101, 102, 103, 108, 201, and 202 in the 2026 USMS Rule Book. In addition, it contains the "Differences Between USMS and USA Swimming Rules" from Appendix A of the rule book.

The additional articles and the appendices in the 2026 USMS Rule Book:

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8388 South Tamiami Trail, Suite 221
Sarasota, FL 34238
Telephone: (941) 256-8767

Email: volunteer@usmastersswimming.org

PART 1:
SWIMMING RULES

All provisions under *Part 1: Swimming Rules,* unless otherwise specified, are effective beginning January 1, 2026, and until changed. Rules in effect on the first day of a meet shall govern throughout the meet.

Part 1: Swimming Rules is based upon articles 101, "Individual Strokes and Relays," 102, "Conduct and Officiating of All Swimming Competition," and 105, "Guidelines for Officiating Swimmers With a Disability in USA Swimming Meets," of the *USA Swimming Technical Rules,* which, as amended, will govern all Masters swimming competitions.

All competitive swimming meets or events held under corporate sanction shall be conducted in accordance with the following rules, which are designed to provide fair and equitable conditions of competition.

It is not the purpose of the *Code of Regulations and Rules of Competition* of United States Masters Swimming (the national governing body) contained herein to set standards of care for the safety of the swimmer. Safety considerations should be addressed by the swimmer, the swim coach, and the local public entity or pool owner in whose facility events are held.

ARTICLE 101:
STARTS, STROKES, AND RELAYS

101.1 Starts

101.1.1 Forward Start—The forward start may be taken from the starting block, the pool deck, or a push from the wall. Once all swimmers have removed their clothing, except for swimwear, the referee shall signal the commencement of an event by a short series of whistles inviting them to get ready at the starting end, followed by a long whistle indicating that they may take and maintain their positions with at least one foot at the front of the starting platform, or the deck, or in the water, and remain there. On the starter's command, "Take your marks," each swimmer shall immediately assume the starting position that maintains at least one foot at the front of the starting platform or the deck. Each swimmer starting in the water must take the position on the wall with at least one hand in contact with the wall or starting platform and one foot in contact with the wall. A swimmer starting in the water may face any direction.

101.1.2 Backstroke Start

A Starting commands—Once all swimmers have removed their clothing, except for swimwear, the

referee shall signal the commencement of an event by a short series of whistles inviting them to get ready at the starting end. At the referee's first long whistle, the swimmers shall immediately enter the water and at the second long whistle shall take their positions on the wall without undue delay.

B All courses—The swimmers shall line up in the water facing the starting end with both hands placed on the gutter or on the backstroke starting grips. Standing in or on the gutter, placing the toes above the lip of the gutter, or bending the toes over the lip of the gutter before or after the start is prohibited. When using a backstroke ledge at the start, at least one toe of each foot must be in contact with the end wall or face of the touchpad. Bending the toes over the top of the touchpad is prohibited.

101.1.3 Starter—See article 103.8 for starter equipment, preparation, optional instructions, start commands, false starts, warning signal, and deliberate delay or misconduct.

101.2 Breaststroke

101.2.1 Start—The forward start shall be used.

101.2.2 Stroke—The body shall be kept on the breast. The swimmer is not permitted to roll onto the back at any time except at the turn after the touch of the wall where it is permissible to turn in any manner as long as the body is on the breast before any stroke or kick after leaving the wall. Throughout the race the stroke cycle must be one stroke and one kick in that order.

All movements of the arms shall be simultaneous and in the same horizontal plane without alternating movement.

The hands shall be pushed forward together from the breast on, under, or over the water. The elbows shall be un- der water except for the final stroke before the turn, during the turn, and for the final stroke at the finish. The hands shall be brought back on or under the surface of the water. The hands shall not be brought back beyond the hip line, except during the first stroke after the start, and each turn.

During each complete cycle, some part of the swimmer's head shall break the surface of the water. After the start and after each turn, the swimmer may take one stroke completely back to the legs. The head must break the surface of the water before the hands turn inward at the widest part of the second stroke.

101.2.3 Kick—After the start and after each turn, at any time prior to the first breaststroke kick, a single butterfly (dolphin) kick is permitted, following which, all move-

ments of the legs shall be simultaneous and in the same horizontal plane without alternating movement.

The feet must be turned outwards during the propulsive part of the kick. Scissors, alternating movements, or downward butterfly (dolphin) kicks are not permitted except as provided herein. Breaking the surface of the water with the feet is allowed unless followed by a downward butterfly (dolphin) kick.

101.2.4 Turns and Finish—At each turn and at the finish of the race, the touch shall be made with both hands separated and simultaneously at, above, or below the water level. At the last stroke before the turn and at the finish, an arm stroke not followed by a leg kick is permitted. The head may be submerged after the last arm pull prior to the touch, provided it breaks the surface of the water at some point during the last complete or incomplete cycle preceding the touch.

101.3 Butterfly

101.3.1 Start—The forward start shall be used.

101.3.2 Stroke—After the start and after each turn, the swimmer's body must be on the breast. The swimmer is permitted one or more leg kicks, but only one arm pull under water, which must bring the swimmer to the surface. **(Note:** After the start and after each turn, only one breaststroke kick is allowed prior to the arm pull that brings the swimmer to the surface.) It shall be permissible for a swimmer to be completely submerged for a distance of not more than 15 meters (16.4 yards) after the start and after each turn. By that point, the head must have broken the surface. The swimmer must remain on the surface until the next turn or finish. From the beginning of the first arm pull, the body shall be kept on the breast except at the turn after the touch of the wall where it is permissible to turn in any manner as long as the body is on the breast when leaving the wall. Both arms must be brought forward simultaneously over the water and pulled back simultaneously under the water throughout the race.

101.3.3 Kick—All up and down movements of the legs and feet must be simultaneous. The position of the legs or the feet need not be on the same level, but they shall not alternate in relation to each other. The breaststroke kick may be used exclusively or interchangeably with the dolphin kick while doing the butterfly stroke at any time during the race. Only one breaststroke kick is permitted per arm pull, except that a single breaststroke kick is permitted prior to the turn and the finish without an arm pull. After the start and after each turn, a single breaststroke kick is

permitted prior to the first arm pull. A scissors kicking movement is not permitted.

101.3.4 Turns—At each turn the body shall be on the breast. The touch shall be made with both hands separated and simultaneously at, above, or below the water surface. Once a touch has been made, the swimmer may turn in any manner desired as long as the body is on the breast when leaving the wall.

101.3.5 Finish – at the finish, the body shall be on the breast and the touch shall be made with both hands separated and simultaneously at, above, or below the water surface. Once some part of the head of the swimmer has passed the final 5-meter mark (long course and short course meters) or 5-yard mark (short course yards), immediately prior to reaching for the finish, the swimmer may be completely submerged.

101.4 Backstroke

101.4.1 Start—The backstroke start shall be used.

101.4.2 Stroke—Standing in or on the gutter, placing the toes above the lip of the gutter, or bending the toes over the lip of the gutter immediately after the start is not permitted. The swimmer shall push off on the back and continue swimming on the back throughout the race. Some part of the swimmer must break the surface of the water throughout the race, except it shall be permissible for the swimmer to be completely submerged during the turn and for a distance of not more than 15 meters (16.4 yards) after the start and each turn. By that point, the head must have broken the surface of the water.

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 single arm pull or an immediate continuous 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 the wall before pushing off with the feet while on the back is considered to have executed a "continuous turning action."

101.4.4 Finish—Upon the finish of the race, the swimmer must touch the wall while on the back. Once some part of the head of the swimmer has passed the final 5-meter mark (long course and short course meters) or 5-yard mark (short course yards) immediately prior to reaching for the finish, the swimmer may be completely submerged prior to the touch.

101.5 Freestyle

101.5.1 Start—The forward start or the backstroke start shall be used.

101.5.2 Stroke—In an event designated freestyle, the swimmer may swim any style, except that in a medley relay or individual medley event, freestyle means any style other than butterfly, breaststroke, or backstroke. Some part of the swimmer must break the surface of the water throughout the race, except it shall be permissible for the swimmer to be completely submerged during the turn and for a distance of not more than 15 meters (16.4 yards) after the start and each turn. By that point the head must have broken the surface.

101.5.3 Turns—Upon completion of each length, the swimmer must touch the wall.

101.5.4 Finish – the swimmer shall have finished the race when any part of the swimmer touches the wall after completing the prescribed distance. Once some part of the head of the swimmer has passed the final 5-meter mark (long course and short course meters) or 5-yard mark (short course yards), immediately prior to reaching for the finish, the swimmer may be completely submerged.

101.6 Individual Medley

The swimmer shall swim the prescribed distance in the following order: the first one-fourth, butterfly; the second one-fourth, backstroke; the third one-fourth, breaststroke; and the last one-fourth, freestyle.

101.6.1 Start—The forward start shall be used.

101.6.2 Stroke—The stroke for each one-fourth of the designated distance shall follow the prescribed rules for that stroke, except that in the freestyle, the swimmer must be on the breast except when executing a turn.

101.6.3 Turns

A Intermediate turns within each stroke shall conform to the turn rules for that stroke, except that in the freestyle turn, the swimmer must return to the breast before any kick or stroke after leaving the wall.

B The turns when changing from one stroke to another shall conform to the finish rules for the stroke just completed.

101.6.4 Finish—The swimmer shall have finished the race when any part of the swimmer touches the wall after completion of the prescribed distance.

101.7 Relays

101.7.1 Freestyle Relay—Four swimmers on each team, each to swim one-fourth of the prescribed distance using any desired stroke(s). Freestyle finish rules apply.

101.7.2 Medley Relay—Four swimmers on each team, each to swim one-fourth of the prescribed distance in the

following order: first, backstroke; second, breaststroke; third, butterfly; fourth, freestyle. Rules pertaining to each stroke as described in article 101.6 (Individual Medley)

shall govern. At the end of each leg, the finish rules for that stroke apply.

101.7.3 Rules Pertaining to Relays

A No swimmer shall swim more than one leg in any relay event.

B When automatic relay takeoff judging is used, all swimmers must touch the touchplate or pad in their respective lanes at the end of the course to have finished their legs of the relay.

C A swimmer other than the first swimmer shall not start until the previous swimmer's leg has been concluded.

D If a team member other than the swimmer designated to swim a particular leg jumps into or enters the pool in the area where the race is being conducted and before all swimmers of all teams have finished the race, both the offending swimmer and relay team shall be disqualified.

Note: An exception may be granted to a relay team member who wishes to enter the water to start from the water; this swimmer shall notify the starter and be careful not to disturb or interfere with another swimmer or the timing system pad when in use.

E All relay team members shall leave the water immediately upon finishing their legs, except for the last member.

Note: Swimmers who cannot exit the water quickly enough to prevent interference with automatic officiating equipment may be allowed to hold on to the lane line until all relays have finished, allowing them to exit the pool more slowly or via the ladders at the conclusion of the race.

F The team of a swimmer whose feet have lost contact with the starting platform (ground, deck, or wall) before the preceding teammate touches the wall shall be disqualified.

G Mixed relays shall consist of two men and two women who may swim in any order.

H On relays, the second, third, and fourth swimmers are prohibited from starting from the top of the adjustable setting back plate. A swimmer must have at least part of one foot in contact with the starting platform in front of the adjustable setting back plate.

101.7.4 See article 102.9 for additional relay rules.

ARTICLE 102:
SWIMMING COMPETITION

102.1 Eligibility

102.1.1 To be eligible for competition, including participation in warm-ups, members must be 18 years of age or over.

102.1.2 USMS members may participate in non-USMS aquatic activities, meetings, exhibitions, demonstrations, etc., without jeopardy to their eligibility to swim in USMS competition. However, any times achieved in nonsanctioned or nonrecognized activities will not be recorded for official purposes and cannot be used for LMSC rankings or USMS Top 10 times, All-American status, or qualification times for USMS national championship meets.

102.2 Age Determining Date

102.2.1 For short course yards, the eligibility of a participant for a particular age group shall be determined by the age as of the last day of the meet.

102.2.2 For short course meters and long course meters, the eligibility of a participant for a particular age group shall be determined by the age as of December 31 of the year of competition.

102.3 Age Groups

102.3.1 Individual Events—18–24, 25–29, 30–34, 35–39, 40–44, 45–49, 50–54, 55–59, 60–64, 65–69, 70–74, 75–79, 80–84, 85–89, 90–94, 95–99, 100–104 … (five-year age groups as high as is necessary).

102.3.2 Relay Events

A Short course (25) yards—18+, 25+, 35+, 45+, 55+, 65+, 75+, 85+, 95+… (10-year increments as high as is necessary). The age of the youngest relay team member shall determine the age group. Relay teams must swim in the oldest age group for which they are eligible.

B Short course (25) meters and long course (50) meters—72–99, 100–119, 120–159, 160–199, 200–239, 240–279, 280–319, 320–359, 360–399 … (40-year increments as high as is necessary). The aggregate age of the four relay team members shall determine the age group.

102.3.3 If a sanctioned meet is conducted by an organization whose age eligibility requirements differ from USMS (see article 202.1.1E), the age groups listed in articles 102.3.1 and 102.3.2 may be adjusted to conform to the minimum and maximum ages eligible to compete in the meet.

102.4 Warm-up/Warm-down

102.4.1 Availability—In pools of five lanes or more, a separate warm-up area must be made available to swimmers during the competition. If there is no other warm-up/warm-down area available in pools of five lanes or more, one lane shall be set aside for warm-up/warm-down during the conduct of the meet. If there is no other warm-up/warm-down area available in pools of four or fewer lanes, swimmers shall be allowed to swim to the other end of the pool at the end of each heat, and a warm-up/warm-down period shall be offered at least once during each half-hour of competition.

102.4.2 Dual-Sanctioned Meets—If the meet is a dual-sanctioned meet with USA Swimming, the requirements of article 102.4.1 may be adjusted depending on availability of warm-up space at the venue by agreement between the LMSC and LSC host clubs. If a continuous warm-up/warm-down lane(s) or area is not available in pools of five lanes or more, the meet announcement shall clearly state the availability of warm-up for USMS athletes. Once the meet announcement is published, changes which further restrict the availability of continuous warm-up/warm-down space are not permitted.

102.4.3 Procedure—Swimmers must enter the pool feet first in a cautious and controlled manner. Diving and backstroke starts shall be permitted only in the designated lanes. No hand paddles are allowed.

102.5 Events

102.5.1 In planning any meet, careful consideration must be given the demands to be made upon swimmers, officials, and spectators, in that order. Meets should be planned to terminate within a reasonable period of time each day. Planning should provide for adequate meal and rest breaks and sheltered rest areas.

102.5.2 Any event (series of races in a given stroke and distance) conducted at a sanctioned meet must be offered for all age groups listed in articles 102.3.1 and 102.3.2 and both genders. Sanctioned meets conducted by organizations whose age eligibility requirements differ from USMS (see article 202.1.1E) must comply with article 102.3.3. Events may be repeated with the same stroke and distance as different event numbers at a meet. Any of the following events may be conducted.

A Short course (25) yards

50-100-200-500-1000-1650 yards freestyle

50-100-200 yards backstroke

50-100-200 yards breaststroke

50-100-200 yards butterfly

100-200-400 yards individual medley

200-400-800 yards freestyle relay

200-400-800 yards mixed freestyle relay

200-400 yards medley relay

200-400 yards mixed medley relay

B Long course (50) meters and short course (25) meters

50-100-200-400-800-1500 meters freestyle

50-100-200 meters backstroke

50-100-200 meters breaststroke

50-100-200 meters butterfly

100*-200-400 meters individual medley

200-400-800 meters freestyle relay

200-400-800 meters mixed freestyle relay

200-400 meters medley relay

200-400 meters mixed medley relay

*short course meters only

102.5.3 The Rules Committee shall develop, publish, and maintain, with the approval of the USMS Board of Directors, policy guidelines that address the eligibility of transgender athletes to earn official times and other forms of recognition (times, places, records, and Top 10 rankings) in the male and female gender categories. Athletes who do not meet the eligibility guidelines shall be permitted to participate in competition in the gender that corresponds to their USMS registrations without official recognition.

102.5.4 Nonconforming events may be offered in accordance with the provisions of article 202.1.1E(3). For open water and long distance events, see Part 3.

102.5.5 All short course meters events, long course meters events, and national championships shall be conducted on a timed-finals basis. Other short course yards events may be conducted on a timed-finals basis or another basis (e.g., preliminary heats and finals). If events are conducted in a format other than timed finals, the meet announcement shall state the process for seeding, contesting the event, and determining the final places.

102.5.6 Independent attempts to establish official times ("time trials") are permitted only in USMS-sanctioned short course yards meets other than national championship meets. Time trials are not permitted in USMS national championship meets, short course meters, or long course meters meets. If time trials are offered, the meet announce-

ment must state the events being offered and the format for the time trials.

102.5.7 Following the issuance of a sanction, the order of events must be published in the meet announcement and made available to all eligible swimmers at least one week prior to the entry deadline. The LMSC may establish a minimum period of time longer than one week for which the meet announcement must be made available to all eligible swimmers. (See article 102.11 for change of program or postponement.)

102.5.8 Virtual meets may be held as competitions at multiple venues (sanctioned by each respective LMSC) with the same order of events and all results merged. Virtual meets may be held on different days at the multiple venues. All of the events must be completed within a maximum 10-day period in the same calendar year. The age determining date shall be the same for the entire meet and in accordance with article 102.2.

102.6 Event Limit

102.6.1 A swimmer may compete in not more than six individual events per day.

102.6.2 A swimmer shall not compete more than once in the same numbered individual event.

102.6.3 If, due to conditions beyond the control of meet officials, an event or events are postponed to a subsequent day of the meet, such postponed events shall not be included in the daily event limit.

102.6.4 For events conducted in formats other than timed finals that require multiple swims (e.g., preliminary heats and finals), swimmers may compete in not more than three individual events per day.

102.6.5 For events conducted in formats other than timed finals that require multiple swims (e.g., preliminary heats and finals), all swims (e.g., preliminary heats) are considered as part of the same individual event, not as multiple individual events.

102.6.6 If time trials are offered in short course yards meets, any time trial events swum shall be included in the daily event limit. A swimmer may repeat, as a time trial, an individual event already swum during the meet on the same day or in the same meet.

102.6.7 Any nonconforming events swum shall be included in the daily event limit.

102.6.8 When a USMS meet is held as a dual-sanctioned meet in conjunction with a USA Swimming meet, swimmers must select only one organization (USMS or USA Swimming) with which to compete. Dual membership

cannot be used to exceed the daily event limit regardless of the format of the dual-sanctioned meet.

102.7 Entries

102.7.1 Entry Name—Each competitor shall enter with the full name as it appears on the USMS registration card.

102.7.2 Entry Fee—Entry fee policies for local Masters events shall be set by the LMSC.

102.7.3 Club Affiliation—A swimmer's club affiliation as stated on the entry form shall apply throughout the meet. If the club on the entry form and the club listed in the USMS membership database do not match, the swimmer shall correct the error or notify the meet host of a valid change in club affiliation by presenting proof of the new club affiliation prior to the first event in which that swimmer competes. If at any time there are any questions about club affiliation, the swimmer shall be switched to unattached status for the entire meet, regardless of actual club affiliation. A swimmer may declare unattached status only prior to the first event in which that swimmer competes.

102.8 Scratch Procedures

It is the swimmer's responsibility to be informed of the meet starting time and to report to the proper meet authorities promptly upon call. Meet announcements and advance information shall specify check-in and scratch procedures for individual and relay events.

102.8.1 Penalties—Any swimmer or relay team not reporting for or competing in an event shall not be penalized.

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.

102.9.2 Clubs entering two or more relay teams in an event shall designate them on the entry blank as team A, team B, etc.

102.9.3 The best time or aggregate time of each relay team shall be entered on the entry blank for seeding purposes, and no change in time shall be permitted.

102.9.4 Swimmers who will be competing only in relays must be entered in accordance with the procedures in the meet announcement.

102.9.5 On the relay entry, relay teams must list the name of the club, each swimmer's full name (as it appears on the USMS membership card), age, and for mixed relays, gender. The name of the leadoff swimmer must be clearly designated. The meet director shall establish a procedure

that ensures entries are compliant with this provision prior to the start of the event.

102.9.6 First and last names of eligible relay swimmers, their ages, and order of swimming shall be submitted to the clerk of course or to the head lane timer. Any changes in names of the competing swimmers or their order of swimming must be declared to the head lane timer prior to the start of the relay heat in which such relay team is entered. No changes will be permitted thereafter. The meet referee is responsible for instructing the officials to ensure compliance with provisions of this article.

102.9.7 The competing teams, first and last names of members, and their ages must be listed in the meet results.

102.9.8 Competitors shall be allowed to swim only once per meet in each of the following relays: men's/women's 200 medley, 400 medley, 200 freestyle, 400 freestyle, and 800 freestyle; and mixed 200 medley, 400 medley, 200 freestyle, 400 freestyle, and 800 freestyle.

102.9.9 See article 101.7 for additional relay rules.

102.9.10 For national championship relay entries, see article 104.5.4B(7).

102.10 Lane Assignments–Seeding–Counters

102.10.1 Seeding Principles for Masters Competition

A All short course meters events, long course meters events, and national championships shall be conducted on a timed-final basis. Other short course yards events may be conducted on a timed-final basis or other basis (e.g., preliminary heats and finals). In such cases, the meet announcement shall state the process for seeding.

B Age groups and/or genders, as well as events of the same distance 200 yards or longer, may be combined so that no swimmer has to swim alone and lanes may be filled.

C It is recommended that when swimmers are seeded by time and not by age groups, the fastest two swimmers in each age group should not be seeded into outside lanes. It is recommended that they be moved inward one lane or given the center lanes in the next slowest heat, whichever is the more appropriate placement.

D Seeding at meets other than national championship meets may be either fast-to-slow or slow-to-fast. Seeding may differ for sprint and distance events (events 400 yards or longer) within a meet. Women's and men's heats may be alternated in the distance events. The meet announcement shall state the seeding for all events.

E Heat and lane assignments for events of 200 meters or less shall be available to all competitors at least five minutes prior to the start of the event.

102.10.2 Heat and Lane Assignments

A Seeding within heats—Within each heat, lanes shall be assigned in order of submitted times (fastest to slowest) in accordance with the following pattern:

Ten lanes:	5-6-4-7-3-8-2-9-1-10
Nine lanes:	5-6-4-7-3-8-2-9-1
Eight lanes:	4-5-3-6-2-7-1-8
Seven lanes:	4-5-3-6-2-7-1
Six lanes:	3-4-2-5-1-6
Five lanes:	3-4-2-5-1
Four lanes:	2-3-1-4

B Minimum number of swimmers per heat—When there are two or more heats, there shall be a minimum of three swimmers or relay teams seeded into the slowest heat. The fastest heat shall be filled first, then the next fastest heat, etc.

C Fast-to-slow seeding—The first heat of each event shall be composed of the swimmers with the fastest submitted times, the second heat composed of the next fastest swimmers, etc.

D Slow-to-fast seeding—The last heat of each event shall be composed of the swimmers with the fastest submitted times, the next-to-last heat composed of the next fastest swimmers, etc.

102.10.3 Seeding of Events in a 50-Meter Course

A Seeding of 50-meter events in a 50-meter course—Fifty-meter events swum in a 50-meter course shall be seeded as provided above. If the event is started at the turning end of the course, no change in the lane numbering shall be made; i.e., the lanes shall be numbered the same on both ends of the course.

B Starting heats from alternate ends of the course—If only one course is available and the pool depth is adequate at both ends of the course, the meet director may choose to start heats from alternate ends of the course.

(1) In 50-meter events, the in-the-water heat may be instructed to wait in the water after the finish until the next heat has been started.

(2) In events 100 meters and longer, the next heat may be started when the in-the-water heat is within a half-length of the finish.

(3) If the pool depth is different at alternate ends of the course, the meet director may choose to start men's events at one end of the course and women's events

at the alternate end of the course. Men's and women's heats shall alternate.

(4) If the pool depth is the same at alternate ends of the course, men's and women's heats may alternate.

102.10.4 Two-to-a-Lane Seeding in Distance Freestyle Events

A General principles of seeding two-to-a-lane

(1) Options to swim two-to-a-lane

(a) At the discretion of the meet director, competitors in the freestyle events over 200 meters may be required to swim two-to-a-lane when only one course is available for the event. The meet announcement shall state the criteria under which such events are to be swum two-to-a-lane.

(b) When competitors have an option of swimming two-to-a-lane, the heats with two competitors per lane will be completed before the heats with a single competitor per lane.

(c) If there are not enough swimmers to fill all heats with two swimmers in each lane, those swimmers with the fastest submitted times may be seeded one-to-a-lane.

(2) Men's/women's events

(a) If men and women compete under the same event number, they shall be seeded by time without regard to gender.

(b) If men and women compete under different event numbers, they shall be seeded separately by time.

(c) If men and women compete under different event numbers, men's and women's heats should be alternated.

(3) Heat designations—Heats shall be numbered consecutively without using alphabetical characters (e.g., no "A" and "B" heats). Heats shall be referred to as "odd" or "even" numbered heats. Odd and even heats shall be paired when seeding two-to-a-lane.

(4) Reporting to the clerk of course—Swimmers in both odd and even heats shall be asked to report to the clerk of course (or to the starting area) at the same time.

(5) Starting procedure—The starter shall call the odd heat to the starting block first. As soon as the odd heat is underway, swimmers in the even heat shall be called to the starting blocks. The even heat shall be started as soon as practical after the odd heat.

(6) Lane etiquette

(a) The starter shall instruct the swimmers to swim on one side of the lane during the entire race (i.e., no "circle" swimming).

(b) Obstructing another swimmer by swimming across the lane or otherwise interfering with the swimmer shall disqualify the offender, subject to the discretion of the referee, and the disqualified offender shall be removed from the lane as soon as practical.

(7) Timing—Separate timing shall be required for each swimmer.

B Methods of seeding two-to-a-lane (either method is recommended)

(1) Swimmers of similar speed in the same heat

(a) Heat and lane assignments—Lanes shall be assigned as in article 102.10.2.

(b) Pairing of heats—After lanes are assigned, heats shall be arranged in pairs beginning with either the slowest or fastest heats, at the meet director's discretion. The fastest heat within each pair shall be designated as the odd heat and the next-fastest heat as the even heat.

In the following example, for a six-lane pool, "1" refers to the fastest swimmer, "2" to the next-fastest swimmer, etc.

	Lane					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Odd Heat	5	3	1	2	4	6
Even Heat	11	9	7	8	10	12

(2) Swimmers of similar speed in the same lane— Groups of swimmers equal in number to twice the number of lanes of the pool (e.g., groups of 12 swimmers for a six-lane pool) shall be created. Each group of swimmers shall be divided into odd and even heats. The fastest swimmer in each group shall be assigned to a middle lane in the odd heat. The second-fastest swimmer shall be assigned to the same middle lane in the even heat. The remaining swimmers shall be assigned to lanes in accordance with article 102.10.2A.

In the following example, for a six-lane pool, "1" refers to the fastest swimmer, "2" to the next-fastest swimmer, etc.

	Lane					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Odd Heat	9	5	1	3	7	11
Even Heat	10	6	2	4	8	12

102.10.5 Places—Places shall be determined on a time basis, subject to the order of finish within each heat. Any ties resulting from the procedure used shall be declared officially tied for awards and points, with no further attempt made at resolution.

102.10.6 Counters

A A swimmer in any individual event of 400 meters/500 yards or longer, except the individual medley, may appoint one counter to call lengths or indicate lengths by visual sign.

B Verbal counters shall be limited to one per swimmer and shall be stationed at the end of the course opposite the starting end. They may use watches and signal intermediate times to the swimmer.

C If visual counters are used, they may be stationed at the end or either side of the pool beyond the halfway point toward the end of the course opposite the starting end. Visual counters may be lowered into the water at the end of the swimmer's lane, provided that, in the opinion of the referee, they neither physically aid the swimmer nor interfere with another competitor nor present any safety hazard.

D The count may be in ascending or descending order.

E In the event of official or counter error, it is the responsibility of the swimmer to complete the prescribed distance.

102.11 Change of Program and Postponement

102.11.1 The order of events, as stated in the meet announcement, shall not be changed. The announced arrangement of heats in any event shall not be added to or altered, except by the authority of the referee to the extent of consolidating the heats.

102.11.2 At the meet referee's discretion, events may be combined by distance and/or stroke.

102.11.3 The entry provisions and starting time of any event, meet, or portion thereof shall stand as stated in the meet announcement and may not be changed to an earlier time or date unless written notice of such change is delivered to all affected swimmers or their coaches. Electronic notice must be sent no later than the entry deadline date

stated in the meet announcement. If mailed, such notice must be postmarked no later than the entry deadline date stated in the meet announcement, and if lack of time prohibits mail notification, all affected swimmers must voluntarily agree in writing that they have been notified and are in accord with such change. Affected swimmers or coaches may file a written protest with the referee prior to the running of the event or the meet if they do not agree to such change in time or date.

102.11.4 Postponement or Cancellation

A. If, prior to the start of a meet or event, unusual or severe weather or other conditions preclude the possibility of safely and effectively conducting a meet or event, the meet director (article 103.5) may cancel or postpone it after consultation with the host organization, LMSC leadership, the meet referee, and/or facility management.

B Should a meet or event have actually commenced, and in the judgment of the referee cannot safely and effectively continue because of weather conditions or for some other compelling reason, the meet or event may be suspended at the referee's sole discretion until conditions warrant continuance. If circumstances do not warrant continuance, the referee may cancel the meet or event or postpone it to a future date or time, with the concurrence of the meet director.

C A decision to cancel or postpone shall be final.

D Should an event have actually commenced but be terminated prior to an official finish and be postponed to another time or date, it shall then be conducted among the swimmers who were officially competing in the event at the time of termination.

E Incomplete events will not be awarded or scored; however, times achieved in accordance with articles 103.17 and 103.18 up to the point of cancellation shall be considered official.

F Entry fees for teams or swimmers may be refunded, in whole or part, at the discretion of the meet director, upon cancellation of a meet or particular event. The decision of the meet director on refunding may be appealed to the officers of the LMSC for local or regional meets or the USMS Championship Committee for national championship meets.

102.12 Swimwear for Pool Competition

102.12.1 Design

A Swimwear shall include only a swimsuit, no more than two caps, and goggles (a nose clip and ear plugs are

allowed). Armbands or legbands shall not be regarded as parts of the swimsuit and are not allowed.

B In swimming competitions, the competitor must wear only one swimsuit in one or two pieces. All swimsuits shall be made from textile materials. For men, the swimsuit shall not extend above the navel nor below the knees, and for women, shall not cover the neck, extend past the shoulder nor extend below the knees.

(1) Exemptions to the foregoing restrictions may be granted to a swimmer, on a case-by-case basis, by the chair of the Rules Committee or designee. Exemptions will be granted for conflicts due to the swimmer's verified religious beliefs, verified medical conditions, or other reasons as deemed appropriate by the chair of the Rules Committee.

(2) Procedures for applying for an exemption will be established by the Rules Committee and posted on the USMS website.

(3) No exemption to these restrictions will be granted for a swimsuit that will give the swimmer a competitive advantage.

(4) The decision of the Rules Committee chair may be appealed only to the entire Rules Committee, whose decision shall be final and binding on all parties.

C Only swimsuits complying with World Aquatics swimsuit specifications may be worn in any USMS-sanctioned or -recognized competition. **Note:** World Aquatics specifications prohibit any zippers, ties, or any other fastener systems with the exception of a waist tie.

D Swimsuits worn for competition shall be nontransparent and conform to the current concept of the appropriate. The referee shall have authority to bar offenders from competition until they comply with this rule.

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. As a consequence of injury, it is permissible to tape together not more than two fingers or toes.

102.12.2 Advertising—Products involving tobacco, psychoactive cannabinoids, alcohol, or pharmaceuticals containing substances banned under IOC or World Aquatics rules may not be advertised, but the advertiser's name only may be used. Offenders may be barred from competition until they comply with this rule.

102.13 Disqualifications

102.13.1 A disqualification can be made only by the official within whose jurisdiction the infraction has been committed. The referee, stroke, turn, or relay takeoff judge, upon observing an infraction, shall immediately raise one hand overhead. If the official does not do so, there shall be no disqualification. When there is dual confirmation of relay takeoffs (article 103.10.5B) or dual confirmation of false starts (article 103.8.6A–B), a disqualification is not signaled by raising one hand overhead.

102.13.2 The referee or designated official making a disqualification shall make every reasonable effort to seek out the swimmer or the swimmer's coach and inform one or both as to the reason for the disqualification. Failure to notify does not negate the disqualification.

102.13.3 Any swimmer who acts in an unsporting or unsafe manner within the swimming venue may be considered for appropriate action or penalty by the referee.

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

102.13.5 Standing on the bottom during a freestyle race shall not disqualify a swimmer, but the swimmer must not leave the pool, walk, or spring from the bottom. Standing on the bottom during any other stroke shall result in disqualification.

102.13.6 Obstructing another swimmer by swimming across the lane or otherwise interfering with the swimmer shall disqualify the offender, subject to the discretion of the referee.

102.13.7 A swimmer who completes a race may warm down in the assigned lane while the rest of the swimmers finish the heat and shall not be disqualified if that swimmer does not delay the start of the next heat.

102.13.8 Dipping goggles in the water or splashing water on the competitor's face or body prior to the event shall not be considered as entering the pool unless the referee finds that such action is interfering with the competition.

102.13.9 Should a foul endanger the chance of success of a swimmer(s), the referee may allow the affected competitor(s) to reswim the event. In the case of collusion to foul another swimmer, at the referee's discretion, the swimmer

for whose aid the foul was committed may be disqualified, as well as the swimmer committing the foul.

102.13.10 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. As a consequence of injury, it is permissible to tape together not more than two fingers or toes.

102.13.11 Grasping the lane line or side wall to assist forward motion is not permitted.

102.13.12 For relay disqualifications, refer to article 101.7.3.

102.13.13 The time, place, and/or initial splits of any swimmer or relay team disqualified either during or following an event shall not be recorded in the results of that event. If awards have been given prior to the decision to disqualify, they shall be returned and given to the proper recipient(s), and if points have been scored by those disqualified, the event shall be rescored.

102.13.14 Time and/or place officially recorded for a swimmer shall not be nullified for violations occurring subsequent to such performance.

102.13.15 A swimmer who misrepresents a seed time, causing a significant delay of the meet, may be disqualified at the discretion of the referee. The disqualified swimmer shall be removed from the lane as soon as practical.

102.13.16 Video replay footage from cameras approved in writing in advance of the competition by the chair of the USMS Officials Committee and, for a national championship meet, with the concurrence of the chair of the USMS Championship Committee, may be used to review stroke or turn infractions called on deck. The official(s) reviewing the video may only confirm the call made on deck, overrule the call, or advise the referee that the review proved inconclusive.

102.13.17 For swimwear disqualifications, refer to article 102.12.1.

102.14 Protests

102.14.1 The official results of any protested race shall not be announced, the affected awards shall not be given, and points shall not be allocated until the protest is resolved or is withdrawn in writing.

102.14.2 Protests affecting the eligibility of any swimmer to compete or to represent an organization in any race shall be made in writing to the meet director or referee before the race is held, and if the meet director deems it advisable, and with the concurrence of the meet referee, the swimmer may compete under protest and it shall be so announced before the race. The meet director shall immediately refer such protest to the LMSC officers (local meets) or championship meet protest committee (national championship meets; see article 104.5.9B) having jurisdiction for adjudication at the earliest possible time.

102.14.3 Protests against judgment decisions of starters and stroke, turn, and relay takeoff judges can only be considered by the referee, and the referee's decision shall be final.

102.14.4 Protests concerning interpretation of the rules in *Part 1: Swimming Rules* and the *Glossary* shall be submitted in writing (on paper or in an electronic file) within 10 days to the USMS Rules Committee chair, who shall issue a decision in writing (on paper or in an electronic file) within five days of the date of receipt of such protest, unless the USMS Rules Committee chair notifies the parties that the issue must come before the entire committee. The ruling shall be final and binding on all parties.

102.14.5 Any other protest arising from the competition itself shall be made within 30 minutes after the race in which the alleged infraction took place. If the protest is not resolved immediately, the protester shall at that time file a written protest with the chair of the LMSC or the chair's representative having jurisdiction over the event. If the LMSC does not satisfactorily resolve the protest within 10 days, the protester may appeal in writing to the USMS Rules Committee chair within the next five days for final adjudication, whose decision shall then be binding on all parties.

102.14.6 Protests of eligibility to compete in a gender category shall be considered by the Rules Committee in accordance with USMS policy guidelines regarding eligibility of transgender athletes. Athletes shall be permitted to compete in the gender category that corresponds to their USMS registration pending a decision by the Rules Committee.

102.15 Tobacco Products

Smoking and use of other tobacco products is prohibited on the pool deck, in locker rooms, in spectator seating, and standing areas, and in all areas used by swimmers during the meet and during the warm-up periods in connection with the meet.

102.16 Use of Cameras, Video Equipment, and Drones

102.16.1 The use of cameras, including cellphone cameras and/or other recording devices, is prohibited behind the starting platforms during the start of races, including relay starts.

102.16.2 The use of audio or visual recording devices, including cellphone cameras, is prohibited in changing areas, restrooms, and locker rooms.

102.16.3 The sanctioning LMSC or the meet host may also impose further restrictions and shall include such information in the meet announcement.

102.16.4 The meet referee may further restrict the use of cameras and video equipment during competition.

102.16.5 Operation of a drone, or any other flying apparatus, is prohibited over the venue (pools, athlete/coach areas, and open-ceiling locker rooms) any time athletes, coaches, officials, and/or spectators are present. USMS-credentialed media personnel may be exempted from these restrictions.

102.16.6 Any individual in violation of these restrictions may be barred from the venue by the meet referee or meet director.

ARTICLE 103: MEET PROCEDURES

103.1 Meet Director

The meet director shall be the chair of the meet committee and, on behalf of the host organization, is responsible for the overall operation of the meet (see article 103.5). The meet director is expected to consult with the host organization, USMS leadership (LMSC, zone, or national leadership, depending on the meet), the meet referee, facility management, and other stakeholders to ensure efficient operations.

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 may also serve as a stroke and turn judge but shall not serve as starter.

B One starter—The starter may also serve as a stroke and turn judge.

C Two stroke and turn judges—At least two people shall perform these duties during competition.
Note: USMS-sanctioned meets approved for observation of swims by USA Swimming require a minimum of four officials: one referee, one starter, and a minimum of two stroke and turn judges who are not serving in another capacity.

103.2.2 Timers—Two timers per lane if semiautomatic or manual timing is used. One timer per lane if automatic timing is used.

103.3 Qualification of Officials

103.3.1 All officials acting in the capacity of referee shall be certified as a referee or equivalent by a USMS-approved certifying body, as defined by the USMS Officials Committee. Except for national championship meets, exceptions may be granted by the LMSC Officials chair (or by the LMSC chair or USMS Officials chair, if necessary). Such exceptions should be granted prior to the meet sanction being issued.

103.3.2 All officials acting in the capacity of starter, administrative official, or judge shall be certified in such position by a USMS-approved certifying body, as defined by the USMS Officials Committee. However, when necessary and with permission of the LMSC Officials chair (or LMSC chair, if necessary), uncertified trainees may perform the duties of such positions if they are under the direct supervision of a certified official (except for national championship meets).

103.4 Reporting of Officials and Meet Personnel

All officials accepting an invitation to work at a swim meet should arrive promptly and report immediately to the meet director or meet referee. All other meet personnel should report directly to the meet director or volunteer coordinator.

103.5 Meet Committee

The meet committee is appointed by the meet host. The committee consists of the meet director and a sufficient number of members to implement the committee functions. The meet committee is responsible for all meet operations on behalf of the host organization, including, but not limited to: obtaining a sanction; publishing the meet announcement; arranging for personnel, equipment, and supplies necessary for meet operation; ordering awards; arranging appropriate publicity and media coverage; processing entries; printing programs; preparing the facility; verifying proper certification of pool length as described in article 105.1.7; completing record applications; preparing and distributing a summary of results within 14 days after the meet; filing an LMSC report; and

other administrative duties necessary to comply with USMS rules and regulations for sanctioned meets.

103.6 Referee

103.6.1 The referee:

A Shall have full authority over all officials.

B Shall assign and instruct all officials.

C Shall enforce all applicable rules and shall decide all questions relating to the actual conduct of the meet, the final settlement of which is not otherwise assigned by said rules.

D Can overrule any meet official on a point of rule interpretation or on a judgment decision pertaining to an action that the referee has personally observed.

103.6.2 The referee has the authority to disqualify a swimmer(s) for any violation of the rules that the referee personally observes and, except for false starts, shall at the same time raise one hand overhead. If the referee does not make such a signal, there shall be no disqualification.

103.6.3 The referee shall signal the starter before each race that all officials are in position, that the course is clear, and that the competition can begin.

103.6.4 The referee shall assign marshals with specific instructions.

103.6.5 The referee shall give a decision on any point where the opinions of the judges differ and shall have authority to intercede in a competition at any stage to ensure that the racing conditions are observed.

103.6.6 The referee may assign two or more additional timers per lane dedicated to recording initial distances for USMS Top 10 purposes. The swimmer may request such additional timers for this purpose.

103.6.7 The referee shall make an immediate investigation when an apparent malfunction of the automatic or semi-automatic timing equipment has occurred to determine whether the swimmer finished in accordance with the rules and/or if there was an actual equipment malfunction.

103.6.8 The referee may prohibit the use of any device, such as a laser pointing device or artificial noisemaker, that disrupts or interferes with the meet.

103.6.9 The referee may modify any rule for a swimmer who has a disability. Any such modification shall be in accordance with article 107, shall affect only the current meet, and shall not set precedent. It shall be the responsibility of the swimmer or a representative to notify the referee of the disability prior to competition.

103.6.10 The referee shall establish the necessary administrative and officiating procedures to conform to articles 102.10.3 and .4 when conducting events from alternate ends of a 50-meter course or conducting freestyle events longer than 200 meters two-to-a-lane.

103.6.11 Refer to article 102.14 concerning protests.

103.7 Administrative Official

103.7.1 The administrative official shall be responsible to the referee for the supervision of the following:

A The entry and registration process.

B Clerk of course.

C Timing equipment operator.

D Other administrative personnel.

103.7.2 The administrative official shall be responsible to the referee for:

A The accurate processing of entries and scratches.

B Accurate seeding of heats.

C Determination and recording of official time:

(1) Receiving and reviewing the automatic and/or semi-automatic timing results from the timing equipment operator and comparing primary timing results with the backup timing results to determine their validity.

(2) Receiving the times recorded by the head lane timers from the chief timer and using that data to the extent needed to determine the official time for each swimmer.

(3) Unless otherwise directed, notifying the referee whenever a time obtained by the primary timing system cannot be used as the official time.

(4) Recording disqualifications approved by the referee.

D Determination of the official results.

E Publication and posting of results of each event by gender and age group and scores (scores optional).

103.7.3 The administrative official shall perform other duties assigned by the referee.

103.8 Starter

103.8.1 Equipment—The preferred starting device shall be a loudspeaker start system conforming to article 106.15, with or without an underwater recall device, and an electronic strobe signal visible to all manual timers and for forward and backstroke starts.

103.8.2 Preparation—The starter shall stand on the side of the pool within approximately 5 meters of the starting end of the pool and, upon signal from the referee, shall

assume control of the swimmers until a fair start has been achieved.

103.8.3 Optional Instructions—The starter may:

A Announce the event.

B Advise the heat that a swimmer will be attempting to achieve a time at an initial distance.

C For backstroke event starts, give the command, "Place your feet."

D Use a "stand" command in accordance with articles 103.8.5 and 103.8.6.

103.8.4 Starts (see article 101.1)

103.8.5 Start Commands

A At the commencement of each heat, the referee shall signal to the swimmers by a short series of whistles to remove all clothing except for swimwear, followed by a long whistle indicating that they may take and maintain their positions with at least one foot at the front of the starting platform or the deck, or in the water, and remain there (article 101.1.1). Each swimmer starting in the water must take the position on the wall with at least one hand in contact with the wall or starting platform and one foot in contact with the wall. In backstroke and medley relay events, at the referee's first long whistle, the swimmers shall immediately enter the water and at the second long whistle shall take their positions on the wall without undue delay (article 101.1.2).

B When the swimmers and officials are ready, the referee shall signal with an outstretched arm to the starter that the swimmers are under the starter's control.

C On the starter's command, "Take your marks," each swimmer shall immediately assume the starting position that maintains at least one foot at the front of the starting platform or the deck. Each swimmer starting in the water must have at least one hand in contact with the wall or starting platform and at least one foot on the wall. When all swimmers are stationary, the starter shall give the starting signal.

D When a swimmer does not respond promptly to the command, "Take your marks," the starter shall immediately release all swimmers with a "stand" command, upon which the swimmers may stand up, step off the blocks, or leave the wall.

103.8.6 False Starts

A Any swimmer starting before the starting signal is given shall be disqualified if the referee independently observes and confirms the starter's observation that a violation occurred. Swimmers remaining on the starting blocks

shall be relieved from their starting positions with a "stand" command and may step off the blocks.

B If the starting signal has been given before the disqualification is declared, the race shall continue without recall. If the referee independently observes and confirms the starter's observation that a violation occurred, the swimmer(s) who have false started shall be disqualified upon completion of the race in accordance with article 102.13.1.

C If the recall signal is activated, no swimmer shall be charged with a false start and the starter shall restart the race upon signal by the referee.

D A swimmer shall be disqualified for an illegal starting position at the start if the swimmer moves from a legal starting position to an illegal starting position immediately prior to or after the "take your marks" command provided that the illegal starting position exists when the signal to start the race is given. Enforcement of the correct starting position is the responsibility of the starter or the stroke and turn judges.

E A swimmer shall not be disqualified for an illegal starting position at the start if the race is permitted to proceed. Enforcement of the correct starting position is the responsibility of the starter.

103.8.7 Warning Signal—With the exception of relays, in freestyle events 400 meters/500 yards or longer the starter or a designee shall sound a warning signal over the water at the finish end of the lane of the leading swimmer when that swimmer has two lengths plus 5 yards or 5 meters to swim. As an alternative, a bell warning signal may be given over each lane by a lane judge or timer in that lane.

103.8.8 Deliberate Delay or Misconduct

A The starter shall report a swimmer to the referee for delaying the start, for willfully disobeying an order, or for any other misconduct taking place at the start, but only the referee may disqualify a swimmer for such delay, willful disobedience, or misconduct.

B The referee shall disqualify a swimmer who fails to appear at the starting platform ready to swim in time for the initial start of the heat.

103.9 Recall Rope Operator

The duty of the recall rope operator shall be to immediately, upon sounding of the false start signal, activate the quick-release mechanism of the recall rope so that the recall rope drops across the course.

103.10 Judges
Shall have jurisdiction over the swimmers immediately after the race has begun.

103.10.1 Chief Judge

A An overall "chief judge" may assign and supervise the activities of all stroke, turn, and takeoff judges and may report their decisions.

B If desired, any judging category may have a designated "chief."

C Any "chief" may act as liaison for the judges and may serve simultaneously in one of the judging positions, and shall assign those judges within the category.

103.10.2 Stroke Judges

A Shall operate on both sides of the pool, preferably walking slightly behind the swimmers during all strokes except freestyle, during which events they may leave poolside, at the referee's discretion.

B Shall ensure that the rules relating to the style of swimming designated for the event are being observed.

C Shall report any violations to the referee on signed slips detailing the event, the heat number, the lane number, and the infraction observed.

103.10.3 Turn Judges

A Shall operate on both ends of the pool.

B Shall ensure that after the start and when turning or finishing, the swimmer complies with the rules applicable to the stroke used.

C Shall report any violations to the referee on signed slips detailing the event, the heat number, the lane number, and the infraction observed.

103.10.4 Jurisdiction of Stroke and Turn Judges—Before the competition begins, the referee shall determine the respective areas of stroke and turn responsibility and jurisdiction, which may include joint, concurrent, and coordinated responsibility and jurisdiction. The referee shall ensure that all swimmers shall have fair, equitable, and uniform conditions of judging.

103.10.5 Relay Takeoff Judges

A Relay takeoff judges shall be assigned by the referee and shall:

(1) Stand so that they can clearly see both the feet of the departing swimmer(s) as they leave the starting platform and the touch of the incoming swimmer(s).

(2) Judge whether the swimmer is in contact with the platform when the incoming swimmer touches the end of the pool.

B If dual relay takeoff judging is used, the lane and side takeoff judges shall independently report infractions in writing without the use of the infraction hand signal. A relay shall be disqualified only if the lane takeoff judge has reported an infraction and the assigned side takeoff judge has confirmed the same infraction.

C When automatic relay exchange judging equipment is in use:

(1) The system printout will provide the information to judge relay exchanges.

(2) Integrated backup timing cameras may be reviewed by the referee to confirm the automatic system's results.

(3) When backup timing cameras are not available, automatic relay exchange equipment may only be used to confirm or overrule an infraction noted by the relay takeoff judges.

103.10.6 Place Judge(s)

A One or two place judges may be positioned on the side of the course near the finish to judge the order of finish of all swimmers.

B If two place judges are used, they shall independently record the order of finish of all swimmers.

C A place judge shall record a tie if a place distinction cannot be made. The referee, starter, or another official may also serve as a place judge.

D Judging results may only be used to corroborate the places determined by the ranking of official times or to determine places in the event of a malfunction. Judging may not be used to change the results produced by ranking the official times.

103.11 Timers

103.11.1 Chief Timer—The chief timer shall:

A Ensure the assignment of lane timers to lanes and the designation of one timer on each lane to be the head lane timer.

B On the starting signal, start a watch(es) on every race. The time of this watch shall be used if a lane timer's watch fails.

C Be responsible for delivering all stopwatch times, including those of disqualified swimmers, to the administrative official.

103.11.2 Head Lane Timer—The head lane timer shall:

A Determine whether the swimmer or relay team is present and in the correct lane, heat, and event, and that relay swimmers are swimming in the order listed. When overhead video cameras replace timers, this responsibility shall be assigned to other meet personnel.

B Determine and record stopwatch times or the absence of a swimmer or the relay team seeded in that lane.

C Assign one timer to take relay splits and initial distance times if requested by the chief timer.

D Report and indicate on the timing recording form if the swimmer has delayed in touching or has missed the touchpad at the finish, or there is reason to believe the semiautomatic or manual times may be inaccurate. When overhead video cameras replace timers, this responsibility shall be assigned to other meet personnel.

103.11.3 Lane Timers—Officials assigned as lane timers may simultaneously operate two dissimilar devices (one watch and one button) but not two similar devices (two watches or two buttons). It is not within a lane timer's jurisdiction to judge if the swimmer's touch conforms to the applicable finish rules or if a relay takeoff infraction has occurred unless assigned concurrent responsibility as a lane timer and turn judge or relay takeoff judge. Each timer shall:

A Be in position at the start to have an unobstructed view and shall start the watch at the instant of observing the visual starting signal. If the visual starting signal is not observed, the watch shall be started upon hearing the sound of the starting signal.

B Stand directly over the assigned lane at the finish to observe a touch above, at, or below the surface of the water and stop the watch and/or push the semiautomatic system button when any part of the swimmer's body touches the wall. When overhead video cameras replace timers, this responsibility shall be assigned to other meet personnel.

C Report:

(1) The watch time to the head lane timer or the designated recorder.

(2) If a late or missed pad touch is observed.

(3) If requested, present the watch for inspection.

Lane timers shall not clear their watches until the command, "Clear watches," is given or the referee signals that the next heat is ready to start.

103.11.4 Timing Equipment Operator—The timing equipment operator shall be responsible for the automatic or semiautomatic timing equipment, including the electronic starting system and scoreboard (if used). The timing equipment operator shall also advise the referee of any system problems that might affect the accuracy of times or whenever the touchpad is observed to have failed to record the finish when the swimmer completed the race. The timing equipment should be placed so that the operator is able to observe the finish of each race.

103.12 Clerk of Course

The clerk of course shall be provided with a list of the names of all swimmers in all events, including relay swimmers in the order in which they will swim. If manual seeding is used, the clerk of course may assign heats and lanes.

103.13 Marshals

Marshals shall wear identifying attire and enforce warm-up procedures and maintain order in the swimming venue. The marshal shall have full authority to warn or order to cease and desist and, with the concurrence of the referee, to remove or have removed from the swimming venue anyone behaving in an unsafe manner or using profane or abusive language, or those whose actions are disrupting the orderly conduct of the meet.

103.14 Announcer

The announcer shall make any announcements requested by the referee, the clerk of course, or the meet management. Announcements may include:

103.14.1 Event.
103.14.2 Number of heats.
103.14.3 Lane, name, and club affiliation of competitors.
103.14.4 Results.

103.15 Recorder of Records

The recorder of records shall obtain from the administrative official all times made in each event, shall have proper application forms, and shall duly process all record claims as set forth in article 105.

103.16 Press Steward

The press steward shall obtain from the clerk of course and the recorders the names of all swimmers in each event and the results of each finish with times or record performances, and shall keep the press and TV personnel thoroughly informed on all details of the competition during the meet.

103.17 Timing Equipment

103.17.1 Timing System Definitions—Every race in a swimming competition shall be timed with one or more of the following systems, listed in their preferred order of use.

A Automatic—A timing system whose start is activated by a starting device and stopped at the finish by the swimmer touching the touchpad.

B Semiautomatic—A timing system whose start is activated by a starting device and stopped by buttons pushed by timers at the finish touch of the swimmer.

C Manual—A timing system operated by individual lane timers, each of whom operates a stopwatch that is both started and stopped by the timer as described in article 103.11.3. Only digital-readout-type, hand-held, battery-powered watches designed for timing purposes shall be used.

103.17.2 Timing System Designation—Timing systems shall be designated in the order in which results are used as follows:

A Primary system—The primary system shall determine the official time of each swimmer unless a comparison of the primary with secondary and/or tertiary system times indicates a malfunction of the primary system. A primary system shall always be in place and shall consist of one of the following, listed in their preferred order of use:

(1) Automatic timing.

(2) Semiautomatic, with three or two buttons per lane, each operated by a separate timer.

(3) Manual, with three or two watches per lane, each operated by a separate timer.

B Secondary system—If manually operated watches are not the primary system, a secondary system of precedence equal to or lower than the primary system shall be used. The secondary system may be one of the following, listed in their preferred order of use:

(1) Stationary overhead video cameras recording 100 images per second. The cameras must be fully integrated with the primary timing system.

(2) Semiautomatic with three, two, or one button(s), each operated by a separate timer.

(3) Manual with three, two, or one watch(es) per lane, each operated by a separate timer.

C Tertiary system—Unless the primary system consists of stopwatches or the secondary system is a fully integrated video system or includes at least one stopwatch per lane, a tertiary system of at least one stopwatch per lane shall be provided.

103.17.3 Determination of Official Time

A Automatic timing—When recorded by properly operating automatic timing equipment, the pad time shall be the official time.

B Semiautomatic or manual timing—Whenever semiautomatic or manual timing is used, only valid times shall be used in calculating the official time. The times shall be determined as follows:

(1) If two of the three valid button times or two of the three valid watch times agree, the time of the two buttons or two watches in agreement shall be the time for that timing system.

(2) If three valid button times or three valid watch times disagree, the time of the intermediate button or intermediate watch shall be the time for that timing system.

(3) If only two valid button times or two valid watch times are available, the average of the two button times or the average of the two watch times shall be the time for that timing system. The digits representing thousandths of a second shall be dropped with no rounding.

(4) If only one button or one watch time is available, the time of that button or watch shall be the time for that timing system unless that time conflicts with other information. If such a conflict exists, the administrative official shall gather as much data as possible and determine the time.

C Primary timing system malfunction—A primary timing system malfunction may have occurred if:

(1) The difference between the time obtained by the primary system and the backup system(s) is approximately 0.30 second or greater, or

(2) It is reported the swimmer missed the touchpad or had a soft touch.

(3) The timing system operator confirms a mechanical, electronic, or operational error that results in failure of the timing system to report a time.

D Fully integrated, overhead video system backup—If the backup system is a fully integrated, stationary overhead video system, the video camera time shall be the official time without adjustment in the event of a primary timing system malfunction.

E Official time for a malfunction on a lane—When a malfunction is confirmed on a lane, the official time for that lane shall be calculated using valid times reported by the secondary timing system (or the tertiary system in the event of a failure of the primary and secondary

backup systems) in accordance with article 103.17.3B and integrated with the accurate primary times in determining the results. (See article 103.10.6 for the use of place judge rankings in the determination of official time.)

F Adjustment for malfunction equally affecting an entire heat—When, because of an early or late start, or other equipment or operator malfunction, the time of the automatic or semiautomatic primary timing system is equally incorrect for all lanes in a heat, but the order of finish and thus the absolute difference of time between the swimmers is accurate, the times of the primary system shall be adjusted by calculating the average difference between the primary times and the valid backup times and adding or subtracting, when appropriate, that difference to the primary times of every lane in that heat.

Table 1—Example of Heat Malfunction

(1) Systems used:
- **(a)** Primary—Automatic (late manual start confirmed)
- **(b)** Secondary—Semiautomatic, three buttons (button times not valid)
- **(c)** Tertiary—Manual, one watch (valid)

Lane	Primary Pad Time	Watch Time	Watch Time Less Pad Time	Heat Adjustment	Official Time
1	52.12	55.14	3.02	+3.06	55.18
2	51.56	54.61	3.05	+3.06	54.62
3	51.09	54.18	3.09	+3.06	54.15
4	50.12	53.18	3.06	+3.06	53.18
5	49.78	52.90	3.12	+3.06	52.84
6	49.06	52.06	3.00	+3.06	52.12
7	52.21	55.30	3.09	+3.06	55.27
8	52.92	55.99	3.07	+3.06	55.98

(2) Adjustment calculation:
- **(a)** Add the differences between the pad and watch times (total = 24.50)
- **(b)** Divide the total by the number of lanes to determine an average (24.50 ÷ 8 = 3.0625).
- **(c)** Drop the digits after the hundredths place (leaving a heat adjustment of 3.06).

(d) Add the adjustment factor for the late start of the primary system to each pad time to obtain the official time for that lane (e.g., lane one, 52.12 + 3.06 = 55.18).

103.18 Official Time

103.18.1 Achieving Official Times—An official time shall be achieved in a USMS-sanctioned competition or a USMS-recognized event in accordance with all applicable rules (articles 202.1.1E[1] and 108.2.1A). It may be achieved in:

A Any timed heat.

B An initial distance within a longer event or relay, provided the swimmer:

(1) Notifies the meet referee in writing of the intent to record an initial split time prior to the conclusion of the meet,

(2) Makes the written request prior to the swim for relay leadoff splits and for initial backstroke distances in individual backstroke events,

(3) Completes the initial distance with a legal finish, and

(4) Completes the relay leadoff distance or the individual event without being disqualified.

C A relay leadoff leg, provided:

(1) The second swimmer does not start in the water when automatic timing is used,

(2) The second swimmer does not invalidate the pad touch by standing on an active touchpad at the exchange if starting from the deck when automatic timing is used, and

(3) That swimmers complete the event without being disqualified.

D A time trial conducted in a USMS-sanctioned meet or USMS-recognized meet under the rules of the sanctioning organization.

103.18.2 Automatic Recording of Split Times—Upon a recommendation from the meet host, the meet referee may approve the automatic recording of individual initial splits and relay leadoff splits for official times without the requirement for a written request subject to the following conditions:

A The meet announcement shall state the events approved for automatic split recording.

B Initial splits from one or more specified individual events, with the exception of backstroke events, may be approved.

C Relay leadoff splits from specific relay events or from all relay events, with the exception of initial splits within a

backstroke leadoff distance, may be approved provided that:

(1) Officials are assigned to judge the exchanges,

(2) Officials confirm that the second swimmer does not start in the water when automatic timing is used, and

(3) Officials confirm that the second swimmer does not invalidate the pad touch at the exchange by standing on an active pad.

D The specified splits for all swimmers in the approved event(s) shall be included separately in the meet results for all meets other than national championship meets. The meet announcement shall specify the process for identifying valid splits at national championship meets for official times.

E For national championship meets, automatic splits shall be automatically recorded in accordance with article 103.18.2C.

103.18.3 Official Time for Event or Stroke—An official time for an event or stroke can be achieved only in that event or stroke, or in an initial distance of such event or stroke (e.g., backstroke time must be achieved in a backstroke event or a butterfly time can be achieved in an individual medley event). Regardless of the stroke(s) used, times achieved in freestyle events can be recorded only as freestyle times.

103.18.4 Timing Resolution (Timing Accuracy)—All timing systems, including stopwatches, shall have a resolution of 0.01 second. Times from all systems shall be recorded to hundredths of a second. The digits representing thousandths shall be dropped with no rounding.

103.18.5 Records and Top 10 Times Using an Automatic Primary Timing System—Secondary and tertiary times may be used to determine the official time as follows when the automatic primary timing system fails, provided the procedures in article 103.17.3B are followed. See article 103.17.3D for overhead video backup.

A World records, USMS records, and USMS Top 10 times may be established when the times are reported by an automatic primary timing system.

B World records, USMS records, and USMS Top 10 times may be established when the automatic primary timing system fails if the times are reported by a semiautomatic secondary timing system using three, two, or one valid button(s).

C USMS records may be established when both the automatic primary and semiautomatic secondary systems fail (no valid button times) if the times are reported by

a manual tertiary system with a minimum of two valid watch times.

D USMS Top 10 times may be established when both the automatic primary and semiautomatic secondary systems fail (no valid button times) if the times are reported by a manual tertiary system using a minimum of one valid watch time.

E An initial distance or a relay leadoff leg may be used to establish world records, USMS records, or USMS Top 10 times when reported by an automatic primary timing system.

F An initial distance or a relay leadoff leg may be used to establish world records when the automatic primary timing system fails and the times are reported by a semiautomatic secondary timing system with three, two, or one valid buttons(s).

G An initial distance or relay leadoff leg may be used to establish USMS Top 10 times when the primary timing system fails and the times are reported by a manual backup timing system with a minimum of two valid watch times.

103.18.6 Records and Top 10 Times Using a Semiautomatic Primary Timing System—Semiautomatic times are used to determine the official time as follows (or backup times when the semiautomatic primary timing system fails), provided the procedures in article 103.17.3B are followed.

A USMS Top 10 times may be established when timed by a minimum two-button semiautomatic primary timing system and the times are reported by three, two, or one valid button times.

B USMS Top 10 times may be established when the minimum two-button semiautomatic primary system fails (no valid button times) if the times are reported by a manual backup system with three, two, or one valid watch times.

C USMS records shall not be established using a semiautomatic primary system or a manual backup system when the primary system fails.

D An initial distance or relay leadoff leg may be used to establish USMS Top 10 times when the times are reported by a manual backup timing system with a minimum of two valid watch times.

103.18.7 Records and Top 10 Times Using a Manual Primary Timing System—Manual times are used to determine the official time as follows, provided the procedures in article 103.17.3B are followed.

A USMS Top 10 times may be established when the times are reported by a manual primary timing system with a minimum of two valid watch times.

B USMS records shall not be established using a manual primary timing system.

C An initial distance or a relay leadoff leg may be used to establish USMS Top 10 times when the times are reported by a manual primary system with a minimum of two valid watch times.

103.18.8 Certified Pool Length—Only those results from events conducted in pools officially certified for length in conformance with article 106.2.1 shall be acceptable for record applications or Top 10 submissions.

103.18.9 Timing System Eligibility—Except when the primary system consists of watches, backup timing shall be provided for all competitors. No swimmer shall be required to reswim a race due to equipment failure that results in unrecorded or inaccurate time or place. It is the meet director's responsibility to provide the proper timing systems so that swimmers can expect to achieve official times that will satisfy the requirements of articles 103.18.5–103.18.7. The meet announcement shall include a description of the timing systems intended to be used at the meet and one of the following statements for each course:

A Times from this competition will be eligible for world record, USMS record, and Top 10 consideration.

B Times from this competition will be eligible for USMS records and Top 10 consideration, but not for world records.

C Times from this competition will be eligible for USMS Top 10 consideration, but not for world or USMS records.

D Times from this competition will not be eligible for world record, USMS record, or Top 10 consideration,

If a change in primary timing system is necessary before or during the meet, the meet director shall ensure that all swimmers are notified of the change.

	Automatic Primary Timing System	Semiautomatic Primary Timing System	Manual Primary Timing System
World Records	Touchpad time		
	Semiautomatic backup time with three, two, or one valid button(s) if the touchpad fails.		
	Leadoff or initial split recorded by a touchpad.		
	Leadoff or initial split recorded by three, two, or one semiautomatic button(s) if the touchpad fails.		
USMS Records	Touchpad time		
	Semiautomatic backup time with three, two, or one valid button(s) if the touchpad fails.		
	Manual backup time with a minimum of two valid watches when both the automatic primary and semiautomatic systems fail.		
	Leadoff or initial split recorded by touchpad.		
USMS Top 10 Times	Touchpad Time		
	Semiautomatic backup time with three, two, or one valid button(s) if the touchpad fails.	Two-button system with a time calculated using the procedure in 103.17.3B	
	Manual backup time with one valid watch if the semiautomatic system fails (no valid buttons).	One watch if the two-button semiautomatic system fails (no buttons)	Two valid watches
	Leadoff or initial split recorded by two valid watches if the touchpad fails.	Leadoff or initial split recorded by two valid watches.	Leadoff or initial split recorded by two valid watches.

103.18.10 Recording Backup Times—Secondary and tertiary times shall be recorded but shall not be used except to corroborate or correct missing or inaccurate primary/secondary results.

103.19 Scoring

The following is recommended for all Masters Swimming competition.

103.19.1 Dual Meets

Individual events: 5-3-1-0

Relay events: 7-0

103.19.2 Triangular Meets

Individual events: 6-4-3-2-1-0

Relay events: 8-4-0

103.19.3 Other Meets

A Individual events:

four-lane pools: 5-3-2-1
five-lane pools: 6-4-3-2-1
six-lane pools: 7-5-4-3-2-1
seven-lane pools: 8-6-5-4-3-2-1
eight-lane pools: 9-7-6-5-4-3-2-1
nine-lane pools: 10-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1
ten-lane pools: 11-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1
Individual point values shall be doubled for relays.

B LMSC options—For nonstandard meets, the LMSC and/or meet host may establish the scoring point values to suit the format of the meet. These point values shall be stated in the meet announcement.

103.19.4 Ties—Where two or more swimmers tie for any place in any event, the points credited to such place or places, if any, next in order shall be equally divided among the swimmers; i.e., if two tie for first place, the points to be credited to first and second place shall be added and divided by two. Each tying swimmer will receive half of the total points for first and second places. If three tie for first place, the points credited to first, second, and third places shall be added and divided by three, and so on for four or more tying for first place. The same is true for those tying for second place, third place, and whatever places there may be.

103.19.5 Disqualifications—When a relay team or individual swimmer is disqualified, the subsequent places will move up accordingly and points will be awarded to conform to the new places.

103.20 Awards

When two or more swimmers tie for any place, duplicate awards shall be given to each swimmer. In such cases, no awards shall be given for the place or places immediately following the tied positions. If two tie for first place, no award for second place; if three tie for first place, no awards for second and third, and so on.

ARTICLE 108:
SANCTION AND RECOGNITION OF POOL EVENTS

108.1 Sanctions

Times achieved at sanctioned events are considered for USMS records, USMS Top 10 times, World Aquatics Masters world records, and World Aquatics Masters Top 10 times. All swimmers entered in sanctioned events shall be USMS members or shall be members of a World Aquatics Member Federation.

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 ONE of the following statements for each course used for competition during the meet:

(a) The length of the competition course without a bulkhead is in compliance and on file with USMS in accordance with articles 105.1.7 and 106.2.1.

(b) The length of the competition course has been measured and is NOT in compliance with USMS articles 105.1.7 and 106.2.1: Times achieved in the meet will NOT be eligible for USMS Top 10 and records.

(c) The length of the competition course is not on file with USMS. Eligibility of times achieved in this meet will be contingent upon pool length measurement and approval with USMS; if bulkheads are present, their placement must also be confirmed by measurements at the meet (USMS articles 105.1.7 and 106.2.1).

(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.

(3) The meet announcement shall include a description of the timing systems intended to be used at the

meet (see articles 103.18.5–103.18.9) and one of the following statements for each course:

(a) Times from this competition will be eligible for world record, USMS record, and Top 10 consideration.

(b) Times from this competition will be eligible for USMS records and Top 10 consideration, but not for world records.

(c) Times from this competition will be eligible for USMS Top 10 consideration, but not for world or USMS records.

(d) Times from this competition will not be eligible for world record, USMS record, or Top 10 consideration.

If a change in primary timing system is necessary before or during the meet, the meet director shall ensure that all swimmers are notified of the change.

B Entries shall not be accepted before the sanction has been issued. Paper forms shall not be distributed, online entry systems shall not be activated, and the event shall not be listed as sanctioned on the USMS Calendar of Events until the sanction has been issued.

C If an individual or organization has failed to conduct a sanctioned event in accordance with applicable USMS rules and administrative regulations, or as stated in the meet announcement, a sanction may be withheld or withdrawn in accordance with articles 202.1.1F and G.

108.2 Recognized Events

Times achieved by USMS members at recognized events other than USA Swimming or World Aquatics meets shall be considered for USMS records and Top 10 times if a designated USMS observer is present and verifies in writing that the conduct of the competition conforms to the relevant USMS swimming rules and administrative regulations. (See Appendix B for the required *Observer's Report for Recognized Meets*.) USA Swimming– and World Aquatics–sanctioned meets do not require observers (see article 202.3). USMS membership is not required for swimmers entered in recognized events.

108.2.1 Recognition—Recognition shall be issued, withheld, or withdrawn in accordance with article 202.2 and the following requirements:

A The conduct of a recognized event shall conform to relevant USMS swimming rules and administrative regulations, including but not limited to the following:

(1) Starts, Strokes, and Relays (article 101) or Guidelines for Officiating Swimmers With a Disability (article 107)

(2) Swimwear Design (article 102.12.1)

(3) Determination of Official Time (articles 103.17.3, 103.18.1, 103.18.2, 103.18.3, and 103.18.4)

(4) Timing System Requirements for Records and Top 10 (articles 103.18.5–103.18.8 and 103.18.10)

(5) Records and Top 10 Times (articles 105.1, 105.2.1, 105.2.2, 105.3.2, 105.3.3, 105.3.4, 105.3.5, 105.3.6, 105.3.7, and 105.3.9)

(6) Minimum Standards for Facilities (articles 106.2.1, 106.2.3A, 106.3, 106.11.1, 106.11.2, 106.12, 106.13.2, 106.14, and 106.16)

(7) Relay leadoff split times that conform to articles 103.18.1, and 105.2.2A will be considered for events listed in article 102.5. USMS membership is not required for the other members of the relay team and the relay event itself need not conform to article 102.5.

B World records can be set only in World Aquatics– or USMS-sanctioned competitions, not recognized events.

C If an individual or organization has failed to conduct a recognized event in accordance with applicable USMS rules and administrative regulations, or as stated in the meet announcement, a recognition may be withheld or withdrawn in accordance with articles 202.2.1E and G.

ARTICLE 201: MEMBERSHIP AND REPRESENTATION

201.1 Membership of Individuals
Individual members are adults currently registered with USMS.

201.1.1 Eligibility—Swimmers age 18 and over are eligible and may apply for membership in USMS.

201.1.2 Annual Membership

A Standard membership is for the period January 1 through December 31 of each year. Standard membership is effective from the date of registration through December 31 of the same year, except that registrations on or after November 1 shall provide membership from the registration date through December 31 of the following year. Swimmers may register unattached or may affiliate with a club that is already registered for the same year for which the swimmer is registering.

B College Club Swimming membership is for the period from the registration date through December 31 following the conclusion of the CCS membership year.

201.1.3 One-Event Registration

A Open Water One-Event Registration—An LMSC may offer a single-event registration that allows an athlete to participate in a USMS-sanctioned open water event. Membership cards shall not be issued for one-event registration. One-event registrants must be considered unattached and agree to be governed by applicable USMS open water swimming rules and administrative regulations, except that their swims shall not be eligible for USMS open water awards and recognition. One-event registrants shall be identified as such in the event results.

B Pool One-Event Registration—An LMSC may offer a single-event registration that allows an athlete to participate in one event sanctioned by that LMSC. Membership cards shall not be issued for one-event registration. One-event registrants must be considered unattached and agree to be governed by the rules and regulations of USMS, except that their times shall not be considered for Top 10 tabulation and USMS or world records, All-American status, or any other USMS special awards; one-event registration forms must include the statement "Times swum under one-event registration are not eligible for USMS Top 10 or records consideration." One-event registrants shall be identified as such in the meet results.

201.1.4 Membership Application

A Individuals may apply for membership through the USMS website or by submitting an application form to the LMSC membership coordinator or the USMS National Office. The LMSC shall provide a link to an electronic membership card or, upon request of the member, issue a membership card.

B All membership applications shall contain the language of the liability release as stated in USMS policy (see *USMS Guide to Local Operations,* Sanctions section).

201.1.5 Fees—The fees for membership and one-event registration shall each be a single fee, with a portion allocated to USMS national operations and a portion allocated to the LMSC in which an individual registers, unless that individual is registering as a member of College Club Swimming, in which case the entire fee is allocated to USMS national operations. The allocation between national operations and LMSCs shall be established by the House of Delegates.

201.2 Membership of Clubs

Member clubs are organizations or groups of permanent character currently registered with an LMSC of USMS and

that actively promote and participate in Masters Swimming. In addition, clubs are members of LMSCs, except for CCS clubs, which are only members of the national organization.

201.2.1 Annual Club Membership

A Standard USMS Clubs—Annual membership for standard USMS clubs is from the date of registration through December 31 of that year; however, a club applying for membership on or after October 1 will receive membership valid through December 31 of the following year.

B CCS Clubs—Annual membership for CCS clubs is for the period from the registration date through December 31 following the conclusion of the CCS club membership year.

201.2.2 Club Membership Application—Clubs may apply for membership through the USMS website or by submitting an application form to the LMSC membership coordinator or the USMS National Office.

201.2.3 Fees—The fee for membership shall be a single fee, with a portion allocated to USMS national operations and a portion allocated to the LMSC in which a club registers. The allocation between national operations and LMSCs shall be established by the House of Delegates.

201.2.4 Changing LMSC Affiliation—A club wishing to change its LMSC affiliation must approve such change by a majority vote of its general membership at a regular club meeting or at a special meeting called for that purpose, with the vote duly certified by the club's president and secretary. The transfer also must be approved by a majority vote of the officers of the club's current and proposed LMSCs. If approved, the transfer shall be effective 60 days after receipt of written notice by the National Office.

201.3 Representation/Club Affiliation

201.3.1 There shall be only one USMS membership per individual permitted at any time.

201.3.2 In order for a swimmer to compete as a representative of a club, that club must be a member in good standing of USMS for the year a swimmer is registering.

201.3.3 A swimmer with an annual membership shall register in the LMSC in which the club being represented is registered. The swimmer need not reside within the LMSC territory.

201.3.4 An unattached swimmer is an individual member who is registered with an LMSC's UC. Swimmers registered with the UC shall not compete in relays or score team points in competition. Competing while registered with

UC shall not be considered as representing a club for the purposes of article 201.3.5.

201.3.5 A swimmer may change club affiliation at the time of annual membership registration and up to three additional times during the membership year. A swimmer may compete for only one club during a meet. A transfer submitted during a meet, including at the time of annual registration, may take immediate effect only if the swimmer has not yet competed in the meet. Swimmers may declare unattached status at any time except during a meet in which they have already competed. Swimmers who intend to compete as unattached should contact their LMSC membership coordinator or the USMS National Office prior to the meet to request that their registration status be changed. Changing a swimmer's status to unattached does not count against the allowable club changes per year. See article 201.3.4 for more information. The LMSC membership coordinator or the USMS National Office shall change the club affiliation of the swimmer to the UC and note the effective date.

ARTICLE 202: SANCTION/RECOGNITION OF POOL EVENTS

202.1 Sanctions

202.1.1 Sanction Requirements—Sanctions shall be issued, withheld, or withdrawn in accordance with the following:

A Applications for sanction shall be made to the LMSC within which the event is to be held. The LMSC may establish a reasonable deadline to receive applications for sanction prior to the competition that will be in compliance with article 102.5.7. Sanction applications shall be accompanied by the meet announcement. After receiving a sanction application, the LMSC may transfer its sanctioning authority to another LMSC, provided both LMSCs and the applicant agree to the transfer in writing. Upon approval, all fees and sanction obligations shall be transferred to the accepting LMSC.

(1) The entry forms, except those for virtual events, shall contain the language of the liability release as stated in USMS policy (see *USMS Guide to Local Operations,* Sanctions section). All swimmers shall have signed the liability release before participating.

(2) The sanction fee shall consist of a national fee established by the House of Delegates. Each LMSC may also establish a local fee.

B Approval of sanctions shall be made by the LMSC's authorized representative, and a record thereof shall be retained for two years.

C Sanctions issued to one organization cannot be transferred to another.

D No sanction of any event shall be granted with the word "Olympic" or the word "Paralympic" or any derivative thereof used in any manner in connection with said event unless consent is obtained from the USOPC.

E All sanctioned events are subject to the following conditions:

(1) The conduct of a sanctioned event shall be in strict compliance with applicable USMS swimming rules and administrative regulations, or when the sanctioned event is held simultaneously in conjunction with a USA Swimming sanctioned meet, with applicable USA Swimming rules and administrative regulations.

(2) USMS-sanctioned meets held in conjunction with USA Swimming–sanctioned meets shall conform to guidelines for the conduct of dual-sanctioned meets approved by USMS and USA Swimming.

(3) In order to be in compliance with World Aquatics Constitution article C II 7 e, an LMSC may grant exceptions to specific USMS swimming rules and administrative regulations when sanctioning a World Aquatics Masters championship held within the United World Aquatics of America.

(4) Sanctioned events may include nonconforming swimming events so long as they are conducted in a safe manner. Nonconforming swimming events are events not defined in article 102.5, article 307.2.2G–J, or that would typically result in the disqualification of participants as defined in article 102.13. USMS records and Top 10 times shall not be maintained in nonconforming events except for initial distances and relay leadoff split times for distances that are also events defined in article 102.5.

(5) Sanctioned events may be conducted in facilities not meeting the dimensional tolerance for required pool length, but the results of those events shall not count for USMS records and Top 10. It must be noted in the meet information that events conducted in these facilities are noncompliant.

(6) All swimmers shall provide proof of current Masters membership acceptable to the LMSC. At the discretion of the meet director and exclusive of

national championship meets, a swimmer may enter indicating "number pending," as long as proof of membership is presented prior to the swimmer's participation in the event.

(7) A swimmer's valid affiliation and age shall be displayed after the name in the meet program.

F A sanction may be withheld from any individual or organization:

(1) That has failed to conduct a prior sanctioned event in accordance with applicable USMS swimming rules and administrative regulations, or as stated on the meet announcement.

(2) When the mission, vision, and/or goals of the host organization conflict with USMS Organizing Principles (mission, vision, goals, and objectives).

(3) When the sanctioning LMSC determines that conduct of the event would violate participation (article 401), unsporting conduct (article 402.4), or equal opportunity (article 501.3).

G Sanction may be withdrawn following issuance up until the conclusion of the event:

(1) For failing to conduct the event in accordance with applicable USMS rules and administrative regulations and other stated requirements on the meet announcement.

(2) When the sanctioning LMSC determines that the sanction should have been denied under the provisions of article 202.1.1F.

202.2 Recognized Events

202.2.1 Recognition—Recognition shall be issued, withheld, or withdrawn in accordance with the following:

A Application for recognition of events within the jurisdiction of USMS shall be made to the LMSC within which the event is to be held, and applications shall be accompanied by the recognition fee. The recognition fee shall consist of a national fee established by the House of Delegates. Each LMSC may also establish a local fee. The LMSC may establish a reasonable deadline to receive applications for recognition prior to the competition.

B Approval of recognitions shall be made by the LMSC's authorized representative, and a record thereof shall be retained for two years.

C Recognition issued to one organization cannot be transferred to another.

D No recognition of any event shall be granted with the word "Olympic" or the word "Paralympic" or any derivative thereof used in any manner in connection with said event unless consent is obtained from the USOPC.

E A recognition may be withheld from any individual or organization

(1) That has failed to conduct said competition in accordance with applicable USMS swimming rules and regulations, or as stated on the meet announcement.

(2) When the mission, vision, and/or goals of the host organization conflict with USMS Organizing Principles (mission, vision, goals, and objectives).

(3) When the sanctioning LMSC determines that the conduct of the event would violate participation (article 401), unsporting conduct (article 402.4), or equal opportunity (article 501.3).

F Recognition for any meet held outside the jurisdiction of USMS, and not sanctioned by a World Aquatics Member Federation, shall be obtained from the Executive Committee.

G Recognition may be withdrawn following issuance up until the conclusion of the event:

(1) For failing to conduct the event in accordance with applicable USMS rules and administrative regulations and other stated requirements on the meet announcement.

(2) When the sanctioning LMSC determines that the recognition should have been denied under the provisions of article 202.2.1E.

202.3 Recognized Swims

Times achieved by USMS members at events sanctioned or approved by USA Swimming shall be considered for USMS records and Top 10 times without formal application for recognition. Times achieved by USMS members at events sanctioned by a World Aquatics Member Federation shall be considered for USMS records and Top 10 times without formal application for recognition if the USMS members register for the meet as USMS members. Times achieved by USMS members at the World Aquatics World Masters Championships shall automatically be considered for USMS records and Top 10 without formal application for recognition and without further documentation. It is the responsibility of the swimmer to submit times obtained in recognized events with complete documentation to the appropriate LMSC Top 10 recorder and the Records and Tabulation Committee chair.

202.4 Fitness Events

Fitness events are USMS events approved by LMSCs or clubs. Participants shall be USMS members or obtain one-event registrations to participate in these events. A fitness event shall be a sanctioned event or performed in an organized/supervised practice.

SUMMARY OF RULES DIFFERENCES BETWEEN USMS AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

The following summary is presented for information only for the benefit of officials, meet directors, swimmers, and coaches. The USMS rule citation shall be used for official rulings.

The *USMS Rules of Competition and Code of Regulations* should be consulted for a complete list of administrative requirements for sanctioned and recognized meets.

USMS Rule	USA Swimming/YMCA	NCAA	NFHS
Forward Start 101.1.1 101.5.1 103.8.5	The forward start may be taken from the starting block, the pool deck, or a push from the wall. The forward start or the backstroke start shall be used for freestyle events. The referee's long whistle indicates that the swimmer may take and maintain a position with at least one foot at the front of the platform or the deck (prior to "take your marks"). On the command, "Take your marks," the swimmer shall immediately assume the starting position that maintains at least one foot at the front of the platform or the deck.		
In-the-Water Starts 101.1.1 103.8.5 101.5.1	A swimmer starting in the water must have one hand on the wall or starting platform and one foot on the wall and may face any direction. The backstroke start may be used as the in-the-water start during freestyle events and for freestyle relays, but not for the freestyle leg of medley relay events. A backstroke starting ledge may be used in freestyle events.		
Backstroke Starts 101.1.2 103.8.5A	*No Difference*	*No Difference*	USMS does not specify that swimmers must step into the water feet first. Use of a backstroke starting ledge is permitted.
Racing Starts None	USMS has no requirement for certification of racing starts in order to use starting platforms or backstroke starting ledges.		
Backstroke Turns 101.4.3	*No Difference*	*No Difference*	Once the body has left the position on the back, any kick or arm pull must be part of the continuous turning action.

USMS Rule	USA Swimming/YMCA	NCAA	NFHS
Breaststroke 101.2.2	*No Difference*	*No Difference*	The hands may extend beyond the hip line during the first stroke after the start and after each turn, but there is no requirement that the first stroke must be under water.
Butterfly 101.3.3	The breaststroke kick may be used exclusively or interchangeably with the dolphin kick while doing the butterfly stroke at any time during the race. Only one breaststroke kick is permitted per arm pull, except that a single breaststroke kick is permitted prior to the turn and the finish without an arm pull. After the start and after each turn, a single breaststroke kick is permitted prior to the first arm pull.		
Breaststroke and Butterfly Turns and Finishes 101.2.4 101.3.4 101.3.5	*No Difference*	*No Difference*	The touch shall be made with both hands separated and simultaneously at, above, or below the water surface.
Relays 101.7.3 102.9	• Mixed relays shall consist of two male and two female swimmers, who may swim in any order. • Relay swimmers who cannot exit the water quickly enough to prevent interference with automatic officiating equipment may hold on to the lane line until all relays have finished, allowing them to exit the pool more slowly or via the ladders at the conclusion of the race. • In relay races involving in-the-water starts, a relay will be disqualified *if the feet of the outgoing swimmer* lose touch with the end of the course before the preceding teammate touches the wall. Inadvertent loss of contact is not grounds for disqualification if the outgoing swimmer corrects the foot position prior to the incoming swimmer touching the end of the course. • The relay team shall be disqualified even if the swimmer in default returns to the original starting point at the wall after the preceding teammate has touched the wall.		
Age Determining Date 102.2	For short course meters and long course meters meets, the swimmer's age is determined as of December 31 of the year of competition. For short course yards meets, the swimmer's age is determined as of the last day of the meet (regardless of postponement).		

USMS Rule	USA Swimming/YMCA	NCAA	NFHS
Lane Assignments 102.13.4	*No Difference*	*No Difference*	Swimmers must start and finish in their assigned lanes.
Finish 101.5.4	*No Difference*	*No Difference*	The finish occurs when any part of the swimmer's body touches the wall. Swimmers are not required to touch the touchpad, except when automatic relay takeoff judging equipment is in use.
Warm-up and Warm-down 102.4.1 102.13.7 102.4.2	• In pools of five lanes or more, a separate warm-up area must be made available to swimmers during the competition. • If there is no other warm-up/warm-down area available in pools of five lanes or more, one lane shall be set aside for warm-up/warm-down during the conduct of the meet. • In pools of four or fewer lanes, swimmers shall be allowed to swim to the other end of the pool at the end of each heat and a warm-up/warm-down period must be offered at least once during each half-hour of competition. • A swimmer who completes a race may warm down in the assigned lane while the rest of the swimmers complete the heat and shall not be disqualified if such action does not delay the start of the next event. • If the meet is a dual-sanctioned meet with USA Swimming, the requirements for continuous warm-up may be adjusted depending on availability of warm-up space at the venue by agreement between the LMSC and LSC host clubs. • Once the entry information is published, changes which further restrict the availability of continuous warm-up/warm-down space are not permitted.		
Gender 102.5.2 102.5.3 102.14.6	USMS policy guidelines govern eligibility of athletes to compete in the male and female gender categories. Protests of eligibility shall be referred to the USMS Rules Committee chair. Athletes shall be permitted to compete in the gender that corresponds to their USMS registrations pending resolution of any protest.		
Scratch Procedures 102.8	There is no penalty for failure to report for or compete in an event, except that a swimmer may not be permitted to swim if the swimmer does not comply with check-in procedures listed in the meet announcement. There are no "declared false starts" in USMS-sanctioned or -recognized meets.		

USMS Rule	USA Swimming/YMCA	NCAA	NFHS
Dual-Sanctioned Meets 102.6.8	If a USMS-sanctioned meet is held in conjunction with a USA Swimming–sanctioned meet (swimmers competing together in the same sessions), swimmers with dual membership must select only one organization with which to compete for the entire meet.		
Event Limit 102.6.1 102.6.4	*No Difference*	A swimmer may compete in not more than six individual events per day. If the meet is conducted with a format other than timed finals, a swimmer may compete in not more than three individual events per day.	
Relay Names 102.9.6	First and last names of eligible swimmers, their ages, and order of swimming shall be submitted to the clerk of course or to the head lane timer.		
Counters 102.10.6B 102.10.6C 102.10.6D	*No Difference*	*No Difference*	Verbal counters may use watches and signal intermediate times to the swimmer. If visual counters are used, they may be stationed at the end or either side of the pool beyond the halfway point toward the end of the course opposite the starting end. The count may be ascending or descending order. Violations of these provisions are not grounds for disqualification.
Seeding 102.10.1D 102.10.4A(1)	Seeding at meets other than national championships may be either fast-to-slow or slow-to-fast. Seeding may differ for sprint and distance events (400 yards or longer) within a meet. Two-to-a-lane seeding may be used for individual freestyle events longer than 200 meters. Seeding must be specified in the meet announcement.		
Change in Program or Postponement 102.11.2 102.11.4B	At the meet referee's discretion, events may be combined by distance and/or stroke. Should a meet or event have commenced, and in the judgment of the referee cannot safely and effectively continue because of weather conditions or some other compelling reason, the meet or event may be suspended at the referee's sole discretion.		

USMS Rule	USA Swimming/YMCA	NCAA	NFHS
Swimwear 102.12.1E 102.12.1C(1) 102.12.1A	Medical identification items may be worn. Modesty wear is prohibited unless a medical or religious exemption has been granted by USMS. Only swimwear exemptions granted by the USMS Rules Committee chair shall be eligible for consideration at USMS competitions.		
Swimwear 102.12.1C 102.12.1E 102.13.10	*No Difference*	Swimwear may be in one or two pieces. Therapeutic elastic tape is prohibited. Any other kind of tape on the body is not permitted unless approved by the referee.	
Swimwear 102.12.2	USMS does not prohibit wearing the insignia or name of another club, does not regulate the number of logos on swimsuits/caps/goggles, does not prohibit body advertising such as temporary tattoos, and does not prohibit the advertising of political statements. Products involving tobacco, psychoactive cannabinoids, alcohol, or pharmaceuticals containing substances banned under IOC or World Aquatics rules may not be advertised, but the advertiser's name only may be used. Offenders may be barred from competition until they comply with this rule.		
Video Replay Footage 102.13.16	Video replay footage may only be used when approved in writing by the chair of the USMS Officials Committee prior to the meet.		
Personnel 103.1 103.5	USMS does not use a meet jury. A protest committee is used at national championships. At LMSC-sanctioned meets, the meet director and meet referee are responsible for ensuring that the provisions of article 102.14 for protests are followed.		
Disability Accommodations 103.6.9	*No Difference*	The referee may modify any rule for a swimmer who has a disability in accordance with USMS article 107.	
Place Judges 103.10.6	One or two place judges may be positioned at the side of the course near the finish to judge the order of finish of all swimmers. However, judging may not be used to change the results produced by ranking the official times.		
Official Time for a Malfunction on a Lane 103.17.3E	*No Difference*	*No Difference*	When a malfunction is confirmed on a lane, the official time shall be calculated using valid times from the secondary timing system and integrated with accurate primary times to determine the results.

USMS Rule	USA Swimming/YMCA	NCAA	NFHS
Split Requests 103.18.1B 103.18.1C 103.18.2 105.2.2	• If swimmers want their initial splits as part of a longer individual event to be submitted for records or Top 10 consideration, they must notify the referee in writing. • Split requests for backstroke individual events must be submitted prior to the event. • Split requests for all other individual events must be submitted prior to the conclusion of the meet, unless the meet referee has approved the automatic recording of splits, in which case no written request is required. • Requests for relay leadoff splits must be submitted prior to the event. • Relay leadoff splits may not be recorded for official purposes if the second swimmer starts in the water and automatic timing is used, if the second swimmer stands on an active pad while starting from the deck.		
Records and Top 10 103.18.5 103.18.6 103.18.7 103.18.8 103.18.9 table 105.1.5 105.1.6	• World and USMS records may only be established when timed with automatic timing. • In the event of an individual lane malfunction, world and USMS records may be established using a semiautomatic (automatic start and manual finish) secondary system with three, two, or one button(s). • USMS records may be established using a tertiary backup system with a minimum of two valid watches if both the automatic and semiautomatic systems fail. • Winning the heat or event is not required to establish a record. • USMS Top 10 times may be established using an automatic primary timing system, a semiautomatic primary system with a minimum of two buttons, or a manual primary system with a minimum of two watches. • USMS Top 10 times may be established if the automatic primary system fails and the secondary semiautomatic system fails, using a manual tertiary system with a minimum of one watch. • USMS Top 10 times may be established if the semiautomatic primary system fails, using a manual secondary system consisting of a minimum of one watch. • Only results from events conducted in pools officially certified for length in conformance with article 106.2.1 will be accepted for records and Top 10 (see article 105.1.7).		
Records and Top 10 From Leadoff and Initial Splits 103.18.5 103.18.9 table	Relay leadoff splits or initial splits may be considered for world records, USMS records, or USMS Top 10 times when timed with automatic timing. Relay leadoff splits or initial splits may be considered for world records or USMS Top 10 times if the touchpad fails and the times are recorded with a semiautomatic secondary system using three, two, or one button(s), but not for USMS records.		

USMS Rule	USA Swimming/YMCA	NCAA	NFHS
Record Documentation 105.3.9	Required documentation for USMS records includes the referee's signature on the record application; the printout from the automatic timing system or a picture of the timing console showing event, heat, lanes, and times with backups; and a copy of the heat sheet showing the swimmer's name, heat number, and the lane number in which the record was achieved.		
Fresh Water 105.2.4 105.3.5	USMS records and Top 10 times may only be established in fresh water. No records or Top 10 times will be recognized in any kind of sea or ocean water.		
Score 103.14 103.19	*No Difference*	*No Difference*	There is no requirement in USMS to announce the final score or for the meet referee to approve the final score.
Water Depth 106.2.3A(2)	In pools with water depth of 3 feet, 6 inches to less than 4 feet at the starting end, swimmers must start from the deck or within the water. USMS does not have a rule for teaching racing starts or certifying racing start proficiency.		
Water Temperature 106.6	Water temperature from 25 to 28 degrees Celsius (77 to 82 degrees Fahrenheit) shall be maintained for competition. USMS does not address air temperature.		
Athlete Protection and Other Policies	USMS does not address deck changing. USMS does not address shaving in the venue.		
Use of Cameras 102.16	USMS does not allow cameras or other recording devices behind the starting platform during the start of the race and during intermediate relay exchanges. The sanctioning LMSC, meet host, and the referee may further impose restrictions. Operation of a drone is not permitted over open areas of the venue unless credentialed by USMS media policies.		
Protests of Eligibility 102.14.2 104.5.9B	Protests affecting the eligibility of any swimmer to compete or to represent an organization in any race shall be made in writing to the meet director or referee before the race is held, and if the meet director deems it advisable, the swimmer may compete under protest and it shall be so announced before the race. The meet director shall immediately refer such protest to the LMSC officers (local meets) or championship meet protest committee (national championship meets) having jurisdiction for adjudication at the earliest possible time.		

USMS Rule	USA Swimming/YMCA	NCAA	NFHS
Protests Arising From the Competition 102.14.5	Protests arising from the competition itself shall be made within 30 minutes after the race in which the alleged infraction took place. If the protest is not resolved immediately, the protester shall at that time file a written protest with the chair of the Local Masters Swimming Committee (LMSC) or the chair's representative having jurisdiction over the event. If the LMSC does not satisfactorily resolve the protest within 10 days, the protester may appeal in writing to the USMS Rules Committee chair within the next five days for final adjudication, whose decision shall then be binding on all parties.		
Protests of Interpretations 102.14.4	Protests concerning interpretation of Part 1 rules shall be submitted in writing to the chair of the USMS Rules Committee within 10 days.		

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