

Introduction

US Masters Swimming is “The” adult aquatic fitness program in the United States. The purpose of this publication is to give prospective clubs an idea of how to get started, to give new clubs ideas to help them grow and be successful, and to aid established clubs in finding information and ideas that will result in a fresh and creative approach to running their organizations.

Developing and Building a Successful Masters Club is a publication of the US Masters Swimming. It is the latest in a succession of such publications which began with *A Guide for Masters Swimming Clubs*, by the USMS Long Range Planning Committee, Verne Scott, Chairman, 1983, revised 1984, 1985; *Masters Swimming Handbook*, USMS Marketing Committee, Mary Lee Watson, Chairman, 1991; and *Starting A Masters Swim Club A-Z*, edited by Tom Lyndon, 1993.

Publications such as this need to be revised from time to time. Suggestions from those who have used it or will use it will be welcomed and incorporated into subsequent printings. Direct such suggestions to the US Masters Swimming, Club and Services Coordinator, c/o the US Masters Swimming National Office, P.O. Box 185, Londonderry, NH 03053-0185.

We hope this booklet will serve you well and we look forward to your continued participation in the Masters swimming program.

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Masters Swimmers

Over 48,000 men and women nationwide ages 18 to over 100, plus many more in countries around the world, participate in Masters swimming. Masters swimming is an adult aquatic fitness program for individuals 18 years and older who have chosen aquatics as their means of exercise for a healthier lifestyle. US Masters Swimming programs do not discriminate between levels of ability or the individual goals of its members. The program is generally made up of three components (Fitness, Tri-athletes, and Competitive Masters Swimmers.).

Masters Swim Clubs

Swim clubs are groups of Masters swimmers organized for the purpose of training, fitness, and enjoyment of swimming. Members may work out in one or more pool facilities, usually under the direction of a coach. Clubs offer camaraderie and social opportunities to swimmers.

Developing An Adult Aquatic Fitness Program

Adult aquatic fitness programs are for those individuals who have chosen aquatics as their means of exercise for a healthier lifestyle. US Masters Swimming programs do not discriminate between levels of ability or the individual goals of its members.

US Masters Swimming Coaches deliberately try to be inclusive to all of its members by creating an environment where individuals feel a sense of belonging. We want people to feel comfortable in themselves to take risks and accept new challenges. We encourage members to set high goals and then monitor their progress. Programs are diverse in gender and age.

One of the administrative objectives of a USMS adult aquatic fitness program is to generate and supports its own operating budget which includes pool rentals, coach's salaries and all other associated expenses. The program can defray some expenses by fundraising efforts and hosting National Swimming events.

What Are Some Of The Benefits of An Adult Aquatic Fitness Program?

- On Deck Coaching
- Structured Workout Regimen
- Motivation
- Camaraderie and Fun
- Stroke Technique Evaluation
- Learn the Latest New Swimming Skills
- Family Social Activities

Different Types of Clubs

- YMCA's
- Workout Groups

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- Park and Recreation Facilities
- University Club Teams
- Age Group Clubs

Starting Masters Program Checklist

- Interest
- Provide Recognition
- Establish Credibility
- Team Events
- Fundraising
- Develop Good Relationships With Members
- Practice Times
- Local Swim Shop Support
- Team Fees
- Advertise

Interest

- Any one 18 years and older
- If you have an age group program contact parents to see if they are interested in swimming.
- Local Triathletes
- Post College Swimmers in the area
- Post High School / Age Group Swimmers

Determine Practice Times

- 5:30 am to 7:00 am
- 11:30 am to 1:00 pm
- 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm

Local Swim Shop Support

- 10% Discount for your USMS team members (exchange for supporting their store)
- Include them in all of your activities and brochures, newsletters and etc.

Team Fees

- Base fees on pool rentals, lifeguard fees, coach's wages, other expenses.
- When determining fees barter services for pool rentals, lifeguards

Advertising

- Word of Mouth
- Flyers at pool,
- Community sections of local newspaper are free, contact the Health Editor
- Yellow pages
- Website
- Set up booth at marathons, triathlons, and health fairs
- Sell t-shirts, and caps with your logo

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Credibility

- Tailor workouts for Masters
- Must be on time for practice and look professional
- Take an interest
- Develop Newsletter and Website
- Establish an image, logo, and mission statement

Develop Good Relationships

- Give them ownership in the program by delegating
- Team Parties
- Newsletter / Website
- Fundraising
- Image – Logo – Mission Statement

Provide Recognition

- Newsletter / Website
- Bulletin Board in Pool Areas
- Local Newspaper

Program Activities

- Pick out meets in your area your program will support
- Team Stroke Clinics

Fundraising

- Raffle
- Volunteer for Local Meets
- Team Dinners (Pitch In)

Basic Needs

Masters Club Registration

There are over 500 Masters swim clubs registered with US Masters Swimming through 52 Local Masters Swimming Committees (LMSCs). The annual cost of club membership includes an LMSC fee (varies from one LMSC to another), plus the USMS fee (currently \$25). You can register for membership on-line at www.usms.org and clicking on the “Join Tab” and following the simple instructions. Applications for membership can also be obtained from your LMSC Registrar (see Appendix B).

As part of the application process, new clubs must choose a name and a four-letter abbreviation. Checking with the LMSC Registrar will determine whether the chosen letter combination is already in use. Clubs reregister each year, after November 1st.

A club must be registered before individual swimmers may register with that club.

Individual Registrations

Membership in US Masters Swimming affords each swimmer many benefits, some of which are as follows:

- Annual Subscription to USMS Swimmer Magazine
- You may participate in coached workouts, clinics, and workshops
- Access to US Masters Swimming (www.usms.org) , which provides an active discussion forum; training, racing, health and fitness information; Places to Swim directory; and tracking of competition results.
- Membership allows you to coach
- Liability coverage and secondary accident insurance coverage.
- When you travel, opportunity to swim with other US Masters Swimming programs.
- Opportunity to compete in pool, open water, and virtual events.
- Access to on line fitness programs that offer encouragements
- Leadership opportunities at the local, regional, and national level.
- Access to Corporate Partner discount programs
- A commitment to your health and fitness goals.

Individual Membership Application Forms are available on line (www.usms.org) or from your LMSC Registrar (see Appendix B). The cost of membership, in effect through the calendar year, includes a USMS fee (currently \$25) plus an LMSC fee (varies from one LMSC to another). Only registered US Masters Swimming members may swim for clubs and only members of the same club may officially swim together for relays at meets.

Swimmers register with a Masters club, depending on club procedures, by one of the following ways:

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1. Registering on-line www.usms.org and clicking on the "Join Tab".
2. Completing an application for US Masters Swimming membership and sending it to the club Registrar/Treasurer with the annual fee and club dues, or
3. Sending a completed US Masters Swimming application (stating club membership) directly to the LMSC Registrar and separately signing up with the club.

Clubs which collect the entire registration package, as in (2) above, then forward the US Masters Swimming / LMSC fees in a single check, with the signed membership applications, to the LMSC Registrar after deducting any club dues. The club should make it clear to new and renewing swimmers which method it uses.

Insurance

As a benefit of membership, the US Masters Swimming insurance program, funded by a portion of the national registration fee, provides secondary accident insurance. In addition, liability coverage is provided for US Masters Swimming members, member clubs, LMSC officials, and volunteers acting on behalf of, and with the approval of, US Masters Swimming.

If the club is using the US Masters Swimming Liability Insurance for its liability coverage, every-one in the workout group must be registered with US Masters Swimming and supervised by a USA Swimming certified coach or a registered US Masters Swimming member.

Insured activities include the following:

- Sanctioned meets where all participants are US Masters Swimming members.
- Swimming practices, where all participants are members of US Masters Swimming or USA Swimming, and are under the supervision of a US Masters Swimming member or USA Swimming Certified Coach.
- Learn to Swim programs where all participants are members of US Masters Swimming or USA Swimming under the direction of a US Masters Swimming member or USA Swimming certified coach.
- Swimming Tryouts under active supervision of a US Masters Swimming member or USA Swimming Certified Coach. The tryout period may not last for more than 30 consecutive calendar days in a 12 month period for any one individual. There is no coverage for the non-member participants during the tryout period.
- Closed Competition, a swimming competition between a US Masters Swimming member club and a non-US Masters Swimming club hosted by the US Masters Swimming member club. For US Masters Swimming insurance coverage to be in effect for US Masters Swimming members and member clubs, THE NON-US Masters Swimming MEMBER CLUB MUST PROVIDE A CERTIFICATE OF INSURANCE FROM ITS IN-SURER/AGENT TO RISK MANAGEMENT SERVICE, INC., and a US Masters Swimming waiver form must be executed by the non-US Masters Swimming club participants.
- Pre-approved social events where alcoholic beverages are not sold.

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- Pre-approved fund raising activities.

If a US Masters Swimming member club is conducting an activity which is not listed above as an insured activity, it is imperative that the club obtain its own additional insurance coverage. Appendix A lists our insurance carrier and its toll free number to call for further information.

Safety Considerations

Swimming safety requires commitment and perseverance on the part of each member. To assure effectiveness and compliance, safety considerations must be addressed by the swimmer, the swim coach, and the local public entity or pool owner where practices and events are held.

Club Membership Dues

Many, but not all, clubs charge dues. The following possible expenses should be considered in determining the cost to members:

- Pool rental or facility membership for team practices.
- Salary for coach(s).
- US Masters Swimming and LMSC club registration fees.
- Printing and mailing a regular newsletter.
- Club services (administrative costs, billing, etc.).
- Website
- Activities (social functions and their costs).
- Club marketing and promotional expenses.

Expenses can be offset by income-generating projects such as swim meets, clinics, merchandise sales, and other fund raising activities.

Tax Exempt Status for non-Profit Organizations

Federal Recognition

Application for recognition of exemption from federal tax can be made under section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue code. Taxes will not have to be paid on membership dues, but this will not exempt any income which is not related to your tax exempt purpose. It is recommended that a CPA, tax consultant, or lawyer who has specific knowledge of tax exempt nonprofit organizations, be consulted to determine under which subsection your group should file:

- 501(c)(3) Educational, religious, etc. - includes Amateur Sports.
- 501(c)(4) Civic Leagues, Social Welfare Organizations - Promotion of community welfare; charitable, educational or recreational.
- 501(c)(7) Social and Recreation Clubs.

There are some distinct advantages to each category. The following are pros and cons, found through experience, by some Masters organizations. For specifics, contact a tax specialist as described above.

- The 501(c)(3) classification is the only one in which a gift is tax deductible to the donor. Children's organizations, and those devoted entirely to competitive sports, have the best chance of attaining this classification.
- The 501(c)(4) classification requires the organization to show that their program will benefit the community in some way, such as health benefits through swimming. Income generated by your tax exempt purpose, i.e., to promote swimming for physical fitness and competition, is not taxed.
- The 501(c)(7) status allows a group to function as a club for the benefit of its own members. Non-member income is taxable. There may be a limit to the amount of money that can be received from sources other than members. For example, income from non-members, interest on money in an account, or income from participants at an event your club is hosting may not be tax-exempt. It is possible that hosting a large meet or open water event could jeopardize the tax exempt status.

The following forms can be obtained from area IRS Distribution Centers, or by calling 1-800-829-3676 or going to the IRS website www.irs.gov. The choice of the correct exemption application is important to ensure timely processing.

- SS-4 Application for Employer Identification Number - The EIN is required for every tax-exempt organization.
- 1023 or 1024 Application for Recognition of Exemption, - Attach:
 - Copy of club constitution, or other organizing document, and bylaws.
 - Full description of club purposes and activities.
 - Financial data that includes statement of receipts and expenditures if the club is already established or proposed budget if newly organized.
 - Description of any fund-raising activities.
- 8718 User Fee for Exempt Organization Determination Letter Request. There is a mini-mum charge of \$150.

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Once approved as exempt, a club is obligated to report its financial situation annually to the IRS by submitting Form 990 Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax or Form 990EZ Short

Form Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax. A 990T Form may also be required if there is unrelated income on which tax must be paid.

IRS Publication 557 details the above procedures. While the above process may seem cumbersome, it is very simple once you have downloaded all of the forms. It is not necessary to have an attorney complete the application, the IRS makes it very simple and is available through the 800 number listed above.

State Recognition

Achieving a Federal Tax Exempt status does not automatically qualify your club for a State Tax Exempt status. A club must pursue this separately, completing the proper state forms, and filing them with the required fee.

Approval in some states for tax exempt status allows tax-exempt purchases. If an organization is reselling anything, and the state has a sales tax, a resale permit should be acquired so that sales tax is paid on all money collected, not just the cost of the item at the time of purchase. Applications, forms, and helpful publications specific to each state are available through sales tax agencies listed in the telephone book government pages. Certain documentation is necessary and, depending on the individual state, will probably include:

- Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN).
- Statement of activities.
- Statement of receipts and expenditures, or proposed budget.
- Statement of assets and liabilities.

Club Operation

Administration

The US Masters Swimming Club Membership Application requests names and addresses of the following club officers:

- Contact person (someone reliable to disseminate information received).
- Club Delegate to the LMSC.
- Registrar.
- Safety Coordinator.
- Official Chairman

Other positions either separate or in combination, are important to club management:

- President.
- Secretary.
- Treasurer.
- Newsletter Editor.

Remaining duties are also important depending on club size, ambitions, and goals:

- Activities/Social Director.
- Publicity Chair.
- Records Keeper.
- Meet Director/Coordinator.
- Relay Coordinator.
- Coaching Coordinator.
- Travel Captain.
- Promotions/Marketing Chair.
- Awards Chair.
- Fitness Chair.

Newsletter

The newsletter disseminates club information. It can also be a tool for public relations and reaching potential new members. Content can include all aspects of club functioning from pure news to interest articles, written by club officers or submitted by swimmers. The following list of ideas shows what variety is possible:

- Meet, clinic, and party announcements.
- Calendar (meeting and meet dates, newsletter deadlines).
- Reports (meeting minutes, financial, meet results).
- Sample workouts, stroke drills and tips, favorite workouts, training techniques.
- Tips for beginning Masters.
- Photos.
- Notes from the Chair, Treasurer, Coach, etc.
- Interviews.
- Medical/nutritional columns.

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- Recognitions (new members, birthdays, accomplishments).
- Cartoons, humorous essays, jokes, and poems.
- Letters to the Editor.
- Lists of swimming books and videos.
- Names and addresses of club and LMSC officers.
- Places to swim within the LMSC and/or state.
- Gossip.
- Recipes.

As a means of sharing club activities:

- Exchange newsletters with other clubs. Your local Registrar or Zone Representative may have area club contacts and addresses.
- Send issues to the LMSC newsletter editor and to the editors of local newspapers.
- Leave extra copies at pool facilities.

Paid advertisements can be sold to help defray newsletter printing and mailing costs. Some clubs in an effort to save money have put their newsletter on their website, saving postage.

Public Relations

Publicity informs the community of local USMS programs and benefits of Masters swimming at the club level. A list of suggestions and techniques follows that can help enhance public awareness and attract new members.

Press release of swim meet or open-water event information (See Appendix C - Constructing an Effective Press Release). Include:

- Name, location, date, and sponsor of meet.
- Description of event and host-site or club.
- Facts about individual participants - ages, hometowns, swimming backgrounds, unusual facts, and names of record holders or nationally ranked swimmers expected, how far traveling to attend, returning to competition.
- Eligibility for participation.

Press release of event follow-up. Include:

- Results.
- Special performances.
- New club, USMS, or world records.
- Number of participants - local, regional, national.
- Youngest/oldest swimmers.
- Related Masters participants, i.e., husband, wife, adult children.
- Human interest profile - community leader, outstanding citizen, or someone who has overcome great obstacles.

Other publicity tools include:

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- Yellow Page advertising under Swimming and/or Health Clubs. The smallest ad works!
- Stroke clinics:
- With video taping - participants can provide their own tapes to take home for viewing and further study.
- Available to members for small or no fee.
- Open to non-members for modest fee and option of USMS membership for a few more dollars.

Advertising packet or press kit containing:

- Club newsletter.
- Brochure describing club activities and benefits of membership.
- Calendar of events.
- Posters on strokes or drills.
- Club workout schedule.
- Names, addresses, and phone numbers of club officers.
- Registration application.

Publicity materials distributed to:

- Health clubs, gyms, YMCAs, and other pool facilities.
- Park and recreation departments.
- Doctor and physical-therapist offices.
- Hospitals.
- Red Cross.
- Triathlete organizations.
- Booths, clinics, fairs, corporate games.
- USA Swimming parents.
- Sporting goods stores.
- Corporate wellness programs.
- Graduating college seniors.

Meetings

Regular gatherings of members, to review current operation and propose improvements, ensure consistency and build a better club. Meetings can be small, involving initially a core assembly of organizers, and later the general membership, depending on goals and club size. They can be held informally after workouts or meets, in conjunction with socials, or they can be more structured, as for an annual meeting.

Below are some suggestions for successful meetings:

- Obtain an abridged copy of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised and follow this most widely accepted guide for fair and orderly meetings.
- Have an agenda, a clear plan of what is to be accomplished, and circulate it prior to the meeting.
- Publish a calendar of meeting dates, time, and location.

The first work of a new club might include:

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- Agreeing on a charge for dues.
- Designing and duplicating a membership application.
- Naming the club or team.
- Outlining offices and committee responsibilities.
- Electing officers and appointing committee heads.
- Creating by-laws.
- Opening a checking account.
- Registering with USMS.
- Deciding on methods of communication with members: Newsletter, bulletin board, telephone tree, announcements at practice. If through the newsletter, how frequently?
- Discussing whether to apply for tax exempt status.

The following additional considerations, once a club becomes established, enhance the organization's depth and stability and build club identity and pride:

- Determine equipment needs beyond what is available at the practice facility:
- Kickboards, pull buoys, hand paddles, and fins can be personal or pool property and are practical workout tools.
- Dry board and markers are useful for writing workouts and announcements.
- Stop watches, clipboards, pens, 3x5 cards, rubber bands, masking tape, etc., stored in a club bag are important meet items. Lap counters for longer races, if not owned by the pool, must be provided by the club.
- A computer can be used to maintain registration lists, update records, write newsletters, and run meets.
- Design a club logo.
- Create a club banner.
- Inventory merchandise items such as team suits, sweats, caps, tee-shirts, decals, bumper stickers, etc., for sale to members.

Coaching

Coaching is one of the main reasons to join or start a Masters program. Successful programs do exist that have no coaches. Qualified members help others with technique and training programs. One quality that sets Masters programs apart from nearly all lap swimming programs, however, is that most offer coaching with its many benefits. Swimmers become more motivated and stay committed when a good coach is available to provide challenging workouts and stroke instruction.

Selecting a coach:

Prepare a press release describing the club and its expectations of a coach (see Appendix C). Include information about:

- The size of the club.
- Workout hours.
- Experience and certification required of a coach.
- Approximate salary.
- Additional benefits.

Distribute the above release:

- To the local newspapers.
- To the LMSC newsletter.
- To local colleges, recreation departments, and pools.
- To local USA Swimming programs, newsletter, coaches committee.
- To the American Swim Coaches Association (ASCA) and the Masters Aquatic Coaches Association (MACA). (see Appendix A).
- Over the Internet.
- To the USMS National Office and Coaches Committee, prepare a contract outlining:
 - The responsibilities of the coach.
 - Compensation and benefits the coach will receive.

Call the American Swim Coaches Association (ASCA) for sample coaches' contracts, evaluations, and other information.

Contact the American Swim Coaches Association (ASCA) for information on its VVMOST System (Values, Vision, Mission, Objectives, Strategy, and Tactics). Join coaching associations:

- The American Swim Coaches Association (ASCA) emphasizes education, certification, and cooperation through home study courses, books, videos, and audio tapes.

US Masters Swimming and some LMSCs have video tape libraries for use by swimmers and coaches. Contact US Masters Swimming office for use of the US Masters Swimming Video Library. Masters swimming is also on-line at www.usms.org. Training

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and coaching information is stored and updated regularly. Other Internet and on-line services have swimming information as well.

Extras

Member Benefits

Availability of services and other complements to membership can increase the appeal of club affiliation. Consider these choices:

- Swim film video lending library offered by USMS and some LMSCs.
- Club newsletter.
- Club directory containing names, addresses, and phone numbers of members.
- Lists of meet schedules, merchandise, and complimentary items.
- Current listing of club records.
- Meet management guide with specific instructions for running a meet.
- Awards for various competitive and fitness accomplishments.
- First meet tee-shirts as a welcome for new members in their initial Masters competition.
- Merchandise with club logo.

Awards

Recognition of individual achievement reinforces positive feelings. Awards, focusing on specific or general performances or contributions, can be presented at meetings, social gatherings, or special awards banquets. Nominations, received by a pre-selected date and including a statement supporting the choice, might be solicited from the general membership through the news-letter with final selections made by an awards committee.

Possible Award Categories

- Fitness swimmer of the year or month.
- Rookie of the year or month.
- Triathlete of the year or month.
- Inspirational.
- Non-stop swimming for beginners (20 min., 40 min., etc.).
- Record breakers.
- Swimming a certain distance (100 miles, 200 miles).
- Completing cross-country trip.
- Achievement.
- Outstanding out-of-the-water contributor.
- Spouse of the year.
- Masters swimmer of the year award presented to the male and female swimmers who best exemplify the spirit of Masters swimming.
- Competitor of the year to the swimmer who earns the most points at LMSC meets, Zone Meets, and/or Nationals.
- Outstanding competitor determined by a swimmer's Top Ten placing.
- Humorous or roast.
- Most improved.

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- Best body (Men's/Women's divisions).

Ideas for awards

- Towel with club emblem.
- Plaque
- Pin.
- Mug.
- Certificate.
- Tee-shirt.
- Patch or badge.

Fitness Activities

Fitness swimmers are an integral part of United States Masters Swimming. A variety of activities can provide them and other club members with a reason for participation and interaction. These activities build cohesion and provide for continued interest in the program. Some suggestions for activities follow:

Practices and workouts:

- Fun relays - inner tube, tee-shirt, etc.
- Pot-luck relays - draw names of relay members.
- Video taping.
- Super set day - include swims of various lengths and difficulty.
- Stroke of the month.
- Birthday sets.
- Special holiday theme workouts.

Social activities:

- Post-meet and after-practice dinners, pizza parties.
- Red-eye breakfasts.
- Midnight swim.

Meets:

- Relay.
- Sprint.
- 1650 or other long distance event.
- Postal.
- Dual, triple, or quad meet with other clubs.
- Novice or developmental meet, with 25 yard and fun events.
- Less serious - nothing official, costume, theme, couples, wet T-shirts, special prizes.

Clinics:

- Stroke instruction.
- Officials certification.
- Well planned, carefully structured sessions.
- Lectures, water instruction, video-taped critique.
- Handouts as summary of what was taught.

Packets to run clinics are available through the US Masters Swimming National Office

Aerobic challenges:

- Form distance clubs for 100/200/300 miles, etc. Create a pool log sheet and graph distances.
- Take a mock journey to cross-country destinations. Convert yardage into miles and plot progress on pool-side maps.

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- Recognize continuous swimming.
- Participate in Red Cross or Presidential sports programs.
- Complete specified distances in closest predicted time.
- Participate in US Masters Swimming postal events.
- Participate in US Masters Swimming “Go the Distance” Program

Swim Meets

Categories and Kinds of Meets

Swim meets offer club members opportunities to test skills and conditioning in a variety of settings, courses, and distances.

- The Mini (club, dual) Meet is usually small in size, lasts 2 to 3 hours, and may be sanctioned or recognized through the LMSC. Swimmers sign up in advance or deck enter on the day of the meet for up to 5 events (the maximum number of events allowed per day at any US Masters Swimming sanctioned or recognized meet). A minimal entry fee may be charged (e.g., \$1 per event or \$5 per meet). It should be just enough to cover expenses (pool rental and cost, if any, of officials). This type of low-key meet is a good introduction for first time competitors and a learning tool for new meet managers. A social activity is a good follow-up.
- The Mid-Sized Meet attracts a greater number of swimmers from a wider geographical area. It offers many events and often relays. It lasts 4 to 6 hours. Entries may be mailed in advance for heat sheet listing or deck entered the day of the meet. However, the meet announcement must specify if on-deck (day-of-meet) entry is an option. Deck entrants usually pay a higher fee than pre-entered swimmers (one and one-half the pre-entrant fee is typical). Some meet hosts charge a flat fee (\$10-\$15) that allows each swimmer to swim as many or as few events as allowable. Others prefer to have a meet surcharge (to cover timing system, pool rental, etc., \$3-\$5) plus a per event charge (\$1 to \$3). Ribbons or other suitable forms of recognition are often awarded to the winners several places deep. Sometimes a useful participation award (such as a mug, key chain, water bottle, etc.) is given in lieu of ribbons or medals. A social gathering for participants, families, officials, and meet personnel is always a popular accompaniment.
- The Big (Championship) Meet offers all the official events, plus relays, and takes two or more days with several hundred or more participants. There are no deck entries and participants must sign up 2 to 4 weeks before the meet. In some areas of the country, officials receive payment. In others, officials volunteer their services. Check to see what the policy is in your area. Electronic timing, often interfaced with the computer system, is used. Medals or similar awards are appropriate for at least the first three places.
- Open Water Events are conducted in fresh or salt water venues, calm or rough water, and are generally one mile or longer on marked courses. They can be out and back where Start and Finish are in the same place or point to point where Start and Finish are different. The US Masters Swimming Long Distance Committee or the LMSC can provide guidelines for Open Water Events. US Masters Swimming has an Open Water Manual available on the Long Distance page of the US Masters Swimming Website at www.usms.org or through the National Office

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Meet Operation

Running a Masters Swim Meet requires a minimum number of chronological steps, depending on the size of the meet, choice of events offered, and the pool or club situation. The following outline will serve as an introduction to the general process necessary for planning, conducting, and completing a pool competition. Please adjust these components to fit your situation and objectives.

Prepare:

1. Contact the LMSC's Sanction Chair and/or Meet Assistance Coordinator for details, guide-lines, and proper forms.
2. Acquire a current US Masters Swimming Rule Book.
3. Determine availability of pool facility and schedule the meet date.
4. Submit a Sanction or Recognition application to the LMSC if the meet is to be sanctioned or recognized.
5. Print announcement.
6. Arrange for officials. Two are required, and more are encouraged, including a Referee, Starter, and Stroke and Turn Judge (at least one must be certified by a USMS approved certifying body).
7. Order awards.

Assign committee duties to volunteers and describe responsibilities:

1. Entries - Receive entries, check for correct payment, and review for completeness of information.
2. Seeding - For each event place swimmers in heats by entry times, either slowest to fastest or vice versa.
3. Program - Print swimmers' names as seeded, listing entry times, ages, and clubs. Give recognition and appreciation to meet directors, officials, and volunteers, print instructions for warm-ups and check-in, and list the event schedule.
4. Publicity - Contact the media for pre-meet coverage and printing of results (see Appendix C).
5. Check-in Table - Check in pre-entered swimmers, process deck entrants according to meet announcement provisions, and collect money, copies of USMS cards and waivers not received. Advise the Seeding Committee of any scratches.
6. Runners - Collect timing cards after each heat and give to Results Table.
7. Results Table - For non-computerized meets, record times in duplicate and post result sheets. For computerized meets, run the system as directed. Asterisk any local or national records on Results and mark these cards or timing sheets for the Referee's signature. (See USMS Rule Book for documentation requirements).
8. Timers - Time swimmers, take splits if requested and record and initial final times.
9. Announcer - Announce event and heat prior to each start, note names of swimmers in each lane, and make additional communications as requested by the director.
10. Safety Marshals - Monitor warm-ups, warm-downs, and meet conduct.
11. Relay Coordinator - Collect relay entries and seed relay events.

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12. Results - Check result sheets for accuracy and print results. Contact the LMSC Top Ten Recorder for the proper format.

Add these optional duties depending on meet size:

1. Refreshments/Social.
2. Relays/Team Scoring.
3. Merchandise Sales.
4. Hotel/Motel Arrangements.
5. Program Sponsors/Advertisers.

Duplicate and have available on the day of meet:

1. USMS Membership Application forms (for non-members).
2. USMS waivers (signature required of each participant).
3. Insurance and accident forms (available from LMSC Sanctions Chairman or Registrar).
4. Application for National/World Record (see USMS Rule Book).
5. Pool Measurement form - see US Masters Swimming Rule Book.
6. Meet Evaluation form.
7. Records - see US Masters Swimming Rule Book for US Masters Swimming records.
8. Emergency safety procedures.

Obtain equipment and have ready on the day of the meet:

1. Clip boards, pencils, watches, electronic starting system or starter gun/horn, lap counters.
2. First aid supplies.
3. Electric timing system and/or authorized number of watches (see US Masters Swimming Rule Book).
4. Backstroke flags.
5. Recall rope.
6. P.A. system and megaphone (for Starter).
7. Warm-up signs - for No Diving and One-Way Sprints.
8. Chairs at lanes for timers.
9. Tables and chairs for sign-in and scoring.

Measure pool if movable bulkhead in use or first-time Masters meet (required for Long Course Meters and Short Course Meters pools used in Sanctioned and Recognized meets). See the US Masters Swimming Rule Book for pool measurement form and instructions.

Post emergency safety information:

1. Location of emergency phone.
2. Phone number of hospital or rescue squad.
3. Emergency exits and gathering place.
4. Location of first aid kit.
5. Safety equipment location.

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6. Pool address.
7. Names of people to notify in case of emergency or accident (Meet Director, Pool Administrator, etc.).

Complete post-meet duties:

1. Send press releases to newspapers.
2. Print the official results. Contact the LMSC Top Ten Recorder for correct format.
3. File meet documents.
4. Mail reports and forms. Contact the LMSC Top Ten or appropriate Chair for requirements.

Many LMSCs have written guidelines for running and evaluating pool meets. Check with your Sanctions or Top Ten Chair for such information. If none is available in your area,

Where to Find Help

USMS National Office

Tracy Grilli, USMS Executive Secretary
PO Box 185
Londonderry, NH 03053

Phone: 603-537-0203 or 800-550 SWIM (7946), Fax: 603-537-0204, USMS@usms.org

Esther Lyman, Database Administrator

Registration@usms.org

Insurance Brokers

Risk Management Service, Inc.

Sandi Blumit, Broker

PO Box 32712

Phoenix, AZ 85064-2712

Phone: 800-777-4930, Fax: 602-274-9138, sblumit@theriskpeople.com

Other

American Swim Coaches Assoc. (ASCA)

301 SE 20th Street

Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33316

Phone: 800-356-2722

Mel Goldstein, Club Development & Coaches Services

5735 Carrollton Ave.

Indianapolis, IN 46220

317-253-8289

goldsteinmel@sbcglobal.net

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