

USMS Rules Committee
Final Report on Proposed Changes to the Rules of Competition
September 16, 2006

RECOMMENDED

The following proposals have been submitted, in accordance with section 601.2, to the Rules Committee for consideration and are **recommended for approval** by the House of Delegates. Adoption requires a majority vote of House of Delegates members present and voting.

R3 104.4.2 p.40 **Championship** Modify

ACTION: Adopted

Pulled

104.4.2 – Payments

Successful bidders of national championship meets shall pay to United States Masters Swimming Inc., no later than 10 days prior to the beginning of the meet, a fee of \$10 per individual entrant in the meet. Upon compliance with the conditions set forth in the meet contract, the sum of ~~\$2~~ \$3 per entrant shall be returned as stipulated in the contract. Noncompliance with said conditions, as determined by the meet evaluation committee within 30 days of the receipt of the final meet report, shall result in forfeiture of part or all of this amount. ~~An additional amount of up to \$1 per entrant may be returned for outstanding performance by the host.~~

Rationale: Every meet host works hard to host a national championship meet, and the meet evaluation committee has NEVER denied this \$1 for outstanding performance. So it really means very little and should be lumped in with the other \$2 reimbursement, all of which will still be returned to the host for an outstanding job.

R4 104.5.2A p.42 **Championship** Modify

ACTION: Adopted

Pulled

104.5.2A – Meet schedules (2008-2011)

(See the attachment with six proposed meet schedules for national championship meets.)

Rationale: See 104.5.2B(4), p. 43. Three meet schedules will be selected by a vote of the House of Delegates and those three schedules will apply to the rotation of meet schedules for national championship meets beginning in 2008.

R5A 104.5.4A(1) and B(4) p.44 **Rules Committee** Modify, add and renumber the rest

ACTION: Adopted

104.5.4 – Entry Procedures

A Eligibility/affiliation

(1) USMS Membership – USMS individual membership numbers and club names and abbreviations must be submitted on all entry forms together with entry times. ~~“No Time” for swimming events and “p~~ Pending” for membership number will not be permitted.

B Entry form

(4) Entry time – Swimmers must submit a time for each event. “No time” will not be permitted.

Rationale: Move the “No time” statement (on the entry form) from the Membership section to the Entry form section.

R7A 104.5.5B(2) p.46 **Rules Committee** Modify

ACTION: Adopted

104.5.5 - Seeding

B Distance events

(2) Willing and able competitors in the freestyle events over 200 meters may swim two-to-a-lane when only one course (seven, eight, nine or ten lanes) is available for the event. Heats with two swimmers to a lane shall be completed before heats with a single swimmer per lane. Competitors of the same gender may be required to swim two-to-a-lane in these events if only one course is available and the meet day is projected to last longer than 12 hours. (See article 102.10.4 for principles of seeding two-to-a-lane.)

(3) For any freestyle event 400 meters or longer, men and women may be seeded together at the discretion of the Championship Committee. ~~Competitors of the same gender may be required to swim two to a lane if the meet day is projected to last longer than 12 hours.~~

Rationale: Move “two-to-a-lane” statement from (3) which addresses seeding men and women together to (2) which addresses two-to-a-lane seeding. Also limit required two-to-a-lane seeding to cases when only one course is available.

R9 102.9.1 p.21 **Rules Committee** Modify

ACTION: Adopted

102.9.1 - Relay teams ~~may~~ shall not compete unattached. In all cases, relay teams must be composed of USMS members of the same club, which is a member of USMS.

Rationale: Shall is mandatory.

R12 102.12.5 p.26 **Rules Committee** Modify

ACTION: Adopted

102.12.5-Disqualifications

When a relay team or individual swimmer is disqualified, the subsequent ~~following~~ places will move up accordingly and points will be awarded to conform to the new places.

Rationale: Match USA-S language.

R13 102.13.3B p.26 **Rules Committee** Modify

ACTION: Adopted

B Should a meet or event have actually commenced, and in the judgment of the referee cannot safely and effectively continue because of weather conditions or for some other compelling reason, the meet or event may be suspended at the referee’s sole discretion until conditions warrant continuance. If circumstances ~~conditions~~ 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.

Rationale: “Circumstances” matches USA-S language, and “or event” is consistent with “meet or event” in the rest of the section.

R15 102.17. p.28 **Rules Committee** Modify

ACTION: Adopted

102.17. Tobacco Products

Rationale: More descriptive title, matches USA-S language.

R19 103.8.5C p.30 **Rules Committee** Modify

ACTION: Adopted

- C On the starter's command "Take your mark," the swimmers shall immediately assume their starting position with at least one foot at the front of the starting platform, the edge of the pool or on the wall. 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.

Rationale: The added phrase makes it consistent with 103.8.5A on the same page and with 101.1.1 on page 15.

R21 103.13.4 p.38 **Rules Committee** Delete and renumber the rest.

ACTION: Adopted

~~**103.13.4**—World records may be established when timed by three watches.~~

Rationale: This was informational for swimmers, reminding them that world records could be set with just three watches (back when USMS did not allow relay leadoff splits for official times). Delete .4 since it is clearly spelled out in the table and there is no such corresponding statement for USMS records.

R22 104.5.10C p.47-48 **Rules Committee** Modify

ACTION: Adopted

- C **Other personnel**—The minimum other personnel at each session of a USMS national championship meet shall include the following:
- Two timers per lane for each course, each using a ~~stopwatch~~ backup button and at least one timer using a ~~backup button~~ stopwatch
 - One recall rope operator for each course if a recall rope is used
 - One safety marshal for each end of each pool in use for warm-ups.

Rationale: The Rules Committee addressed a question on timing at Nationals in spring 2005 which revolved around staffing timers on three courses for distance events and meeting the requirements of 104.5.10C. The rule as written does not reflect the proper order of timing systems as defined in the table of 103.13.3, p. 38, and what is normally practiced at most meets. While the preferred option is to have at least two buttons and two watches on each lane, emphasis should be placed on ensuring that sufficient semi-automatic times are available for timing system corrections.

R23 104.4.2 p.40 **Championship** Modify

ACTION: Adopted

104.4.2 – Payments

~~The amount of \$10 per entrant shall be withheld in the payment from USMS to the national meet host. Successful bidders of national championship meets shall pay to United States Masters Swimming Inc., no later than 10 days prior to the beginning of the meet, a fee of \$10 per individual entrant in the meet.~~ Upon compliance with the conditions set forth in the meet contract, the sum of \$2 per entrant shall be returned as stipulated in the contract. Noncompliance with said conditions, as determined by the meet evaluation committee within 30 days of the receipt of the final meet report, shall result in forfeiture of part or all of this amount. An additional amount of up to \$1 per entrant may be returned for outstanding performance by the host.

Rationale: Change language to match current practice. (See R3 for other proposed changes.)

RECOMMENDED AS AMENDED

The following proposals have been submitted, in accordance with section 601.2 to the Rules Committee for consideration and are **recommended for approval as amended** by the House of Delegates. Adoption requires a majority vote of the House of Delegates members present and voting.

R2 103.13.4 p.38 **Pacific Northwest** Add and renumber the rest

ACTION: Adopted as Amended

103.13.4 – Only those results from events conducted in pools in conformance with 107.2.1 shall be acceptable for record applications or Top 10 submissions.

Rational: 103.13.3 states that official times to establish records and Top 10 times can be achieved only with the timing methods as listed and neglects to mention anywhere in Article 103.13, “Official Time,” that such official times must also be performed in regulation length pools. The above language is similar to 105.1.5, page 48 (requirements for records and Top 10 times).

R5 104.5.4A(1) p. 44 **Championship** Modify

ACTION: Adopted as Amended

104.5.4 – Entry Procedures

A Eligibility/affiliation

(1) USMS Membership – USMS individual membership numbers and club names and abbreviations must be submitted on all entry forms together with entry times. “No Time” for swimming events and “pending” (except for 18-year-olds) for membership number will not be permitted. An 18-year-old must enter the meet by the entry deadline and must register for USMS membership prior to the first day of the meet. An 18-year-old may register for USMS membership at the championship venue on the day prior to the beginning of competition and must be 18 by that date.

Rationale: We have included 18-year-olds in our competition, but, due to the fact that 18-year-olds cannot register for USMS until they are actually 18, we could not allow a swimmer turning 18 between the entry deadline and the actual start of nationals to enter nationals. By allowing *only* 18-year-olds to register for USMS at the meet (on the warm-up day so that our insurance will be in effect), we will look like a welcoming organization to these young swimmers.

R6 104.5.4B(2) p.44 **Championship** Modify

ACTION: Adopted as Amended

104.5.4B – Entry Form

- (2) **Distribution of entry form** – The entry form for individual events and all meet information shall be published in an official USMS publication and on the USMS website at no cost to the meet host. Short course nationals information shall be published in the January-February issue and long course nationals information shall be published in the May-June issue. The individual and relay entry forms and any Championship-Committee-approved additional information the host desires shall be posted on the USMS website as soon as after the entry form and information are available, and no later than five months prior to the first day of the meet.

Rationale: While the goal is to have this information ready for distribution by five months before the meet, there have been times when that has not happened. This is more consistent with what happens sometimes.

R8 105.1.5 p.48 **Pacific Northwest** Modify

ACTION: Adopted as Amended

105.1.5 – ~~Publication of Records~~ Acceptable Times

Only those Results from events conducted in pools that do not meet the *minimum* pool length requirement (minus 0.00 meter) in all lanes used in competition in conformance with 107.2.1 shall not be acceptable for record applications or Top 10 submissions.

Rationale: The current title does not accurately reflect the content of 105.1.5, making it difficult to find this particular rule. State the requirements for acceptable times in the positive rather than the negative.

R16 103.2. p.29 **Rules Committee** Modify

ACTION: Adopted as Amended

103.2. CERTIFICATION OF OFFICIALS

The referee shall be certified as a stroke and turn judge, starter or referee by USA Swimming, USMS, YMCA or any other USMS-approved certifying body.

Other Articles that Require Changing: **104.5.10B** p.47

B Officials

All officials shall be certified by USA Swimming, USMS, YMCA or any other USMS-approved certifying body. An official may serve in only one officiating position during any event, except that during freestyle events 400 meters and longer, the referee and starter may double as stroke and turn judges.

Rationale: Add USMS as a certifying body because USMS has an officials certifying program previously approved by the House of Delegates.

R20 103.8.5 p.30 **Rules Committee** Add

ACTION: Adopted as Amended

103.8.5 – Start Commands

D For backstroke event starts, the starter may give the command “Place your feet” after the referee’s whistle.

E When a swimmer does not respond promptly to the command “Take your mark,” the starter shall immediately release all swimmers, upon which the swimmers may stand up, step off the blocks or leave the wall.

Rationale: When USA-S rewrote the starting section, language similar to this had been inadvertently deleted. USA-S put it back in their rule book in 2001.

R20A 103.8.3 p.30 **Rules Committee** Delete and add

ACTION: Adopted as Amended

103.8.3 – Optional Instructions

The starter may:

A Announce the event (recommended).

B Advise the heat when a swimmer will be attempting to achieve a time at an initial distance.

C For backstroke event starts, give the command, “Place your feet.”

103.8.5 – Start Commands

~~**D** For backstroke event starts, the starter may give the command “Place your feet” after the referee’s whistle.~~

Rationale: Move the backstroke commands to “Optional Instructions” because the original language says “may”.

NOT RECOMMENDED

The following proposals have been submitted, in accordance with section 601.2 to the Rules Committee for consideration and are **not recommended as amended** for approval by the House of Delegates. Adoption requires a two-thirds vote of the House of Delegates members present and voting.

R1 102.5 p. 20 **Oregon** Modify and Add

ACTION: Defeated

Pulled

102.5 – Events

In planning

Any of the following events may be conducted. Any events listed in 102.5.1 or 102.5.2 that are conducted must be offered for all groups and both genders. For long distance events, see article 302.

102.5.3 – 25 Yard/Meter Events

The 25 yard/meter events in all four strokes may be offered to swimmers 75 years or older.

Rationale: Older swimmers usually do not have a true sprint event because it takes them longer than 45 seconds or a minute to swim a 50 yard/meter event. Adding this event as an option for meet hosts to offer allows those older swimmers to truly strut their sprinting abilities just as any younger athlete can do! If the Olympians can swim 50s, our older Masters should be allowed to swim 25s. Any sections then referring to records and Top 10 would have to include these 25 yard/meter events.

R7 104.5.5B(3) p. 46 **Championship** Modify

ACTION: Defeated

104.5.5 – Seeding

B Distance events

- (3) For any freestyle event 400 yards or longer, men and women may be seeded together at the discretion of the Championship Committee. Competitors of the same gender may be required to swim two-to-a-lane in the freestyle events over 200 meters if only one course is available and if the meet day is projected to last longer than 12 hours.

Rationale: We now allow nationals meet directors to seed the 400 through 1650 freestyles men and women together. This proposal would allow the meet director to seed men and women together in the 400 IM (a big time saver) but would not allow two-to-a-lane in that event.

WITHDRAWN

The following housekeeping proposals have been submitted, in accordance with section 601.2, by the Rules Committee for consideration and have been **withdrawn**.

R10 102.9.5 p.22 **Rules Committee** Modify

102.9.5 - First and last ~~The full~~ names (as they appear on the USMS membership cards) of eligible relay swimmers, their ages and order of swimming shall be submitted on a relay entry form or card to the clerk of course (if used) or to the head lane timer.

Rationale: Match the language of 102.9.5 with 102.9.4 and 104.5.4B[5], p. 44.

R11 102.10.2A p.22 **Rules Committee** Modify

A Within each heat, lanes shall be assigned in order of submitted times (fastest to slowest) ~~in accordance with the following pattern:~~ by placing the fastest swimmer or team in the center lane of a pool with an odd number of lanes, or in lanes 3, 4, or 5 respectively in pools having 6, 8, or 10 lanes. The swimmer having the next fastest time is to be placed in the lane to the left, then alternating swimmers to the right and left in accordance with submitted times. (See chart below.)

Ten Lanes: ~~5-6-4-7-3-8-2-9-1-10~~

Nine Lanes: ~~5-6-4-7-3-8-2-9-1~~

Eight Lanes: ~~4-5-3-6-2-7-1-8~~

Seven Lanes: ~~4-5-3-6-2-7-1~~

Six Lanes: ~~3-4-2-5-1-6~~

Five Lanes: ~~3-4-2-5-1~~

Four Lanes: ~~2-3-1-4~~

Replace with USA-S chart on page 26 of USA-S rule book.

Rationale: Add USA-S language and replace the chart with the USA-S chart to make it clearer.

R14 102.15.10 p.27 **Rules Committee** Modify

102.15.10 - Grasping the lane line divider or side wall to assist forward motion is not permitted.

Rationale: Choose a more descriptive term for the floating lane line (see 107.12 and 107.12.1, p. 54).

R17 103.8.5A p.30 **Rules Committee** Modify

- A At the commencement of each heat, the referee shall signal to the swimmers by a short series of whistles to remove all clothing except for swimwear, followed by a long whistle indicating that they ~~should~~ shall take their positions with at least one foot at the front of the starting platform, the edge of the pool or on the wall and remain there. 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 (article 101.1.2).

Rationale: Shall is mandatory. Should is not. USA-S is not sure why it doesn’t say “shall”, perhaps because there is no defined starting position (track starts, bend all the way down, or some sort of bend at the waist). No rule requires a swimmer to be in a starting position at the start, other than the swimmer has to be at the front of the block.

R18 101.1.1 p.15 **Rules Committee** Modify

101.1.1—Forward Start

The forward start may be taken from the starting block, the pool deck, or a push from the wall. 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~~ shall take their positions with at least one foot at the front of the starting platform, the edge of the pool, or on the wall before the command “Take your mark.” Those starting in the water must have at least one hand in contact with the wall or starting block.

Rationale: Shall is mandatory. Should is not. USA-S is not sure why it doesn’t say “shall”, perhaps because there is no defined starting position (track starts, bend all the way down, or some sort of bend at the waist). No rule requires a swimmer to be in a starting position at the start, other than the swimmer has to be at the front of the block.

HOUSEKEEPING

The following housekeeping proposals have been submitted, in accordance with section 601.2, by the Rules Committee for consideration and are **recommended for approval** by the House of Delegates. Adoption requires a majority vote of House of Delegates members present and voting.

HK1 102.13.3D p.26 **Rules Committee** Modify

ACTION: Adopted

D Should an event have actually commenced but be terminated prior to an official finish, and be postponed to another time or date, it shall then be conducted among the swimmers who were officially competing in the event at the time of termination.

Rationale: The first comma is not needed for clarity.

HK2 102.15.4 p.27 **Rules Committee** Modify

ACTION: Adopted

102.15.4 - A ~~Swimmers~~ must start and finish the race in their assigned lane.

Rationale: The original sentence starts with the plural but finishes in the singular. The correction maintains the singular throughout.

HK3 102.15.5 p.27 **Rules Committee** Modify

ACTION: Adopted

102.15.5 – Standing on the bottom during a freestyle race shall not disqualify a swimmers, but ~~the swimmer they~~ must not leave the pool, ~~or~~ walk or spring from the bottom. Standing on the bottom during any other stroke shall result in disqualification.

Rationale: Change from plural to singular and delete the first “or”. (Note to committee: added comma was removed because of style manual.)

HK4 103.13.5 p.38 **Pacific Northwest** Modify

ACTION: Adopted

103.13.5 - Except when the primary system consists of watches, backup timing shall be provided for all competitors. No swimmer shall be required to reswim a race due to equipment failure that results in unrecorded or inaccurate time or place. It is the meet director’s responsibility to provide the proper timing systems so that swimmers can expect to achieve official times that will satisfy the ~~above~~ requirements of 103.13.3.

Rationale: For clarity the rule reference should be specific to indicate that the requirements are from 103.13.3.

HK5 108.1.1 p.57 **Rules Committee** Move and renumber the rest

ACTION: Adopted

108.1.13 - **Use of ID Card for Swimmers with a Disability**

All swimmers with a disability, who have an International Paralympic Committee-authorized classification, will be issued an ID card listing their specific International Paralympic Committee swimming rule exceptions on the reverse of the card. Swimmers shall be judged under these specific exceptions.

Rationale: Move the ID card section to .3 to match its placement in the USA Swimming rules (105.1.4, p. 53, in the USA-S rule book), so officials will see the referee’s “Authority” and individual “Responsibilities” first in the general information. Otherwise some officials assume a swimmer must have an International Paralympic ID card to qualify for any modifications.