



# RULEBOOK

VISIT [FANSHOP.USASWIMMING.ORG](https://fanshop.usaswimming.org) TO SHOP OFFICIAL LICENSED MERCHANDISE



# USA SWIMMING

## *Fan Favorites*



# 2026 USA Swimming

## *Rules and Regulations*

**PART ONE ▼**  
*Technical Rules*

**1**

Published by:

**USA SWIMMING, INC.**

1 Olympic Plaza

Colorado Springs, CO 80909

719.866.4578 o

719.866.4669 f

**usaswimming.org**

The *2026 Rules and Regulations* is an official publication of USA Swimming, the National Governing Body for swimming in the U.S. Review of legislated changes for correct application provided by Taylor Rogers and Herb Schwab.

**PART SEVEN ▼**  
*Open Water  
Swimming*

**7**

**MASTERS ▼**  
*U.S. Masters Technical  
Rules Differences*

**M**

Cover Photo: *Mike Lewis; Ola Vista Photography*  
Copyright 2026 by USA Swimming, Inc.

## USA SWIMMING'S HEADQUARTERS STAFF

### EXECUTIVE

**Kevin Ring**

President & Chief Executive  
Officer  
kring@usaswimming.org

**Paula D'Amico**

Executive Administrative  
Assistant  
pdamico@usaswimming.org

### BUSINESS AFFAIRS

**Michelle Steinfeld**

Secretary/General Counsel  
msteinfeld@usaswimming.org

**Derek Paul**

Associate General Counsel  
dpaul@usaswimming.org

**Rebecca Chafin**

Paralegal  
rchafin@usaswimming.org

### Human Resources

**Ashley Anderton**

Senior Manager, Human  
Resources, Payroll & Benefits  
aanderton@usaswimming.org

**Deborah Brown**

Coordinator, Payroll & Benefits  
dbrown@usaswimming.org

### Risk Management

**Rachel Olson**

Program Director,  
Risk Management  
rolson@usaswimming.org

### COMMERCIAL

**Jake Grosser**

Chief Operating Officer  
jgrosser@usaswimming.org

**Nikki Warner**

Senior Director,  
Communications  
nwarner@usaswimming.org

**Bryce Elser**

Director, Commercial  
Operations  
belsel@usaswimming.org

### Communications

**Kyle Sagendorph**

Manager, Digital  
Communications  
ksagendorph@usaswimming.org

**Devonie Pitre**

Manager, Communications  
dpitre@usaswimming.org

### Marketing

**Mollie Albert**

Manager, Marketing  
malbert@usaswimming.org

**Wendy Bartlett**

Senior Manager,  
Athlete Marketing  
wbartlett@usaswimming.org

**Mariah Carnahan**

Front End Developer  
mcarnahan@  
usaswimming.org

**Donya' Green II**

Associate Producer  
dgreen@usaswimming.org

### Creative

**Matt Lupton**

Senior Director, Creative &  
Productions  
mlupton@usaswimming.org

**Brendan Alvino**

Manager, Video &  
Creative Services  
balvino@usaswimming.org

**Will Brethauer**

Producer  
wbrethauer@  
usaswimming.org

**David Gardner**

Coordinator, Graphic Design  
dgardner@usaswimming.org

### Partnerships

**Ellison Elledge**

Senior Manager,  
Partnership Marketing  
eelledge@usaswimming.org

**Caitlin Whiteside**

Manager, Partnership  
Marketing  
cwhiteside@usaswimming.org

### FINANCE

**Cory Hilliard**

Chief Financial Officer  
chilliard@usaswimming.org

**Tami Bock**

Director, Accounting  
tbock@usaswimming.org

**Sophie Graf**

Accounting Manager  
sgraf@usaswimming.org

**William Poff**

Senior Accountant, Revenue  
& Fp&A  
wpoff@usaswimming.org

**Rosalind Medina**

Coordinator, Accounts  
Payable  
rmedinal@usaswimming.org

### TECHNOLOGY & DATA

**Patrick Murphy**

Managing Director, T  
echnology & Data  
pmurphy@usaswimming.org

**Mitch Gold**

Senior Advisor, Product  
mgold@usaswimming.org

### Data Analytics

**Eduardo Yzcaray**

Lead Applications Developer  
eyzcaray@usaswimming.org

**Robb Hinds**

Applications Programmer  
rhinds@usaswimming.org

**Ellen Woytowitz**

Applications Developer  
ewoytowitz  
@usaswimming.org

**Ty Gibbs**

Data Scientist  
tgibbs@usaswimming.org

## **Information Technology**

### **Chris Detert**

*Director, Information  
Technology*  
cdetert@usaswimming.org

### **Dan Becker**

*Quality Assurance  
and Application Support*  
dbecker@usaswimming.org

### **David Mueller**

*IT Technician II*  
dmueller@usaswimming.org

## **Facilities**

### **Mike Wilkinson**

*Senior Manager, Purchasing  
& Facilities*  
mwilkinson  
@usaswimming.org

### **Tom Vanatta**

*Coordinator, Shipping  
& Receiving*  
tvannatta@usaswimming.org

## **NATIONAL EVENTS**

### **Macie McNichols**

*Director, National Events*  
mmcnichols  
@usaswimming.org

### **Kristin Alfano**

*Manager, National Events*  
kalfano@usaswimming.org

### **Trey Freeman**

*Manager, National Events*  
tfreeman@usaswimming.org

### **Marissa Delgado**

*Specialist, National Events*  
mdelgado  
@usaswimming.org

### **Katie Trace**

*Coordinator, Events & Data*  
ktrace@usaswimming.org

## **NATIONAL TEAM**

### **Greg Meehan**

*Managing Director,  
National Team*  
gmeehan@usaswimming.org

### **Yuri Suguiyama**

*Senior Director & Coach,  
National Team*  
ysuguiyama  
@usaswimming.org

### **Kim Williams**

*Director & Coach,  
National Team*  
kwilliams@usaswimming.org

### **Brendan Hansen**

*Director, National Junior  
Team*  
bhansen@usaswimming.org

## **National Team Operations**

### **Rachel Levitsky**

*Senior Manager*  
rlevitsky@usaswimming.org

### **Adriana Quirke**

*Manager, Operations*  
aquirke@usaswimming.org

## **National Team Support & Services**

### **Stacy Michael-Miller**

*Director, National Team  
Support & Services*  
smichael@usaswimming.org

### **Erin Cameron**

*Director, Medical Services*  
ecameron  
@usaswimming.org

### **Emily Klueh**

*Manager, Psychological  
Services*  
eklueh@usaswimming.org

### **Jennifer Thomas**

*Coordinator, National  
Team Services*  
jthomas@usaswimming.org

### **Kimberly Robb**

*Administrative Coordinator,  
National Team Services*  
krobb@usaswimming.org

## **SPORT DEVELOPMENT**

### **Joel Shinofield**

*Managing Director,  
Sport Development*  
jshinofield  
@usaswimming.org

## **Safe Sport**

### **Liz Hahn**

*Director, Safe Sport*  
ehahn@usaswimming.org

### **Cha'Vera Jackson**

*Manager, Safe Sport*  
cjackson@usaswimming.org

### **Cha'Vera Jackson**

*Manager, Safe Sport*  
cjackson@usaswimming.org

### **Michael Mares**

*Manager, Safe Sport  
Education & Resolution*  
mmares@usaswimming.org

### **Trish Hughes**

*Coordinator, Background  
Check & Administrative  
Assistant*  
thughes@usaswimming.org

## **Diversity, Equity, and Community Engagement**

### **Leland Brown, III**

*Director, Diversity, Equity,  
and Community Engagement*  
lbrown@usaswimming.org

### **Hilary Perez**

*Manager, Diversity, Equity,  
and Community Engagement*  
thughes@usaswimming.org

### **Shaun Anderson**

*Senior Advisor, Community  
Outreach & Engagement*  
shaun.anderson  
@usaswimming.org

## **Education & Curriculum**

### **Maggie Vail**

*Director, Education &  
Curriculum*  
mvail@usaswimming.org

**Kimberly Herb**  
*Instructional Designer*  
kherb@usaswimming.org

**Kirsten Victor**  
*Coordinator, Education  
& Curriculum*  
kvictor@usaswimming.org

#### **Membership Affairs**

**Eric Stimson**  
*Senior Advisor, Membership  
& Data Services*  
estimson@usaswimming.org

**Denise Thomas**  
*Manager,  
Membership Affairs*  
denise.thomas  
@usaswimming.org

#### **Team Services**

**Beth Winkowski**  
*Lead Senior Advisor,  
Team Services*  
bwinkowski  
@usaswimming.org

**Terry Jones**  
*Senior Advisor,  
Team Services*  
tjones@usaswimming.org

**Jay Chambers**  
*Senior Advisor,  
Team Services*  
jchambers  
@usaswimming.org

#### **Team Services**

**Beth Winkowski**  
*Lead Senior Advisor,  
Team Services*  
bwinkowski  
@usaswimming.org

**Terry Jones**  
*Senior Advisor, Team Services*  
tjones@usaswimming.org

**Jay Chambers**  
*Senior Advisor, Team Services*  
jchambers@usaswimming.org

**Mark Hesse**  
*Senior Advisor, Team Services*  
mhesse@usaswimming.org

**Michael Novell**  
*Senior Advisor, Team Services*  
mnovell@usaswimming.org

**Dana Skelton**  
*Advisor, Team Services*  
dskelton@usaswimming.org

**Nate Chessey**  
*Advisor, Team Services*  
nchessey@usaswimming.org

#### **LSCServices**

**Jane Grosser**  
*Senior Advisor, Team Services*  
jane.grosser  
@usaswimming.org

**Gracie Mensay**  
*Coordinator,  
LSC Performance Services*  
gmensay@usaswimming.org

## **USA SWIMMING FOUNDATION**

**Elaine Calip**  
*Executive Director  
of The Foundation*  
ecalip@usaswimming.org

**Tom Luchsinger**  
*Director, Development  
& Alumni Relations*  
tluchsinger@usaswimming.org

**Jill Johnson**  
*Senior Manager, Development*  
jjohnson@usaswimming.org

**Kelcie O'Donnell**  
*Specialist, Development*  
ko'donnell@usaswimming.org

## **USA SWIMMING'S 2026 BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

#### **Board Chair**

**Brent Lang**  
*c/o USA Swimming*  
1 Olympic Plaza  
Colorado Springs,  
CO 80909-5770  
(E) BrentDLang@gmail.com  
(C) (408) 420-2664

#### **Immediate Past Chair**

**Chris Brearton**  
201 24th Street  
Hermosa Beach, CA 90254  
(E) cbrearton@agbo.com  
(C) (310) 489-8013

#### **Katy Arris-Wilson**

*c/o USA Swimming*  
1 Olympic Plaza  
Colorado Springs,  
CO 80909-5770  
(E) katyarriswilson  
@gmail.com  
(C) (757) 679-5954

**Jack Bauerle**  
1151 Scotland Bnd  
Watkinsville, GA 30677  
(E) jackbauerle@gmail.com  
(C) (706)-202-9443

**Kenneth Chung**  
c/o USA Swimming  
1 Olympic Plaza  
Colorado Springs,  
CO 80909-5770  
(E) kyfchung@gmail.com  
(C) (617) 417-5544

**Billy Doughty**  
2021 Bishop Place  
Davis, CA 95618  
(E) swimdavis@yahoo.com  
(C) (251) 648-3977

**Kathy Fish**  
9825 Cunningham Rd.  
Cincinnati, OH 45243  
(E) kathyfish615@gmail.com  
(H) 513-315-9488

**Kate Lundsten**  
8986 Deer Run Dr.  
Victoria, MN 55386  
(E) kate@aquajets.com  
(C) (952) 240-8885

**Sabir Muhammad**  
c/o USA Swimming  
1 Olympic Plaza  
Colorado Springs,  
CO 80909-5770  
(E) sabirswims@gmail.com  
(C) (404) 597-7033

**Kathleen K. Prindle**  
745 SE 31st Street Boca  
Raton, FL 33432  
(E) PerformanceAQ  
@gmail.com  
(C) (561) 212-7175

**Athlete Representatives**  
**Maya (Dirado) Andrews**  
c/o USA Swimming  
1 Olympic Plaza Colorado  
Springs, CO 80909-5770  
(E) mjdirdado@gmail.com  
(O) (719) 866-4578

**Nic Fink**  
c/o USA Swimming  
1 Olympic Plaza  
Colorado Springs,  
CO 80909-5770  
(E) nicolaskfink@gmail.com  
(O) (719) 866-4578

**Caitlin Leverenz-Smith**  
c/o USA Swimming  
1 Olympic Plaza  
Colorado Springs,  
CO 80909-5770  
(E) c.leverenz.smith  
@gmail.com  
(O) (719) 866-4578

**Katie Playko**  
c/o USA Swimming  
1 Olympic Plaza  
Colorado Springs,  
CO 80909-5770  
(E) catemeili@gmail.com  
(O) (719) 866-4578

**Andrew Seliskar**  
c/o USA Swimming  
1 Olympic Plaza  
Colorado Springs,  
CO 80909-5770  
(E) andrewseliskar  
@gmail.com  
(C) (703) 343-3869

**Ex-Officio – President &  
Chief Executive Officer**  
**Kevin Ring**  
USA Swimming  
1 Olympic Plaza  
Colorado Springs,  
CO 80909-5770  
(E) ceo@usaswimming.org  
(O) (719) 866-4578

**Ex-Officio – Secretary &  
General Counsel**  
**Michelle Steinfeld**  
USA Swimming  
1 Olympic Plaza Colorado  
Springs, CO 80909-5770  
(E) msteinfeld  
@usaswimming.org  
(O) (719) 866-4578

## **RULES AND REGULATIONS COMMITTEE CHAIR**

**Taylor Rogers**  
c/o USA Swimming  
1 Olympic Plaza  
Colorado Springs,  
CO 80909-5770  
(W) 719-866-4578  
(M) 317-504-5486  
(E) swimrulesandregs  
@gmail.com

# USA Swimming's Calendar of Events

*(calendar tentative and subject to change)*

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>City</i>
<b>2026</b>		
January 14-17	TYR Pro Swim Series	Austin, TX
March 4-7	TYR Pro Swim Series	Westmont, IL
April 2-4	Open Water National and Junior National Championships	Sarasota, FL
May 20-23	TYR Pro Swim Series	Sacramento, CA
June 17-20	TYR Pro Swim Series	Indianapolis, IN
July 28 – August 1	Toyota National Championships	Irvine, CA
July 29 – August 1	TYR Futures Championships	Austin, TX; Greensboro, NC; Knoxville, TN; Madison, WI; Sacramento, CA
August 3-7	Speedo Junior National Championships	Irvine, CA
August 10	Pan Pacific Swimming Championships - Open Water 10K	Long Beach, CA
August 12-15	Pan Pacific Swimming Championships	Irvine, CA
December 2-5	Toyota U.S. Open Championships	TBA
December 9-12	Speedo Winter Junior Championships	TBA

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## USA Swimming Rules and Regulations — 2026

Glossary.....	11
---------------	----

### PART ONE — Technical Rules

<b>ARTICLE 101 — Individual Strokes and Relays.....</b>	<b>19</b>
101.1 Starts .....	19
101.2 Breaststroke .....	21
101.3 Butterfly .....	22
101.4 Backstroke.....	22
101.5 Freestyle.....	23
101.6 Individual Medley .....	23
101.7 Relays.....	24
101.8 Long Distance Swimming - Pool Events.....	25
<b>ARTICLE 102 — Conduct and Officiating of All Swimming Competition.....</b>	<b>25</b>
102.1 Events.....	25
102.2 General Rules .....	27
102.3 Relays.....	28
102.4 Scratch Procedures .....	28
102.5 Seeding, Lane Assignments, Swim-Offs, and Order of Heats.....	28
102.6 Counters.....	31
102.7 Postponements and Changes in Program .....	32
102.8 Swimwear .....	33
102.9 Meet Director.....	35
102.10 Officials.....	35
102.11 Referee.....	37
102.12 Starter.....	38
102.13 Judges.....	38
102.14 Administrative Official.....	39
102.15 Scorers .....	40
102.16 Timing Personnel and Their Duties.....	40
102.17 Press Steward .....	41
102.18 Marshals.....	41
102.19 Clerk of Course .....	42
102.20 Announcer.....	42
102.21 Disqualifications.....	42
102.22 Protests.....	43
102.23 Timing Rules .....	44
102.24 Scoring .....	47
102.25 Awards.....	48
102.26 Meet Results .....	49

## Appendix to Article 102

<b>APPENDIX 1</b>	Example of Lane Malfunction.....	50
<b>ARTICLE 103 — Facilities Standards</b> .....		51
103.1	Definitions.....	51
103.2	Water Depth.....	51
103.3	Racing Course Dimensions .....	52
103.4	Racing Course Walls.....	52
103.5	Pool and Bulkhead Markings.....	53
103.6	Overflow Recirculation System .....	53
103.7	Water and Air Temperature.....	53
103.8	Ladders.....	53
103.9	Other Deck Equipment.....	53
103.10	Lighting .....	54
103.11	Tobacco Products.....	54
103.12	Alcoholic Beverages.....	54
103.13	Drones .....	54
103.14	Starting Platforms .....	54
103.15	Backstroke Ledge .....	55
103.16	Floating Lane Dividers and Markings.....	55
103.17	Backstroke Flags and Lines.....	56
103.18	Loudspeaker Start System .....	56
103.19	Recall Device.....	56
103.20	Pace Clocks.....	56
103.21	Automatic Officiating Equipment .....	56
103.22	Electrical Safety.....	58
<b>ARTICLE 104 — Rules For Swimming Records</b> .....		58
104.1	World Records.....	58
104.2	USA Swimming Records.....	58
<b>ARTICLE 105 — Guidelines for Officiating Swimmers with a Disability in     USA Swimming Meets</b> .....		62
105.1	General .....	62
105.2	Blind and Vision Loss.....	63
105.3	Deaf and Hard of Hearing .....	63
105.4	Cognitively Disabled .....	65
105.5	Physical Disabilities .....	65

## **PART SEVEN — Open Water Swimming**

<b>ARTICLE 701 — Conduct and Officiating of the Competition .....</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>ARTICLE 702 — Venue Standards.....</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>ARTICLE 703 — Records.....</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>ARTICLE 704 — Zone Open Water Championships.....</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>ARTICLE 705 — USA Swimming Open Water National Championships.....</b>	<b>80</b>
 <b>Differences Between USA Swimming and USMS Rules .....</b>	 <b>83</b>
<b>Dual-Sanctioned Events.....</b>	<b>90</b>



# OFFICIAL GLOSSARY

## Swimming Words and Terms

**10-YEAR ATHLETE** — an athlete who has represented the United States in a Delegation Event, World Championships, or another event designated by the USOPC (together with the USOPC Athletes' Advisory Council) and USA Swimming (together with USA Swimming's Athletes' Advisory Council) as an elite-level event for purposes of this definition, within the previous 10 years.

**10-YEAR+ ATHLETE** — an athlete who has represented the United States in a Delegation Event, World Championships, or another event designated by the USOPC (together with the USOPC Athletes' Advisory Council) and USA Swimming (together with USA Swimming's Athletes' Advisory Council) as an elite-level event for purposes of this definition, but not within the previous 10 years.

**2-YEAR ATHLETE** — an athlete who has been actively engaged within the 24 months prior to election/selection in a USA Swimming-sanctioned competition (as defined by the USA Swimming Athletes' Advisory Council and approved by the USA Swimming Athlete Representation Working Group [as defined in the USOPC Bylaws]), which may include events that categorize entrants in age restricted classifications.

**ABANDONMENT** — termination of an open water event prior to its completion due to safety considerations.

**ACTIVELY ENGAGED ATHLETE REPRESENTATIVE** — an athlete who qualifies as a 10-Year or 10-Year+ Athlete representative, or who has been actively engaged in 24 months prior to election/selection in a USA Swimming-sanctioned competition (as defined by the USA Swimming Athletes' Advisory Council and approved by the USA Swimming Athlete Representation Working Group [as defined in the USOPC Bylaws]), which may include events that categorize entrants in age-restricted classifications.

**ADMINISTRATIVE REFEREE** — Referee who performs the duties of an Administrative Official under 102.14 at a prelims-finals meet. The Administrative Referee should have the experience and knowledge to be able to assume the role of the Meet Referee any time during the meet, if necessary.

**AGGREGATE TIME** — times achieved by four individuals in separate starts which are added together to arrive at a relay time for entry purposes.

**ALTERNATING KICK** — the alternating movement of the legs, commonly known as the flutter kick, is the up-and-down propulsive motion of the legs where one limb moves in the opposite direction of the other at the same time.

**AMATEUR SPORTS ACT** — the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act (1998) (or as applicable, the Amateur Sports Act of 1978), as amended from time to time.

**APPRECIABLE** — sufficient in extent to be recognized.

**APPROVAL** — a permit issued by an LSC for meets conducted in conformance with USA Swimming technical rules in which both members and non-members may compete.

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

**ATTACHED** — status of an athlete member who represents a member club in competition after having met the requirements of Article 203.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS** — unless otherwise noted, shall mean the USA Swimming Board of Directors.

**BODY** — the torso, including shoulders and hips.

**CLOSED COMPETITION**

- Competition exclusively among members of a single club
- Competition or series of competitions within an independent organization open only to members of that organization, such as:
  - ° YMCA competition
  - ° Summer league competition
  - ° Conference competition
- Closed competition does not include representing a group within USA Swimming such as LSC, Zone, Region, or Section, nor does it include dual meets, invitationals, or other meets where only certain clubs are invited to participate.

**CLUB** — an organization which has been accepted for membership in USA Swimming.

**COMPETITION CATEGORY** — stated as men or women for the purpose of athlete swimming eligibility, competition, selection and records. An athlete's stated competition category shall be referred to as "gender."

**CONFORMING TIME** — time achieved in a course that corresponds to the meet competition course.

**COURSE** — designated distance over which the competition is conducted.

**LONG COURSE** — 50 meters.

**SHORT COURSE** — 25 yards or 25 meters.

**DECK CHANGE** — changing, in whole or in part, into or out of a swimsuit when wearing just one suit in an area other than a permanent or temporary locker room, bathroom, changing room or other space designated for changing purposes.

**DECK REFEREE** — the deck level Referee who may be assigned by the Meet Referee to perform specific duties as enumerated under 102.11 during a session.

**DELEGATION EVENT** — individually or collectively as applicable, the Olympic Games, the Olympic Winter Games, the Paralympic Games, the Paralympic Winter Games, the Pan American Games, and the Parapan American Games.

**DISABILITY** — a permanent physical or cognitive disability that substantially impacts one or more major life activities.

**DRAW** — random selection by chance.

**DUAL COMPETITION** — competition between two teams.

**END OF COURSE** — designated wall for racing turns and finishes.

**ESCORT CRAFT** — boats or paddle boards used in open water competition for the swimmers' safety and logistical support.

**ESCORTED SWIM** — an open water event in which each swimmer is required to have an escort craft accompany the swimmer throughout the race.

**EVENT** — any race or series of races in a given stroke and/or distance. For competitive limits, one event is inclusive of preliminary heat(s) plus its related final(s), or one timed final, or one time trial.

**EX-OFFICIO** — a member of a board or committee serving by virtue of some other office or position held (whether in USA Swimming, in an Allied or Affiliate Member, or otherwise), or by virtue of an appointment to such committee or board pursuant to the Bylaws of USA Swimming. Ex-officio members have full rights of membership including the right to vote (unless otherwise provided in the Bylaws or Policy Manual). Ex-officio members without the right to vote are not counted to establish a quorum (unless expressly provided otherwise in the Bylaws).

**FEED POLE** — a mechanical implement used by coaches or support personnel to deliver fluid and/or food to open water swimmers during the race.

**FINALS** — a session of a meet in which the concluding heats of an event are contested which may include championship, consolation, or bonus finals.

- Championship (A) Final — the fastest heat of swimmers competing in Finals
  - Consolation Final(s) — the second fastest and subsequent heats of swimmers competing in Finals for which team selection, scoring points and/or prize money are awarded
  - Bonus Final(s) — any finals heat in which no points or placement prizes are awarded
- FINISH** — the instant that a swimmer touches the wall at the end of the prescribed distance. **FINISH POINT** — the physical location where an open water race terminates.

**FIRST DAY OF MEET** — day on which the first competitive swimming event is conducted.

**FOREIGN SWIMMER** — an athlete member of a World Aquatics member-country federation, other than USA Swimming, or an athlete member of USA Swimming who is not eligible to represent the United States in international competition due to World Aquatics sports citizenship requirements. (See Sports Citizen)

**FORWARD START** — an entry made while facing the course.

**FOUL** — an instance of obstruction, interference, collision, or equipment malfunction which prevents the successful completion of a race.

**HEADQUARTERS** — USA Swimming's office in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

**HEATS** — a division of an event in which there are too many swimmers to compete at one time. (See Preliminary Heats and Timed Final Heats)

**HORIZONTAL** — parallel to the surface of the water.

**INITIAL DISTANCE** — that first portion of a race for which an official time may be recorded but which is not in itself a completed event.

**INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION** — any athletic competition between any athlete(s) or member organization(s) of USA Swimming, either individually or as part of a team, and any athlete(s) or member organization(s) (e.g., clubs) representing any foreign country.

**INTRA-SQUAD MEET** — a competition exclusively among members of a single club.

**LANE DIVIDER** — continuous floating markers attached to a line stretched from the starting end to the turning end of the course for the purpose of separating each lane.

**LEAD BOAT** — the boat used as a course guide for open water swimmers.

**LENGTH** — extent of the course from end to end.

**LSC (LOCAL SWIMMING COMMITTEE)** — an administrative division of USA Swimming with supervisory responsibilities within certain geographic boundaries designated by USA Swimming.

**MANUAL START** — the start of any timing device by an individual in response to the same starting signal given to the swimmer(s).

**MAY** — permissive, not mandatory.

**MEET ANNOUNCEMENT** — document setting forth information of the meet events, schedule, and procedures.

**MEET COMMITTEE** — unless otherwise specified in the meet announcement, the Meet Committee shall consist of the Meet Director, Meet Referee, and coach and athlete members as appropriate.

**MEET REFEREE (OPEN WATER (OW) COMPETITION)** — an experienced OW referee who oversees the operations of the entire OW swim meet and ensures that all safety plans, rules, and regulations are followed, and who makes final decisions on any procedure, modification, dispute, or protest to ensure a safe, fair, and equitable competition.

**MEET REFEREE (POOL COMPETITION)** — an experienced referee who oversees the entire swim meet and ensures that all rules and regulations are followed by making final decisions on any procedure, modification, dispute, or protest for a fair and equitable competition.

**MIXED CLASSIFICATION** — meet in which events of Age Group and Junior, Senior, or any other classification are offered.

**NATIONAL AGE GROUP (NAG) RECOGNITION TIME** — an official time that quali-

fies as one of the fastest for a given age group as defined in the SWIMS portion of the Operating Policy Manual.

**NON-CONFORMING TIME** — entry time achieved in a course which does not correspond to the course in which the meet will be conducted.

**NOTICE** — a written communication notifying about a scheduled meeting of a committee, board or other governing body or group, or other fact or occurrence, required to be made by law, bylaw, rule or regulation. To be considered written, the communication must be addressed, using the last known address on file with the LSC or in SWIMS, to the intended or required recipient(s) and delivered by hand, first class mail, overnight or second day delivery by a national delivery service, facsimile transmission, electronic mail or text message.

**OBSERVED SWIM** — a swim observed by assigned USA Swimming officials for conformance with USA Swimming technical rules in a meet conducted under other than USA Swimming rules.

**OFFICIAL TIME** — a time achieved in a USA Swimming sanctioned or approved competition or in an observed swim in accordance with USA Swimming technical rules.

**ON THE BACK** — position of the body when the shoulders are past vertical towards the back.

**ON THE BREAST** — position of the body when the shoulders are at or past vertical towards the breast.

**OPEN COMPETITION** — competition that is not otherwise defined as a closed competition in which any qualified club, organization or individual may enter.

**OPEN EVENT** — an event in which any qualified individual may compete, regardless of age.

**OPEN WATER SWIMMING** — any swimming competition that takes place in rivers, lakes, or oceans.

**OPERATING POLICY MANUAL** — document maintained by the President/CEO that specifies operating policies and procedures not contained in Rules & Regulations. New policies adopted shall be vetted and approved by the Board of Directors and appropriate committee chair.

**OUTREACH MEMBERSHIP** — a reduced-fee category of athlete membership for underrepresented and/or economically disadvantaged swimmers.

**PACING** — an attempt by a person not participating in an open water race to enter the water with the intent of providing moral support or otherwise assisting a swimmer in setting the tempo of the race.

**PADDLER** — a person on a paddle board or manually propelled craft who supports an open water swimmer or group of swimmers.

**PERSONAL ASSISTANT** — an individual who assists an athlete requiring help with activities of daily living and preparation for athletic participation. A Personal

Assistant provides support unique to the needs of the athlete(s) in their care. This support may include, but is not limited to, mobility guidance, assistance with transfer, entering/exiting the pool, dressing, showering, toileting, medication administration, and communication. Some athletes require a Personal Assistant to enable successful participation in the sport, while others need help to assure personal safety in practice and meet environments.

**PLACE JUDGE** — official assigned to record the order of finish of all swimmers by lane in each heat.

**PRACTICE** — the instruction of swimming techniques, skills, knowledge, conditioning, aptitude and motivation.

**PRELIMINARY HEATS OR PRELIMINARIES** — competition in which a number of heats are swum to qualify the fastest swimmers for the Finals.

**PRESIDENT/CEO** — unless otherwise noted, the President and Chief Executive Officer of USA Swimming.

**PROGRAM** — the order of events, including starting times and intermissions in a meet or portion thereof (See Session), sequentially listed by class of competition, sex, age group, distance, and stroke as set forth in the meet announcement.

**PROPULSIVE** — having power to propel.

**REINSTATEMENT** — return of all or limited rights of membership in USA Swimming.

**RELAY** — a race in which four eligible team members each swim a specified portion of the course.

**RELAY LEG** — the part of a relay event that is swum by a single team member.

**SANCTION** — a permit issued by an LSC to a USA Swimming group member to conduct a meet in conformance with all USA Swimming rules in which all participating swimmers are athlete members of USA Swimming, except as provided in Article 202.5.1.

**SCISSOR 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 (from an event)** — withdraw an entry from competition.

**SEASONAL ATHLETE MEMBERSHIP** — an individual athlete membership in USA Swimming which may be offered at the option of the LSC for one or two periods of not more than 150 days in a registration year pursuant to the Corporate Bylaws Article 2.4.

**SEASONAL CLUB** — an organization which has been accepted for membership in USA Swimming and which operates within a period of time specified by the LSC.

**SEED** — to distribute the swimmers among the required number of heats and/or lanes, according to their submitted or preliminary times.

**DECK-SEED** — swimmers are required to check in for their events on the day of the meet. After scratches are determined, events are seeded.

**PRE-SEED** — all entrants are seeded prior to the day of competition.

**SEMI-INDEPENDENT** — an individual who (prior to the election to the Board of Directors) has not been a member of a House of Delegates at the national level, but who at present or in the past, has/had an obvious connection to swimming as a swimmer, parent of a swimmer, coach, official, etc.

**SESSION** — any portion of a meet distinctly separated from other portions by locale, time, or type of competition, i.e., preliminaries and finals; morning and evening; Senior and Age Group, etc.

**SHALL** — mandatory.

**SHOULD** — recommended but not mandatory.

**SIMULTANEOUSLY** — occurring at the same time.

**SLIPSTREAMING** — swimming behind or next to another open water swimmer or support craft for the purpose of taking advantage of the reduced water resistance created by the former's wake.

**SPORTS CITIZEN** — an athlete who has represented a nation other than the United States in international competition is a sports citizen of that nation and is considered ineligible to represent the United States until World Aquatics requirements for changing sports citizenship (sport nationality) have been met. (See Foreign Swimmer)

**SPORTS ORGANIZATION** — a corporation, club, federation, union, association, or other group organized in the United States which sponsors or conducts any athletic competition.

**SUPPORT PERSONNEL** — persons in an open water swimmer's escort craft who provide for feeding, navigating, coaching, and other supporting activities.

**SUSPENSION** — deprivation of all rights of membership in USA Swimming.

**SWIMS (SWIMMING WEB-BASED INTERACTIVE MEMBERSHIP SYSTEM)** — a single integrated database system which includes USA Swimming membership data and a databank of achieved times that are considered official and are recognized for proof of entry and recognition programs.

**TAPPER** — Personal Assistant who uses a pole with a soft-tipped end to tap a blind or visually-impaired swimmer as notification of turns and finish.

**TEXTILE MATERIALS** — natural and/or synthetic, individual and non-consolidating yarns used to constitute a fabric by weaving, knitting, and/or braiding, or as further defined under current World Aquatics swimwear rules.

**TIME STANDARD** — the time a swimmer must have previously achieved in order to compete in that event at a designated competition.

**TIME TRIAL** — an event conducted within or independently of a meet where the swimmer races against the clock to establish an official time.

**TIMED FINAL HEATS OR 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.

**TRYOUT** — practices where a swimmer who is not a member of USA Swimming participates with a USA Swimming member club for a period not to exceed thirty (30) consecutive days in a twelve (12) month period to determine the swimmer's interest in becoming a member of USA Swimming.

**TURN** — a point where the swimmers reverse or change direction.

**UNATTACHED** — status of a member who does not represent a club or World Aquatics member Federation in competition.

**UNESCORTED SWIM** — an open water event where swimmers compete without a designated support craft.

**USA SWIMMING** — USA Swimming, Inc., a Colorado corporation.

**VENUE** — the area located on the sides and ends of the pool, spectator area, team areas within the pool facility (e.g., portion of the building designated for teams and swimmers, or fenced area around an outdoor pool), locker rooms, and such other areas as may be specifically designated by the host club or organization, meet director, or referee. In open water competition, the geographical area and environs where the meet is conducted.

**VERTICAL** — perpendicular to the water surface.

**VIRTUAL MEET** — a competition held at multiple venues.

**WALL** — vertical portion of the pool, contiguous surfaces of the deck and overflow gutter, 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** — at an open water event, a second or subsequent start used if the start area cannot accommodate all contestants at the same time.

**WEBSITE** — the official site maintained by USA Swimming on the internet (usaswimming.org).

**WETSUIT** — a swimsuit made of material providing thermal insulation.

Except as otherwise noted, all provisions in this Rulebook are effective immediately. Rules in effect on the first day of a meet shall govern throughout that meet.

## PART ONE

### TECHNICAL RULES

All competitive swimming events held under USA Swimming sanction shall be conducted in accordance with the following rules that are designed to provide fair and equitable conditions of competition.

It is recommended that the LSC and regional short course and long course championships be held annually and that they be conducted under the rules governing National Championships (Article 207), subject to available facilities and personnel. Events other than such championships may use Article 207 as a guide, subject to local conditions and preferences.

**It is not the purpose of the Rules and Regulations of USA Swimming (the National Governing Body) contained herein to set standards of care for the safety of the swimmer. The swimmer, the swim coach, the swim club and the local public entity or pool owner should address safety considerations where events are held.**

#### ARTICLE 101

#### INDIVIDUAL STROKES AND RELAYS

##### 101.1 STARTS

.1 **Equipment** — A loudspeaker start system conforming to 103.18, with or without an underwater recall device, and an electronic strobe signal visible to all manual timers for forward and backstroke starts, shall be the preferred starting device.

##### .2 The Start

- A A 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 should take and maintain their positions on the starting platform, the deck, or in the water. 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 return without undue delay to the starting position.

## 101.1

- 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," the swimmers shall immediately assume their starting position, in the forward start, with at least one foot at the front of the starting platform or the deck. Swimmers starting in the water must have at least one hand in contact with the wall or starting platform. 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 or step off the blocks.
- E 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.

### .3 False Starts

- A Any swimmer initiating a start before the signal may 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 or swimmers who have false started shall be disqualified upon completion of the race.
- 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 who would otherwise be charged with a false start may be relieved of the charge if the false start was caused by the swimmer's reaction to a "stand" command.
- E Declared false start: swimmers reporting to the Referee prior to the start of their race and declaring their intent not to compete shall be disqualified except as noted in 207.11.6D(1).

### .4 Warning Signal — With the exception of relays, in events 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 five

yards or five meters to swim. As an alternative, a bell warning signal may be given over each lane by a lane judge or timer for that lane.

## .5 **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 their heat.
- C Such disqualification shall not be charged as a false start.

## 101.2 **BREASTSTROKE**

.1 **Start** — The forward start shall be used.

.2 **Stroke** — After the start and after each turn when the swimmer leaves the wall, the body shall be kept on the breast. It 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 when leaving the wall. Throughout the race the stroke cycle must be one arm stroke and one leg 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 arm 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.

.3 **Kick** — After the start and each turn, at any time prior to the first breaststroke kick, a single butterfly 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 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 kick.

.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

## 101.2

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

- .1 **Start** — The forward start shall be used.
- .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. 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.
- .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. A scissors or breaststroke kicking movement is not permitted.
- .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.
- .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.

## 101.4 BACKSTROKE

- .1 **Start** — The swimmers shall line up in the water facing the starting end, with both hands placed on the gutter or on the 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.
- .2 **Stroke** — The swimmer shall push off on their 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 is 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 after each turn. By that point, the head must have

broken the surface of the water. Additionally, 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.

- .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 immediate continuous simultaneous double arm pull may be used to initiate the turn. The swimmer must have returned to a position on the back upon leaving the wall.
- .4 **Finish** — Upon the finish of the race, the swimmer must touch the wall while on the back.

### 101.5 FREESTYLE

- .1 **Start** — The forward start shall be used.
- .2 **Stroke** — In an event designated freestyle, the swimmer may swim any style, except that in a medley relay or an 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.
- .3 **Turns** — Upon completion of each length the swimmer must touch the wall.
- .4 **Finish** — The swimmer shall have finished the race when any part of their person touches the wall after completing the prescribed distance.

**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.

- .1 **Start** — The forward start shall be used.
- .2 **Stroke** — The stroke for each one-fourth of the designated distance shall follow the prescribed rules for that stroke, except in the freestyle, the swimmer must be on the breast except when executing a turn.
- .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.
  - B The turns when changing from one stroke to another shall conform to the finish rules for the stroke just completed.
- .4 **Finish** — The swimmer shall have finished the race when any part of their person touches the wall after the prescribed distance

**101.7 RELAYS**

- .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.
- .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; and fourth, freestyle. Rules pertaining to each stroke used as described in 101.6 (Individual Medley) shall govern where applicable. At the end of each leg, the finish rule for each stroke applies in each case.
- .3 **Mixed Competition Category Relays** — must consist of two (2) men and two (2) women.

**Exception:** at meets below the LSC championship level, mixed relays consisting of compositions other than two (2) men swimmers and two (2) women swimmers may be permitted if stated in the meet announcement. Times for the mixed relays with compositions other than two (2) men and two (2) women shall not be loaded into the SWIMS database, but eligible lead-off times shall be loaded.

- .4 **Rules Pertaining to Relay Races**

- A No swimmer shall swim more than one leg in any relay event.
- B When automatic relay take-off judging is used, each swimmer must touch the touchplate or pad in their lane at the end of the course to have finished their leg of the relay race.
- C In relay races a swimmer other than the first swimmer shall not start until their teammate has concluded their leg.
- D Any relay team member and their relay team shall be disqualified from a race if a team member other than the swimmer designated to swim that leg enters the pool in the area where the race is being conducted before all swimmers of all teams have finished the race. Exception: When an in-the-water start is required or such start is approved by the Referee.
- E Each relay team member shall leave the water immediately upon finishing their leg, except the last member.
- F In relay races, the team of a swimmer whose feet have lost touch with the starting platform (ground or deck) before their preceding teammate touches the wall shall be disqualified.
- G In relay races involving in-the-water starts, the team of a swimmer who has lost touch with the end of the course before their preceding teammate touches the wall shall be disqualified, unless the swimmer in default returns to the original starting point at the wall.

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

## 101.8 LONG DISTANCE SWIMMING — POOL EVENTS

- .1 Events 5000y/5000m or greater conducted in a pool will be subject to the following special rules:
- A It is permissible for a swimmer to leave the water for brief periods because of pool safety and health considerations. When reentering the water, the swimmer shall resume the event commencing with the last completed length using an in-water start with a push off the wall. A dive reentry is not permitted.
- B The swimmer's time includes the period the swimmer is out of the pool.

### ARTICLE 102

## CONDUCT AND OFFICIATING OF ALL SWIMMING COMPETITION

- 102.1 **EVENTS** — Meets should be planned to terminate within a maximum period of eight (8) hours of competitive events for any group of swimmers in any one day and to provide adequate meal and rest breaks and properly supervised sheltered rest areas. Refer to 205.3.1F for additional provisions.

- .1 **SENIOR EVENTS** — The following events for National Championships are recommended for LSC and other championship meets. Eligibility for these championships shall be determined by the LSCs involved.

50, 100, 200, 400m/500y, 800m/1000y, 1500m/1650y freestyle

50, 100, 200 backstroke

50, 100, 200 butterfly

50, 100, 200 breaststroke

200, 400 individual medley

200, 400, 800 freestyle relay

200, 400 medley relay

200, 400, 800 mixed competition category freestyle relay 200, 400 mixed competition category medley relay

- .2 **AGE GROUP EVENTS** — Competitions may be composed of events selected from the following recognized list of events or other such events/meet types as may be sanctioned by the LSC.

### 10 Years and Younger

50, 100, 200, 400m/500y freestyle

1500m/1650y freestyle

50, 100 backstroke

### 11, 12 Years

50, 100, 200, 400m/500y, 800m/1000y,

50, 100, 200 backstroke

## 102.1

50, 100 breaststroke	50, 100, 200 breaststroke
50, 100 butterfly	50, 100, 200 butterfly
100, 200 individual medley	100, 200, 400 individual medley
200 freestyle relay	200, 400 freestyle relay
200 medley relay	200, 400 medley relay
200 mixed competition	200, 400 mixed competition
category freestyle relay	category freestyle relay
200 mixed competition	200, 400 mixed competition
category medley relay	category medley relay

### **13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 Years**

50, 100, 200, 400m/500y, 800m/1000y, 1500m/1650y freestyle  
50, 100, 200 backstroke  
50, 100, 200 breaststroke  
50, 100, 200 butterfly  
200, 400 individual medley  
200, 400, 800 freestyle relay  
200, 400 medley relay  
200, 400, 800 mixed competition category freestyle relay 200, 400 mixed competition category medley relay

- .3 **DEVELOPMENT COMPETITION EVENTS** — Competitions may be composed of events selected from the following recognized list of events:

### **12 Years and Younger**

25, 50, 100 freestyle  
25, 50 backstroke  
25, 50 breaststroke  
25, 50 butterfly  
100 individual medley  
100, 200 freestyle relay  
100, 200 medley relay  
100, 200 mixed competition category freestyle relay  
100, 200 mixed competition category medley relay

- .4 **OPEN WATER AND LONG DISTANCE POOL EVENTS** — The following events are recommended for Sectional, Zone, and LSC competitions. Competitions may be composed of events selected from the following list of events or other such events/meet types as may be sanctioned by the LSC.

### **10 Years and Younger**

1 kilometer open water  
800m/1000y—pool

### **13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 Years**

1, 3, 5, 10 kilometer open water  
2400m/3000y—pool

### **11, 12 Years**

1, 3, 5 kilometer open water  
1600m/2000y—pool

### **Senior**

5, 10, 25 kilometer open water  
4000m/5000y—pool

- .5 **CONSOLIDATED EVENTS** — As a local option, events may be sanctioned and seeded as a single event, without regard to swimmers' ages or gender, in the order of submitted entry times. Places, awards, and published results for these events may be separate for each age group and gender.
- .6 **TIME TRIALS** — Time trial events may be held in conjunction with a sanctioned, approved, or observed competition if all information about the conduct of the time trials is included in the meet announcement as sanctioned or approved by the LSC. If time trials are held as a separate event, they shall be sanctioned, approved, or observed in compliance with Article 202.
- .7 **VIRTUAL EVENTS** — A Virtual Meet shall be conducted with the same order of events with all results merged. All venues shall complete their competition within a ten (10) day period. It shall be officiated in accordance with 102.10 at each venue and conducted according to the Virtual Meet guidelines.

## 102.2 GENERAL RULES

- .1 In order to compete in a meet, a swimmer must be entered in compliance with the event entry requirements stated in the meet announcement.
- .2 In a preliminaries and finals meet, a swimmer may compete in not more than three (3) individual events per day.
- .3 In a timed finals meet, a swimmer may compete in not more than six (6) individual events per day.
- .4 If, due to conditions beyond the meet officials' control (e.g., a thunderstorm), an event or events are postponed to a subsequent day of the meet, such postponed events shall not be included in the above events-per-day limitations.
- .5 In a meet where finals for an event(s) are scheduled to be contested on a day subsequent to preliminaries for that event(s), that finals event(s) shall not be counted in the daily event limitation.
- .6 In a meet where a combination of preliminary and final events and timed finals are scheduled, a swimmer may compete in not more than three (3) individual events per day, unless entered exclusively in timed final events that day.
- .7 The above limitations on individual events apply regardless of the classification mixture or if separate meets or time trials are being conducted. These, and additional limitations on entries which may be established by the LSC's sanction or approval, shall be clearly stated in the meet announcement.
  - A Unless explicitly stated otherwise, a swimmer found, prior to seeding, to have exceeded the session, daily, or overall meet entry limit shall be scratched from any and all events that occur beyond the allowable limit, in the order that events are contested.

## 102.2

- B Unless explicitly stated otherwise, a swimmer found to have competed in events beyond entry limits shall be administratively disqualified from any and all events that were swum beyond the allowable limit.
- .8 In a mixed classification meet, a swimmer may enter the same stroke and distance individual event in an age group and any other classification, provided the limit of events per day for the type of meet is not exceeded. The same entry time must be used for all repetitive entries.
- .9 If a meet or an event has no qualifying time standards, a swimmer who has no official time for an event may enter that event with no submitted time. Meet hosts may specify in the meet announcement that swimmers must submit estimated times if they have no official times.

## 102.3 RELAYS

- .1 Relay teams shall not compete unattached. In all cases, relay teams must be composed of USA Swimming members of the same club, school or organization which is a member of USA Swimming. This requirement does not apply to relay teams representing an LSC at a Zone meet or similar all-star competition sanctioned or approved by USA Swimming. Foreign relays competing in USA Swimming sanctioned meets must consist of members of the same foreign club or may represent their recognized World Aquatics federation if so authorized by that federation.
- .2 Relays may be conducted on a timed final basis or with preliminaries and finals.
- .3 Organizations entering two or more relay teams in an event shall designate them on the entry blank as Team A, Team B, etc.
- .4 The time of each relay team shall be entered on the entry blank for seeding purposes and no change in time will be permitted.
- .5 First and last names of swimmers eligible to compete in relay events shall be entered in accordance with the meet announcement.
- .6 The composition of a relay team may be changed between preliminaries and finals. All members competing on a relay team disqualified during preliminaries shall be barred from further competition in that event.
- .7 Names of eligible relay swimmers 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 heat in which such relay team is entered. No changes will be permitted thereafter.

**102.4 SCRATCH PROCEDURES** — Each swimmer shall become informed of the meet starting time and shall 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 and penalties for violation of those procedures.

**102.5 SEEDING, LANE ASSIGNMENTS, SWIM-OFFS, AND ORDER OF HEATS**

- .1 Preliminary Heats When Finals Are Scheduled** — Entry times shall be listed by the meet committee with the fastest swimmer first and the slowest swimmer last. Swimmers whose submitted times are identical should be assigned places in the list by draw. Swimmers with no submitted times shall be considered the slowest and shall be placed at the end of the list by draw. Swimmers shall be seeded in lanes under the procedure outlined for finals seeding in 102.5. Swimmers shall be seeded in heats according to submitted times in the following manner:

**A Fewer than three heats**

- (1) If there is only one heat, it shall be swum as scheduled during the preliminaries and finals.
- (2) If there are two heats, the fastest swimmer shall be seeded in the second heat, next fastest in the first heat, next fastest in the second heat, next in the first heat, next in the second heat, next in the first heat, etc.

- B Three heats** — Except for 400y, 400m/500y, 800m/1000y and 1500m/1650y events, the fastest swimmer shall be placed in the third heat, next fastest in the second, next in the first. The fourth fastest swimmer shall be placed in the third heat, the fifth in the second heat, and the sixth fastest in the first heat, the seventh fastest in the third heat, etc.

- C Four heats or more** — Except for 400y, 400m/500y, 800m/1000y and 1500m/1650y events, the fastest three heats of an event shall be seeded in accordance with B above. The heat preceding the fastest three heats shall consist of the next fastest swimmers; the heat preceding the fastest four heats shall consist of the next fastest swimmers, etc. Lanes shall be assigned in descending order of submitted times within each heat, in accordance with the pattern outlined in 102.5.3.

- D** For 400y, 400m/500y, 800m/1000y and 1500m/1650y events, the fastest two heats of an event shall be seeded in accordance with 102.5.1A(2). The heat preceding the fastest two heats shall consist of the next fastest swimmers; the heat preceding the fastest three heats shall consist of the next fastest swimmers, etc. Lanes shall be assigned in descending order of submitted times within each heat, in accordance with the pattern outlined in 102.5.

- E Exception** — When there are two or more heats in an event, there shall be a minimum of three swimmers seeded into any one preliminary heat, but subsequent scratches may reduce the number of swimmers in such heat to less than three.

- .2 Swim-Offs** — A swim-off is considered to be part of the total preliminary process of qualifying for the finals. In no case may a swimmer with a faster time displace another who placed ahead of them within a heat as the result of a decision by the

Referee or Place Judges in accordance with 102.23. If this situation results in disputed qualifications, all swimmers having times tied or within the disputed times shall swim-off the event to qualify for the disputed place or places in the final unless the swimmers, coaches, and Referee mutually agree to resolve the tie in an alternative manner, such as coin toss or racing a different distance/ event. The swim-off shall be timed and judged in the same manner as the original event unless a subsequent timing system malfunction requires that an adjustment be made. For the seeding of finals, the times used for the swimmers involved shall be the times achieved in their original preliminary heats. This elimination may be held at any time set by the Referee, but not more than 45 minutes after the last heat of any event in which any one of these swimmers is competing in that session. In the case of a disqualification in a swim-off, the swimmer so disqualified is relegated to the lowest qualifying position for which they are competing. Disqualification in a swim-off for a qualifying position shall not eliminate a swimmer from eligibility to compete in the accompanying finals, or as an alternate. If disqualifications leave a vacancy for the full complement of finalists, swimoffs shall be continued among the disqualified swimmers until a full complement of finalists is assured.

**Note:** It shall be the swimmer's responsibility to become acquainted with information pertaining to swim-offs, final events and the participants therein.

- .3 **Finals** — In finals, the times to be considered are those times made in preliminary heats. If any qualifying swimmers have the same time, their respective lanes shall be determined by draw. Lane assignments shall be made in descending order of qualifying times by placing the fastest swimmer or team in the center lane in a pool with an odd number of lanes, or in lanes 3, 4, or 5 respectively in pools having 6, 8, or 10 lanes, with the swimmer having the next fastest time in the adjacent lane, then alternating the other swimmer(s) to the right or left in accordance with the submitted times. (See chart below)

Lanes in Pool									
				4	2	1	3	5	5
		6	4	2	1	3	5		6
	6	4	2	1	3	5	7		7
	8	6	4	2	1	3	5	7	8
	8	6	4	2	1	3	5	7	9
10	8	6	4	2	1	3	5	7	9
10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
									< Lane

#### .4 Timed Finals

- A **Heats** — The last heat shall be composed of the swimmers with the fastest submitted times, the next to last heat composed of the next fastest swimmers, etc. Lanes shall be assigned in descending order of submitted times within each heat, in accordance with the pattern outlined in .3 above. When

there are two or more heats there shall be a minimum of three swimmers or relay teams seeded into the first heat. The last heat should be a full heat, but the requirement of seeding three swimmers or relay teams into the first heat may result in failure to fill the last heat.

- B **Places** — In timed finals, places shall be determined on a time basis, subject to the order of finish within each heat and based upon the ranking system used at the meet. Any ties resulting from the procedure used shall be declared officially tied for awards and points, with no further attempt at resolution.

- .5 **Seeding of 50 meter events in a 50 meter course** — 50 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.

## .6 **Order of Heats**

- A **Preliminary Heats and Timed Finals** — The normal order of heats may be reversed by swimming the fastest heats first. Women's and men's heats may be alternated.

- B **Finals** — The order of heats during the finals of a preliminaries and finals meet may be reversed, with the B and C (consolation and bonus) heats, if any, swum following the A (final) heat.

- C The order of heats shall be stated in the meet announcement.

- .7 **Alternates** — In the event of scratches or athlete(s) failing to report for finals, the empty lanes may be filled by moving the athletes up in order from the slower heats and by using the available alternates to fill lanes in the slowest heat without reseeding the heats.

- .8 For heats other than team selection finals where athletes are not provided any recognition other than the opportunity to swim (e.g., scoring points, earning prize money, etc.) alternates may be inserted into empty lanes in any heat regardless of order swum.

## 102.6 **COUNTERS**

- A A swimmer in the 500/1000/1650 yard or 400/800/1500 Short Course Meter or 800/1500 Long Course Meter freestyle or other long distance pool event (see 102.1.4) 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 swimmer or 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.

## 102.7 POSTPONEMENTS AND CHANGES IN PROGRAM

- .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.
- .2 At the Meet Referee's discretion, events may be combined by age, gender, distance, and/or stroke provided there is at least one empty lane between such combined events. The Referee may waive the empty lane requirement with the concurrence of the coaches of the affected swimmers.
- .3 The entry provisions and starting time of any event, meet or portion thereof shall stand as stated in the meet announcement (except as permitted under .4 below) 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. If mailed, such notice must be postmarked no later than the entry deadline date stated on the meet announcement, and if lack of time prohibits mail notification, all affected swimmers or their coaches must voluntarily agree in writing that they have been notified and are in accord with such change. Any affected swimmer or their coach may file a written protest with the Referee prior to running of the event or meet if they do not agree to such change in time or date.
- .4 **Postponement or Cancellation**
  - A If, prior to its commencement, unusual or severe weather or other conditions preclude the possibility of safely and effectively conducting a meet or an event, the meet committee may cancel or postpone it. Meets postponed to a start date within fourteen (14) days from the original start date shall define age as the first day of the original meet. Meets postponed to a date more than fourteen (14) days from the original start date shall define age as the first day of the rescheduled meet.
  - B If, after commencement, conditions preclude the possibility of safely and effectively conducting a meet or an event, the meet committee may cancel or postpone. If postponed to continue within fourteen (14) days of the date of postponement, age of the swimmers shall not change. If postponed to continue at a date beyond fourteen (14) days of the date of postponement, age of the swimmers shall change to the first day of the rescheduled events.
  - C Should a meet or event have actually commenced, and in the judgment of the Referee cannot safely and effectively continue because of weather condi-

tions, or for some other compelling reason, the Referee, in their sole discretion, may suspend the meet or event 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 approval of the meet committee.

- D A decision to cancel or postpone shall be final.
- E Should an event have actually commenced but is terminated prior to an official finish, and is postponed to another time or date, it shall then be conducted between the swimmers who were officially competing in the event at the time of the termination.
- F Incomplete events will not be awarded or scored; however, times achieved in accordance with 102.23 up to the point of cancellation shall be considered official.
- G Entry fees for teams or swimmers may be refunded, in whole or part, at the discretion of the meet committee, upon cancellation of a meet or particular event. The decision of the meet committee on refunding may be appealed to the LSC Administrative Review Board or National Board of Review for hearing under the provisions of Policy 26.0 of the USA Swimming Operating Policy Manual.

## 102.8 SWIMWEAR

### .1 Design

- A Swimwear shall include only a swimsuit, cap, and goggles. It is not permissible to wear more than two (2) caps. Armbands or leg bands shall not be regarded as parts of the swimsuit and are not allowed.
- B In swimming competitions, the swimmer must wear only one swimsuit in one or two pieces, except as provided in 205.10.1. 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 knee (see 701.4.4 for open water exception).
  - (1) Exemptions to the foregoing restriction may be granted to a swimmer, on a case by case basis, by the Rules & Regulations Chair (or their designee). Exemptions will be granted only for conflicts due to the swimmer's verified religious beliefs, verified medical conditions or other reasons deemed appropriate by the Rules & Regulations Committee Chair.
  - (2) Procedures for applying for an exemption will be established by the Rules & Regulations Committee and posted on the USA Swimming website.
  - (3) No exemption to this restriction will be granted for a swimsuit that will give the swimmer a competitive advantage.

- (4) The decision of the Rules & Regulations Committee Chair may be appealed only to the entire Rules & Regulations 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 USA Swimming sanctioned or approved competition.
- D Swimsuits worn for competition must be nontransparent and conform to the current concept of the appropriate.
- E No swimmer is permitted to wear or use any device, substance or swimsuit to help their speed, pace, buoyancy or endurance during a race (such as webbed gloves, flippers, fins, power bands, adhesive substances, etc.). The use of technology and automated data collection devices is permissible for the sole purpose of collecting data. Automated devices shall not be utilized 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. Therapeutic elastic tape is prohibited. As a consequence of injury, it is permissible to tape not more than two fingers or toes. Any other kind of tape on the body is not permitted unless approved by the Referee.
- F No Technical Suits shall be worn by any 12 & Under athlete in competition at any sanctioned, approved or observed meet.
  - (1) (1) Exceptions to the foregoing restriction are only for Junior Nationals, U.S. Open, National Championships, and Olympic Trials.
  - (2) A Technical Suit is one that has the following components:
    - a. Any suit with any bonded or taped seams regardless of its fabric or silhouette; or
    - b. Any suit which includes any woven fabric and which extends past the hips.

(Note: WOVEN FABRIC — A suit with woven fabric and sewn seams that does not extend below the hips is permitted.)

(Note: KNIT FABRIC — A suit with knit fabric and sewn seams not extending below the knees is permitted.)

- .2 **Insignia** — Swimmers may wear the insignia and/or name of the club or organization they represent or of which they are a member or the insignia of their World Aquatics National Federation or Organizing Committees for Olympic, World, Continental or Regional Championships, except as otherwise provided in 202.9.3 for international competition and in World Aquatics rules GR5 and GR6. Swimmers shall not be allowed to wear the insignia and/or name of any club or organization which they are not entitled to represent in open competition, if such action is objectionable to that club or organization.

### .3 Advertising

- A Advertising means the normal display of the name, designation, trademark, logo, or any other distinctive sign of the manufacturer of the item or any other advertiser permitted in accordance with this rule. World Aquatics labeling and the USA Swimming logo or club logo shall not be considered as advertisements. Logos of the swimwear manufacturer shall be considered as advertising and are included in the limits described in (1) through (3) below. In the competition venue or complex of all events conducted by and under the control of USA Swimming or any LSC or division thereof, advertising appearing on swimwear is allowed as follows:
- (1) **Swimsuits** — A total of three separate advertising logos of a maximum size of 30 square centimeters (4.65 sq. in.) each, measured as worn, shall be permitted.
  - (2) **Caps** — A total of three separate advertising logos of a maximum size of 20 square centimeters (3.1 sq. in.) each, as measured as applied, shall be permitted. A club logo is not considered as advertising and is not subject to the size limitations.
  - (3) **Goggles** — A total of three separate advertising logos of a maximum size of 6 square centimeters (.9 sq. in.) each, as measured as applied, shall be permitted, but only on the spectacle frame or band.
- B Body advertising in the form of temporary tattoos or other embellishments is not allowed.
- C Advertising for the following shall not be allowed:
- (1) Products involving tobacco, nicotine, psychoactive cannabinoids, alcohol or pharmaceuticals containing substances banned under IOC or World Aquatics rules;
  - (2) Political statements; and
  - (3) Any products or services that would be counter to the values of the sport or bring disrepute to USA Swimming.
- D Swimmers in violation of the above provisions may be barred from the competition venue until they comply. However, any swimmer who competes in an event wearing swimwear in violation of these advertising provisions shall not be subject to disqualification.

**102.9 MEET DIRECTOR** — Shall be appointed by the meet host. The Meet Director's responsibilities include, but are not limited to: procuring the awards; obtaining a sanction; preparing the facility; arranging for personnel, equipment (including appropriate timing equipment as specified in 102.23), and supplies necessary for meet operation; processing of entries; printing of programs; arranging for publicity and media coverage; preparing and distributing meet results and filing the LSC report.

**102.10 OFFICIALS**

- .1 All officials accepting an invitation to officiate at a swimming meet should arrive promptly and report immediately to the Meet Director or Meet Referee.
- .2 All officials acting in the capacity of Referee, Starter, Stroke and Turn Judge, or Administrative Official at a sanctioned or approved USA Swimming meet shall be certified and trained in such position by their LSC to the uniform and consistent standards set by USA Swimming with recommendation from the National Officials Committee in conjunction with the Coach Advisory Council prior to being assigned to officiate in that capacity. LSCs and clubs shall not require any additional certifications. Uncertified trainees may perform the duties of such positions when they are under the direct supervision of a certified official in said position. See Article 202 and the Corporate Bylaws for USA Swimming membership requirements.
- .3 With the exception of development, intrasquad and dual meets, there shall not be fewer than the following officiating positions filled or approved by the LSC in authority for all swim meets and time trials. Officials other than the Referee and Administrative Official may act in more than one officiating capacity only when sufficient qualified officials are not available, but no one may simultaneously time and judge the order of finish. An LSC House of Delegates may establish additional minimum requirements.
  - 1 Referee
  - 1 Starter
  - 3 Timers per lane (one minimum if automatic equipment with touchpads is used)
  - 1 Clerk of Course (if applicable)
  - 1 Place Judge (2 are preferred)
  - 2 Stroke Judges and 2 Turn Judges or 2 Stroke & Turn Judges Relay Take-off Judges (if applicable)
  - 1 Administrative Official
  - 1 Announcer (if applicable)
  - Timing Equipment Operators (as needed)
  - 2 Marshals, with at least one of each gender
- .4 At development, dual, and intra-squad meets, there shall be no fewer than the following officiating positions filled or approved by the LSC in authority for all swim meets and time trials.
  - 1 Referee, who may also act as a stroke and turn judge
  - 1 Starter
  - 1 Other Stroke and Turn Judge (may be the Starter)
  - 1 Announcer (if applicable)
  - 3 Timers per lane (one minimum if automatic timing equipment with touchpads is used)
  - 1 Administrative Official
  - 1 Place Judge
  - Relay Take-off Judges (if applicable)
  - Timing Equipment Operators (as needed)
  - 2 Marshals, with at least one of each gender

## .5 Officials for USA Swimming Championships

- A Officials for USA Swimming championship meets shall be assigned by the National Officials Committee Chair with the approval of the Program & Events Coordinator (or their designee).
- B The following officials shall be required and assigned for all USA Swimming championships and team selection trials competitions:
  - 1 Referee
  - 1 Starter
  - 1 Administrative Referee
  - 1 Chief Timer
  - 1 Place Judge where overhead video cameras are not used (2 are preferred)
  - 1 Chief Judge
  - 1 Stroke Judge per each side of pool
  - 1 Timer/Relay Take-off Judge per lane (start end)
  - 1 Head Lane Timer per lane (start end)
  - 1 Timer/Turn Judge per lane (start end)
  - 1 Turn Judge per lane (turn end)
  - 4 Relay Take-off Judges — two each side of pool
  - 1 Recall Rope Operator
  - 4 Marshals (minimum)
- C In addition to the officials listed above, assistant referees, assistant chief judges, one additional stroke judge per each side of the pool and relief personnel may be assigned. In the event of insufficient officials, the Referee may modify or combine assignments, subject to the provisions of 102.10.3. Where overhead video cameras are used, the Referee may make further modifications as appropriate.
- D Additional Required Meet Personnel
  - 1 Clerk of Course
  - 1 Announcer
  - 2 Timing Equipment Operators
  - 1 Computer Operator

## 102.11 REFEREE

- .1 Shall have full authority over all officials and shall assign and instruct them; 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; can overrule any meet official on a point of rule interpretation, or on a judgment decision pertaining to an action which the Referee has personally observed.
- .2 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.

## 102.11

- .3 Shall signal the Starter before each race that all officials are in position, that the course is clear, and that the competition can begin.
- .4 Shall assign marshals with specific instructions.
- .5 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 appropriate racing conditions are observed.
- .6 For LSC and local records only, may assign three (3) additional official timers on request to record a record attempt at initial distances in accordance with 102.23 and Article 104.
- .7 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.
- .8 May prohibit the use of any device that disrupts or interferes with the meet, such as a laser pointing device or artificial noisemaker.
- .9 May modify any rule for a competitive swimmer who has a disability. Any such modification shall be in accordance with Article 105 of the USA Swimming Rules and Regulations, shall affect only the current meet, and shall not set a precedent.
- .10 Shall establish the necessary administrative and officiating procedures to conform to Part One of the rules and local conditions when the meet sanction allows conducting the events by starting them from the alternate ends of a 50-meter course.
- .11 Refer to 102.22 concerning protests.

## 102.12 STARTER

- .1 **Preparation** — The Starter shall stand on the side of the pool within approximately five 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.
- .2 **Optional Instructions** — The Starter may:
  - A Announce the event.
  - B Advise the heat when a swimmer will be attempting to achieve a time at an initial distance.
  - C For backstroke starts, give the command, "Place your feet."
  - D Use a "stand" command in accordance with 101.1.2 D, 101.1.3 A, and 101.1.3 D.

**102.13 JUDGES** — Shall have jurisdiction over the swimmers immediately after the race has begun.

- .1 **Chief** — An overall "Chief Judge" may assign and supervise the activities of all stroke, turn, place and take-off judges and may report their decisions. If desired,

any judging category may have a designated "Chief." 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 "Chief's" category.

- .2 **Place Judge** — One or two place judges shall be positioned on the side of the course near the finish and shall judge the order of finish of all swimmers. If two place judges are used, they shall independently record the order of finish of all swimmers. A place judge shall record a tie if a place distinction cannot be made. Judging results shall be used only in accordance with 102.23.5C in determining the order of finish.
- .3 **Stroke Judge** — 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 pool-side, at the Referee's discretion; shall ensure that the rules relating to the style of swimming designated for the event are being observed; and shall report any violations to the Referee on signed slips detailing the event, the heat number, the lane number and the infraction.
- .4 **Turn Judge** — Shall operate on both ends of the pool; shall ensure that after the start and when turning or finishing, the swimmer complies with the rules applicable to the stroke used; and shall report any violations to the Referee on signed slips detailing the event, the heat number, lane number and infraction observed.
- .5 **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 insure that all swimmers shall have fair, equitable, and uniform conditions of judging.
- .6 **Relay Take-Off Judges**
  - A Relay take-off judges shall be assigned by the Referee and shall 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), and shall judge whether the swimmer is in contact with the platform when the incoming swimmer touches the end of the pool.
  - B If dual relay take-off judging is used, the lane and side take-off judges shall independently report infractions in writing without the use of the infraction hand signal. A relay will be disqualified only if the lane take-off judge has reported an infraction and the assigned side take-off judge has confirmed the same infraction.
  - C When automatic relay exchange judging equipment is in use, the system printout will provide the information to judge relay exchanges. Integrated back-up timing cameras may be reviewed by the Referee to confirm the automatic system's results. When backup timing cameras are not available, the Referee will determine the confirmation process.

## 102.14

### 102.14 ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIAL

- .1 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 Scoring personnel
  - E Other administrative personnel
- .2 Shall be responsible to the Referee for:
  - A The accurate processing of entries and scratches.
  - B Accurate seeding of preliminary, semi-final and final heats.
  - C Determination and recording of official time.
    - (1) Receiving and reviewing the automatic and/or semi-automatic timing results from the Timing Equipment Operator and comparing primary timing results with the back-up timing results to determine their validity.
    - (2) Receiving the times recorded by the Head Lane Timers from the Chief Timer and the order of finish data from the Place Judges 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 and scores.
- .3 Shall perform other duties assigned by the Referee.

**102.15 SCORERS** — In a scored meet, shall receive from the Administrative Official the results in timed finals, or consolation finals and championship finals for each event. They shall compile team and high-point scores as applicable.

### 102.16 TIMING PERSONNEL AND THEIR DUTIES

- .1 **Chief Timer** — The Chief Timer shall:
  - A Assure 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 manual watch times, including those of disqualified swimmers, to the Administrative Official.

**.2 Head Lane Timer —** The Head Lane Timer shall:

- A A Determine whether the swimmer or relay team is present and in the correct lane, heat and event, and record the names and order of relay swimmers prior to the start of the race, and determine that the relay swimmers are swimming in the order listed.
- B Determine and record manual watch times or the absence of a swimmer or the relay team seeded in that lane.
- C Assign one timer to time 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 touch pad at the finish, or if there is reason to believe the semi-automatic or manual times may be inaccurate.

**.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 the Lane Timer's jurisdiction to judge if the swimmer's touch conforms to the applicable finish rules or if a relay take-off infraction has occurred unless assigned concurrent responsibility as a Lane Timer and Turn Judge or Relay Take-off Judge. Each timer shall:

- A 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 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 semi-automatic system button when any part of the swimmer's body touches the wall.
- C Report the watch time to the Head Lane Timer or the designated recorder, report if a late or missed pad touch is observed; and, if requested, present the watch for inspection. Lane Timers shall not clear their watches until a command to "clear watches" is given or the Referee signals that the next heat is ready to start.

**.4 Timing Equipment Operator —** The Timing Equipment Operator shall be responsible for the automatic or semi-automatic timing equipment, including the electronic starting system and scoreboard (if used), and shall advise the Referee or Administrative Official 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.

## 102.17

**102.17 PRESS STEWARD** — Shall obtain from the Clerk of Course or the Administrative Official the names of all swimmers in each event, the results of each finish with times or record performances, and keep the press and TV personnel thoroughly informed on all details of the competition during the meet.

**102.18 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 whose actions are disrupting the orderly conduct of the meet.

**102.19 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 shall assign heats and lanes. A Clerk of Course may be used to organize swimmers and escort them to the blocks for their assigned heats.

**102.20 ANNOUNCER** — The announcer shall make any announcements requested by the Referee, the Clerk of Course, or meet management.

## 102.21 DISQUALIFICATIONS

- .1 A disqualification can be made only by the official within whose jurisdiction the infraction has been committed. Except for the Relay Take-off Judges when dual confirmation relay take-off judging, as provided in 102.13.6B, is used, the Referee, Stroke, Turn, or Relay Take-off Judge upon observing an infraction, shall immediately raise one hand overhead. If the official does not do so, there shall be no disqualification unless the meet is being conducted under World Aquatics procedures.
- .2 The Referee or designated official making a disqualification shall make every reasonable effort to seek out the swimmer or their coach and inform them as to the reason for the disqualification. Failure to notify does not negate the disqualification.
- .3 For swimwear disqualifications, refer to 102.8.
- .4 Any swimmer who acts in an unsportsmanlike or unsafe manner within the swimming venue may be considered for appropriate action or penalty by the Referee.
- .5 The swimmer must remain and finish the race in the same lane in which they started.
- .6 Standing on the bottom during a freestyle race shall not disqualify a swimmer, but a swimmer must not leave the pool, or walk, or spring from the bottom. Standing on the bottom during any other stroke shall result in disqualification.
- .7 Obstructing or otherwise interfering with another swimmer shall disqualify the offender, subject to the discretion of the Referee.
- .8 Any swimmer not entered in a race who enters the pool or course in the area in

which said race is being conducted before all swimmers therein have completed the race shall be barred from the next individual event in which that swimmer is entered on that day or the next meet day, whichever is first.

- .9 Dipping goggles in the water or splashing water on the swimmer's face or body prior to an event shall not be considered as entering the pool unless the Referee finds that such action is interfering with the competition.
- .10 Should a foul endanger the chance of success of a swimmer(s), the Referee may allow the affected swimmer(s) to reswim the event. In case of collusion to foul another swimmer, the Referee may, at their discretion, disqualify the swimmer for whose aid the foul was committed, as well as the swimmer committing the foul.
- .11 Grasping lane dividers to assist forward motion is not permitted.
- .12 For relay disqualifications, refer to 101.7.4.
- .13 The time and/or place 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 made prior to the decision to disqualify, they shall be returned and made to the proper recipient(s) and if points have been scored by those disqualified, the event shall be rescored.
- .14 Time and/or place officially recorded for a swimmer shall not be nullified for violations occurring subsequent to such performance.
- .15 Video replay footage from cameras approved in writing in advance of the competition by the Program & Events Coordinator (or their designee) may be used to ensure that the rules related to the style of swimming designated for the event are being observed, and to observe the starts, turns and finishes.

## 102.22 PROTESTS

- .1 Protests against the judgment decisions of starters, stroke, turn, place and relay take-off judges can only be considered by the Referee and the Referee's decision shall be final.
- .2 For consideration of all other protests lodged at the meet, the Referee may appoint a meet jury. The jury shall consist of not fewer than three (3) and not more than five (5) persons, at least one of whom shall be a coach and one an athlete.
- .3 Protests made prior to the race contesting the eligibility of a swimmer to compete or to represent an organization shall be made to the Referee in writing. If a protest is not resolved, the Referee or the meet jury shall allow the swimmer to compete under protest and it shall be so announced before the race.
- .4 All other competition-related protests, including protests concerning eligibility and representation, must be made to the Referee and submitted in writing within thirty (30) minutes after the race in which the alleged infraction occurred.
- .5 Except as provided in 102.22.1, the Referee's or the meet jury's ruling may be

## 102.22

appealed as follows:

- A A Protests concerning interpretation of the rules in Part One and Part Seven of the USA Swimming Rules & Regulations shall be submitted in writing within ten (10) days to the Rules & Regulations Committee Chair who shall issue a ruling within five (5) days from the date of the receipt of such protest. This ruling shall be final and binding on all parties.
  - B All other protests, together with the Referee's or the jury's written decision, shall be submitted to the National Board of Review, in accordance with Policy 26.0 of the USA Swimming Operating Policy Manual.
- .6 The official results of any protested race shall not be announced, the affected awards shall not be given, and points scored shall not be allocated until the protest is resolved or is withdrawn in writing.

## 102.23 TIMING RULES

### .1 Requirements for Official Time

#### A Performance Requirements

- (1) An official time can be achieved only in USA Swimming sanctioned or USA Swimming approved competition, or in an observed swim in accordance with all applicable rules. It may be achieved in:
  - (a) Any heat.
  - (b) A swim-off.
  - (c) A lead-off leg in a relay swum by four eligible relay members; the lead-off swimmer's time shall not be nullified by a subsequent disqualification of their team members.
  - (d) A split time recorded from the official start to the completion of an initial distance with a legal finish within a longer event, provided the swimmer completes the event or the lead-off portion of the relay in compliance with applicable rules.
  - (e) A time trial or a record attempt
- (2) An official time for an event or a stroke can be achieved only in that event or stroke, or in an initial distance of such event or stroke (e.g., a backstroke time must be achieved in a backstroke event or the backstroke leg of a medley relay). Regardless of the stroke(s) used, times achieved in freestyle events can be recorded only as freestyle times.

- B **Timing Resolution** — All timing systems, including manual watches, shall have a resolution of one one-hundredth of a second (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.

#### C System Requirements for Specific Purposes

- (1) Official times achieved using a timing system in accordance with 102.23.3 are valid for all entry time and recognition program purposes with the following exception: World, American, and U.S. Open Records can be established only when timed by an automatic timing system, a backup camera system, or semiautomatic system if the automatic system fails.
- (2) A backup time adjusted as described in 102.23.4 may be used as an official time.

- D **Backup Timing System Requirement** — 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 which 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 102.23.1C.
- E **Use of Secondary and Tertiary Times** — Secondary and tertiary times shall be recorded but shall not be used except to corroborate or correct missing or inaccurate primary/secondary results.

.2 **Timing Systems** — 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 activated by a starting device and stopped at the finish by the swimmer touching the touchpad.
- B **Semi-Automatic** — A timing system activated by a starting device and stopped by buttons pushed by timers at the finish touch of the swimmer.
- C **Manual** — A timing system consisting of individual lane timers, each operating a manual watch that is both started and stopped by the timer as described in 102.16.3. Only handheld, battery-powered, digital read-out type watches designed for timing purposes shall be used.

.3 **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) Semi-Automatic, with three (3) or two (2) buttons per lane, each operated by a separate timer.
  - (3) Manual, with three (3) 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 must be used. The secondary system may be:
  - (1) Stationary overhead video cameras recording 100 images per second. The cameras must be fully integrated with the primary timing system.
  - (2) Semi-Automatic with one (1), two (2), or three (3) buttons, each operated by a separate timer.
  - (3) Manual with one (1), two (2) or three (3) watches per lane, each operated by a separate timer.
- C **Tertiary System** — Unless the primary system consists of manual watches or the secondary system is a fully integrated video system or includes at least one (1) manual watch per lane, a tertiary system of at least one (1) manual watch per lane shall be provided.

#### .4 Determining Official Time

- A **Automatic Timing** — When recorded by properly operating automatic timing equipment, the pad time shall be the official time.
- B **Semi-Automatic and Manual Timing** — Whenever semi-automatic 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 or watch times agree, that shall be the time for that timing system.
  - (2) If three valid buttons or watches disagree, the time of the intermediate button or watch shall be the time for that timing system.
  - (3) If only two valid button or watch times are available, the time shall be the average of those two buttons or the average of the two watch times. The digits representing thousandths of a second shall be dropped with no rounding.
  - (4) If only one button or 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 malfunction may have occurred if:
  - (1) The difference between the time obtained by the primary system and the back-up system(s) is approximately .30 second or greater; or
  - (2) The place judge(s) reports a different order of finish; or
  - (3) It is reported the swimmer missed the touchpad or had a soft touch.

- D **Adjustment for Malfunction on a Lane** — When a malfunction is confirmed on a lane, the back-up times for that lane shall be calculated in accordance with 102.23.4B and integrated with the accurate primary times in establishing the official time and determining the results.
- E **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 semi-automatic primary timing system is equally incorrect for all the 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 back-up times and adding, or subtracting when appropriate, that difference to the primary times of every lane in that heat. (See Appendix 1 on page 50)

## .5 Determining Results

- A **Place and Ranking** — The results shall be by integration of official times including those times adjusted in accordance with 102.23.4.
- B **Ties** — Official times identical to the hundredths shall be ties, with swim-offs as required to determine qualifiers or alternates for semi-final, consolation or final heats.
- C **Judging** — Judging shall only be used to change the results produced by ranking the Official Times if:
  - (1) The swimmers competed in the same heat;
  - (2) Times obtained from properly operating automatic timing equipment are not available; and
  - (3) The Place Judges both observed a different relative order of finish and made a written record of their observation immediately following the conclusion of that heat.

**Note:** A different relative order of finish means there is agreement that a different swimmer finished ahead of another swimmer; there need not be agreement on their exact placement within the heat.
- D **Impact of Judging on Order of Finish** — If judging changes the results:
  - (1) In timed finals meets and the finals of preliminaries and finals meets, such placement by judges decision (JD) shall be indicated in the meet results.
  - (2) In the preliminaries of preliminaries and finals meets, in no case may a swimmer with a faster time displace a swimmer who was judged to have placed ahead of them within a heat according to 102.23.5C. If this should result in disputed qualifications, all swimmers having times

tied or within the disputed times shall swim-off for the disputed places in accordance with 102.5.2.

## 102.24 SCORING

### .1 Dual Meets

Individual events: 5-3-1-0

Relays: 7-0

### .2 Triangular meets

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

Relays: 8-4-0

### .3 All other meets — Individual events (Individual point values shall be doubled for relays):

4-lane pools: 5-3-2-1

8-lane pools: 9-7-6-5-4-3-2-1

5-lane pools: 6-4-3-2-1

9-lane pools: 10-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1

6-lane pools: 7-5-4-3-2-1

10-lane pools: 11-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1

7-lane pools: 8-6-5-4-3-2-1

When consolation and championship finals are swum, scoring shall be as follows for individual events (Individual point values shall be doubled for relays, even when relays are swum as timed finals):

#### 6-lane pools (12 places):

A (final): 16-13-12-11-10-9

B (consolation): 7-5-4-3-2-1

#### 9-lane pools (18 places):

A (final): 22-19-18-17-16-15-14-13-12

B (consolation): 10-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1

#### 7-lane pools (14 places):

A (final): 18-15-14-13-12-11-10

B (consolation): 8-6-5-4-3-2-1

#### 10-lane pools (20 places):

A (final): 24-21-20-19-18-17-16-15-14-13

B (consolation): 11-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1

#### 8-lane pools (16 places):

A (final): 20-17-16-15-14-13-12-11

B (consolation): 9-7-6-5-4-3-2-1

### .4 LSC Options — For mixed classification meets, nonstandard events, or when an additional (bonus) heat or only a single championship final heat is swum in some or all of the events, the LSC sanctioning the meet shall establish the scoring point values to suit the format of the meet. These point values shall be stated in the meet announcement.

### .5 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 between such swimmers; i.e., if two tie for first place, the points to be credited to first place and the points to be credited to second place shall be added and divided one-half and one-half. If three tie for first place, the points credited to first, second and third places shall be added and divided one-third, one-third and one-third, 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.

- .6 **Disqualifications** — When a relay team or individual swimmer is disqualified, the subsequent places will move up accordingly and points shall be awarded to conform to the new places. Consolation finalists shall not receive championship final placing. Alternates shall not receive consolation final placing.

**102.25 AWARDS** — When two or more swimmers tie for any place, duplicate awards shall be given to each of such tied swimmers. In such cases, no awards shall be given for the place or places immediately following the tied positions. If two tie for 1st place, no award for 2nd place; if three tie for 1st place, no awards for 2nd or 3rd, and so on.

**102.26 MEET RESULTS** — Meet results shall be provided, as directed by the LSC, within fourteen (14) days after the meet. The results may also be provided in an electronic format or posted to a website. Meet results shall include the following information:

- .1 Meet name, date, location, sanction number, and the pool length (25y, 25m or 50m) must appear on every page and the pages must be numbered.
- .2 Any scores, team or individual, if kept.
- .3 For each individual event, the order of finish in preliminaries, finals and swim-offs, when applicable, listing the swimmer's first and last name, age, club affiliation and official time; disqualified swimmers shall be listed last and indicated "DQ," with no times listed. Time Trial results shall be provided in the above format, when applicable. If the meet is computerized and connected directly to or interfaced with the automatic timing system, then all available initial distance times satisfying the requirements listed in 102.23.1A shall be provided upon request.
- .4 For relays, in addition to the order of finish, affiliation, and official time, the swimmers' first and last names, ages, the order in which they swam, and, if available, lead-off swimmer's time, shall be included.

**Note:** First names may be abbreviated within the limitations of the printing or computer program.

# APPENDIX 1

## EXAMPLE OF LANE MALFUNCTION

**Primary** - Automatic (Late manual start confirmed);

**Secondary** - Semi-automatic, three buttons (button time not valid);

**Tertiary** - Manual, one watch

\*Adjustment calculation:

▼ Add the differences between the pad and watch times; total = 24.50; ▼ Divide 24.50 by the number of lanes to determine an average: 24.50 divided by 8 = 3.0625; the digits after hundredths are dropped, leaving a heat adjustment of 3.06; ▼ Add the adjustment factor of 3.06 seconds for late start of the primary system to each pad time to obtain the official time for that lane.

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
			24.50 total		

## ARTICLE 103 FACILITIES STANDARDS

### 103.1 DEFINITIONS

- .1 /M/ = Indicates mandatory requirement for all competition.
- .2 /NC/ = Except as noted otherwise, indicates mandatory requirement for USA Swimming Championships and International Competition.
- .3 /LSC/ = Predicated on facility availability, LSCs may waive strict compliance with these requirements in sanctioning local competition.
- .4 Where dimensions are given, the dimension listed first shall govern, and dimensions given in parenthesis are for reference only.

### 103.2 WATER DEPTH

- .1 /NC/ 2 meters (6 feet 7 inches) deep throughout the course.
- .2 /M/ **Teaching Racing Starts** — Minimum water depth for teaching all racing starts, prior to certification, in any setting from any height starting blocks, from backstroke ledges or from the deck shall be 6 feet (1.84 meters) measured for a distance of 3 feet 3-1/2 inches (1.0 meter) to 16 feet 5 inches (5.0 meters) from the end wall. Teaching racing starts shall only take place under the direct supervision of a USA Swimming member coach and shall include:

- A All racing start instruction until a swimmer has been certified by their USA Swimming member coach as proficient in performing a racing start; and
- B Subsequent to certification, instruction which seeks to alter a swimmer's basic technique in performing a racing start.

Prior to certification, all racing starts must take place from a position in the water, and without use of the backstroke ledge, regardless of pool depth. Subsequent to certification, practicing of racing starts may take place in water depth of four (4) feet (1.22 meters) and deeper.

- .3 /M/ **Racing Starts** — Minimum water depth for racing starts during practice and competition shall be measured for a distance 3 feet 3-1/2 inches (1.0 meter) to 16 feet 5 inches (5.0 meters) from the end wall. Starting requirements and height of starting block shall be:
  - A In pools with water depth less than 4 feet (1.22 meters) at the starting end;
    - (1) The swimmer must start in the water;
    - (2) Backstroke starting ledges are not permitted.
  - B In pools with water depth 4 feet (1.22 meters) or more at the starting end, starting platforms shall meet the height requirements of 103.14.1.

**Note:** Local, state and municipal statutes, ordinances, rules and regulations, may have depth limitations in conflict with this section. The LSC and all Member Clubs should check for this at all times.

## 103.3

### 103.3 RACING COURSE DIMENSIONS

#### .1 /M/ Length.

- A **Long Course:** 50.00 meters (164 feet and 1/2 inch).
- B **Short Course:** 25.00 yards or 25.00 meters (82 feet and 1/4 inch).
- C **Dimensional Tolerance:** Against the required length, a tolerance of minus (-) 0.000 meters in a vertical plane extending 0.3 meters (12 inches) above and 0.8 meters (2 feet 7-1/2 inches) below the surface of the water at all points of both end walls. The plus tolerances apply for National, Trials Class, World Aquatics and international competition. See the current Operating Policy Manual and World Aquatics Facilities Rules FR2 for details.
- D When automatic officiating equipment touch pads are used at one or both ends, the course shall be of such length that ensures the required distance between the two touch pads or between either pad and the opposite end of the course.
- E When the racing course is fixed by the use of movable bulkheads, such bulkheads shall be designed to resist lateral deflection due to tension exerted by the attachment of the lane dividers to ensure the required course distance in all lanes.
- F See Article 104, Rules for Swimming Records, for course measurements requirements.

#### .2 Width.

- A /NC/ Eight or ten lanes, minimum width of 2.5 meters (8 feet 2-1/2 inches), from center line to center line of the lane dividers, with approximately 0.45 meters (1 foot 6 inches) of additional open water outside lanes 1 and 8 (or 10). The Program & Events Coordinator (or his/ her designee) may waive this requirement for National Championships.
- B /LSC/ Minimum lane width for competitive swimming shall be 7 feet (2.13 meters).

### 103.4 /M/ RACING COURSE WALLS

- .1 **Permanent Course Walls** — 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 non-slip surface that extends no less than 0.8 meters (2 feet 7-1/2 inches) below the water surface.
- .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 be not less than six inches (.15 meters) and designed in a manner to prevent the swimmer's fingers from contacting the back surface of the recess.

### 103.5 /LSC/ POOL AND BULKHEAD MARKINGS

- .1 **Pool bottom lane markers:** Minimum 10-inch (25-centimeter) wide 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 1.0 meters (3 feet 4 inches) long and the same width as the bottom marker. The line, including the cross line, shall terminate 2.00 meters (6 feet 7 inches) from each end wall.
- .2 **End wall targets:** Flush, non-slip targets in a shape of a "T" or a cross 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 meters) 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 water at the end of the course.
- .3 **/M/ 15-Meter Markings:** 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.
- .4 **Lane Numbers**
  - A The lanes shall be numbered from right to left as the swimmers stand facing the course.
  - B Lane numbers shall clearly identify the lanes to officials stationed on each side of the course.

**103.6 /M/ OVERFLOW RECIRCULATION SYSTEM** — The pool water recirculation and overflow system shall maintain water level in line with the overflow rim of the pool gutters without creating appreciable current or water turbulence and shall maintain smooth and calm water surface during competition.

### 103.7 WATER AND AIR TEMPERATURE

- .1 /LSC/ Water temperature between 25 to 28 degrees Celsius (77 to 82.4 degrees Fahrenheit) shall be maintained for competition.
- .2 Air temperature within 8 feet above deck level in indoor facilities shall be not lower than 76 degrees Fahrenheit, with relative humidity maintained at about 60% and air velocity at about 25 feet per minute.

**103.8 /M/ LADDERS** — All ladders, steps or stairs within the racing course shall be recessed in the pool side walls or shall be removed during competition.

### 103.9 OTHER DECK EQUIPMENT

- .1 /LSC/ Use of portable lifeguard chair stands and other deck fixtures is recommended and they should be removed from the competition area to allow free pas-

## 103.9

sage and unobstructed view for competitors and officials along all sides of the course.

- .2 /M/ 1-meter diving boards which overhang the racing course shall be hinged out of the way or removed during competition.

## 103.10 /M/ LIGHTING

- .1 /LSC/ A minimum of one hundred (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.
- .2 /NC/ At National Championships, the same type and level of illumination that will be used for finals must be provided and maintained during the warm-up period and preliminaries.

**103.11 /M/ TOBACCO PRODUCTS** — Smoking and use of other tobacco products is prohibited in all areas of the venue.

**103.12 /M/ ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES** — Alcoholic beverages or the recognition of alcohol sponsors are prohibited in all areas of the venue. Exceptions to this provision include USA Swimming National Championships, Trials Class meets, U.S. Open Championships, USA Swimming Open Water National Championships and the Pro Series events or other events approved by the USA Swimming Chief Commercial Officer.

**103.13 /M/ DRONES** — Operation of a drone, or any other flying apparatus, is prohibited over the venue (pools, athlete/coach areas, spectator areas and open-ceiling locker rooms) any time athletes, coaches, officials and/or spectators are present.

Exceptions may be granted with prior written approval by the Program & Events Coordinator (or his/her designee).

## 103.14 /M/ STARTING PLATFORMS

### .1 Height:

**A A Long course and short course meters:** The front edge of the starting platform shall be no less than 0.50 meters (1 foot 8 inches) nor more than 0.75 meters (2 feet 5-1/2 inches) above the surface of the water.

**B Short course yards:** The front edge of the starting platform shall be not higher than 2 feet 6 inches (0.762 meters) above the surface of the water.

- .2 The front edge of the starting platform shall be flush with the face of the end walls.
- .3 The top surface of the starting platform shall be not less than 0.50 by 0.50 meters (1 foot 8 inches square) 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 non-slip material. Handgrips for the forward

start may be installed on the sides of the starting platforms.

- .4 **Backstroke starting grips:** Starting platforms shall be equipped with firm starting grips located between 0.3 meters (12 inches) and 0.6 meters (24 inches) above water surface. The front edge of the grips shall be parallel to and flush with the face of the end wall.
- .5 Starting platforms shall be clearly marked with lane numbers visible to competitors and officials. (See 103.5.3)
- .6 Starting platforms shall be anchored to the deck or bulkhead to remain stable at all times.

**103.15 /M/ BACKSTROKE LEDGE** — The backstroke ledge shall conform to World Aquatics' specifications when used in competition as follows:

- .1 The ledge shall be adjustable to 4 centimeters above or 4 centimeters below the water level and may not be used outside this range.
- .2 The ledge shall be a minimum of 65 centimeters in length.
- .3 The ledge must be 8 centimeters in height, 2 centimeters at the width with 10 degrees of slope.
- .4 The ledge may not be used in water depth less than 4 feet (1.22 meters).
- .5 Should backstroke ledges be used, identical ledges shall be provided for all lanes.

### 103.16 /M/ FLOATING LANE DIVIDERS AND MARKINGS

- .1 Floating lane dividers 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 dividers shall be on the surface of the water with the bottom half uniformly submerged for its entire length. They shall:
  - A Separate the racing lanes.
  - B /LSC/ Be outside the outermost lanes being used.
- .2 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 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 2-1/2 inches) from each end wall in both short course and long course pools. Additionally, in long course pools, a distinctive warning line or lane markers may be placed at a distance of 13 meters from each end wall. Damaged or broken floats shall be removed and/or replaced, to the extent possible.

## 103.16

- .3 /LSC/ A single line of dividers between racing lanes shall be used in long course and short course meters competition. Multiple lines may be installed for short course yards competition, provided the width of water between dividers is not reduced to less than 7 feet.
- .4 /NC/ Minimum 11 centimeter diameter floats shall be required for National Championships.

## 103.17 /M/ BACKSTROKE FLAGS AND LINES

- .1 **Design:** At least three triangular pennants six (6) to twelve (12) inches in width at the base and twelve (12) to eighteen (18) inches in vertical length, of two or more alternating and contrasting colors shall be suspended on a firmly stretched line over each lane during all warm-up periods and during competition for all backstroke, individual medley and medley relay events.
- .2 **Location:**
  - A **Long course and short course meters:** 5 meters (16 feet 5 inches) from each end of the course, and
    - (1) 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.
    - (2) /NC/ 1.8 meters (5 feet 11 inches) above the water surface,
  - B **Short course yards:** 15 feet (4.57 meters) from each end of the course, 7 feet (2.13 meters) above the water surface.
  - C Height shall be measured to the horizontal line from which the pennants are suspended.

**103.18 /NC/ LOUDSPEAKER START 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. The start system may include an underwater recall speaker and final lap signal option.

**103.19 /M/ RECALL DEVICE** — A device to recall swimmers shall be provided. If a recall rope is used, it shall be placed at the mid-point of the course in long course facilities and at the turn end backstroke flags in short course facilities.

**103.20 /LSC/ PACE CLOCKS** — There shall be at least two large accurate timing devices or clocks, preferably located one on each side of the course, clearly visible to all swimmers in all warm-up/warm-down areas.

## 103.21 AUTOMATIC OFFICIATING EQUIPMENT

- .1 /NC/ See 102.23 for Automatic and Semi-Automatic Timing equipment types and performance requirements. Equipment powered directly from the utility line electrical service shall have the capability to automatically switch to stand-by battery power source in case of line power failure without affecting the continuity and accuracy of the timing system.
- .2 /M/ **Installation and Safety:** Equipment shall be installed so that it will not interfere with swimmers' start, turns, or finish and the normal overflow functions of the pool water recirculation system. All deck-level wiring shall carry no more than 12 volts.
- .3 /NC/ **Touch Pads:**
  - A **A Size and thickness:** Recommended pad size shall be 6 feet 6 inches (2 meters) wide and not less than 2 feet (0.60 meters) deep. Minimum width of pads shall be 5 feet (1.52 meters). Thickness shall not exceed 3/8 of an inch (1 centimeter).
  - B **Markings:** Panel face markings shall conform and superimpose on pool end wall markings as closely as possible. Perimeter edges of the panel shall have a one-inch wide black border.
  - C **Sensitivity:** Panels shall stop the timing system instantaneously by a light hand touch anywhere on the flat surface facing the racing course and the upper edge but shall not be activated by water turbulence.
  - D 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.
  - E At the facilities in which competition to select USA Swimming National Teams for the Olympic Games and World Championships is held, the touch pads must be minimum 0.9 meters (2 feet 11-7/16 inches) high, 2.4 meters (7 feet 10-1/2 inches) wide and maximum one centimeter (3/8 of an inch) in thickness. Such pads shall be installed at end of the course and shall extend 0.3 meters each (11-3/16 inches) above and 0.6 meters (1 foot 11-5/8 inches) below the water surface. The Program & Events Coordinator (or his/her designee) may waive this requirement for National Championships.
- .4 **Optional Accessories:** Automatic officiating equipment may provide relay judging capability, automatic lap counting, split times' 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 print-out.

## **103.22**

### **.5 Time Display Board (optional):**

- A An automatic display board visible to all swimmers shall give a digital time read-out 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.
- B /NC/ A separate line of display for each lane meeting the above requirements shall be provided for National Championships.

**103.22 /M/ ELECTRICAL SAFETY** — All permanent or temporary electrical connections to the electronic loudspeaker start system, automatic officiating 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 U.L. approved self-contained type GFCI outlet fittings shall be provided (furnished and installed) at the non-protected convenience receptacles by the meet management, Meet Director, or the equipment operator(s) whenever such equipment is connected and in use.

## **ARTICLE 104 RULES FOR SWIMMING RECORDS**

### **104.1 WORLD RECORDS**

- .1 May be established only in 25-meter and 50-meter pools and shall conform to the recognized distance, stroke and other current governing regulations of World Aquatics.
- .2 All claims shall be sent immediately following the performance to USA Swimming. Supporting evidence must be filed on official World Aquatics World Record application forms, which must be submitted to the Executive Director of World Aquatics within 14 days after the performance. Responsibility for this filing shall rest with the Meet and/or Administrative Referee.

### **104.2 USA SWIMMING RECORDS**

#### **.1 General Requirements and Conditions for Records**

- A The official time for establishing specific records must be achieved and determined in accordance with 102.23.
- B Record times registered by automatic equipment shall be in hundredths of a second (two decimal places). If first place times are tied to a hundredth of a second, the results shall be declared to be a tie and the record shall be shared by each swimmer.
- C No record shall be considered that results from a meet sanctioned by a conference, league, LSC, allied member, or organizational member whose rules governing performance do not conform to Parts One, Two and Seven of USA Swimming Rules & Regulations unless such swim is observed in accordance with 202.8.

- D For LSC and local records only, unless prohibited by the LSC, the Referee, if requested, for the purposes of recording record attempts at an initial distance for an individual event or for the lead-off leg of a relay, may for any lane:
- (1) Permit the use of split times recorded by a fully automatic timing system; or
  - (2) Assign three (3) additional official timers to the lane to time the record attempt.
- Note:** Performances in this category require the swimmer(s) to complete the full distance of the scheduled event in compliance with applicable rules including a legal finish at the initial distance.
- E Should the first swimmer on a legally composed relay team complete his/her leg in a record time for that stroke/distance, his/her performance shall not be nullified by a subsequent disqualification of his/her team members.
- F To be eligible for a record a swimmer must have won his/her heat. Only the time of the winner is recognized for record purposes even though another swimmer may have a faster time but is displaced by judge's or ballot decision. If the judge's or ballot decision results in a tie, all tied swimmers shall share the faster time of such finish. The requirement to win the heat does not apply:
- (1) When age or representation is a condition for setting LSC or Age Group records;
  - (2) To a U.S. citizen setting an American record in competition with non-U.S. citizens; or
  - (3) When achieved as the lead-off leg in a relay race or at an initial distance.

## .2 American and United States Open Records

### A Classification

- (1) **American** — May be established only by United States Citizens who are also U.S. Sports Citizens who achieve an official time in accordance with USA Swimming rules.
- (2) **United States Open** — May be established only within the geographical territory of the United States by any person eligible to compete under and achieving an official time in accordance with USA Swimming rules.

- B **Recognized Distances and Strokes (Men and Women)** Times submitted for American and United States Open Records shall be achieved in the recognized events in 102.1.1 with the following exception: the 100 Short Course

Meters (SCM) individual medley event shall be eligible for American and United States Open Records.

**C Special Requirements and Conditions**

- (1) Lead-off legs/initial distances of mixed competition category relays shall not count for American or U.S. Open records.
- (2) American Records established outside of the United States shall be applied for on official record application forms. When an American Record results from a World Record performance outside the United States, it shall be accepted as such upon formal approval by World Aquatics without further certification.
- (3) When a record is claimed, an official record application form shall be filled out, signed by the designated officials, and transmitted to USA Swimming with all supporting data, including official meet results and official measurement of the lane(s), within 14 days after the performance. Record applications will not be accepted unless certification of course length accompanies them.
- (4) Pool Measurement
  - (a) The length of the course shall be measured and certified by a qualified person in accordance with the standards established by USA Swimming. Such measurements shall be stated in feet and inches and fractions of an inch, or feet and hundredths of a foot for short course yards pools, or in meters for long or short course meters pools.
  - (b) A statement of the conditions under which the course was measured must be included.
  - (c) Where a moveable bulkhead is used, course measurement of the lane in which the record was set must be confirmed at the conclusion of the session during which the time was achieved and submitted by the meet referee to USA Swimming.
- (5) Pending record claims upon approval by USA Swimming shall be declared effective immediately.
- (6) American and United States Open Records established at the USA Swimming National Championships, the U.S. Open, any World Cup event sponsored by USA Swimming, and at events conducted by World Aquatics, shall, upon receipt of official results, and proper completion of pool certification, be declared effective immediately unless a faster claim is pending.
- (7) Swimmers who establish a record shall be presented with a certificate signed by the Board Chair of USA Swimming and the President/CEO (or his/her designee).

### .3 National Age Group Records

#### A Requirements

- (1) Only USA Swimming members, who are U.S. citizens representing a USA Swimming club or competing unattached, are eligible to establish National Age Group records.
- (2) Times submitted for Age Group records must comply with all the requirements of the National Age Group Recognition Program as listed in 205.9.

**B Reporting** — When an Age Group record is reported, an official Age Group Record Application Form (posted on the USA Swimming website) shall be filled out, signed by the designated officials, and transmitted along with proper completion of pool measurement within thirty (30) days.

**C Recognition** — Upon confirmation of a National Age Group Record by USA Swimming including receipt of the record application and proper completion of pool measurement, a certificate of record achievement will be sent to all swimmers and members of relays whose time meets or betters the current National Age Group Record.

### .4 Zone Age Group Records

**A Requirements** — Zone records must be achieved in Zone championship meets.

**B Reporting** — Each Zone shall determine the means of reporting Zone records.

**C Recognition** — Each Zone shall determine appropriate recognition for Zone records.

### .5 LSC Records

#### A Requirements

- (1) LSC Records must be achieved by LSC member swimmers in USA Swimming or World Aquatics sanctioned competition. This competition can be at any level including Senior and international competition.
- (2) LSCs may elect to recognize times achieved by member swimmers in approved competition or in USA Swimming observed swims.
- (3) An LSC may establish All-Star records which would include All-Star relay performances achieved by swimmers representing the LSC in Zone, Regional, or dual meets involving All-Star teams. Individual times including lead-off splits should be recognized by the LSC with the swimmer's LSC club of record (or unattached if appropriate) for any LSC records, National records or NAG Recognition Times.

## 104.2

- B **Reporting** — The LSC shall determine the method of reporting LSC records.
- C **Recognition** — The LSC shall determine appropriate recognition for LSC records.

### **ARTICLE 105** **GUIDELINES FOR OFFICIATING SWIMMERS WITH A DISABILITY** **IN USA SWIMMING MEETS**

#### **105.1 GENERAL**

- .1 **Authority** — The USA Swimming Rules & Regulations grant the Referee the authority to modify the rules for the swimmer with a disability. This section contains guidelines and suggestions for making such modifications. Reference 701.24 for Open Water competitions.

#### **.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 a 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 officiating crew, a Meet Referee may:
    - a. Instruct them to observe and report ANY violation of the rules and vet the call against the approved modification(s) and apply Article 105 to overturn the call,
    - b. Or, share the specific modification(s) and instruct them to observe and report any violation except the approved modification(s).

#### **.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/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:

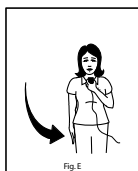
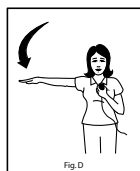
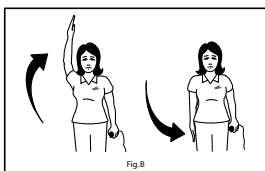
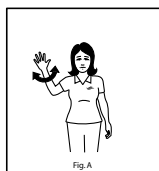
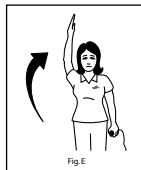
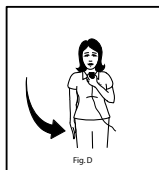
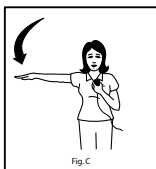
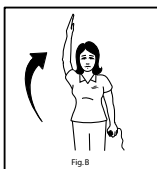
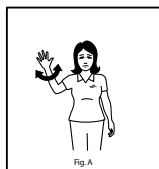
- (1) Reassignment of lanes within a heat, e.g., exchanging Lanes 2 and 7.
- (2) Allowing a swimmer to have a personal assistant(s) for any reason approved by the Meet Referee.
- (3) Assuring proximity wheelchair access from deck to block.

B Modifications are any exception to the technical rules approved by the Meet Referee (See 102.11.9) allowing a parallel performance for a swimmer with a disability. Aids to buoyancy or speed are not allowed (See 102.8.1E). Modifications which the Meet 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 105 shall affect the current meet and shall not set a precedent (See 102.11.9).

## 105.2 BLIND AND VISION LOSS

- .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 and on the block. Should the swimmer feel insecure starting from the block or deck, an in-the-water start is allowed.
- .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.
- .3 **Relay Take-Offs** — A physical touch may be required to signal the relay swimmer when his/her 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 take-off or interfere with the timing.



### 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)

## 105.3 DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

- 1 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.
- 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 don't have to turn their heads to look backwards.

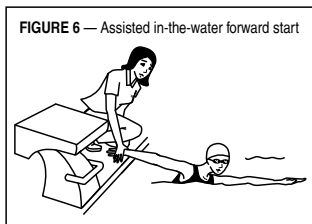
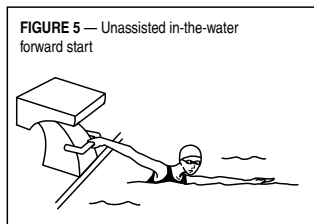
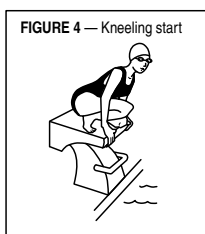
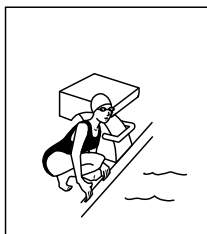
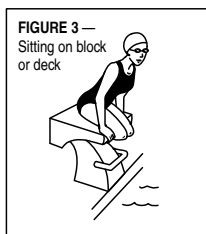
**105.4 COGNITIVELY DISABLED** — A swimmer with a cognitive disability may be permitted to have a Personal Assistant on the deck when necessary. Specific circumstances may allow rule modifications as communicated and approved in accordance with Rule 105.1.2 to be granted. Patience and clarity in communication is often required for a swimmer with a cognitive disability.

## 105.5 PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

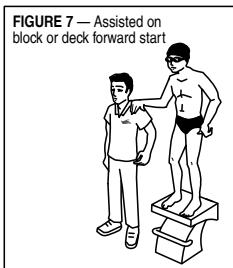
- 1 **Start** — Swimmers with physical disabilities:
  - A May take longer to assume their starting position;
  - B May have difficulty holding the starting platform or pool end for a start;
  - C May need assistance from someone on the deck to maintain a starting position;
  - D May use a modified starting position on the blocks, deck or in the water.

- E Shall use a forward start for freestyle, 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 arm stroke that need not be simultaneous to attain the breast position.

Examples of modified starting positions are shown in Figures 3 through 7.



**FIGURE 7** — Assisted on block or deck forward start



- .2 **Stroke/Kick** — In judging the stroke or kick of a swimmer with a physical disability, the Referee and Stroke & 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 USA Swimming Rules & Regulations.

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 non-symmetrical stroke or kick, but as long as the arm or leg action is simultaneous, it would meet that portion of the rule. No flotation devices should be permitted.

.3 **Turn/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-hand touch. When a swimmer has a different arm length, 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.
- 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.

- .4 **Relays** — Relay swimmers who cannot exit the water immediately may be allowed to remain in the lane until all relays have finished so long as they do not interfere with the other swimmers or the timing equipment.



# PART SEVEN

## OPEN WATER SWIMMING

Parts One through Six of the USA Swimming Rules and Regulations apply to open water competition, unless specifically indicated otherwise in Part Seven.

### ARTICLE 701

#### CONDUCT AND OFFICIATING OF THE COMPETITION

#### 701.1 EVENTS

.1 Recommended individual events are listed in 102.1.3.

#### .2 Wetsuit Events

- A At Junior National and National Championships and any sanctioned open water competition with a race distance of 5k and greater, World Aquatics rules regarding use of wetsuits shall apply.
- B For all open water competitions with water temperature below 18.0°C (64.4°F), participants must use wetsuits (refer to 701.4.5).
- C Meet Directors may also designate a wetsuit competition category at any event other than Junior National Championships, National Championships, and Zone Open Water Championships.

.3 **Team Events** — Team events may be conducted in various formats concurrently with individual events, with the results achieved in the individual event used to compute the team scoring as announced in the meet announcement.

#### 701.2 RULES

.1 All open water competitions shall be freestyle events.

#### .2 The Start

- A Events may be started either:
  - (1) In-water — swimmers stand or tread water in a depth sufficient for them to commence swimming on the start signal;
  - (2) From the beach — swimmers line up and run into the water from the shore on the Starter's signal; or
  - (3) From a fixed platform — swimmers' positions on the platform are determined by random draw and they commence racing on the start signal (See 103.2.3 — Water Depth).
- B In all starts, the start signal shall be both audible and visible. For fixed platform starts, the Starter shall give the command, "Take your marks," at which

time the swimmers will assume a starting position with at least one foot at the front of the starting platform. When all swimmers are stationary, the Starter shall give the starting signal.

- C When the start for Men's and Women's competitions is staggered, the Men's events shall always start before the Women's events.
- D If, in the opinion of the Referee, an unfair advantage has been gained by someone at the start, that swimmer may be disqualified.
- E Prior to the start, all escort safety crafts shall be stationed so as to avoid interference with any competitor. If catching up to their swimmers from behind, the craft shall navigate in such a way as to avoid maneuvering through the field of swimmers.

### .3 The Finish

- A Where in-water finish apparatus is not available, an on-shore finish where contestants run from the water to a finish point is permitted.
- B The finish should be filmed and recorded by a video system.
  - (1) The video recording system should be positioned in line with the finish where a clear, unobstructed view can be maintained. The recording system is from each side and above with a clear, unobstructed view.
  - (2) The video recording system shall have both slow motion and recall capability, including timing equipment.

### .4 Escort Safety Craft

- A Escort safety craft shall maintain a constant position at the sides of their swimmers and shall maneuver so as to avoid obstructing or placing themselves directly in front of another swimmer.
- B Each escort safety craft shall contain a race judge, a person of the swimmer's choosing, and the minimum crew required to operate the escort safety craft.
- C Coaching and the giving of instructions by a swimmer's representative on escort safety craft or platforms is permitted. No whistles may be used by coaches.

### .5 Time Limits — In all Open Water events, time limits shall be published in the meet announcement and shall apply as follows from the finish time of the first swimmer. Events with age group divisions will have the time applied by age group.

- A Events under 25k not less than 30 minutes
- B Events of 25k not less than 60 minutes
- C Events of over 25k not less than 120 minutes

- .6 In events where feed poles are permitted, feed poles are not to exceed 5m (16 feet 5 inches) in length when extended. No objects, rope or wire may hang off of feed poles except banners or flags not to exceed 20 cm x 30 cm (8 inches x 12 inches).

**701.3 MARKING** — Prior to the start, swimmers shall be marked with their race numbers on both upper arms and their upper backs. The swimmers shall be numbered vertically down the arms and horizontally across the upper backs. Swimmers shall be marked with their race numbers on both hands and/or their swim caps when competing in wetsuits. Depending on the finish system used, the Referee may also require numbering elsewhere on the body (hands or thighs). Paddlers and escort boats for escorted swims shall also be marked on both sides with the swimmer's race number so it is easily seen from either side.

#### 701.4 SWIMWEAR

- .1 No swimmer shall be allowed to use or wear any device that may be an aid to his/her speed, endurance, or buoyancy. A maximum of two (2) caps may be used.
- .2 Except as provided in 701.1.2, wetsuits, flotation aids or any similar items, and anything used to maintain body heat, except a reasonable application of body grease, are not allowed.
- .3 Only swimsuits complying with World Aquatics Open Water swimsuit specifications may be worn in any USA Swimming sanctioned or approved open water competition.
- .4 Swimsuits for both men and women shall not cover the neck, extend past the shoulder, nor extend below the ankle.
- .5 **Wetsuits at Championships Events (701.1.2 A)** — Wetsuits (for both men and women) shall completely cover the torso, back, shoulders and knees. Wetsuits shall not extend beyond the neck, wrists and ankles.
- .6 **Wetsuits at non-Championships Events (701.1.2 C)** — Wetsuits (for both men and women) shall not extend beyond the neck, wrists and ankles. The thickness of material(s) used shall be maximum 5 mm.

#### 701.5 DISQUALIFICATIONS

- .1 **Red Flag** — A swimmer shall receive a Red Flag and be disqualified from further competition for:
  - A Accumulating two Yellow Flag infractions for any combination of rules violations. The Red Flag will be issued at the time of the second infraction;
  - B Failing to swim or complete the prescribed course. Swimmers who do not finish the course within the time limit shall be removed from the water except that the Referee may allow a swimmer outside the time limit to complete the course but not participate in any points or prizes awarded;
  - C Receiving assistance by pulling on the cables, line markers, buoys, or buoy lines (Note: Incidental contact shall not be a basis for disqualification.);

## 701.5

- D Receiving propulsive aid from anyone in boats or other escort craft of any kind;
- E Walking or pushing off the bottom or objects thereon (Note: Pushing off at the start or walking at the finish where an on-shore finish is employed is permitted.);
- F Receiving support from any fixed or floating object or touching or being touched by his/ her escort safety craft or the crew. (Standing on the bottom during the race shall not disqualify the swimmer. Incidental physical contact while giving food or liquid to a swimmer shall not result in disqualification.) Being touched by water safety personnel will not necessarily result in disqualification;
- G Unsporting conduct. Swimmers will be disqualified if they, their support craft, or support personnel, commit an act that is deemed unsporting by the Referee. Examples of unsporting conduct include intentionally striking another swimmer, refusing to re-round a turn mark and intentional interference with another swimmer while approaching the finish; or
- H Violating the swimwear rules. No swimmer shall be permitted to use or wear any device which may be an aid to his/her speed, endurance, or buoyancy. Goggles, a maximum of two (2) caps, nose clip and earplugs may be used.

### .2 **Yellow Flag** — A swimmer shall receive a Yellow Flag for:

- A Gaining an unfair advantage at the start. If in the opinion of the Referee, an unfair advantage has been gained at the start, the offending swimmer will be given a Yellow Flag or a Red Flag as determined by the Referee;
- B Receiving aid from a non-competing person in the form of pacing;
- C Taking an unfair advantage by slipstreaming an escort safety craft (Race judges shall instruct swimmers who are taking unfair advantage by pacing, or slipstreaming with escort safety craft to move clear.);
- D Actions of his/her escort craft that interfere with another swimmer's progress or for failure of his/her craft or coach to heed the instruction of an assigned official; or
- E Intentional contact with another swimmer or contact which causes interference.

## 701.6 DISQUALIFICATION PROCEDURE

- .1 **Yellow Flag** — A swimmer who commits an infraction listed in 701.5.2 shall receive a Yellow Flag. The Referee will display a Yellow Flag and a card bearing the number of the swimmer being charged with the infraction. The Referee may use a whistle to attempt to get the swimmer's attention in order to notify the swimmer being charged with an infraction. There is no requirement for the swimmer to acknowledge the infraction.

- .2 **Red Flag** — A swimmer who commits an infraction as listed in 701.5.1 shall receive a Red Flag. The Referee will display a Red Flag and a card bearing the number of the swimmer being charged with the infraction. The Referee may use a whistle to get the swimmer's attention in order to notify the swimmer of the disqualification. The disqualified swimmer must leave the water immediately.

#### **701.7 THE MEET DIRECTOR shall**

- .1 have no other position at the event;
- .2 determine the course for an open water event;
- .3 have the authority to withdraw the sanction on race day if adequate safety precautions are not in place and shall notify all race participants prior to the beginning of the race of the revocation should the race organizer proceed with the competition; and
- .4 have the authority to stop a race at any time should conditions change and safety become a concern.

#### **701.8 THE INDEPENDENT SAFETY MONITOR shall**

- .1 be independent of the race organizing committee, approved by an LSC sanction officer, and have no direct responsibility for athletes entered in the competition (e.g., coach, Personal Assistant, or team manager);
- .2 be present at the race to assure the approved safety plan is implemented;
- .3 assure that adequate safety precautions are in place to deal with race-day conditions;
- .4 have the authority to withdraw the sanction on race day if adequate safety precautions are not in place and shall notify all race participants of the revocation prior to the beginning of the race should the race organizer proceed with the competition; and
- .5 have the authority to stop a race at any time should conditions change and safety becomes a concern.

**701.9 OFFICIALS** — The Referee, Administrative Referee, and Starter must have passed the USA Swimming Open Water Referee online test prior to officiating a sanctioned open water competition.

- .1 The following positions are required for all open water competitions:
  - Referee\*
  - Administrative Referee\* or Administrative Official\*
  - Finish Judge
  - Meet Director\*
  - Independent Safety Monitor\*
  - Medical Officer\*
  - Turn Judge (one at each change in the direction of the course)
  - Starter

## 701.9

**Note:** All positions noted with an asterisk (\*) above shall not be combined with any other role.

- .2 The following additional positions are recommended for all open water competitions, and are required for championship meets at or above the Zone level:

Recorder

Race Judge (one per competitor in escorted races)

Timer

Announcer

Course Officer

Clerk Of Course

Assistant Referee

## 701.10 THE REFEREE shall

- .1 ensure that all participants, coaches, and event support personnel are briefed about the course, safety procedures and any site-specific rules applying to the event;
- .2 have the authority to withdraw the sanction on race day if adequate safety precautions are not in place and shall notify all race participants of the revocation prior to the beginning of the race should the race organizer proceed with the competition;
- .3 have the authority to stop the race or to change the distance and/or race course due to safety concerns or unforeseen circumstances;
- .4 have the authority to use any video or electronic or mechanical judging devices in judging the finish order or in making other rulings.
- .5 conduct a random draw for assignment of the Race Judges in escorted swims;
- .6 signal by a raised flag and a series of short blasts on a whistle that the start is imminent and when satisfied that the swimmers are ready, indicate by pointing the flag at the Starter that the competition may commence;
- .7 have the authority to start the race in waves whereby each wave (heat) is separated at the start from the previous wave by a set time interval. Swimmers' times shall be adjusted by the starting time interval and their order of finish shall be determined on the basis of the adjusted time; and
- .8 have the authority to segregate competitors into the men's and women's or other classifications (e.g., by age group), either by the position at the starting line or by separate time of start.

**701.11 THE ASSISTANT REFEREE** shall perform all duties assigned by the Referee.

**701.12 THE ADMINISTRATIVE REFEREE OR ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIAL** shall be responsible for all administrative matters assigned by the Referee.

**701.13 THE INDEPENDENT SAFETY OFFICER** shall

- .1 be responsible to the Referee for all aspects of safety related to the conduct of the competition;
- .2 ensure that each escort craft is suitable;
- .3 check that the entire course and especially the start and finish areas are safe and free of all obstructions;
- .4 ensure that a sufficient number of powered craft are available during the competition to provide safety backup for the escort boats;
- .5 when applicable, provide to all swimmers a tide and/or current charts indicating the time of tide changes on the course and showing the relationship between tides or current and swimmers' progress along the course; and
- .6 in conjunction with the Medical Officer, advise the Referee if conditions are unsuitable for staging the competition and/or make recommendations for the modification of the course or the manner in which the competition is conducted.

#### **701.14 THE MEDICAL OFFICER shall**

- .1 be responsible to the Referee for all medical aspects related to the competition and swimmers;
- .2 inform the local medical facilities of the nature of the competition and ensure that all casualties can be evacuated to them at the earliest opportunity; and
- .3 advise the Referee, in conjunction with the Safety Officer, if conditions are unsuitable for staging the competition and/or make recommendations for the modification of the course or the manner in which the competition is conducted.

#### **701.15 THE COURSE OFFICER shall**

- .1 be responsible for the accuracy of the survey establishing the distance of the course;
- .2 prior to the commencement of competition, inspect with the Referee and Safety Officer the course to ensure that all points are correctly marked and all equipment has been correctly installed and is in working order;
- .3 ensure that Turn Judges are in position prior to the start of the competition and report this to the Assistant Referee; and
- .4 serve as pilot in the lead boat when one is used.

#### **701.16 THE CLERK OF COURSE shall**

- .1 assemble and instruct the competitors prior to the competition and ensure proper reception for the competitors at the finish;
- .2 ensure that each competitor is correctly marked with his/her race number and that all swimmers have trimmed fingernails and are not wearing any jewelry including watches;
- .3 be certain all swimmers are present, in the assembly area, at the required time prior to the start; and

## **701.17**

- .4 keep competitors and officials informed of the time remaining before the start at suitable intervals and at one-minute intervals for the last five minutes.

### **701.17 THE STARTER shall**

- .1 assume a position clearly visible to all competitors;
- .2 on a signal from the Referee, raise a distinctive flag to a vertical position;
- .3 holding the arm straight, simultaneously bring the arm holding the flag down and shall activate an audible signal to signify the start; and
- .4 when swimmers are starting from a fixed platform, give the command, "Take your marks," at which time the swimmers will assume a starting position with at least one foot at the front of the starting platform. When all swimmers are stationary, the Starter shall give the starting signal.

### **701.18 THE RACE JUDGE shall**

- .1 be positioned in the escort boat so as to be able to observe his or her appointed swimmer at all times to ensure compliance with the rules of competition and that any violations are recorded and reported to the Referee;
- .2 have the authority to order a swimmer from the water upon expiration of the time limit or when so ordered by the Referee;
- .3 ensure that the assigned swimmer does not take unfair advantage or commit unsportsmanlike impedance of another swimmer and, if the situation requires, instruct the swimmer to maintain clearance from any other swimmer;
- .4 immediately inform the Referee if the assigned swimmer withdraws from the event and shall record the completed distance and the time of the withdrawal; and
- .5 report observation of rules violations to the Referee immediately. In unescorted races, the Referee may assign Race Judges to monitor specific areas of the competition such as the feed station.

### **701.19 THE TURN JUDGE shall**

- .1 be positioned so as to ensure that all swimmers comply with the turn and other change-of-course procedures; and
- .2 record any violation of the turn procedures and indicate to the Referee any infraction at the time it is observed.

### **701.20 THE CHIEF TIMER shall**

- .1 assign at least three Timers to their positions for the start and finish;
- .2 brief the Timers on their duties and the details of their assignment;
- .3 ensure that a time check is made to allow all persons to synchronize their watches with the official race clock, if applicable, at least fifteen (15) minutes before start time; and

- .4 arrange for the use of automatic or semi-automatic timing devices in addition to watches, if desired.

#### **701.21 THE CHIEF FINISH JUDGE shall**

- .1 assign each Finish Judge to a position;
- .2 brief Finish Judges on their duties and the details of their assignment; and
- .3 after the race, collect the signed results sheets from each Finish Judge, determine the order of finish and deliver the results to the Referee (or his/her designee).

#### **701.22 THE FINISH JUDGE shall**

- .1 be positioned in line with the finish where there is a clear and unobstructed view of the finish; and
- .2 record the finish place of each swimmer.

**701.23 THE RECORDER** shall record withdrawals from the competition, enter results on official forms, and maintain the record for team awards as appropriate.

#### **701.24 SWIMMERS WITH DISABILITIES**

- .1 **Authority** — The USA Swimming Rules & Regulations grant the Referee authority to modify any rule or race management procedure for a swimmer with a disability. Disability is defined as a permanent physical or cognitive disability that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Any such modification shall affect only the current event and does not set precedent.

#### **.2 Responsibilities**

- A **Swimmer** — The swimmer (or the swimmer's coach) is responsible for notifying the Referee, prior to the competition, of any disability of the swimmer and of the requested modification. The swimmer/coach shall provide any assistant(s) or equipment if required.
- B **Referee** — The Referee's responsibilities include:
  - (1) Determining if the requested modifications are appropriate and conform to safety requirements. No modifications shall be granted which give a swimmer a competitive advantage.
  - (2) Instructing the Starter and all Judges as to the accommodations to be made for that swimmer.
- C **Coaches** — Coaches and teams entering swimmers with disabilities that require any accommodations shall provide advance notice in writing to the meet director by the entry deadline. Failure to provide advance notice may limit the host's ability to accommodate all requests.

## ARTICLE 702 VENUE STANDARDS

### 702.1 THE COURSE

- .1 The course shall be measured as accurately as possible with the available navigational or survey equipment.
- .2 The course shall be in water that is subject to only minor currents or tide and may be salt or fresh water.
- .3 With the exception of beach starts and beach finishes, the minimum depth of water at any point on the course shall be 1.4 meters.
- .4 **Guide Buoy** — A distinctively marked colored float in the water, anchored to provide navigational guidance for swimmers, may be used. Guide buoys shall be non-directional in nature and swimmers may pass on either side of the buoy. Guide buoys must be colored differently from turn buoys.

**702.2 WATER/AIR TEMPERATURE** — The race shall not begin if the following conditions are not satisfied:

- .1 The water temperature shall not be less than 16.0° C (60.8° F).
- .2 For races of 5k and above, the water temperature shall not exceed 29.45° C (85° F).
- .3 The air temperature and water temperature when added together shall not be less than 47.8° C (118° F) nor greater than 80.8° C (177.4° F).
- .4 The water temperature shall be checked the day of the race, two (2) hours before the start, on the course at a depth of 40 cm (15.75 inches).

### 702.3 WATER QUALITY

- .1 If water quality meets the standards of the local testing authority, the water quality will be deemed acceptable unless otherwise determined by the Safety Officer or Independent Safety Monitor.
- .2 If an exceptional event such as heavy rain or flooding affects the water quality, the Referee, the Meet Director, or the Independent Safety Monitor shall have the authority to postpone or cancel the race.

### 702.4 THE START

- .1 The start line shall be clearly defined by either overhead apparatus or by removable equipment at water level.
- .2 If the race is started from a fixed platform, the water depth requirements of 103.2.3 must be met. Additionally, the Course Officer and Referee shall have the start area inspected for hidden underwater obstacles or obstructions. If there is any doubt as to the condition of the start area, an in-water or beach start shall be used.

## 702.5 TURNS/CHANGES IN COURSE

- .1 **Turn Buoys** — All turns and other changes in direction on the course shall be clearly indicated by turn buoys which shall be distinctively marked colored floats, anchored to mark the course for swimmers. Turn buoys shall be directional in nature and must be passed with a right shoulder turn or left shoulder turn, as stated in the pre-race instructions.
- .2 A clearly marked craft or platform for a turn judge shall be securely fixed in position at all locations where alterations in direction on the course occur and in such a manner as not to obstruct the swimmers' view or negotiation of the turn, while providing a clear view of the swimmers' turns for the officials.

## 702.6 THE FINISH

- .1 The final approach to the finish shall be clearly defined with markers of a distinctive color. The area leading to the finish apparatus should be clearly marked by rows of buoys which narrow as they get closer to the finish wall – this is considered part of the course and the swimmers shall remain within the rows of buoys throughout their approach to the finish. Escort safety craft should be stationed at the approach to and entrance of the finish lane to ensure that only the escort craft authorized to do so enter or cross this entrance.
- .2 The finish line shall be clearly defined and marked by a vertical surface at least five meters wide. The finish apparatus, where possible, should be a stationary panel securely fastened in place so as to not be moved by wind, tide, or force of the swimmer striking it.
- .3 When Automatic Officiating Equipment (microchip technology) is used for timing of the race, the official time for the finish shall be recorded in tenths of seconds. Actual finish placement shall be determined by manual finish judging and/or video replay of the finish.

## 702.7 FEEDING STATIONS

- .1 Feeding stations shall be securely fixed in position and shall not be subject to tidal, wind, or other movements, and shall safely accommodate the number of feeders consistent with the number of entries.
- .2 Feeding stations shall be located on the inner or outer boundary of the course, in line with the turn buoy.
- .3 Number of feeding stations required:
  - A No feeding station is required for an event 5k or shorter.
  - B At least one feeding station is required for an event that is longer than 5k but shorter than 10k.
  - C For an event 10k or longer, there shall be at least one feeding station every 2k.

## ARTICLE 703 RECORDS

**703.1** Because of differences in courses, currents and other physical factors, records for open water events are not maintained. For long distance events swum in a pool, records are maintained as U.S. Open Records.

**703.2** Open Water and Long Distance U.S. Open individual and team records for men and women may only be achieved in a sanctioned or approved event and will be maintained as indicated below:

**.1 Time/Distance Events:**

- A One-Hour Swim (25 yard pool)
- B 12- and 24-Hour Swim (50 meter pool)

**.2 Set Distances:**

- A Five-mile increments (5, 10, 15 miles, etc.) (25 yard pool)
- B Five kilometer increments (5, 10, 15...50...100 kilometers) (50 meter pool)
- C Age Group 1000-2000-3000 yard (25 yard pool)
- D Senior 5000 yard (25 yard pool)

## ARTICLE 704 ZONE OPEN WATER CHAMPIONSHIPS

**704.1 EVENTS** — A 5k shall be a required event for all Zone Open Water Championships and designated as the qualifying event for the Open Water Junior National and National Championships. All other events for Zone Open Water Championships shall be determined by the Zone.

**704.2 ELIGIBILITY** — Age for Open Water Zone Championships shall be determined by the swimmer's age as of December 31 in the year of competition.

## ARTICLE 705 USA SWIMMING OPEN WATER NATIONAL AND JUNIOR NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

**See sections 207.1, 207.3, 207.5, 207.7, 207.9, 207.11 for additional rules  
pertaining to Open Water National Championships.**

### **705.1 START AND FINISH**

- .1 An in-water start and an in-water finish are required.
- .2 Video taping of the finish shall be provided for meets from which National Teams are selected.

**705.2 ABANDONMENT** — Where emergency conditions require a race to be halted before it is completed, the following shall apply:

- .1 Races of 10k or shorter: In the event of abandonment, the race shall be restarted from the beginning at the earliest possible time and the full distance completed.
- .2 Races longer than 10k: If the race is abandoned prior to the lead swimmer completing three-fourths of the distance of the event, the race shall be restarted from the beginning at the most appropriate time, as decided by the meet committee, and the full distance completed. If the race is abandoned when the lead swimmer has completed at least three-fourths of the race, the race shall be considered complete. The final placings of all swimmers shall be determined by the Meet Referee.
- .3 Situations not covered above shall be determined by the Meet Committee.

**705.3 EVENTS** — In conjunction with the Managing Director, National Team, or designee, the Open Water Committee may designate additional events as qualifying competitions for the Open Water Junior National and National Championships, including the 5K at Zone Open Water Championships.

**705.4 ENTRY FEES** — The entry fees shall be determined by the Meet Director with the concurrence of the President/CEO (or his/her designee).

**705.5 ENTRY PROCESS AND MEET ANNOUNCEMENT** — The entry procedure shall be stated in the meet announcement. The meet announcement shall be prepared under joint direction of and approved by the Open Water Committee, the Meet Director, Program & Events Coordinator, and the President/CEO (or his/her designee).

**705.6 RESULTS** — Results shall be submitted to the Open Water Committee, USA Swimming, and posted on the USA Swimming website.

## **705.7 TEAM EVENT ENTRIES**

- .1 Clubs may enter more than one team in each category. Prior to the start of the competition coaches shall designate the category (men's, women's, mixed) and the team (A, B, C, etc.) in which their swimmers will compete.
- .2 When participating concurrently in individual and team events, no participant shall compete in more than two team events, one of which may be as a member of his/her gender-specific team and the other as a member of a mixed-competition category team.

**705.8 SCORING** — Scoring of individual events will be on a sixteen (16)-place basis: 20, 17, 16, 15, 14, 13, 12, 11, 9, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1.

- .1 **Team Events** — team events shall be scored in men's, women's and mixed-competition categories.

## 705.7

### .2 National Event Club Championship

- A A club champion shall be determined by totaling the scores of individual club members in the event. Club champions will be named in the following categories: Women's, Men's and Combined.
- B To be eligible for the Combined Men's and Women's Club Championship, a club must have scored points in both the men's and women's events.

## 705.9 AWARDS

- .1 Individual champions shall be determined and awarded in women's and men's competitions. Medals shall be awarded to all first through eighth place finishers in each individual event.
- .2 The male and female swimmers eighteen (18) years of age and younger attaining the highest finish position shall be designated as the USA Swimming 18 and under Open Water Swimming Champion in the 10K and 5K National Championships and shall receive the appropriate USA Swimming Championship medals.
- .3 Team Event medals shall be awarded to team event members placing first through third.
- .4 Awards shall be given to the top three clubs: men's, women's and combined where the following criteria are met:
  - A Men's or Women's — In order for awards to be given within a specific gender, that gender shall have a minimum of sixteen (16) competitors from at least three clubs starting the race.
  - B Combined — To be eligible for this award, a club must have scored points in both the men's and women's races, and there must have been a minimum of three clubs participating in each gender's race.
- .5 The Meet Host may present additional individual and team awards with approval from the President/CEO (or his/her designee).

**705.10 ELIGIBILITY** — Qualifying times and/or qualifying criteria may be established by the Meet Director with the concurrence of the Open Water Committee.

**705.11 PROOF OF TIME** — A swimmer entered in any USA Swimming National Championships shall be required to show proof of having met the qualification standards as set forth in the meet announcement.

# DIFFERENCES BETWEEN USA SWIMMING AND USMS RULES

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

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

The U.S. Masters Swimming Rulebook is available at a cost of \$12.00 (mini-rulebook is \$8.00) from the USMS National Office, 8388 South Tamiami Trail, Suite 221, Sarasota, FL 34238 / 941-256-8767, or it can be ordered online at [usms@usms.org](mailto:usms@usms.org).

## **Forward Start**

The forward start may be taken from the starting block, the pool deck, or a push from the wall. The forward start or the backstroke start shall be used for freestyle events. The referee's long whistle indicates that the swimmer may take and maintain a position with at least one foot at the front of the platform or the deck (prior to "take your marks"). On the command, "Take your marks," the swimmer shall immediately assume the starting position that maintains at least one foot at the front of the platform or the deck.

## **In-the-Water Starts**

A swimmer starting in the water must have one hand on the wall or starting platform and one foot on the wall and may face any direction. The backstroke start may be used as the in-the-water start during freestyle events and for freestyle relays, but not for the freestyle leg of medley relay events. A backstroke starting ledge may be used in freestyle events.

## **Racing Starts**

USMS has no requirement for certification of racing starts in order to use starting platforms or backstroke starting ledges.

## **Butterfly**

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.

## **Relays**

- Mixed relays shall consist of two male and two female swimmers who may swim in any order.
- Relay swimmers who cannot exit the water quickly enough to prevent interference with automatic officiating equip-

ment may hold on to the lane line until all relays have finished, allowing them to exit the pool more slowly or via the ladders at the conclusion of the race.

- In relay races involving in-the-water starts, a relay will be disqualified if the feet of the outgoing swimmer lose touch with the end of the course before the preceding teammate touches the wall. Inadvertent loss of contact is not grounds for disqualification if the outgoing swimmer corrects the foot position prior to the incoming swimmer touching the end of the course.
- The relay team shall be disqualified even if the swimmer in default returns to the original starting point at the wall after the preceding teammate has touched the wall.

### **Age Determining Date**

For short course meters and long course meters meets, the swimmer's age is determined as of December 31 of the year of competition.

For short course yards meets, the swimmer's age is determined as of the last day of the meet (regardless of postponement).

### **Warm-Up and Warm-Down**

- In pools of five lanes or more, a separate warm-up area must be made available to swimmers during the competition.
- If there is no other warm-up/warm-down area available in pools of five lanes or more, one lane shall be set aside for warm-up/warm-down during the conduct of the meet.
- In pools of four or fewer lanes, swimmers shall be allowed to swim to the other end of the pool at the end of each heat and a warm-up/warm-down period must be offered at least once during each half hour of competition.
- A swimmer who completes a race may warm down in the assigned lane while the rest of the swimmers complete the heat and shall not be disqualified if such action does not delay the start of the next event.
- If the meet is a dual-sanctioned meet with USA Swimming, the requirements for continuous warm-up may be adjusted depending on availability of warm-up space at the venue by agreement between the LMSC and LSC host clubs.
- Once the entry information is published, changes which further restrict the availability of continuous warm-up/warm-down space are not permitted.

<b>Gender</b>	USMS policy guidelines govern eligibility of athletes to compete in the male and female gender categories. Protests of eligibility shall be referred to the USMS Rules Committee chair. Athletes shall be permitted to compete in the gender that corresponds to their USMS registration pending resolution of any protest.
<b>Scratch Procedures</b>	There is no penalty for failure to report for or compete in an event, except that a swimmer may not be permitted to swim if the swimmer does not comply with check-in procedures listed in the meet announcement. There are no “declared false starts” in USMS sanctioned or recognized meets.
<b>Dual-Sanctioned Meets</b>	If a USMS-sanctioned meet is held in conjunction with a USA Swimming-sanctioned meet (swimmers competing together in the same sessions), swimmers with dual membership must select only one organization with which to compete for the entire meet.
<b>Relay Names</b>	First and last names of eligible swimmers, their ages, and order of swimming shall be submitted to the clerk of course or to the head lane timer.
<b>Seeding</b>	Seeding at meets other than national championships may be either fast-to-slow or slow-to-fast. Seeding may differ for sprint and distance events (400 yards or longer) within a meet. Two-to-a-lane seeding may be used for individual freestyle events longer than 200 meters. Seeding must be specified in the meet announcement.
<b>Change in Program or Postponement</b>	At the meet referee’s discretion, events may be combined by distance and/or stroke. Should a meet or event have commenced, and in the judgement of the referee cannot safely and effectively continue because of weather conditions or some other compelling reason, the meet or event may be suspended at the referee’s sole discretion.
<b>Swimwear</b>	Medical identification items may be worn. Modesty wear is prohibited unless a medical or religious exemption has been granted by USMS. Only swimwear exemptions granted by the USMS Rules Committee chair shall be eligible for consideration at USMS competitions.

<b>Swimwear</b> <b>102.12.2</b>	USMS does not prohibit wearing the insignia or name of another club, does not regulate the number of logos on swimsuits/caps/goggles, does not prohibit body advertising such as temporary tattoos, and does not prohibit the advertising of political statements. Products involving tobacco, psychoactive cannabinoids, alcohol, or pharmaceuticals containing substances banned under IOC or World Aquatics rules may not be advertised, but the advertiser's name only may be used. Offenders may be barred from competition until they comply with this rule.
<b>Video Replay Footage</b>	Video replay footage may only be used when approved in writing by the chair of the USMS Officials Committee prior to the meet.
<b>Personnel</b>	USMS does not use a meet jury. A protest committee is used at national championships. At LMSC-sanctioned meets, the meet director and meet referee are responsible for ensuring that the provisions of article 102.14 for protests are followed.
<b>Place Judges</b>	One or two place judges may be positioned at the side of the course near the finish to judge the order of finish of all swimmers. However, judging may not be used to change the results produced by ranking the official times.
<b>Split Requests</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If swimmers want their initial splits as part of a longer individual event to be submitted for records or Top 10 consideration, they must notify the referee in writing.</li> <li>• Split requests for backstroke individual events must be submitted prior to the event.</li> <li>• Split requests for all other individual events must be submitted prior to the conclusion of the meet, unless the meet referee has approved the automatic recording of splits, in which case no written request is required.</li> <li>• Requests for relay leadoff splits must be submitted prior to the event.</li> <li>• Relay leadoff splits may not be recorded for official purposes if the second swimmer starts in the water and automatic timing is used, if the second swimmer stands on an active pad while starting from the deck, or if the relay is disqualified.</li> </ul>

## **Records and Top 10**

- World and USMS records may only be established when timed with automatic timing.
- In the event of an individual lane malfunction, World and USMS records may be established using a semiautomatic (automatic start and manual finish) secondary system with three, two, or one button(s).
- USMS records may be established using a tertiary backup system with a minimum of two valid watches if both the automatic and semiautomatic systems fail.
- Winning the heat or event is not required to establish a record.
- USMS Top 10 times may be established using an automatic primary timing system, a semiautomatic primary system with a minimum of two buttons, or a manual primary system with a minimum of two watches.
- Top 10 times may be established if the automatic primary system fails and the secondary semiautomatic system fails using a manual tertiary system with a minimum of one watch.
- Top 10 times may be established if the semiautomatic primary system fails using a manual secondary system consisting of a minimum of one watch.
- Only results from events conducted in pools officially certified for length in conformance with USMS 106.2.1 will be accepted for records and Top 10 (see USMS 105.1.7) times.

## **Records and Top 10 from Leadoff and Initial Splits**

Relay leadoff splits or initial splits may be considered for World records, USMS records, or USMS Top 10 times when timed with automatic timing. Relay leadoff splits or initial splits may be considered for World records or USMS Top 10 times if the touchpad fails and the times are recorded with a semiautomatic secondary system using three, two, or one button(s), but not for USMS records.

## **Record Documentation**

Required documentation for USMS records includes the referee's signature on the record application, the printout from the automatic timing system (in the event of a lane malfunction, also the printout from the semiautomatic timing equipment), and a copy of the heat sheet showing the swimmer's name, heat number, and the lane number in which the record was achieved.

<b>Fresh Water</b>	USMS records and Top 10 times may only be established in fresh water. No records or Top 10 times will be recognized in any kind of sea or ocean water.
<b>Water Depth</b>	In pools with water depth of 3 feet 6 inches to less than 4 feet at the starting end, swimmers must start from the deck or within the water. USMS does not have a rule for teaching racing starts or certifying racing start proficiency.
<b>Water Temperature</b>	Water temperature from 25 to 28 degrees Celsius (77 to 82 degrees Fahrenheit) shall be maintained for competition. USMS does not address air temperature.
<b>Athlete Protection and other Policies</b>	USMS does not address deck changing. USMS does not address shaving in the venue.
<b>Use of Cameras, Video Equipment, and Drones</b>	USMS does not allow cameras or other recording devices behind the starting platform during the start of the race and during intermediate relay exchanges. The sanctioning LMSC, meet host, and the referee may further impose restrictions. Operation of a drone is not permitted over open areas of the venue unless credentialed by USMS media policies.
<b>Protests of Eligibility</b>	Protests affecting the eligibility of any swimmer to compete or to represent an organization in any race shall be made in writing to the meet director or referee before the race is held, and if the meet director deems it advisable, the swimmer may compete under protest and it shall be so announced before the race. The meet director shall immediately refer such protest to the LMSC officers (local meets) or championship meet protest committee (national championship meets) having jurisdiction for adjudication at the earliest possible time.
<b>Protests Arising from the Competition</b>	Protests arising from the competition itself shall be made within 30 minutes after the race in which the alleged infraction took place. If the protest is not resolved immediately, the protester shall at that time file a written protest with the chair of the Local Masters Swimming Committee (LMSC) or the chair's representative having jurisdiction over the event. If the LMSC does not satisfactorily resolve the protest within 10 days, the protester may appeal in writing to the USMS Rules Committee chair within the next five days for final adjudication, whose decision shall then be binding on all parties.

**Protests of Interpretations**

Protests concerning interpretation of Part 1 rules shall be submitted in writing to the chair of the USMS Rules Committee within 10 days.

## **COMBINED, PARALLEL, AND INTERWOVEN MEETS (DUAL-SANCTIONED EVENTS)**

The number of inquiries as to what mechanisms are available for combining USA Swimming and USMS swimming meets has been increasing. The reasons for combining these meets are many, ranging from the limited availability of pool time and officials to the desire to promote the sport as a lifelong activity. There are several ways of accomplishing this goal within the rules and insurance policies of each organization. This document outlines these options.

It is assumed that all competitors are a member of USA Swimming, USMS, or both. Those that are members of both must select one organization with which to compete for the entire meet. Dual membership cannot be used to exceed the daily event limits imposed by either organization. Automatic recognition of times achieved by a USMS swimmer competing in the USA-S portion is still available.

Any of the joint meets described below must have sanctions from both USA Swimming and USMS. Both sanctions must be held by the host organization. The host organization cannot be required to accept a participant from either USMS or USA Swimming that would otherwise be barred from participation by their respective organizations.

USMS Record and Top Ten submissions must comply with all USMS documentation requirements.

### **Combined Meets**

With the consent of all (co-)hosting teams and the LSC and LMSC, a combined meet may be sanctioned by both USA Swimming and USMS and all swimmers competing according to USA Swimming rules for individual strokes, relays, and the conduct and officiating of the competition with the exception that USMS rules and regulations governing events, eligibility, protests of USMS applicable rules, and meet results shall apply to USMS members. Otherwise, each organization's rules and administrative regulations apply to their members. This mechanism allows the meet host(s) to seed the event as they normally would, based upon times, with USA Swimming and USMS members combined in heats without specific lanes allocated to one organization or the other. Relay teams must consist of members of the same USMS or USA Swimming club. Note that all USMS events held in 25-meter and 50-meter pools must be conducted as timed finals, but USMS members may compete in preliminary heats if they are not competing for slots in the final session(s). USMS does not permit time trials in 25-meter and 50-meter pools.

### **Parallel Meets**

The two meets may be swum in parallel by assigning some number of lanes to USMS competitors and a different set to USA Swimming competitors. If possible, separate stroke and turn officials for each set is preferred. It is permissible to adjust, for example,

the makeup of the USMS heats so that competitors in a given heat have approximately the same seed times. Each organization's rules would apply to their members.

### **Interwoven Meets**

The two meets may be swum with complete heats of swimmers from both organizations alternating. There would be no need for separate stroke and turn officials. Each organization's rules would apply to their members.

Meet announcements for dual-sanctioned meets or open water events must contain information for USMS and USA Swimming athletes in accordance with each organization's rules and administrative regulations. The safety plan for an open water event must be approved by both organizations.

## NOTES

[illegible]

Have a breakthrough season with  
SwimOutlet Custom Team Stores

## Get 35% OFF Tech Suits for Your Entire Team

The easiest, most affordable way  
to outfit your swim team



**SWIMOUTLET**  
TEAMS

Check us out at  
[www.swimoutlet.com/teams](http://www.swimoutlet.com/teams)

Contact us at  
[teams@swimoutlet.com](mailto:teams@swimoutlet.com)  
(800)469-7132





# Protection and collaboration a winning combination

As a proud sponsor of USA Swimming, OneAmerica Financial® champions financial wellness and water safety.

Learn how we're making waves in and out of the pool.

Visit [OneAmerica.com/swim](https://OneAmerica.com/swim)

**OneAmerica®**  
Financial

**Life Insurance   Retirement   Employee Benefits   Long-Term Care**

[OneAmerica.com](https://OneAmerica.com)

© 2025 All rights reserved. OneAmerica Financial®, the OneAmerica Financial logo and flag pictorial mark are service marks of OneAmerica Financial Partners, Inc.

C-38477 11/07/25