

Metropolitan Local Masters Swimming Committee

Frequently Asked Questions ("FAQ's") 2006

ORGANIZATION / ADMINISTRATION

Governing Bodies / Organizations

- FINA = La Fédération Internationale de Natation - international swimming governing body
- USMS = United States Masters Swimming - national swimming governing body
- ZONE = The United States is separating into eight different regions or zones; our zone is "Colonies"
- LMSC = Local Masters Swimming Committee; our LMSC is "Metropolitan"
- CLUB* = Independent USMS club (registered through LMSC)
- TEAM* = Workout group of swimmers with whom you train (not the same as a CLUB)

**What constitutes a bona fide or recognized USMS Club or Team? All members of said Club or Team are current registered members of USMS with a registered USMS member on pool deck supervising each and every swim session. In addition, the Club is registered with USMS through the LMSC (submitted proper forms and paid appropriate fees), or the Team is a recognized member of the LMSC and has fulfilled USMS registration requirements by all of its members.*

LMSC Officers

LMSC Officers include a Chairman, Vice Chair, Treasurer, Secretary and Sanction Chairperson. Additional Metropolitan LMSC Board members include one or more representative(s) from each Club and Team (see Metro LMSC By-Laws for specifics on Club/Team representation), along with individuals who are appointed by the Chairman, e.g. Insurance/Safety Chairperson, Top Ten Tabulator, Officials Chairperson, Fitness Chairperson, Coaches' representative.

NOTE that one or more PAID positions exist within LMSC administration as recommended by USMS that include, but are not limited to, the Registrar and the Webmaster.

REGISTRATION

Annual USMS Registration

Mandatory insurance requirement for anyone wishing to participate in a bona fide USMS swim program or in any type of sanctioned event, e.g. swim meets; clinics; open water swims; fitness, virtual or postal events. Annual registration is conducted by calendar year and expires on December 31 of each year. USMS registration provides secondary accident & liability coverage (see Insurance section for further details) and activates USMS SWIMMER magazine subscription during registration period.

Late-Season USMS Registration

Late season registration is occasionally offered at discount for the period September 1 through October 31.

OEVT USMS Registration

One-event ("OEVT") registration is occasionally made available by the LMSC/event director. OEVT registrant is considered "unattached" and, therefore, is ineligible to participate on relays, score points, or establish records or times for USMS top ten consideration. OEVT registration provides the individual with insurance coverage only during one-event participation.

COMPETITION

Different Swim Seasons / Competition Courses*

SCM (generally September through December): Events conducted in a 25 short course METER competition course, culminating with zone championship meet. FINA international rules govern SCM events.

SCY (generally January through May): Events conducted in a 25 YARD competition course, culminating with USMS National Short Course Championships. USMS domestic rules govern SCY events.

LCM (generally June through August): Events conducted in a 50 long course METER competition course, culminating with USMS National Long Course Championship meet. FINA international rules govern LCM events.

Long Distance Pool Event (can be conducted in any course - SCM or SCY or LCM - at any time of the year): Any swimming event that is a distance-based event over 1650 yards (1508.8 meters) in length or a time-based event equal to or longer than 60 minutes in duration.

Long Distance OWS Event (generally conducted during summer months): OWS = Open Water Swimming. A swimming event of any distance conducted in an open body of water, natural or manmade.

**USMS compiles Top Ten rankings, recognizes All American status (fastest swimmer in each event and/or national champion), and national records for each gender in each five-year age group for the above competitive swim seasons. FINA maintains world records only for SCM and LCM events; world records can only be established in METRIC events/distances. NOTE that with the exception of quarter-mile straightaway events, no national records are maintained by USMS in OWS events because of differences in courses, currents and other physical factors beyond the control of event organizers and participants.*

Pool Length Certification - Procedure and form required to be on file for each and every facility used for swim competition. If a pool length certification form is already on file with the LMSC and the facility has a moveable bulkhead, then pool length certification must be done again each time competition is held at facility (both before event and after final meet day/session) to confirm bulkhead placement. Pool length certification is a requirement to substantiate pool dimensions and to document USMS national or FINA world record applications and/or USMS top ten times.

Eligibility / Age Determining Date for Competition - Age determining date for SCY meets or OWS events is age as of the LAST day of the event; age determining date for SCM or LCM meets is age as of December 31 of the current year. Swimmers must be 18 years of age or older to be eligible for competition. NOTE that 18 year old swimmers may not participate in any manner until their actual 18th birthday. For example, a swimmer who turns 18 in the middle of a multi-day event cannot participate until his or her birthday. Registrars may not accept signed USMS registration forms from swimmers prior to any swimmer's 18th birthday.

Hy-Tek Meet Manager - Computer software used to manage swim meets and compile event results.

Event Entry Deadline - Determined by event director and based on the amount of time event director/staff needs to complete all pre-event preparations in time for event day.

Timeline - A report compiled by Hy-Tek Meet Manager software which gives an approximation of when each event during a swim meet will be contested and the overall duration of meet.

COMPETITION continued . . .

Entry Time - The time an individual indicates for a specific event he or she intends to compete in that reflects how fast the swimmer expects to swim or has swum the event in the past. NO TIME ("NT") is an optional alternative to indicating a specific entry time if the individual does not know his or her time. NOTE that some event directors or events do not permit "NT" entries, especially in long distance events or at national championships.

Pre-Seeded versus Deck-Seeded Events

Pre-seeded events are those that require entry submission prior to event day by pre-determined entry deadline. Hy-Tek Meet Manager software sorts all individuals entered in each event according to entry time and places swimmers into heats. Deck-seeded events are either those that require entry submission prior to event day and require additional positive check-in by individuals on day of event (then seeded at event) or events that accept race day event registration. NOTE that in all non-championship swimming competitions, men and women are seeded together in heats solely based on entry time. Awards are calculated and separated by age and gender.

Heat Sheets versus Psych Sheets

Heat sheets are a listing of all swimmers entered in event(s) listing them according heat and lane assignment based on entry time and sorted by Hy-Tek Meet Manager computer software. Psych sheets are an unseeded ranking or listing of all swimmers entered in an event according to entry time (to be seeded at event after positive check-in has concluded).

Timed Finals - ALL USMS-sanctioned events are conducted on a timed finals basis (swimmers only swim each event ONCE). In other words, no events are contested in a preliminary and finals session manner.

Check-In - Some events/event directors require positive check-in by participants on event day to confirm presence and in an effort to eliminate "empty" lanes to speed up timeline (eliminating individuals who have "scratched").

Scratch - Individuals who indicate that they are not planning on swimming an event during check-in period on event day or who simply do not show up. As a result, they are eliminated from event seeding.

Warmup - Time period (usually prior to start of swim meet or open water swim event) during which participants have the opportunity to warm up in pool, elevate heart rate in preparation for competition, practice turns and racing starts. It is a mandatory USMS requirement that some accommodation is made available for all event participants to have an area in which to warm up prior to or cool down after swimming event throughout the entire event day. NO DIVING is permitted in and during warmup except in designated one-way sprint lanes.

Starting Blocks / Racing Dives - Although starting blocks are used by the majority of competitive pool swimmers to gain the advantage and speed of a racing start at the beginning of an event, some individuals may not wish or are unable to dive into the pool. In such instances, the option to begin a race from the side of the pool or from a pushoff in the water is available and only requires that the swimmer notify the Head Official of his or her intention prior to the start of the race.

Disqualification - If a swimmer violates a rule of competition, his or her time will be stricken from official results and replaced by a disqualification ("DQ") indication.

COMPETITION continued . . .

Starts & Official Start Commands - (USMS Rule Book 101.1.1) The forward start may be taken from the starting block, the pool deck, or an in-water push from the wall. (USMS Rule Book 103.8.5) At the commencement of each heat, the referee shall signal to the swimmers by a short series of whistles to remove all clothing except for swimwear, followed by a long whistle indicating that they should take their positions with at least one foot at the front of the starting platform, the edge of the pool, or on the wall (for an in-water start) and remain there. (USMS Rule Book 101.1.2) 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.

Rules and Regulations govern each event and each competitive swimming stroke discipline. Refer to the current USMS Rule Book or confer with your coach for specifics. Event officials are charged with the responsibility of enforcing USMS rules during competition. A competitor will be advised by an official if he or she has violated a rule, in which case the swimmer should keep in mind that said advice should be taken constructively as a learning experience. A rule infraction prevents the competitor from achieving an official time, receiving an award or scoring points.

Official Split Time Request - Swim meet participants can submit a written request to the Head Official or Event Director or Computer Operator requesting an official split time when swimming an event. Written official split time request must be submitted PRIOR to relay swims and backstroke events; written request for all other individual swims only needs to be submitted prior to the CONCLUSION of the meet. Split time request must be for an event/stroke/distance that is the initial portion of a longer race. For example: Request a 500 free split time en route to a 1000 free swim; request a 100 butterfly split time en route to a 400 Individual Medley swim. An example of an unacceptable split time request in an event that does not constitute an initial event/stroke/distance is asking for a split time in a 100 Individual Medley - there is no USMS-recognized event as a 25fly or a 50 comprised of 25 butterfly + 25 backstroke.

Results - Post-event results are published online on website(s) indicated by event director. Occasionally event directors will make mailed paper copy of results available for a fee.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION can be obtained by visiting respective sections of the Metropolitan LMSC website (www.metroswim.org) or the USMS national website (www.usms.org), or by contacting the USMS national office. Questions may also be directed to the Metropolitan LMSC Officers (see www.metroswim.org for contact information).