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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 without alternating movement.

The hands shall be pushed forward together from the breast on, under, or over the water. The elbows shall be under 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 movements of the legs shall be simultaneous 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(4). 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 announcement 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 103.1) 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 semiautomatic 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 semiautomatic 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) The relay is swum by four eligible relay members. The leadoff swimmer's time shall not be nullified by a subsequent disqualification of the remaining relay team members.

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 article 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 104:
National Championship Meets

(Recommended for all other championship meets when possible)

104.1 Meet Categories and Dates
USMS national championship meets shall be awarded in the following categories and held during the following dates:

104.1.1 Short Course (25) Yards or (25) Meters—Between April 15 and May 31.

104.1.2 Long Course (50) Meters—Between August 1 and September 15.

104.1.3 Other Dates—With the approval of the Championship Committee, other dates may be considered.

104.1.4 Dates of LMSC and Zone Championship Meets—When planning dates for LMSC championship meets and zone championship meets, see articles 502.10 and 503.5, respectively.

104.2 Meet Name

The official name shall include the following words: "U.S. Masters Swimming" and "National Championship." The name shall also include the year of the event and may include a title sponsor and any other wording approved by the Championship Committee.

104.3 Awarding of National Championship Meets

The USMS Championship Committee shall be responsible for soliciting eligible bidders to host national championship meets, providing bid information to eligible bidders, establishing appropriate bid deadlines, certifying eligible bidders, and awarding the national championships to host organizations one to three years in advance of the national championship meet. The facilities to be used must comply with the facility standards for competition (article 106). The Championship Committee shall establish a policy for awarding of the championships with the approval of the Board of Directors.

104.4 USMS Assistance and Agreements

The USMS Championship Committee, National Office, and legal counsel shall be responsible for establishing written contract requirements between USMS and the host organization of national championship meets. The Championship Committee shall establish policies, with the approval of the Board of Directors, for financial payments and for providing assistance to the meet host. The Championship Committee shall also establish policies for evaluating meet operations and receiving post-meet reports to document financial operations, lessons learned, and any other information that may be helpful to future meet hosts. The Officials Committee shall establish requirements for and receive a post-meet report from the meet referee.

104.5 Conduct of National Championship Meets

Conduct of national championship meets shall be governed by the swimming rules of USMS Inc.

104.5.1 Information for Participants

A Warm-up schedule—A separate warm-up area must be made available to swimmers during the competition. A list of times when the competition pool and other facilities will be available for warm-up shall be provided in the official meet announcement.

B Heat sheets—For preseeded events, heat sheets listing the name, age, club, seed time, and heat and lane assignments shall be made available to all swimmers at the time of check-in. For deck-seeded events, entry lists with the name, age, club, and time, by time or age group, except relays, shall be made available to all swimmers at the time of check-in. If instead the host chooses to make heat sheets available for deck-seeded events, then the heat sheets for each day, except relays, shall be made available in the morning before those events are swum.

104.5.2 Format—A four-day or five-day national championship meet shall be conducted. The Championship Committee shall set the order of events for each national championship meet.

A A national championship order of events shall not be repeated for at least two years.

B The Championship Committee shall publish the order of events no less than six months before the national championship meet begins.

C In odd-numbered years, men's events shall be odd-numbered. In even-numbered years, men's events shall be even-numbered.

104.5.3 Event Limit

A **Individual events—**Competitors may enter and swim in a maximum of six individual events (or five individual events, if deemed necessary by the Championship Committee), with a maximum of three individual events per day.

B **Relays—**Each competitor shall be allowed to swim in only one freestyle relay, one medley relay, one mixed freestyle relay, and one mixed medley relay of each distance, to a maximum number of relays for each competitor as determined by the Championship Committee.

C **National qualifying times—**There shall be qualifying times for national championship meets unless otherwise determined by the Championship Committee. The procedure for determining the qualification times shall be established by the Championship Committee with the approval of the House of Delegates.

(1) Altitude adjustment—Times achieved at an altitude of 3,000 feet or higher may be adjusted, for national qualifying times purposes only, by subtracting the adjustment times (in seconds) from the actual time achieved. The specific adjustments for each age group and gender are found in Appendix A. The adjustments shall be determined every four years starting in 1998 (see Appendix A for the next scheduled revision of the altitude adjustment charts). The adjustment times for men and women competitors shall be calculated by multiplying the time adjustment in the following table by the ratio of the 200-yard freestyle USMS record for the age group to that of the 25–29 200-yard freestyle for men and women, respectively. The values in the following table shall be those determined and used for the same purpose by USA Swimming.

Note: Records and Top 10, etc., are to be actual times swum, not adjusted for altitude.

	3,000–4,249 ft	4,250–6,499 ft	6,500+ ft
200 meters/yards	0.5	1.2	1.6
400 meters/500 yards	2.5	5.0	7.0
800 meters/1000 yards	5.0	10.0	15.0
1500 meters/1650 yards	11.0	23.0	32.5

(2) Event limit—When qualifying times are in effect, competitors may enter and swim in a maximum of three individual events without meeting the established qualifying times. Competitors may also enter up to three additional events (or two if the maximum event limit is five) in which they have in the past two years achieved a time equal to or better than the qualifying times for those events. The

Championship Committee may choose to put an entry cap on events 200 yards/meters and longer. The Championship Committee may also choose to specify one or more of the following entry limitations for the 800/1000 and/or the 1500/1650 freestyle:

(a) Each competitor may enter only one of these events.

(b) Each competitor may enter both of these events.

(c) Only competitors who meet the qualifying times in both events may enter both events.

(d) One of these events may be restricted to only competitors who meet the qualifying times in that event.

104.5.4 Entry Procedures

A Eligibility

(1) USMS membership—USMS individual membership numbers and club names and abbreviations must be submitted on all entry forms together with entry times. "Pending" as a membership number shall not be permitted except for 18-year-olds as follows: A swimmer who will turn 18 by the day prior to the beginning of competition must enter the meet by the entry deadline as a 17-year-old, provided the swimmer registers with USMS no later than the day prior to competition. An 18-year-old may register for USMS membership at the championship venue on the day prior to the beginning of competition and must be 18 by that date.

(2) Foreign swimmers—Masters swimmers who are members of other federations shall be permitted to participate in national championship meets. Swimmers who enter and participate as members of other federations may not qualify for USMS Top 10 and All-American awards nor set USMS records.

B Entries

(1) Approval of entry form—Entry forms (both individual and relay) and meet announcement shall be prepared following the direction and approval of the Championship Committee.

(2) Distribution of entry form—The individual and relay entry forms and any Championship Committee–approved additional information the host desires shall be posted on the USMS website.

(3) Meet information—The national championship meet announcement and additional information shall be published according to the Championship Committee policy.

(4) Completion of entry form—All competitors, including members of relay teams, must fill out and sign the appropriate entry forms.

(5) Entry time—Swimmers must submit a time for each event. "No time" will not be permitted.

(6) Information on entry—All information regarding seeding must be stated in the meet announcement.

(7) Relay cards—At the time of relay entry submission, relay teams must list the name of the club and each swimmer's full name (as it appears on the USMS membership card), age, and for mixed relays,

gender. Following relay submissions, no changes in the age group or seed time are permitted. Changes in the order of swimming after submission of the relay entry must comply with article 102.9.6 or the relay entry will be removed from the event.

C Entry deadline

(1) Individual entry deadline—The deadline for receipt of entries for national championship meets shall be not more than 35 days prior to the first day of competition.

(2) Relay entry deadline—A relay may be entered until the day before it is scheduled to be swum per the meet announcement. Participants therein must have entered the meet by the individual entry deadline.

(3) Entry receipt deadline—The Championship Committee may establish an entry receipt deadline. All entries must be received by USMS by that deadline to be considered on time.

D Entry fees

(1) The Championship Committee shall determine the individual and relay entry fees.

104.5.5 Seeding

A General procedures for seeding (also see article 102.10)

(1) At the request of the meet director and with the approval of the Championship Committee, any or all events may be deck-seeded. The Championship Committee may mandate deck seeding for any or all events.

(2) All preseeded events and all deck-seeded events 100 yards/meters or less shall be seeded with oldest age groups first, slowest heats swum first in each age group. In the event that swimmers of the same gender are simultaneously swimming in two courses, the Championship Committee may authorize some alteration of this rule to allow for smooth progress of the meet.

(3) Events 200 yards/meters and longer shall be seeded by one of the following methods:

(a) By entry time only, slowest heats swum first,

(b) By age group, the oldest age group first, slowest to fastest within each age group, or,

(c) By a combination of (a) and (b).

The Championship Committee shall make all seeding decisions.

(Note exception provided in article 104.5.5A[7].)

(4) In any age group, if there are not enough swimmers for one complete heat, all swimmers in that age group shall be seeded in adjacent lanes for preseeded events.

(5) After all full heats are seeded within each age group, the remaining swimmers may be seeded with any available age group of remaining swimmers.

(6) In situations where all seeding rules cannot be simultaneously met, the seeding of these heats may diverge slightly from the general seeding procedures, with the concurrence of the Championship Committee.

(7) A swimmer may be seeded in an incomplete heat of another age group if the swimmer's entry time would have a significant impact on the timely running of the meet, as determined by the Championship Committee.

(8) There will be no splitting of age groups into a.m. and p.m. sessions.

(9) At the discretion of the Championship Committee, a swimmer whose entry time will inordinately delay the progress of the meet may be seeded individually in an outside lane with manual timing, thus allowing the continued sequence of the regularly scheduled heats, unless the meet referee concurs that the swimmer has the potential to break a USMS or world record(s).

(10) If a swimmer enters an event with a time significantly slower or faster than that swimmer's recorded time in the past two years, the Championship Committee may, after a discussion with the swimmer, change the seeded time to a realistic time.

B Distance events

(1) The 1000/1650 or 800/1500 freestyle shall be deck-seeded as in article 104.5.5A(3).

(2) For any freestyle event 400 meters or longer, men and women may be seeded together at the discretion of the Championship Committee.

(3) In the 800/1000 and 1500/1650 freestyle, all men and women swimming slower than a standard established by the Championship Committee may be seeded together by time only.

C Multiple courses—When courses are unequal in any way (depth of the course, visibility of timing display, bulkhead turns, type of gutter, or starting blocks, etc.), male and female swimmers shall alternate courses by days. Days for each course shall be determined by the Championship Committee. If the timeline of the meet is significantly affected by this rotation, the Championship Committee may override this requirement.

104.5.6 Club Scoring

A Scoring—All national championship meet scoring and awards shall be treated as if the meet were swum in a 10-lane pool, regardless of the actual number of lanes available. Points shall be awarded as in article 103.19.3A.

B Categories—Club scoring will be tabulated in two categories.

(1) Regional clubs—For competition at national championship meets, a regional club consists of a club made up of those swimmers who represent a club at Nationals, but at competitions within their LMSC, they compete for an entity or subgroup (such as a workout group) that is different than the one they compete with at Nationals.

(2) Local clubs—For competition at national championship meets, a local club consists of a club that does not qualify as a regional club.

(3) Publication—The Championship Committee shall publish a list of regional and local clubs no later than February 15 of each year. A club may contest its designation or the designation of another club by filing an appeal with the chair of the Championship Committee at least 45 days prior to the first day of competition at the national championship meet.

C Overall point total—The overall point totals for each club shall be published in all results documentation.

104.5.7 Awards

A Awards—All top finishers in each race will be given awards regardless of the nationality of the swimmer. Duplicate awards will NOT be given except in the case of ties. Appropriate awards as determined by the Championship Committee will be awarded for places one through 10.

B USMS championship award—(i.e., patch or some similar award to be determined by the Championship Committee). Each individual who wins a short course or long course individual or relay event shall be awarded a USMS championship award. Swimmers winning more than one event may purchase one additional award for each additional event won.

C Club awards—The organization conducting the national championship meet shall provide awards as approved by the Championship Committee in accordance with the scoring method. Points scored for a club will be the sum of all points scored by members competing for that club in events for men, women, and relays.

104.5.8 Results

A Posting of meet results—Event results shall be posted and splits for each swimmer shall be made available in accordance with article 103.7.2E.

B Publication of meet results—Meet results in the appropriate format (see Appendix A, "Preparation of Meet Results") and club scores shall be published within 30 days of the last day of the meet and posted on the USMS website. Electronic files shall be sent to the Championship Committee chair and the USMS Records and Tabulation Committee chair.

104.5.9 Protest Procedure

A Protests against judgment decisions of starters, stroke and turn judges, and relay takeoff judges may only be considered by the referee of the meet.

B Protests affecting the eligibility of an individual, a relay team, or a club to compete, or protests arising from the competition itself, shall be handled by a panel of five persons. The panel shall be composed of one representative each from the Championship Committee and Rules Committee, if present, plus three other participants selected from other than the host club by the protest panel chair or Championship Committee liaison. This panel shall be chaired by the representative from the Championship Committee. Protests shall be submitted in writing and heard by the panel. Both the party lodging the protest and the party charged shall be afforded a chance to be heard. Decisions shall be rendered no

later than the last day of competition. The decision of the panel shall be final.

C Any protests made following the close of competition shall be directed to the chair of the Championship Committee for resolution.

104.5.10 Personnel (also see article 103)

A Meet director—The meet director shall follow the swimming rules of USMS Inc. and the policies and procedures established by the Championship Committee with regard to the planning and execution of the requirements for a national championship meet.

B Officials

(1) Meet referee

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

(b) The meet referee shall develop a leadership team (lead administrative official, head starter, and lead chief judge) and submit the names to the chairs of the Championship and Officials Committees for approval.

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

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

C Other personnel

(1) Minimum other personnel—The minimum other personnel at each session of a USMS national championship meet shall include the following:

(a) Two timers per lane for each course, each using a backup button, and at least one timer using a stopwatch.

(b) One recall rope operator for each course if a recall rope is used.

(c) One safety marshal for each end of each pool in use for warm-ups.

(2) Sufficient number—A sufficient number of administrative officials (including timing equipment operators) shall be assigned to ensure that rules and procedures regarding seeding, official time determination, results, and certification of records are followed.

(3) Overhead video cameras—Where overhead video cameras are used, the referee shall make further modifications as appropriate and shall ensure that timers' duties in articles 103.11.2A and D and 103.11.3B are assigned to other meet personnel.

D Availability of officials—In the event of insufficient personnel, the meet referee may modify or combine assignments, except that the deck referee and starter may not be the same person and lane timers may not operate two similar timing devices simultaneously.

104.5.11 Facilities and Equipment (Also See Article 106)

A If more than one course is to be used in a national championship meet, then each course must have its own automatic timing system.

B All courses shall have automatic timing equipment and an electronic readout board(s) with the capability of displaying times for all lanes simultaneously.

C The event number and heat number for each heat in the water shall be displayed at all times during the competition in a location easily visible to all participants for each course being used.

ARTICLE 105: Records, Top 10 Times, and All-American Recognition

105.1 Requirements for Records, Top 10 Times, and All-American

105.1.1 Sanction/Recognition—All times to be considered for records, Top 10, and All-American recognition must be achieved in USMS-sanctioned meets or USMS-recognized events.

105.1.2 Deadlines—Times to be considered for records and Top 10 times shall be achieved and submitted as follows:

Course	Times Shall Be Achieved On or Before:	Times Shall Be Forwarded to Records and Tabulation Chair Or Designee By:	Season
Short Course Yards	May 31*	June 30**	June 1– May 31
Long Course Meters	September 30*	October 20**	October 1– September 30
Short Course Meters	December 31	January 20	January 1– December 31

*If USMS requests that a meet host conduct a USMS national championship meet after the season-ending date, times achieved at all USMS/World Aquatics meets up to and including Nationals after the season-ending date (May 31 or September 30) shall be considered for USMS Top 10 for the season that just ended, not the next year's season.

**Should a USMS national championship meet occur after the submission deadline for that course, times from meets through Nationals shall be forwarded to the Records and Tabulation chair or designee by the last day of the month in which that meet was completed or by the 15th of the following month, if the meet was held in the last two weeks of the month.

105.1.3 **LMSC Responsibility—**Each LMSC is responsible for reporting the Top 10 times, USMS records, and world records achieved in its LMSC in the appropriate format (see Appendix A), including all times achieved by swimmers from other LMSCs.

105.1.4 **Required Information—**To be considered for USMS Top 10 times or for USMS records, eligibility for all individual times and relay leadoff times is based on current USMS membership. The results must contain the full name (as it appears on the USMS membership card) and age of each swimmer. All relay times must include the name of the club and the full name (as it appears on the USMS membership card), the age, and for mixed relays, the gender of each swimmer.

105.1.5 **Acceptable Times—**Only those results from events conducted in pools in conformance with article 106.2.1 shall be acceptable for record applications or Top 10 submissions.

105.1.6 **Pool Certification**

A Record applications and Top 10 submissions shall not be accepted unless certification of course length accompanies them or is on file with USMS or World Aquatics.

B Pool certification shall be reported on the USMS pool length certification form (see Appendix A). USA Swimming verification of pool length certification will be accepted if it meets the USMS requirements for pool measurement (article 105.1.7B).

C Certification data need only be filed once unless structural changes, including resurfacing, have occurred since the original certification.

105.1.7 **Pool Measurement**

A The length of the course must be measured for all lanes using a steel tape or other acceptable measuring device. The measurement must be attested to by the person performing the measurements. The measurement must be recorded:

(1) In feet and inches and fractions of an inch or

(2) In meters and centimeters.

B A statement of the conditions under which the course was measured must be included as stipulated on the USMS pool length certification form (Appendix A).

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

D If a movable bulkhead is used and the initial pool length certification for all lanes is on file, the measurement rules and policies of World Aquatics shall be the standard for events sanctioned by a World Aquatics Masters Member Federation other than USMS.

E If a movable bulkhead is used and the initial pool length certification for all lanes is on file, the measurement rules and policies of USA Swimming shall be the standard for Top 10 eligibility for events sanctioned or approved by USA-S. A bulkhead placement confirmation measurement

is required for a USMS record set at events sanctioned or approved by USA-S. The measurement rules and policies of USMS shall apply for dual-sanctioned events.

105.2 Top 10 Times

105.2.1 The USMS Top 10 times list shall be published annually for each age division and for each gender for the events listed under article 102.5.

105.2.2 Split times shall be considered for Top 10 times if:

A The time meets the requirements for an official time.

B In an individual event other than backstroke, the request to have a split time recorded is brought to the attention of the meet referee in writing prior to the conclusion of the meet. A written request is not required for individual events (other than backstroke) in national championship meets or other meets, in accordance with article 103.18.2, when the meet referee has approved automatic splits.

C In a relay event or in an individual backstroke event, the request to have a split time recorded is brought to the attention of the meet referee in writing prior to the swim. A written request is not required for relay leadoff splits (other than initial splits within a backstroke leadoff distance) in national championship meets or other meets, in accordance with article 103.18.2, when the meet referee has approved automatic splits.

D In an individual event the swimmer completes the full distance of the scheduled event without being disqualified and performs a legal finish at the initial distance.

E For a relay leadoff split time when automatic timing is used, the second swimmer does not start in the water or invalidate the pad touch by standing on an active touchpad at the exchange if starting from the deck. The leadoff swimmer's time shall not be nullified by a subsequent disqualification of the remaining relay team members if the relay is swum by four eligible relay members.

F In nonconforming individual or relay events, the initial distance corresponds to an event listed in article 102.5. The relay event itself and the individual event itself need not conform to article 102.5 as long as the distance and stroke are clearly defined.

Such split times shall be included separately in the summary of results prepared by the meet director, and submitted to the LMSC Top 10 recorder.

105.2.3 In order for a time to be valid for Top 10 times consideration, a minimum primary timing quality of two manual times, averaged per USMS rules (see article 103.17.3), shall be used.

105.2.4 A Top 10 time can only be made in fresh water. No Top 10 times will be recognized in any kind of sea or ocean water.

105.3 USMS Records

105.3.1 The fastest official time by a USMS member in each event in a USMS-sanctioned or USMS-recognized competition, as verified in accordance with article 105.3.9, shall be designated as a USMS record. For open water and long distance records, see article 308.

105.3.2 Records shall be achieved only in distances and strokes as listed in article 102.5.

105.3.3 Records must be made in accordance with all pertinent rules of USMS.

105.3.4 A record can only be made in still water.

105.3.5 A record can only be made in fresh water. No records will be recognized in any kind of sea or ocean water.

105.3.6 The official time for establishing records shall be achieved and determined in accordance with articles 103.11, 103.17, and 103.18.

105.3.7 Split times shall be considered for USMS records if:

A They are recorded by automatic timing equipment.

B They meet the requirements of articles 105.2.2B–F.

Such split times shall be included separately in the summary of results prepared by the meet director and submitted to the LMSC Top 10 recorder.

105.3.8 Record times shall be submitted in hundredths of a second (two decimal places). If times are tied to the hundredth of a second, the results shall be declared a tie and records shared by all swimmers thus tied.

105.3.9 The following requirements for USMS record applications must be fulfilled:

A When a record is claimed in meets other than USMS national championship meets:

(1) An official USMS record application form (Appendix A) shall be:

(a) Completed and signed by the designated officials.

(b) Transmitted immediately following the performance with all supporting data to the records and tabulation chair for the LMSC in which the event was sanctioned or recognized.

(2) Supporting data shall include:

(a) The timing system printout or a picture of the timing console showing event, heat, lanes, and times with backups.

(b) A copy of the heat sheet, which shall show the swimmer's name, heat number, and lane number in which the record was achieved.

Official meet results are encouraged.

(3) The LMSC may assign this responsibility to the LMSC records chair or to the meet director.

B The LMSC records chair shall send the supporting data to the chair of the USMS Records and Tabulation Committee or designee within 90 days of the end of the season (see article 105.1.2). Note that if the USMS record is also a World Aquatics Masters record, the record application must be received within 30 days of the swim and not 90 days after the close of the season.

C Upon verification, the chair of the USMS Records and Tabulation Committee or designee shall promptly publish the new record on the USMS website.

D A record application shall not be accepted unless a copy of a birth certificate or passport accompanies it or is on file with USMS or has been

sent to the chair of the USMS Records and Tabulation Committee or designee by the individual or relay applicants.

E Record applications are not required for times reported in the official electronic meet database from USMS national championship meets. If necessary, the chair of the USMS Records and Tabulation Committee or designee may request additional information (including timing system printouts) to resolve discrepancies in reported times.

F With the exception of World Aquatics World Masters Championships, record applications for times achieved in meets held outside of the United States shall be submitted on official USMS record application forms (Appendix A) and are subject to all pertinent requirements. Record applications are not required for times reported in the official results from World Aquatics World Masters Championships.

105.4 All-American and All-Star

105.4.1 Individual All-American—The USMS member with the fastest listed time for an individual event for that season shall be declared the All-American in that event for the year.

105.4.2 Relay All-American—The USMS members from each relay team with the fastest listed time for that season shall be declared the relay All-Americans in that event for the year.

105.4.3 All-Star—The USMS member with the most individual All-American finishes for all three seasons in each age group and gender shall be declared the All-Star in that age group and gender for the year. If two or more swimmers have the same number of All-American finishes, then points will be assigned to all the Top 10 rankings of the tied swimmers for the year, and the swimmer with the highest sum will be declared the All-Star.

105.5 World Records

Applications and documentation for world records (25-meter and 50-meter courses only) shall be submitted to the USMS Records and Tabulation Committee chair or designee as detailed in Appendix A (see also articles 103.18.5–103.18.9).

ARTICLE 106:
Facilities Standards

IMPORTANT: Swimmers are advised that United States Masters Swimming Inc. accepts no responsibility or liability for injuries resulting from accidents occurring in facilities not owned by United States Masters Swimming Inc., and strongly urges that all safety precautions be observed during sanctioned events.

106.1 Definitions

106.1.1 [M]—Mandatory requirement for all competition.

106.1.2 [M*]—Predicated upon facility availability, LMSCs may waive strict compliance with these requirements when sanctioning local competition.

106.1.3 [M‡]—Mandatory requirement; sanctioned events may be conducted in facilities not meeting these requirements but the results of those events shall not count for USMS records and Top 10. It must be noted in the meet announcement that events conducted in these facilities are noncompliant.

106.1.4 [NC]—Mandatory requirement for national championship meets and international competition.

106.1.5 Where dimensions are given, the dimension listed first shall govern and dimensions given in parentheses are for reference only.

106.2 Racing Course Dimensions

106.2.1 Length

A Long course meters—50.00 meters (164 feet, ½ inch). [M]

B Short course meters—25.00 meters (82 feet, ¼ inch). [M]

C Short course yards—25.00 yards. [M]

D Dimensional tolerance—Against the required length, a tolerance of minus 0.00 meter in each lane used for competition on both end walls at all points from 0.3 meter above (if the wall or timing pad extends to this height; otherwise to the top of the wall or pad) to 0.8 meter below the surface of the water is allowed. [M‡]

E Touchpads—When automatic officiating touchpads are used at one or both ends of the course, the length of the course with the touchpads in place shall not be less than the required minimum. [M‡]

F Movable bulkheads—When the racing course is fixed by the use of movable bulkheads, such bulkheads shall be capable of resisting lateral deflection due to tension exerted by the attachment of the lane dividers to ensure the required course distance in all lanes. [M]

106.2.2 Width—Minimum lane width for competitive swimming shall be 7 feet (2.13 meters). [M*, NC]

106.2.3 Water Depth

A Starting end—Minimum water depth for racing starts, as measured for a distance of 3 feet, 3½ inches (1.0 meter) to 16 feet, 5 inches (5.0 meters) from the end wall, during either competition or practice shall be as follows:

(1) In pools with water depth less than 3 feet, 6 inches (1.07 meters) at the starting end:

(a) The swimmer must start in the water. [M]

(b) Backstroke starting ledges are not permitted. [M]

(2) In pools with water depth 3 feet, 6 inches (1.07 meters) to less than 4 feet (1.22 meters) at the starting end, the swimmer must start from the deck or from in the water. Backstroke starting ledges are not permitted. [M]

(3) In pools with water depth 4 feet (1.22 meters) or more at the starting end, platforms shall meet the height requirements of article 106.11.1. [M]

B Racing course—Minimum water depth shall be 2 meters (6 feet, 7 inches) throughout the course. Based on facility availability, the Championship Committee may waive this requirement for national championship meets. [NC]

106.3 Racing Course Walls

106.3.1 Permanent Course—Walls enclosing the racing course shall be parallel and vertical. The end walls shall be at a right angle to the water surface and shall be constructed of solid material with a nonslip surface that extends no less than 0.8 meter (2 feet, 7½ inches) below the water surface. [M]

106.3.2 Movable Bulkhead Course Walls—If a continuous recessed hand grip is provided at or near the water surface in a movable bulkhead, the horizontal dimension of the recess perpendicular to the bulkhead should not be less than 6 inches (0.15 meter) and designed in a manner to prevent the swimmer's fingers from contacting the back surface of the recess. [M]

106.4 Pool and Bulkhead Markings

106.4.1 Pool Bottom Lane Markers—Minimum 10-inch-wide (25-centimeter) lines of a dark contrasting color (preferably black) shall be provided in the middle of each racing lane on the bottom of the pool. The lines should be uninterrupted the length of the course and shall end with a distinctive cross line 3 feet, 4 inches (1.0 meter) long and the same width as the bottom center marker. The line, including the cross line, shall terminate 6 feet, 7 inches (2.0 meters) from each end wall. [M*, NC]

106.4.2 End Wall Targets—Flush, nonslip targets in the shape of a "T" or across and the same width as the lane bottom markers shall be provided in the center of each lane on each end wall of the course and shall extend at least 3 feet, 4 inches (1.0 meter) below the level of the water surface. It is recommended that the top edge of the deck be of a contrasting color to provide a visual target above the water at the end of the course. [M*, NC]

106.4.3 Lane Numbers—The lanes shall be numbered from right to left as the swimmers stand facing the course from the starting end of the pool. 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. Lane numbers shall clearly identify the lanes to officials stationed on each side of the course. [M*]

106.4.4 15-Meter Marks—Fixed distinctive marks shall be placed on either the pool wall or deck surface adjacent to any outside lane at a distance of 15 meters from each end wall of the course. These marks should also be used to correctly align the distinctive floats on the lane dividers, but the fixed marks on the deck or walls take precedence for judging. [M]

106.5 Overflow Recirculation System

The pool water recirculation and overflow system shall maintain the water level in line with the overflow rim of the pool gutters without creating appreciable current or water turbulence and shall maintain a smooth and calm water surface during competition. [M]

106.6 Water Temperature

Water temperature from 25 to 28 degrees Celsius (77 to 82 degrees Fahrenheit) shall be maintained for competition. [M*, NC]

106.7 Ladders

All ladders, steps, or stairs within the racing course should be recessed in the pool side walls or removed during competition. [M*, NC]

106.8 Other Deck Equipment

106.8.1 Unobstructed Deck—Use of portable lifeguard chair stands and other deck fixtures is recommended. They should be removed from the competition area to allow free passage and unobstructed view for competitors and officials along all sides of the course. [M*, NC]

106.8.2 Diving Boards—One-meter diving boards that overhang the racing course shall be hinged out of the way or removed during competition. [M*, NC]

106.9 Lighting

106.9.1 Illumination—For indoor pools, 100 foot-candle illumination level is required at the water surface over the entire course. Overhead light fixtures shall be located to avoid the casting of shadows by the pool walls over the racing course. [M*, NC]

106.9.2 National Championship Meets—At national championship meets the same type and level of illumination must be provided and maintained during the warm-up period and competition. [NC]

106.10 No Smoking Signs

No smoking indoors or outdoors shall be permitted in any area designated for swimmers, including spectator seating, standing, and eating areas, and "No Smoking" signs shall be so posted. [M]

106.11 Starting Platforms

106.11.1 Height (Subject to the Provisions of Article 106.2.3)

A Long course and short course meters—The front edge of the starting platform shall be no less than 0.50 meter (1 foot, 8 inches) nor more than 0.75 meter (2 feet, 5½ inches) above the surface of the water. [M]

B Short course yards—The front edge of the starting platform shall be not higher than 2 feet, 6 inches (0.762 meter) above the surface of the water. [M]

106.11.2 Front Edge of Platform—The front edge of the starting platform shall be flush with the face of the end walls. [M]

106.11.3 Size and Slope of Platform—The top surface of the starting platform shall be not less than 0.50 by 0.50 meters (20 inches by 20 inches) and shall slope not more than 10 degrees from the horizontal. It may have an adjustable-setting back plate. The entire surface of the platform shall be faced with permanent nonslip material. [M]

106.11.4 Forward Start Handgrips—Handgrips for the forward start may be installed on the sides of the starting platform. [M*]

106.11.5 Backstroke Starting Grips—Starting platforms shall be equipped with firm starting grips located between 0.3 meter (12 inches) and 0.6 meter (24 inches) above the water surface. The front edge of the grips shall be parallel to and flush with the face of the end wall. [M]

106.11.6 Lane Numbers—Starting platforms shall be clearly marked with lane numbers visible to competitors and officials. [M]

106.11.7 **Stability of Platforms—**Starting platforms shall be anchored to the deck or bulkhead to remain stable at all times. [M]

106.12 Backstroke Ledge

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

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

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

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

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

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

106.13 Floating Lane Dividers and Markings

106.13.1 **Installation—**Floating lines dividing each lane shall extend the full length of the course and shall be attached at each end wall with recessed anchors so located that the center line of the cable securing the lane lines shall be on the surface of the water, with the bottom half of the floats uniformly submerged for its entire length. They shall:

A Separate the racing lanes. [M]

B Be outside the outermost lanes being used. [M*]

106.13.2 **Size, Color, and Safety—**Dividers shall consist of contiguous floats having a minimum diameter of 5 centimeters (2 inches) to a maximum diameter of 15 centimeters (6 inches). The color of the floats extending from the walls the distance of 5 meters (16 feet, 6 inches) for long course and short course meters, and 15 feet for short course yards, shall be distinct from the rest of the floats. Distinctive colored floats, or markers extending around the full circumference of the floats, shall be placed at 15 meters (49 feet, 2½ inches) from each end wall in both short course and long course pools. Damaged or broken floats shall be removed and/or replaced to the extent possible. [M]

106.13.3 **Number of Lane Lines—**A single lane line between racing lanes shall be used in long course and short course meters competition. Multiple lane lines may be installed for short course yards competition, provided the width of water between dividers is not reduced to less than 7 feet. [M*, NC]

106.13.4 **National Championship Meets—**Minimum 11-centimeter-diameter floats shall be required for national championship meets. [NC]

106.14 Backstroke Flags and Lines

106.14.1 **Design—**At least three triangular pennants 6 to 12 inches in width at the base and 12 to 18 inches in vertical length, of two or more alternating and contrasting colors, shall be suspended on a firmly stretched line over each lane for all backstroke, individual medley, and medley relay events. [M]

106.14.2 **Location**

A Long course and short course meters—5 meters (16 feet, 5 inches) from each end of the course, a minimum of 1.8 meters (5 feet, 11 inches)

to a maximum of 2.5 meters (8 feet, 3 inches) above the water surface. [M]

B Short course yards—15 feet (4.57 meters) from each end of the course, 7 feet (2.13 meters) above the water surface. [M]

C Measurement—Height shall be measured to the horizontal line from which the pennants are suspended. [M]

106.14.3 Marking at Midpoint of Course—For long course backstroke, individual medley, and medley relay events, a firmly stretched ¼-inch (7-millimeter) line without flags or pennants may be suspended at the midpoint of the course.

106.15 Loudspeaker Starting System

An electronic sound-generating device shall be provided to give the starting and recall signal. Loudspeakers may be mounted underneath or on the side of each starting platform, between every two platforms, on each side of the racing course, or positioned behind the starting platforms in such a manner that equitable dispersion of sound to all lanes is assured. The device shall also activate a strobe light or similar visual signal located on the starter's side of the course approximately 15 feet forward from the starting end, to indicate the start to manual timers and swimmers who are deaf or hard of hearing (also see article 107.3). The starting system may include an underwater recall speaker and final-lap signal option. [NC]

106.16 Recall Device

A device to recall swimmers shall be provided. If a recall rope is used, it shall be placed at the midpoint of the course in long course facilities and at the turn end backstroke flags in short course facilities. The rope shall be attached to vertical stanchions with a quick-release mechanism and shall be suspended at least 4 feet (1.22 meters) above the water surface at the lowest point. [M*]

106.17 Pace Clocks

There shall be at least two large, accurate timing devices or clocks for each warm-up course, preferably located on opposite sides of the course, clearly visible to all swimmers. [M*, NC]

106.18 Automatic Timing Equipment

106.18.1 Installation and Safety—Equipment shall be installed so that it will not interfere with swimmers' starts, turns, or finishes or the normal overflow functions of the pool water recirculation system. All deck-level wiring shall be no more than 12 volts. [M]

106.18.2 Power Source—See article 103.17 for automatic and semiautomatic timing equipment types and performance requirements. Equipment powered directly from the utility line electrical service shall have the capability to automatically switch to standby battery power source in case of line power failure without affecting the continuity and accuracy of the timing system. [NC]

106.18.3 Touchpads

A Size and thickness—Recommended pad size shall be 6 feet, 6 inches (2 meters) wide and not less than 2 feet (0.6 meter) deep. Minimum width of pads shall be 5 feet (1.52 meters). Thickness shall not exceed 3/8-inch (1 centimeter). [NC]

B Markings—Panel face markings shall conform to and superimpose on pool end wall markings as closely as possible. Perimeter edges of the panel shall have a 1-inch-wide (0.025-meter) black border. [NC]

C Sensitivity—Panels shall stop the timing system instantaneously by a light hand touch anywhere on the flat surface facing the race course and the upper edge, but shall not be activated by water turbulence. [NC]

D Installation and safety—Panels shall be installed and firmly anchored in the center of each lane and shall have no sharp edges, corners, or other protrusions on any exposed surfaces. [NC]

106.18.4 Optional Accessories—Automatic timing equipment may provide relay judging capability, automatic lap counting, split time readouts for all lanes, correction of erroneous touch, and television equipment tie-in. Any corrections or impulses generated by the equipment operators shall be clearly identified on the results printout.

106.18.5 Time Display Board (Optional, Except for National Championships)—An automatic display board visible to all swimmers shall give a digital-time readout to two decimal places, displaying split times, final times, and places for all lanes. In the event of a tie, the place shall be displayed as a tie. A separate line of display for each lane meeting the above requirements shall be provided for national championship meets on all courses. [NC]

106.19 Electrical Safety

All permanent or temporary electrical connections to the electronic loudspeaker start system, automatic timing equipment, and other electrical or electronic devices operating on line voltages in the vicinity of the racing course shall be made only from ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) protected convenience receptacles or circuits. In the event such receptacles or circuits are not available in the facility used for competition, portable UL-approved self-contained GFCI outlet fittings shall be provided (furnished and installed) at the nonprotected convenience receptacles by the meet management, meet director, or equipment operator(s), whenever such equipment is connected and in use. [M]

ARTICLE 107:
Guidelines for Officiating Swimmers With a Disability in USMS Meets

107.1 General

107.1.1 Authority—The USMS rules and regulations grant the referee the authority to modify the rules for the swimmer with a disability (see article 103.6.9). This section contains guidelines and suggestions for making such modifications.

107.1.2 Responsibilities

A Swimmer/coach—The swimmer (or the swimmer's coach) is responsible for notifying the referee, prior to the competition, of any swimmer with a disability and of the requested accommodations and/or modifications. The swimmer/coach shall provide personal assistant(s) or any equipment (tappers, deck mats, etc.) if required.

B Meet referee—The meet referee's responsibilities include:

(1) Determining if the requested accommodations/modifications are appropriate and can be met.

(2) Instructing the deck referee and starter as to how the accommodations and/or modifications will be made for the swimmer with a disability.

(3) In communication with the remaining officials a meet referee may:

(a) Instruct them to observe and report ANY violation of the rules and apply article 107 to confirm or overturn the call against the approved modification(s) or

(b) Share the specific modification(s) and instruct them to observe and report any violation except the approved modification(s).

107.1.3 Accommodations/Modifications

A Accommodations are considerations which allow a swimmer with a disability to access the facility (locker rooms, restrooms, pool deck, warm-up/warm-down pool) and afford the athlete the time, assistance, and deck space required to obtain a starting position for each event. Accommodations which the meet referee may approve for the swimmer with a disability include but are not limited to:

(1) Reassignment of lanes within a heat, e.g., exchanging lanes 2 and 7.

(2) Allowing a swimmer to have a personal assistant(s) for any reason approved by the meet referee.

(3) Assuring proximity for wheelchair access from the deck to the block.

B Modifications are any exception to the technical rules approved by the meet referee (see article 103.6.9) allowing a parallel performance for a swimmer with a disability. Aids to buoyancy or speed are not allowed (see articles 102.12.1E and 102.13.10). Modifications which the referee may approve for the swimmer with a disability include but are not limited to:

(1) Personal assistant to act as a tapper at the turn and finish walls for a swimmer who is blind or has low vision.

(2) Use of visual starting signal(s) (strobe and hand signals) for a swimmer that is deaf or hard of hearing.

(3) Inability of the swimmer to turn a foot out in breaststroke during the propulsive part of the kick.

(4) Examples of other allowable modifications are further described in this section under the type of disability. Allowable modifications in accordance with article 107 shall affect the current meet and shall not set a precedent (see article 103.6.9).

107.2 Blind and Visually Impaired

107.2.1 **Start**—With an audible starting system, no modification is usually required for a swimmer who is blind or has vision loss. A swimmer may, however, require assistance getting to the chosen starting position.

107.2.2 **Turns and Finishes**—A swimmer who is blind or has vision loss is permitted to have personal assistants (tappers) who use poles with soft-tipped ends to tap the swimmer as notification of turns and the finish. Sound devices shall

not be used. It is the swimmer's responsibility to provide the tapper(s), who shall be positioned within the confines of the swimmer's lane at the ends of the pool.

107.2.3 **Relay Takeoffs**—A physical touch may be required to signal when the relay swimmer's teammate has touched the wall. The specific method may be tailored to the swimmer's preference, so long as it does not aid the swimmer's takeoff or interfere with the timing.

107.3 Deaf and Hard of Hearing

107.3.1 **Visual Starting Signal**—Swimmers who are deaf or hard of hearing require a visual starting signal (i.e., a strobe light and/or starter's arm signals). The referee may reassign lanes within the swimmer's heat (i.e., exchanging one lane for another) so that the strobe light or starter's arm signal can more readily be seen by the swimmer who is deaf or hard of hearing. Standard starter's arm signals are shown in Figures 1 and 2. A recall rope is required in the event of a recall, provided the meet host is notified by the entry deadline that a swimmer who is deaf or hard of hearing will be participating.

107.3.2 **Strobe Light Location**—The starter shall advise the swimmers about the location of the strobe light, and the light shall be located where the swimmers can clearly see it for the start. For backstroke starts, the light should be positioned so that the swimmers do not have to turn their heads to look backwards.

107.4 Cognitively Disabled

The swimmer may be permitted to have a personal assistant on the deck when necessary. No other specific rule modifications are required other than patience and clarity in communicating instructions.

107.5 Physical Disabilities

107.5.1 **Start**—Swimmers with physical disabilities:

A May take longer to assume their starting positions.

B May have difficulty holding the starting platform or pool end for a start.

C May need assistance from someone on the deck to maintain a starting position.

D May use a modified starting position on the blocks, deck, or in the water. Examples of modified starting positions are shown in Figures 3 and 4.

E Shall use a forward start for breaststroke and butterfly. The referee, however, may allow modifications, such as the following:

(1) The swimmer may start from a sitting position on the block or on the deck.

(2) The swimmer may assume a starting position in the water, with or without assistance.

(3) If the swimmer cannot use a hand and/or foot to maintain contact with the wall, some other part of the body may be used.

(4) For breaststroke and butterfly, after the start and after each turn, a swimmer who is unable to push off with the leg(s) may perform one asymmetrical stroke to attain the breast position.



Figure 1. FORWARD START.

A Twist hand at chin level—short whistles

B Arm overhead—"long whistle"—swimmer steps onto starting block

C Arm moves to shoulder level—signal to "Take your marks"

D Arm moves to side of body—starting signal

E Arm raised overhead with palm up (at any time after C. ["Take your marks"] and prior to D. [starting signal])—swimmer released from "Take your marks" command



Figure 2. BACKSTROKE START.

A. Twist hand at chin level—short whistles

B. Arm overhead—"long whistle"—swimmer enters water; drop arm to side while swimmer enters water

C. Arm overhead—swimmer returns to backstroke start position

D. Arm moves to shoulder level—signal to "Take your marks"

E. Arm moves to side of body—starting signal

F. Arm raised overhead with palm up (at any time after D. ["Take your marks"] and prior to E. [starting signal])—swimmer released from "Take your marks" command.

107.5.2 Stroke/Kick—In judging the stroke or kick of a swimmer with a physical disability, the referee and stroke and turn judge should follow the general rule that if a part of the body is absent or cannot be used, it is not judged; if it is used during the stroke or kick, it should be judged in accordance with the USMS rules.

Judgments should be made based on the actual rule—not on the swimmer's technique. For example, the breaststroke swimmer with one arm or leg shorter than the other may have a nonsymmetrical stroke or kick, but as long as the arm or leg action is simultaneous, it would meet that portion of the rule.

107.5.3 Turns/Finishes

A Touches shall be judged in the same manner as strokes and kicks (i.e., on the basis of the arm[s] and/or hand[s] that the swimmer can use). In breaststroke and butterfly events, the competitor must reach forward as if attempting a simultaneous two-handed touch. When a swimmer has different arm lengths, only the longer arm must touch the wall, but both arms must be stretched forward simultaneously. Swimmers with no arms or with upper limbs too short to stretch above the head may touch the wall with any part of the upper body.

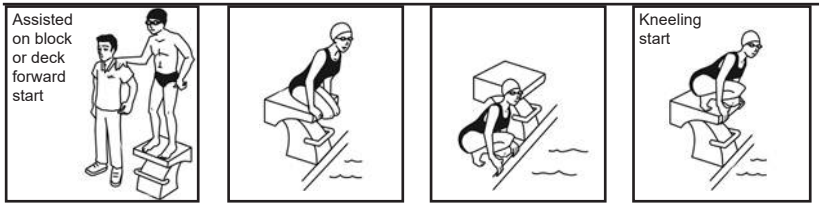


Figure 3. MODIFIED STARTING POSITIONS FROM BLOCK OR DECK.

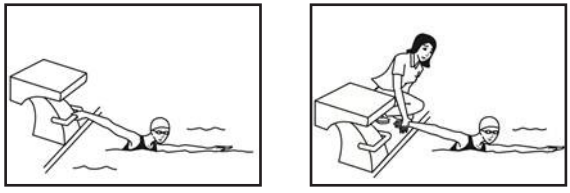


Figure 4. MODIFIED STARTING POSITIONS FROM THE POOL.

B At the turn and finish of the butterfly, an athlete with no leg function is permitted to perform a partial stroke with the arm(s) recovering forward under the surface of the water in order to touch the wall.

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 A 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:

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

B Swimwear Design (article 102.12.1)

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

D 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.

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

F 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.