2024 U.S. MASTERS SWIMMING CODE OF REGULATIONS AND RULES OF COMPETITION

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

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

This is an official publication of United States Masters Swimming Inc., the national governing body for Masters Swimming in the United States. Additional copies of this book may be purchased at a cost of \$12 per copy for shipping and handling from the USMS National Office at the above address.

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On the Cover: Swimmers gather for the start of Swim to the Moon in Pinckney, Michigan. Photo by Aaron Palaian.

Rule Book Dedication

Patty Miller certainly has lived that ancient Chinese blessing (or is it a curse?), "May you live in interesting times."

During her presidency, she oversaw two strategic plan updates and hired USMS's current CEO. Her day job as an attorney also made her an ideal member of the Governance, Legislation, and Election Committees. Also during her presidency, USMS brought College Club Swimming into the fold and Patty became the first president of U.S. Aquatic Sports to have come from the ranks of USMS.

Before becoming president, she was legal counsel for USMS for many years and served on innumerable other committees. It's no wonder then that in 2013 she was the recipient of the Capt. Ransom J. Arthur M.D. Award, joining her husband, Jim Miller, who won the award in 1999, in the pantheon of Ransom Arthur winners.

She's no slouch in the pool either, having achieved 96 individual Top 10 swims, mostly in breaststroke events, and 82 relay Top 10 swims. Husband Jim Miller



Pattv Miller

says, "The combination of athlete, leadership, innovation, insight, and motivation while empowering others is so unique! She is amazing, and USMS has benefited tremendously from her dedication."

Patty has served USMS in so many ways that singling out just one or two of her accomplishments is difficult. But one reason the 2024 rule book is being dedicated to her is that it is an honor long overdue. And the timing is right: This will be the first year since 2002 that she has not been a member of the Board of Directors (except for a brief two-year hiatus) as legal counsel, president, or past-president.

Enjoy your Zoom-free evenings, Patty!

Previous Rule Book Dedications

June Krauser		Championships
Mary Lee Watson		Organizing Committee
Kathrine Casey and Gail	2008	Steve Schofield
Dummer	2009	Meg Smath
All USMS volunteers	2010	Bill Volckening
E. Kevin Kelly	2011	Tracy Grilli
Dorothy Donnelly	2012	Esther Lyman
Jack Geoghegan	2013	Rob Copeland
USMS All-Americans	2015	June Krauser
F.H. "Ted" Haartz	2016	Rob Butcher
Jim Matysek	2017	Tom Taylor
Gene Donner and the staff	2018	Anna Lea Matysek
of Gateway Printing	2019	Jeffrey Roddin
Nancy Ridout	2020	Ralph Davis
Tom Boak	2021	Ray Novitske
Joanne Tingley	2022	Ted Haartz
Walt Reid	2023	Teri White
Pieter Cath		
Pacific Masters XI FINA		
World Masters		
	Mary Lee Watson Kathrine Casey and Gail Dummer All USMS volunteers E. Kevin Kelly Dorothy Donnelly Jack Geoghegan USMS All-Americans F.H. "Ted" Haartz Jim Matysek Gene Donner and the staff of Gateway Printing Nancy Ridout Tom Boak Joanne Tingley Walt Reid Pieter Cath Pacific Masters XI FINA	Mary Lee Watson Kathrine Casey and Gail Dummer 2009 All USMS volunteers E. Kevin Kelly Dorothy Donnelly Jack Geoghegan 2013 USMS All-Americans F.H. "Ted" Haartz Jim Matysek 2017 Gene Donner and the staff of Gateway Printing Nancy Ridout Tom Boak Joanne Tingley Walt Reid Pacific Masters XI FINA

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Guiding Principles

Mission Statement

Empower adults to improve their lives through swimming.

Vision Statement

Foster a nationwide adult swimming community through lifelong fitness, competition, and education.

Values

Fitness

Camaraderie

Inclusion

Learning

Excellence

Competition

Fairness

Major Changes for 2024

Official Times: The time of the leadoff swimmer on a relay is now considered an official time even if one or more of the remaining relay team members are disqualified. (article 103.18.1C(3)

Deadline for Records and Top 10 Submissions: The deadline for submitting times to be submitted to the Records and Tabulation Committee chair for short course meters swims has been changed from January 26 to January 20. (article 105.1.2 table)

Virtual Events: The USMS National Office now has jurisdiction, in coordination with the Long Distance Committee, for virtual events. (articles 305.2.4, 307.2.3)

Guiding Principles: The Organizing Principles have been reorganized and renamed "Guiding Principles."

Fitness Committee: The Fitness Committee has been dissolved. (article 507.1)

Appointment of Coordinators: The position of "coordinator" has been removed from entities the president may appoint. (article 507.3)

Member in Good Standing: A member in good standing has been defined as "any person or club who has fulfilled the requirements for membership and who has not voluntarily withdrawn nor been expelled or suspended." (Glossary)

Glossary

Administrative Referee—an official certified as an administrative referee who supervises entries, seeding, determination of official times, results, and meet personnel assisting with these duties.

Aggregate Time—times achieved by four individuals in separate starts that are added together to arrive at a relay time for entry purposes.

Anchored (Starting Platform)—stable at all times without human aid.

Arm—that part of the body that extends from the shoulder to the wrist.

Bulkhead—moveable end wall of a course.

Cable Swim—a type of straightaway swim defined by a cable.

Club—an organization or group of permanent character that is a member of USMS, and that actively promotes and/or participates in Masters Swimming.

Code—the USMS Code of Regulations and Rules of Competition, including Parts 1–6 and the Organizing Principles.

College Club Swimming (CCS)—A swimming program administered by USMS. CCS is the organization. that unifies college club swimming programs across the country. CCS provides the rules, calendar of events, results database, and communications for CCS registered individuals and clubs.

Corporation—United States Masters Swimming Inc. (USMS).

Course—designated distance over which the competition is conducted.

Long Course—50 meters.

Short Course—25 yards or 25 meters.

Deck-Entered—all entries are accepted on the first or later day of that meet and subsequently seeded into events.

Deck-Seeding—with or without check-in, events seeded at the time of the event using entries received prior to or at the meet.

Drafting—in open water and long distance events, an individual swimming behind or next to a single swimmer or support craft for the purpose of taking advantage of the reduced water resistance.

Dual Meet—competition between two clubs.

Dual-Sanctioned Meet—A USMS sanctioned meet held in conjunction with a USA Swimming sanctioned meet in which swimmers from both organizations are competing together in the same session(s).

Electronic Timing Chip—used to trigger the timing system and may not be used as an audible pacing device in swimming.

End of the Course—designated wall for racing turns or finishes.

Escort Craft—boats or paddle boards that accompany swimmers in an open water swim for safety and logistical support, including the person or people that staff them.

Event—any clinic, demonstration, series of races in a given stroke and distance, or meet: including pool, long distance, and open water.

Event Director—the person responsible for the administration and conduct of the event.

Ex Officio Member—a committee member, appointed by virtue of an office or position held, who has participatory rights of membership but no vote.

FINA—see World Aquatics

Finish—the instant that a swimmer touches the wall at the end of the prescribed distance.

Finish Point—the physical location where the race terminates.

Fitness Events—events designed to encourage and enhance fitness.

First Day of Meet—day on which first competitive swimming event is conducted.

Foreign Swimmer—athlete member of a World Aquatics Member Federation other than USMS.

Forward Start—an entry made while facing the course or a start made while in the water either facing the course or not facing the course.

Foul—an instance of obstruction, interference, collision, or equipment malfunction that prevents the successful completion of a race.

Gender—a competition category defined as male or female for the purpose of athlete swimming eligibility for official times, places, records, and other forms of recognition.

Gender Identity—an individual's concept of self, which may be male, female, a blend of both, or neither.

Grease—a substance used by swimmers to reduce friction or reduce the loss of body heat during a swim.

Heat—a division of an event in which there are too many swimmers to compete at one time.

Heat Sheet—a list of events with names of swimmers, heat assignments, lane assignments, ages, affiliations (e.g., club, workout group, and/or LMSC), and seed times.

Horizontal—parallel to the level surface of the water.

Housekeeping—changes to the *USMS Code of Regulations and Rules of Competition* to correct errors of deviation from adopted language, nonconformity with the *USMS Publications Style Guide*, consistency of wording between multiple articles, or accuracy of numerical article and page references.

IOPC—International Olympic and Paralympic Committee.

Initial Distance—that first portion of a race for which an official time may be recorded but which is not itself a completed event.

Lane—the specific area in which the swimmer is assigned to swim.

Lane Line—continuous floating markers attached to a line stretched from one end of the course to the other for the purpose of separating adjacent lanes.

Lane Markers—the guide lines on the bottom of the pool and in the center of the lanes running from one end of the course to the other.

Last Day of the Meet—day on which last competitive swimming event is conducted.

Leadoff—the first part of the relay event that is swum by a single team member.

Leg (Relay)—the part of the relay event that is swum by a single team member.

Length—the extent of the course from end to end.

LMSC—Local Masters Swimming Committee.

Manual Start—the start of any timing device by an individual in response to the same starting signal given to the swimmers.

Marks—(take your) starting positions.

Masters Swimming—a program including training, competition, and other activities affiliated with United States Masters Swimming through the participation of USMS members or through a USMS sanction.

May—permissive, not mandatory.

Medical Identification Item—an item worn by a swimmer that identifies medical conditions, emergency contacts, or other information necessary to protect the health of the swimmer. Medical identification items are not considered part of swimwear.

Meet—an event or series of events held under sanction or recognition and conducted within 10 consecutive days at the same venue or multiple venues for virtual meets. Postal meets may be conducted over periods longer than 10 days.

Meet Announcement—document that sets forth required information about the meet, including the starting times, order of events, entry procedures, and other meet procedures as required by the rules and regulations.

Meet Program—information provided to swimmers, coaches, and officials pertinent to the operation of a meet, which should include entry lists with names, ages, and affiliations (e.g., club, workout group, and/or LMSC), but may also include heat sheets and/or other information.

Member—an individual, club, or organization registered with USMS.

Member in Good Standing—any person or club who has fulfilled the requirements for membership and who has not voluntarily withdrawn nor been expelled or suspended.

Must—mandatory.

Official time—a time achieved in a USMS-sanctioned or -recognized competition in accordance with USMS rules.

On the Back—position of the body when the shoulders are at or past the vertical towards the back.

On the Breast—position of the body when the shoulders are at or past the vertical towards the breast.

Paddler—a person on a paddle board or manually propelled craft who supports a swimmer or group of swimmers.

Pool—the physical facility in which the competition is conducted.

Preliminary Heats—competition in which a number of heats are swum to qualify the fastest swimmers for the finals.

Preseeding—events are seeded prior to the day of competition.

Propulsive—having the power to propel.

Recognized Events—the written acknowledgment by an LMSC for a designated competition conducted in conformance with relevant USMS rules, or a demonstration, clinic, or exhibition conducted by USMS member clubs, individual members, or organizations other than USMS in which both members and nonmembers may participate. Times or distances achieved by members at recognized competitions will be considered for recording purposes by USMS.

Register—enroll as a member of USMS.

Safety Plans—written plans for the procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency or need for medical intervention.

Sanction—the written authorization of an LMSC to permit members to participate in a specific competition, demonstration, clinic, exhibition, or Swim-A-Thon.

Scissors Kick—use of the top of the instep of one foot and the bottom of the other foot in the propulsive part of the kick.

Scratch—withdraw an entry from an event or fail to report to the assigned lane in the assigned heat.

Seeding—distributing swimmers among the required number of heats and/or lanes, based on submitted times.

Session—any portion of a pool meet distinctly separated from other portions of the meet by locale, time, day, or type of competition; i.e., first day and second day, morning and evening, etc., exclusive of a short break between events such as before the start of distance events or relays.

Shall—mandatory.

Should—recommended but not mandatory.

Soft Touch—a swimmer's touch that does not register a time at the point of contact with the touchpad.

Split Time—time recorded from official start to completion of an initial distance within a longer event.

Still Water—water contained within four walls or landlocked, having no perceptible current or movement other than that caused by wind or by swimmers.

Straightaway Swim—any swim of any length where the course shall be a straight, measured distance in stationary open water and defined by a cable with floats or a continuous marking system visible to the swimmer.

Submitted Times—those filed with an entry as having been previously achieved or reasonably estimated; also known as seed times.

Time Trial—a timed heat conducted within a meet where the swimmer races against the clock to establish an official time.

Timed Finals—competition in which only heats are swum and final placings are determined by the times achieved in the heats.

Touch—contact with the end of the course.

Turn—a point on the course where the swimmers reverse or change direction of the swim.

USA-S—USA Swimming Inc.

USAS—United States Aquatic Sports Inc.

USMS—United States Masters Swimming Inc.

Valid Time—a time reported by a designated timing system without a confirmed malfunction and determined by the meet referee or designee to be accurate based on analysis of all reported times, observations by officials, and other relevant data.

Venue—geographical area and environs where a swim event is conducted.

Virtual Event—a swimming competition conducted in multiple pool locations with results compiled in a central location.

Wall—the vertical portion of the pool, the contiguous surface of the deck and overflow gutters, the front portion of the starting block or platform, or the touchpad at the end of the course.

Warning Signal—a bell, whistle, air horn, or other appropriate audible device.

Wave—the second or subsequent start used if the start area cannot accommodate all contestants at the same time.

Will—consent to do, an expectation.

Workout Group—a subordinate organization (subgroup) of a USMS-registered club.

World Aquatics—(Formerly known as FINA).

Zone—a geographic section of the country that includes all LMSCs within that section.



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