

Sanctions/Recognitions

Revised January 25, 2022

General Information

Sanctioning and recognizing events are a crucial function of the LMSC. Care must be taken to ensure the event hosts follow the requirements of **article 202** in the USMS rule book. Each LMSC should have a sanctions chair responsible for all phases of the process, including early scheduling to avoid conflicts or overlaps, and follow-up with the Top 10 Recorder to ensure meet results are submitted in a timely manner. There must be good two-way communication.

USMS, through the LMSC, has an obligation to its swimmers to ensure a well-run and properly reported competition. The sanctions chair should be aware of the past performance of meet hosts and call particular attention to any prior deficiencies. An LMSC may use performance bonds as a means to encourage well-run events. Further sanctions and recognitions may be denied to an organization failing to live up to its obligation to conduct such events in accordance with applicable USMS swimming rules and administrative regulations or as stated on the entry form.

Applications for sanction or recognition must be made to the LMSC within which the event is to be held, or in the case of open water sanctions, to the LMSC where the event originates (**article 202.1.1 and 202.2.1**). Sanction and recognition applications must be submitted online. If the LMSC has established a sanction or recognition fee, it is the responsibility of the LMSC sanctions chair to arrange for collection of that fee from the event director.

Sanctions or recognitions issued to one organization cannot be transferred to another. Any sanctions or recognitions so transferred shall be void for all purposes, and the LMSC may deny further sanctions to any organization violating this provision (**article 202.1.1 and 202.2.1**).

No sanction of any event shall be granted with the word "Olympic" or the word "Paralympic" or any derivative thereof used in any manner in connection with said event unless consent is obtained from the USOPC (**article 202.1.1 and 202.2.1**).

Numbering System for Sanctions and Recognitions

Sanctioned and recognized events are assigned consistent, identifying numbers. The numbering system is **XXY-Z000**, where **XX** is the LMSC numerical code, **Y** is the last digit of the current year, **Z** denotes the type of sanction, and **000** the consecutive numbering:

- 560-W001 would be assigned to the first open water event sanctioned in the Alaska LMSC during 2020
- 170-S005 would be assigned to the fifth sanctioned pool meet in the Ohio LMSC during 2020
- 399-R002 would be assigned to the second recognized pool meet in the Hawaii LMSC during 2019

USMS Rule Book

A copy of the current USMS rule book is required to be available at the event. [The Rule Book can be viewed online](#). If there are any discrepancies between the online version and the printed publication, the online version will take precedence. Printed versions of the official publication can be purchased from the National Office. Contact the National Office at 941-256-8767 or via email to order.

Sanctioned, Recognized, and Dual-Sanctioned Events

Sanctioned Events

- ALL competitors in sanctioned events must be USMS members or a member of a FINA-recognized national governing body for Masters swimming (**article 202.1**).
- Because all participants are USMS members, they are covered by liability and excess personal accident insurance during the event. For additional information on insurance coverage, refer to the Insurance section of the online USMS Guide to Local Operations.
- Times achieved at sanctioned events, conducted in strict compliance with all mandatory swimming rules of the USMS rule book, as defined in Part 1, shall be considered for USMS national records, USMS Top 10 times, and FINA Top 10 and world records (SCM and LCM courses) (**article 202.1**).
- World Records can only be set in FINA or USMS sanctioned, timed finals meters competitions. If a USMS swimmer is competing in a dual sanctioned meters competition that is being conducted in a preliminary and finals format, the USMS swimmer may only compete in the preliminary session each day if they wish for their times to count for World Records.

Recognized Events

- In recognized events, participants are not required to be USMS members. Only the times of currently-registered USMS members can be counted for USMS records and Top 10 (**article 202.2**).
- Recognized events and their participants are **not** covered by liability and excess personal accident insurance.
- The conduct of a recognized event shall conform to relevant USMS swimming rules and administrative regulations. See **article 202.2.1** for a list of relevant rules.
- Times achieved at recognized events may be considered for USMS national records and Top 10 times if a **designated USMS observer** is present and verifies in writing that the conduct of the competition conforms to the relevant USMS swimming rules and administrative regulations. Times achieved at recognized events are not eligible for FINA Top 10 or world records (**article 202.2**). The required Observer report can be found in **Appendix B** of the USMS rule book. USA Swimming meets are automatically recognized and do not require an observer.
- Sanctions chairs are not allowed to approve recognitions for USA Swimming meets. If a USA Swimming meet wishes to allow adult participants who are NOT members of USA Swimming, but are members of USMS, the meet must apply for a SANCTION with USMS (not a recognition). This is because USMS only provides insurance coverage to sanctioned meets (not recognized meets). In a dual-sanctioned USA Swimming/USMS meet, the participants who are competing as members of USA Swimming are covered by USA Swimming's insurance, and the participants who are competing as members of USMS are covered by USMS's insurance.
- USA Swimming meets, both sanctioned and approved, are automatically considered to be recognized and they do not need to apply for USMS recognition. All relevant USMS rules, including those for pool measurement, must be met for times to count for a USMS member who participates in a USA Swimming meet under his USA Swimming membership number. It is the responsibility of the swimmer to submit times obtained in these meets, along with complete documentation, to the LMSC Top 10 Recorder (**article 202.2**).
- Meets sanctioned by a FINA member federation shall be considered for USMS national records and Top 10 times without formal application for recognition if the USMS member(s) register for the meet as USMS members. It is the responsibility of the swimmer to submit times obtained in these meets, along with complete documentation, including pool measurement forms if applicable, to the LMSC Top 10 Recorder (**article 202.2**).

U. S. Masters Swimming

Summary of Differences Between USMS-Sanctioned and USMS-Recognized Events	
USMS-sanctioned event (pool or open water)	USMS-recognized event (pool only)
All participants must be currently-registered USMS members	Participants are not required to be USMS members
Participants are covered by USMS liability and participant accident insurance	No insurance coverage from USMS
Times swum by USMS members are eligible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• USMS Top 10• USMS national records• FINA Top 10 (SCM & LCM meets)• FINA world records (SCM & LCM meets)	Times swum by USMS members are eligible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• USMS Top 10• USMS national records

Dual-Sanctioned Events (USMS & USA Swimming)

Dual-sanctioned events must obtain sanctions from both USMS and USA Swimming. Both sanctions must be held by the USA Swimming host organization. It is recommended that the same person who applied for the USA Swimming sanction also apply for the USMS sanction. The USA Swimming meet director must be in agreement that the meet is to be dual-sanctioned with USMS. Participants in the event must be members of one of the two organizations. 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. 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.

A dual-sanctioned event must still meet the relevant USMS requirements in order for insurance coverage to be in effect. These requirements include, but are not limited to, all USMS participants being currently registered USMS members; and all USMS participants signing the USMS waiver and release of liability form.

A dual-sanctioned event must still meet the following USMS requirements in order for times to count for USMS records and Top 10:

- Pools must meet the USMS pool measurement requirements (even if measurements are not required by USA Swimming)
- USMS Record and Top 10 submissions must comply with all USMS documentation requirements.

A more detailed description of the types of dual-sanctioned events may be found in **Appendix B** of the USMS rule book.

Please see the Guide to Local Operations, Sanctions: Dual Sanction Meets for more complete information about the dual-sanction requirements.

U. S. Masters Swimming Pools and Facilities

Before approving a sanction or recognition request, it is the LMSC sanction chair's responsibility to determine whether the pool appears in the USMS list of measured pools and whether it meets the minimum length requirements. If the pool does not appear in the list of measured pools, and the LMSC does not have measurements on file, the sanctions chair should mark the sanction or recognition request as **not meeting** USMS pool measurement requirements. (If measurements are obtained later, the approved online sanction or recognition can be updated to reflect that the pool now meets measurement requirements.)

- All pools used in competition must be in strict compliance with mandatory facilities standards, including pool length, in order for times to be accepted for USMS Top 10 and record consideration. A "Pool Length Certification Form" must be on file with USMS or submitted with the application for sanction or recognition.
- The USMS list of measured pools can be found in the online Guide to Local Operations.
- Sanctions and recognitions may be issued for events contested in pools that do *not* meet minimum USMS facilities standards. In these cases, results **cannot** be considered for USMS Top 10 and records. Meet entry information for contests in such pools must clearly state "The length of the competition course has been measured and is NOT in compliance with USMS articles 105.1.7 and 106.2.1: Times achieved in the meet will NOT be eligible for USMS Top 10 and records." (**article 106.1.3 and 202.1.1A(3)(b)**)
- For events swum in a pool using a moveable bulkhead:
 - Before the meet begins, initial measurements of all lanes must be taken (if not on file with USMS), or of the two outside lanes and a center lane (if a full set of measurements is on file with USMS), and
 - The pool's length must be verified for bulkhead placement after each session. "Pool Length Certification Forms" from each session must be submitted, after the meet, to the LMSC Top 10 Recorder. They should also be included with any USMS record applications (**article 105.1.7**).

Entry Forms – Required statements

- The entry forms must contain the language of the USMS waiver and release of liability form as stated in USMS policy. The release can be found in the Insurance section of the USMS online Guide to Local Operations. All swimmers, before participating, shall have signed the liability release **201.1A(1), 204.1**
- The event entry forms and programs must bear the statement "Sanctioned by (LMSC name) for USMS Inc." in accordance with **article 202.1.1A(2)**
- The meet entry information shall include ONE of the following statements (a through d) per **article 202.1.1A(3)**:
 - (a) The length of the competition course without a bulkhead is in compliance and on file with USMS in accordance with articles 105.1.7 and 106.2.1.
 - (b) The length of the competition course has been measured and is NOT in compliance with USMS articles 105.1.7 and 106.2.1: Times achieved in the meet will NOT be eligible for USMS Top 10 and records.
 - (c) The length of the competition course is not on file with USMS. Eligibility of times achieved in this meet will be contingent upon pool length measurement and approval with USMS; if bulkheads are present, their placement must also be confirmed by measurements at the meet (USMS articles 105.1.7 and 106.2.1).
 - (d) The length of the competition course is in compliance and on file with USMS in accordance with articles 105.1.7 and 106.2.1, but as a bulkhead course, is subject to length confirmation. Eligibility of times for USMS Top 10 and records will be contingent on verification of bulkhead placement.
- If the event is being conducted in a facility that does not meet the mandatory facilities standards, the results of the meet shall not count for USMS records and Top 10 and it must be noted in the meet announcement that the facility is noncompliant. (**article 106.1.3**)

U. S. Masters Swimming

- If it is not possible to provide timing systems that will satisfy the requirements for world records, USMS records, or Top 10 submission (articles 103.18.5-103.18.7), the meet announcement must include a statement informing swimmers that times cannot be accepted for records or Top 10. (**article 201.1.1A(4)**)
- A copy of the member's registration card, or proof of registration acceptable to the LMSC, must accompany all entries. However, at the discretion of the meet director and exclusive of national championship meets, a swimmer may enter indicating "number pending," as long as proof of membership is presented prior to the swimmer's participation in the event (**article 202.1**).

Online Event Entry

Before approving a sanction for an event that will utilize online entry, the Sanctions Chair should verify the following:

- That the online entry system includes the language of the USMS waiver and release of liability form and an affirmative method for indicating acceptance of the liability release (e.g., "I accept" button). The liability release and acceptance should be designed in such a manner that it is clear to the entrant that he or she is accepting the terms of the liability release.
- That the online entry system operates such that the entrant may not proceed to completion of the entry without affirmatively clicking acceptance of the USMS waiver and release of liability form.
- That records that provide evidence of acceptance of the liability release will be maintained by the event director or sanctioning LMSC for at least the period of the personal injury or wrongful death statute of limitations, whichever is longer, for the state in which the event takes place. A minimum of ten years is recommended.
- That the online entry system includes a method for determining, within reason, that the entrant is the person accepting the liability release.
- That the system, or the event director, will verify that the entrant/participant is a currently-registered USMS member. This may include such methods as electronic verification of the USMS membership number or requiring participants to show their USMS membership cards prior to participating on the day of the event.

Meet Procedures

- Officials: There must be at least two officials (**article 103.2.1**). The referee must be certified as a stroke and turn judge, starter, or referee by USA Swimming, YMCA, or any other USMS-approved certifying body (see **appendix B** of the USMS rule book for the complete list of approved certifying bodies).
- Events labeled as "Choice" or "Open," where any stroke is allowed, are not eligible for Top Ten or USMS records and cannot be included in a Top Ten submission. This is true even if the swimmer gets permission from the meet director and has the stroke judge watch the event. For an event to be counted for Top Ten or records, it must be labeled as Free, Back, Breast, Fly or IM. Rule book **article 102.5** includes a list of events that are eligible for Top Ten.
- If no separate facility is available, provisions for warm-up/warm-down must be made as follows (**article 102.4**):
 - In pools of five lanes or more, one lane shall be set aside for continuous warm-up/warm-down during the conduct of the meet.
 - In pools of fewer than five 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 shall be offered at least once during each half-hour of competition.
- While in-person signing of the liability release on the day of the event is not required, sanctions chairs and event directors are free to include this requirement for extra assurance of compliance with the release requirement.

U. S. Masters Swimming

- USMS National Championships (both pool and long distance) shall allow entrants to register for the event on paper even if online entry is utilized.

Open Water

Open water events require a second level of approval. After the LMSC sanctions chair approves the sanction request, it is forwarded to the USMS Open Water Compliance Coordinator. The Coordinator reviews the event safety plan and approves it. The sanction number is then assigned to the event.

Open Water sanction guidelines are found in **article 203** and in the Long Distance and Open Water section of the Guide to Local Operations.

Checklist for Sanctions Chairs

This checklist covers some of the items described in this document that should be reviewed or verified when reviewing a sanction or recognition request. See **article 102** and **article 202**.

- Does the event host understand the difference between sanction vs recognized events and have they chosen the correct one?
- If the event is recognized, have arrangements been made for a designated USMS observer to be present to verify in writing that the conduct of the event conforms to the relevant USMS rules and regulations? (USA meets are exempt from the observer requirement.) One version of the observer report can be found in the USMS Rulebook Appendix B. (202.2)
- Does the competition pool meet the mandatory facilities standards? (106.1.3, 106.2-106.19)
- Does the pool have an initial USMS measurement on file? If not, it is recommended that the pool be measured before the meet. (105.1.7A-105.1.7B)
- Does the course contain a bulkhead? if so, additional measurements will be required before and after each session. (105.1.7C)
- Will the order of events be published at least one week prior to the entry deadline? This is required. (102.5.7)
- Will the timing systems used satisfy the requirements for world records, USMS records or Top 10 submissions? (103.18.5-103.18.7)
- Is the event host aware that events labeled as "Choice" or "Open," where any stroke is allowed, are not eligible for Top Ten or USMS records and cannot be included in a Top Ten submission?
- Is the meet director aware that all information used to compile results and records (including results, timing printouts or tapes, time cards, heat sheets, timer's heat sheets or swimmer lists) must be kept a minimum of two years after the conclusion of the meet? This includes electronic entry data storage.

Meet Announcement Checklist See USMS Rulebook articles 102 and 202.

This checklist covers items that are required (R) or recommended to be included in a meet announcement

- ___ the current USMS waiver and release of liability form is included (for sanctioned events) (202.1.1A) **(R)**
- ___ the "sanctioned by" or "recognized by" statement (202.1.1A(2)) **(R)**
- ___ the appropriate pool measurement statement provided in the rulebook listing whether or not the pool meets standards for official times to count (one statement from 201.1A(3) (a) – (d)) **(R)**
- ___ if the timing system requirements of 103.18.5-103.18.7 cannot be met, a statement that official times cannot be submitted for world records, USMS records, and/or Top 10. (103.18.9, 202.1.1A(4)) **(R)**
- ___ if mandatory facilities standards [M] cannot be met, a statement that events conducted in the facility are noncompliant and times will not count for USMS records and Top 10 (106.1.3, 202.1.1G(4)) **(R)**
- ___ the starting time of the meet and entry deadline (see 102.11 for information about changing a program or postponement) **(R)**
- ___ the warm-up and warm-down space and procedures (standard meets: 102.4.1) (dual-sanctioned meets: 102.4.2) **(R)**
- ___ the order of events and format (any events labeled "choice" or "open" are not eligible for USMS official purposes) (102.5.1-2, 102.5.5, 102.5.7, Guide to Local Operations, Sanction/Recognition: Meet Procedures) **(R)**
- ___ if the events are conducted in a format other than timed finals (short course yards meets only), the process for

U. S. Masters Swimming

seeding, contesting the event and determining the final places are included in the meet announcement (102.5.5, 102.10.1A) **(R)**

- if time trials are offered, the list of events and the format (yards competitions only) (102.5.6) **(R)**
- the entry fee, entry deadline(s) and the entry procedure for individuals (102.7, 102.11.3) **(R)**
- the entry fee, entry deadlines(s) and entry procedure for relays and relay only swimmers (102.9.4, 102.11.3) **(R)**
- the check-in and scratch procedures for individual and relay events (102.8) **(R)**
- the seeding method for all events (102.10.1D) **(R)**
- if used, the criteria under which freestyle events over 200 meters will be swum 2 to a lane (102.10.4A(1)(a)) **(R)**
- the location of the pool and other useful information such as parking provisions, driving directions, a description of the facility and racing course(s), information about any social events, information about nearby hotels and accommodations
- the entry limit (maximum 6 individual events per day for a sanctioned timed finals competition) (102.6.1), maximum 3 individual events per day for a prelim/finals competition (102.6.4) and no limit for a recognized meet)
- if possible, the virtual and/or physical location of the meet programs and heat sheets before and during the meet (102.10.1E)
- if possible, the virtual and/or physical location of the results during and after the completion of the meet
- the age determining date for the competition (yards: last day of meet) (meters: age as of Dec. 31) (102.2)
- the age groups for individuals (18-24, 25-29, 30-34, ... 5-year groups) (102.3.1) (see 102.3.3 for outside organization's meets)
- the age groups for relays (yds: 18+, 25+, 35+...10-yr groups) (meters: 72-99, 100-119, 120-159...40-year groups) (102.3.2-102.3.3)
- if applicable, any facility or LMSC restrictions on the use of cameras, video equipment and drones (102.16)
- if applicable, a description of the scoring system (103.19.1 – 103.19.3))
- if applicable, a description of any awards (103.20)

Entry form:

- each USMS member has provided their current USMS membership number (202.1.1G(5)) **(R)**
- the current USMS waiver and release of liability form (for sanctioned events) is included (202.1.1A) **(R)**
- all the events desired to be offered are listed on the entry form

LMSC Information Packet

Each LMSC should develop a sanctions/recognitions packet or document to supply to requesting organizations, which should include guidelines for preparing the entry form and meet results, as well as links to the references listed below:

References

- [USMS Rule Book ordering information](#)
- [USMS Rule Book, Part 1: Swimming Rules](#)
- [USMS Rule Book, Part 2: Administrative Regulations of Competition](#)
- [USMS Rule Book, Appendix B: Information for Meet Directors and Officials](#)
- [USMS online sanction or recognition application](#)
- [Meet Management section of the USMS Guide to Local Operations](#)
- [Pool Length Form and Measurement Procedures](#)
- [List of Measured Pools by State](#)
- [Insurance Guidelines for Workouts and Sanctioned Events](#)
- [Incident Report Form \(Report of Occurrence\)](#)
- [USMS Participant Waiver and Release](#)
- [Guidelines for Warm-Up and Warm-Down](#)
- [Application for USMS and/or World Record](#)
- [Observer's Report](#)
- [Guide to Local Operations: Sanctions: Dual-Sanction Meets](#)