

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN USA SWIMMING AND USMS RULES

All provisions under Part 1 of USMS Swimming Rules are effective January 1, 2015 [USA-S provisions under Part One, the Technical Rules are effective May 1, 2015]. USMS follows USA Swimming's Technical Rules, Articles 101, 102 and 105, with the following exceptions (USMS and USA Swimming rule references in brackets):

MS1. Starts, Strokes, and Relays

MS1.1—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. On the command, "Take your mark," the swimmer shall immediately assume the starting position with at least one foot at the front of the platform or the deck. 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. [USMS 101.1.1 and 101.5.1; USA-S Glossary "Forward Start" and 101.1.2]

MS1.2—Butterfly. The breaststroke kick may be used exclusively or interchangeably with the dolphin kick at any time during the race (for example, one breaststroke kick and multiple dolphin kicks may be used with each arm pull). Only one breaststroke kick is permitted per arm pull except that a single breaststroke or whip kick is permitted prior to the turn and finish without an arm pull. After the start and after each turn, a single breaststroke or whip kick is permitted prior to the arm pull that brings the swimmer to the surface. [USMS 101.3.2 and 101.3.3; USA-S 101.3.2 and 101.3.3]

MS1.3—Backstroke. Note: The swimmer who turns past vertical and, in a continuous motion, grabs the wall before pushing off with the feet while on the back is considered to have executed a "continuous turning action". [USMS 101.4.3; USA-S 101.4.3]

MS1.4—Relays. Relay swimmers who cannot exit the water quickly enough to prevent interference with automatic officiating equipment 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 a swimmer loses touch with the end of the course before the preceding teammate touches the wall. [USMS 101.7.3E and H; USA-S 101.7.3E and G]

MS1.5—Long Distance Swimming—Pool Events are governed by Open Water and Long Distance rules. There is no provision for leaving the water for brief periods during the swim. [USMS 305 and 306; USA-S 101.8]

MS2. Swimming Competition

MS2.1—Personnel. The minimum personnel at USMS sanctioned or recognized Masters swimming meets shall include the following: one referee, one starter, two stroke and turn judges, two timers per lane (if automatic timing is not being used). The referee and starter may double as stroke and turn judges, but the referee and starter shall not be the same person. The referee shall be certified as a referee by a USMS-approved certifying body. A referee who is certified as a stroke and turn judge or starter by a USMS-approved certifying (including USA Swimming) body shall receive training in the duties of a referee. Starters and stroke and turn judges who are uncertified shall receive training in the duties of their positions. Note: USMS does not use place judges and has a meet committee rather than a meet jury. [USMS 103.2, 103.3, 102.14.2, and 103.5; USA-S 102.10.3, 102.10.2, 102.23.3, and 102.9]

MS2.2—Personnel at National Championship Meets. The meet host shall appoint a meet referee, an administrative referee, a head starter, and a chief judge subject to qualification standards established by the USMS Officials Committee. Minimum stroke and turn judges include: at least two turn judges at each end of each course (jurisdiction not to exceed 5 lanes per judge), one stroke judge on each side of a 50-meter course, and one official at the 15-meter mark of each course for all starts and turns except breaststroke. [USMS 104.5.10B; USA-S 102.10.5]

MS2.3—Warm-up. 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. [USMS 102.4.1; USA-S none]

MS2.4—Relays. 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. [USMS 102.9.6; USA-S 102.3.7]

MS2.5—Timed Finals. All Masters events held in meters pools (short course or long course) are conducted on a timed-final basis. Short course yards meets, except for national championships, MAY be conducted on a basis other

than timed finals (e.g., trials/finals basis). If trials/finals are offered, competitors are limited to three individual events per day. [USMS 102.10.1A and 102.6; USA-S 102.2]

MS2.6—Seeding.

MS2.6.1—Age groups and/or genders as well as events of the same distance 200 yards or longer may be combined during seeding so that no swimmer has to swim alone and lanes may be filled. At the meet referee's discretion, events may be combined by distance and/or stroke. An empty lane is not required when combining events. [USMS 102.10.1B and 102.11.2; USA-S 102.1.4 and 102.7.2]

MS2.6.2—Seeding at meets other than national championship meets may be either fast-to-slow or slow-to-fast. Seeding may differ for sprint and distance events. [USMS 102.10.1D; USA-S 102.5.6]

MS2.7—Counters. A swimmer may appoint one counter in any individual event of 16 lengths or more, except the individual medley. [USMS 102.10.6A; USA-S 102.6A]

MS2.8—Swimwear. 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 USMS shall be eligible for consideration by a referee at USMS competitions. [USMS 102.12.1E, 102.13.9 and 102.12.1C(1); USA-S 102.8.1E and 102.8.1B[1]]

MS2.9—Advertising. Products involving tobacco, alcohol or pharmaceuticals containing drugs banned under IOC or FINA 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. Note: USMS does not regulate the number of logos on swimsuits, caps and goggles, does not prohibit wearing the insignia or name of another club or prohibit body advertising such as temporary tattoos or prohibit the advertising of political statements. [USMS 102.12.2; USA-S 102.8.3]

MS2.10—Timing System Designation. A manual timing system with two watches per lane, each operated by a separate timer, is the minimum requirement. [USMS 103.17.2A(3); USA-S 102.24.3A(3)]

MS2.11—Fully Integrated, Overhead Video System Backup. If the backup system is a fully integrated, stationary overhead video system, the video camera time shall be the official time without adjustment in the event of a primary timing system malfunction. [USMS 103.17.3D; USA-S 102.24.4]

MS2.12—Records and Top Ten.

MS2.12.1—Record applications and Top 10 submissions shall not be accepted unless certification of course length accompanies them or is on file with USMS or FINA. Any person can be assigned to conduct the course measurement. [USMS 105.1.6A; USA-S 104.2.2C(3)(a)]

MS2.12.2—USMS records may only be established by USMS members in sanctioned or recognized competition. Because swimmers from different age groups and genders may compete in the same heat or event, winning the heat or event is not required to establish a record. **A bulkhead placement confirmation measurement is required for a USMS record set at events sanctioned or approved by USA Swimming.** [USMS 105.1.7E and 105.3.1; USA-S 104.2.1F]

MS2.12.3—Relay leadoff split times will be considered for Top 10 times, provided the swimmers complete the event without being disqualified and the second swimmer does not start in the water. A relay leadoff split time will be considered for USMS records provided automatic timing is used. [USMS 103.18.1, 103.18.4, 105.2.2A and D, 105.3.6A; USA-S 104.2.1E]

MS2.12.4—If swimmers want their initial splits as part of a longer individual event to be submitted for records or Top 10 times, they must notify the referee, in writing, prior to the conclusion of the meet. However, for backstroke initial splits and relay leadoff legs to count, notification must be made prior to the swim so that officials may verify that a legal finish was performed at the initial distance and that for relays the second swimmer did not start in the water (when automatic timing is used). [USMS 103.18.1B(1) and (2); 103.18.1D; and 105.2.2B, C, D and E; and 105.3.6; USA-S none]

MS2.12.5—Required documentation for USMS records includes the referee's signature, as well as the printout from the automatic or semiautomatic (with three buttons) timing equipment or the time card bearing times and signatures from *three* timers. [USMS 105.3.8; USA-S 104.2.2C(2)]

MS2.13—Scratch Procedures. Swimmers or relay teams not reporting for or competing in an event are not penalized. [USMS 102.8.1; USA-S 102.4]

MS2.14—Protests. Protests arising from competition 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 final decision shall then be binding on all parties. Protests concerning interpretation of the rules in *Part 1: Swimming Rules* and the *Glossary* shall be submitted in writing (on paper or in an electronic file) within 10 days to the USMS Rules Committee chair. [USMS 102.14.5 and 102.14.4; USA-S 102.23.5]

MS2.15—Eligibility. The eligibility of a participant for a particular age group will be determined for all meters meets (both short course and long course) by the swimmer’s age as of December 31 of the year of competition. For short course yards meets, eligibility will be determined by the swimmer’s age as of the *last* day of the meet. [USMS 102.2; USA-S 205.2.2]

MS3. Facility Standards

MS3.1—Water Depth. In pools with water depth 3 feet, 6 inches to less than 4 feet at the starting end, the swimmer must start from the deck or from within the water. USMS does not have a rule for teaching racing starts or certifying swimmers for proficiency at performing racing starts. [USMS 107.2.3A(2); USA-S 103.2.3A]

MS3.2—Lane Numbers. The lanes shall be numbered from right to left as the swimmers face the course from the starting end of the pool except when the event starts at the turn end of the course (no change in lane numbering so that the lanes are numbered the same at both ends); mandatory for all meets. [USMS 107.4.3; USA-S 102.5.5 and 103.5.3]

MS3.3—Water Temperature. Water temperature from 25 to 28 degrees Celsius (77 to 82 degrees Fahrenheit) shall be maintained for competition. USMS does not address air temperature. [USMS 107.6; USA-S 103.7]

MS4. Athlete Protection Policies

MS4.1—Except for video timing equipment, USMS does not address the use of cameras, including cell phone cameras, in the venue. [USMS none; USA-S 305.3]