

## **Official Interpretation of Part One Rules Issued by the USMS Rules Committee**

### **Seeding swimmers with significantly slower seed times in distance freestyle events**

Some questions have arisen about the possibility of seeding a swimmer with a significantly slower seed time in an outside lane for distance freestyle events, allowing the swimmer to continue swimming while a subsequent heat is being conducted in other lanes in the same course.

Article 102.10.1 is entitled “seeding principles” which should be interpreted as a set of principles that can be applied to achieve the intent of efficient meet operations. Article 102.11.1 gives the referee authority to consolidate heats, which provides some latitude for officials to deal with specific situations in ways that achieve the goal of running an efficient meet.

The rule provision for seeding a swimmer in an outside lane in distance events is captured in rule 104.5.5A(8). Although article 104 is intended to apply to national championship meets, the rules committee interprets the rules to permit application of selected article 104 rules to any USMS-sanctioned meet in the interests of efficient meet operations.

If this provision is applied to an LMSC-sanctioned meet, the following factors should be considered:

- Since the slower swimmer would likely need to be timed with manual timing, officials should not apply this provision to any swimmer who might be expected to achieve a USMS record. Only times achieved with automatic timing (or semiautomatic in the event of primary timing system malfunction) may be considered for USMS records.
- Swimmers should be notified in the meet information or in information provided at check-in on the day of the meet that this rule will be applied.
- Officials must ensure that the start of any subsequent heats do not interfere with the swimmer(s) who may be continuing to swim in an ongoing heat. If the meet timeline permits, officials could consider leaving an open lane between the heat which is already underway and the next heat.

Questions may be directed to the Chair of the USMS Rules Committee.

Charles Cockrell  
USMS Rules Committee Chair  
September 29, 2019