

Starting Your First Event

Ian King - Walnut Creek Masters, Pacific LMSC & LMSC Event Development
Committee Member

Shari Cruse - Marin Aquatic Masters, Pacific LMSC

Cory Nguyen - OC Riptide Aquatics, Southern Pacific LMSC

Tony Preston - Moses Lake Masters, Inland Northwest LMSC



RELAY2023
EVENT DEVELOPMENT
— HOUSTON —

Our Experiences

- Small Events
- Medium Events
- Championship Events



Catering to YOU

How many of you are interested in hosting the following?

1. Small-medium sized meet (30-200 participants)
2. Championship meet (several days; roughly 300-2000 participants)
3. Open water event (varies)



Estimated Timeline & General Checklist

- **Step 1 - 3 months to 1 year in advance**
 - Generate an Event Idea
 - Bid on meets/ open weekends to host your event idea
 - LMSC Sanctions Chair: confirmed event date, measure the pool, find admin & officials
 - Rent out your facility
 - Collaborate with Sanctions Chair to confirm all event details
- **Step 2 - 2 weeks to 2 months before the event**
 - Find volunteers for your event
 - Open registration
 - Monitor participant entries (ClubAssistant)
 - Close registration
- **Step 3 - One week before to the day of the event**
 - Send participants a welcome email with event details (timeline, parking guide, etc)
 - Set up for the event
 - Standby for any troubleshooting
 - Tear down after the event
- **Step 4 - Day after the event**
 - Thank participants for attending & advertise any confirmed future events



Event Idea & Commitment

- **Have an Idea**
 - Pool Meets - standard meet, pentathlon, relay only, dual-sanctioned meet, etc
 - Open Water - pier swim, pier-to-pier, lake swim, etc
 - Fitness Event - 30 minutes, 1 hour, 1k-10k yard/ meter, relay version
- **Set a Date**
 - The weekend seems to work best for most adults.
 - Consideration: Is the date(s) chosen busy? (school events, city events, holidays, other sporting events)
- **Make the Commitment**
 - Coordinate with your LMSC Sanctions Chair for date availability.
 - Draft the event details such as start time, order of events, awards, etc
- **Other Considerations**
 - Weather (inside or outside, traveling conditions, etc)



Sanctioning & Event Outline

- **Find your Event Admin, Head Official & Crew, & Timing System Operator**
 - Your LMSC has a list of people who have executed meets.
 - After a few meets, you will find some you enjoy working with.
- **Event Schedule**
 - **Pool** - Get creative or hold the traditional events
 - Examples: pentathlon, relay only, standard, short-distance only, fun events (with fins?)
 - **Open Water** - Split up start times for each event distance. If there is only one distance, separate groups of ages to reduce overcrowded starts and possible trampling
 - **Fitness** - Usually focus on one event or goal
 - Examples: 1-hour swim, 3000 yd/mtr, etc
- **Number of Days**
 - **Pool** - If you want to host multiple distance events, spread the events to the beginning and end of the day or on separate days. Some strokes and shorter distance events pair well together. Experiment with it.
 - **Open Water** - Usually held on one day.
 - **Fitness** - Generous timeframe to allow as many participants as possible



Facility Rental & Prerequisites (Main Costs)

- **Renting (one of the biggest costs)**
 - Coordinate with other facility users to avoid any scheduling conflicts.
 - Use the facility rental website or talk to the facility director to book your event.
- **Admin/ Officials/ Timing System Operator/ Announcer/ Lifeguards (next largest costs)**
- **Measuring with your LMSC (usually free)**
 - Pool/Fitness - Your local LMSC accurately measures your pool to determine the true length. (Only done for first meet)
 - Open Water - use permanent structures or buoys for distance markers
- **Insurance & Emergency Action Plan (EAP) (most likely an annual cost)**
 - Facility insurance is required; protect yourself from the unexpected
 - EAP is useful to have when the unexpected happens
- **Parking Situation**
 - Sometimes grouped with renting the facility
 - Is it free for participants?



Equipment & Supplies (Minor Costs)

- **General Event Equipment (usually included with the facility)**
 - **Pools**
 - lane lines, starting unit, touchpads, blocks, horns, flags, chairs, tables, canopies
 - **Open water**
 - buoys, timing system, ankle monitor, tables, chairs, canopies, colored caps
 - **Fitness**
 - stopwatches, clipboards, pencils, chairs
- **Other Costs (most of the minor costs)**
 - Awards
 - Hospitality - feed your admin and coaches
 - Snacks - usually for smaller meets (some hosts freely give to participants)
 - Snack Bar - usually for large meets (form of payment? cash? cashless?)



Staffing

- **Meet Director/Meet Host**
 - You. Oversees the entire meet, makes quick responses to any situation that arises
- **Meet Admin & Officials**
 - Help run the meet for you and keep the integrity of the meet
- **Lifeguards**
 - Protect everybody at your event
- **Paddler/Watcher (Open Water)**
 - Friend willing to accompany you for your safety
- **Volunteers**
 - Ask from your city, Masters club, or USA Swimming club if applicable
 - Reach out to local high school clubs that require students to complete volunteer hours
 - Promotes local high schools and helps fill in areas with staffing shortages
 - General positions
 - Set-up, Tear-down, Announcer, Awards, Timers, Deck Marshalls, Results Runners, Hospitality/ Snack Bar



Advertising, Vendors & Swag

- **Promote Your Event**
 - Ask LMSC to email event details, post on social media, word of mouth
- **Utilize Local Businesses**
 - Reach out to local small businesses to see if they would like to provide anything or are interested in selling at your event
 - Jolyn, local swim shop, TriSwim, coupons from local restaurants
 - Costs for attending the event
 - Negotiate shares of sales
- **Excess Merchandise from Previous Events (for your next event)**
 - Previous year goodies can be used for heat winners or age group winners
 - Helps promote your event for future years



Monitor Event Entries

- Signing Up
 - One-day membership vs annual membership
 - One-day is a cheaper alternative that allows adults to try a USMS event
 - Annual membership lets adults attend all USMS events held for the year of membership.
 - Club Assistant
- Pool Distance Events
 - These usually have a limit due to the time constraint of hosting distance events.
 - Check the registrations daily to remove anybody who started the registration process but did not finish registering
 - Pro tip: You can email that registrant to see if they are still interested.
- After the Entry Deadline
 - Check the total amount of entrants to determine requirements for the meet
 - length of event, amount of items needed (hospitality/ snack bar)
 - determines length of event shifts.



Group Content

- **Draft an event you plan on hosting**
 - Include brief details such as
 - The type of event (pool, open water, fitness)
 - Day(s) hosting
 - 1-2 things you are looking forward to
 - 1-2 things you are worried about
- **In small groups, share your ideas.**
 - Include 1 thing you are looking forward to when hosting & something you are worried about.
 - Brainstorm some ways to troubleshoot those issues



Bring it Back & Share

- **Let us know what you plan on hosting**
 - Some of you may get some ideas that swimmers in your LMSC would appreciate



Resources

- Website links
 - <https://www.usms.org/events/event-development-program>
- Local LMSC
 - There are grants you can apply for within your LMSC to help you fund your first event.
- Presentation Hosts
 - Shari Cruse - swim@marinaquaticmasters.com
 - Cory Nguyen - corynguyen4@gmail.com
 - Tony Preston - preston.tony@gmail.com



Questions & Answers

- Don't be afraid. Ask away.



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Thank you!



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