

Michigan Swimming Swim Guide

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General Information

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About This Document

The purpose of this document is to provide information regarding Michigan Swimming (MS). This information is designed to supplement USA Swimming (USA-S) Rules and Regulations which are published annually by USA-S and the Rules and Procedures for Michigan meets which are published by MS. If any information contained herein is found to be in conflict with rules in either of these documents, the USA-S and/or MS Rule will supercede.

Michigan Swimming, Inc.

MS is part of a larger organization, USA-S, that governs amateur competitive swimming in the United States. USA-S sets rules for meets, establishes safety procedures, sets criteria for achievement levels, administers USA national teams such as the Olympic, Pan American and Pan Pacific teams, and promotes competitive swimming through research, education, and marketing.

MS is one of 59 geographically-defined Local Swim Committees (LSCs) which administer and promote USA-S programs at the local level. MS has jurisdiction over USA-S programs in the State of Michigan. The principal activities of MS are developing swim meet schedules, setting standards for and sanctioning swim meets, implementing USA-S rules and safety procedures within the LSC, developing programs to promote, enhance, and market competitive swimming, and administering the registration of clubs and individuals. MS encourages participation by all interested swimmers, coaches, officials, and volunteers. Discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, age, gender, disability, or national origin is prohibited by MS and USA-S rules.

MS is managed by a representative body, called the House of Delegates (HoD), composed of one adult volunteer and one athlete from each swim club. The HoD meets at least once a year, usually in the fall, to elect the Board of Directors (BoD) and carry out other business that requires action of the full HoD. Between meetings of the HoD, the BoD conducts all business of MS.

Regular meetings of the BoD and the HoD are open to any interested person, although only persons designated by the bylaws may vote. Club delegates, coaches and officials receive copies and / or notification of all minutes, schedules, and other information pertaining to the activities of the BoD and the HoD.

Club Development

Periodically, MS offers club development workshops on various topics such as club administration, coach and swimmer retention, marketing, and team

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building. Most sessions are open to parents, coaches, and swim officials, while some are reserved only for athletes.

In the interim, clubs needing information on club development, planning, marketing or publicity may contact the program development division chairperson.

Registration and Insurance

Registration

USA-S offers two categories of individual memberships: athlete and non-athlete. Non-athlete members are further designated as coach, official, and other. All swimmers who participate in practices or meets conducted by MS or its member clubs must be registered with USA-S as athlete members. All coaches who are on deck at practices and meets must meet special training requirements to qualify for coach registration. In order to meet the requirements for MS membership, teams must have at least one registered coach. All meet directors and officials must be registered as members—meet directors may be adult athlete members but officials must be non-athlete members. Non-athlete membership is also available to other volunteers, such as club representatives.

The individual registration fee is per calendar year, with registrations received after September 1st continued until December 31st of the following year. Individual seasonal memberships are available to athletes. Season 1 memberships are a structured 150-day membership from April 4 through August 31 while Individual Seasonal memberships are valid for any 150-day period. Both types of seasonal memberships are valid only for meets below the zone level.

Club Affiliation

Swimmers who are members of a swim club usually register with USA-S as members of that club. When they enter meets as affiliated with a club, they can earn points for the team and swim on team relays. Swimmers affiliated with a club are said to be *attached* to that club. Swimmers who participate without being affiliated with a club are said to be *unattached*. An unattached swimmer may not swim on team relays and may not earn points for a team.

For a swimmer to represent a USA-S club in a competitive event, one hundred twenty (120) consecutive days must have elapsed without the swimmer having represented any other USA-S club in USA-S competition. During the 120 days, the swimmer may practice with the new club but must compete as an *unattached* swimmer. If this rule is violated, the swimmer will be disqualified in the event during which the violation occurred. Changes in affiliation from attached to unattached status or from unattached status to a club attachment must be made through the MS Permanent Office.

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Insurance Coverage

Registered athlete members of USA-S/MS are insured under a secondary accident medical insurance policy. For further information concerning coverage, benefits, and the processing of claims, contact the Safe Sport Coordinator.

Types of Swim Meets

Age-Group Swim Meets

Classifications. In age-group meets, swimmers are grouped by age, gender, and swimming ability. The age groups usually used in Michigan are 8 & under, 10 & under, 11-12, 13-14, and Open. Other groupings sometimes used in MS meets are “mini meets” for 8 & under swimmers, and “own-age meets” in which swimmers compete in single-year age groups. Open events usually are offered to accommodate the needs of high-school and post-high-school swimmers but they are available to swimmers of any age who have achieved the relevant time standard.

Time Standards. In order to facilitate the management of swim meets, MS classifies swimmers into three ability levels labeled A, B, and C for invitational meets. These levels are defined by time standards, where A is the fastest group, B the next fastest, etc. For example, in a B meet, all of the swimmers in a given event will have achieved times equal to or better than the B time standard, but slower than the A time standard. The A, B, C time standards used in MS meets are taken directly from the national motivational times published by USA-S. MS also publishes qualifying time standards (“Q” Times) for championship meets (District Championships, Junior Olympics, and State Championships). These Q-time standards are unique to Michigan and are not related to the national motivational times. They may be adjusted from year-to-year to reflect the anticipated number of swimmers in each event.

Once a swimmer has achieved or claimed a best time at a certain level, the swimmer may not compete in that event at a lower level. For example, a swimmer who has achieved an A-level time may not enter that event in a B-level meet. If a swimmer achieves a faster time standard after having entered an event in a lower level, the swimmer must withdraw from the event. For example, a swimmer who achieves an A time in a specific event after entering the B event must withdraw from the B event. The host club must refund the entry fee if so requested or, when possible, allow the swimmer to enter another event for which he or she is qualified.

The nature of relay events (mixed or single gender) must be specified in the meet announcement. Mixed relays may consist of all girls, all boys, or a combination of boys and girls.

Variety in meet formats. MS encourages variety in meet formats. Therefore the meet schedule includes some multi-level meets, as well as some

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meets with unique time standards. Multi-level meets offer events at more than one level. For example, a B-C meet offers both B and C level events, accommodating swimmers who have B times in some events and C times in other events.

The Michigan Mile is a special type of meet which provides opportunities for swimmers to compete in the distance freestyle events, namely the 800m/1000y and 1500m/1650y freestyles.

End-of-Season Meets

MS conducts two state championship meets at the end of the short-course season for those swimmers who achieve the state championship “Q” time standards. One meet is for the 12 and under age groups, and the other is for the 13 and older age groups. At the end of the long-course season, MS conducts one state championship meet for athletes 14 and under and another for athletes meeting the Open time standards.

MS also conducts short-course season-ending meets for swimmers who do not achieve the state championship (Q1) time standards. The District Championships are designed to allow the Q3 level swimmers an opportunity to qualify for the Junior Olympics or the State Championship Meets while the Junior Olympics Meet is designed to allow all Q2 qualified swimmers another opportunity to qualify for their respective State Championship Meet. These meets are held on succeeding weekends so that swimmers who have state championship (Q1) times in some events, but not in others, may participate in all meets for which they qualify.

Senior Meets

Senior meets are designed for elite swimmers who are striving to achieve qualifying times for national-level competition. All events at a senior meet are “open” with qualifying times specified by the host club. The 13-14 and 15-16 *national AA* time standards have been used at MS senior meets in recent years. There are no age-group categories in these meets; any swimmer who has equaled or bettered the time standards may compete.

National-Level Meets

Zone championship meets. Zone meets are the highest level of age-group competition conducted by USA-S. Separate meets are conducted in each of the four zones; Eastern, Central, Southern, and Western. Michigan competes in the Central Zone along with Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Lake Erie, Midwestern, Minnesota, Missouri Valley, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Ozark, South Dakota, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

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Because of the large geographical area encompassed by the Central Zone, two meets are conducted at different venues. These meets are held in early August at long-course facilities. All participating Michigan swimmers constitute a single Michigan Zone Team, swim on Michigan relays, and earn points for the Michigan team. National AAA times are required to qualify for this meet.

Sectional meets. Since 2001 USA-S has held short-course and long-course Sectional Championships in spring and late summer. Sectional meets are conducted simultaneously in the three sections of the Central Zone to accommodate swimmers who meet the qualifying times. Age-group classifications are not used. Indiana, Lake Erie, Michigan and Ohio comprise Section III of the Central Zone.

Senior national championship meets. USA-S conducts one spring and one summer Senior National Meet each year. Any swimmer who has achieved the qualifying time may participate. This is a world-class meet, and may include swimmers from other nations. In some years the meet is used as the basis for selecting USA teams for Pan Pacific, Pan American, and Olympic competition. Age-group classifications are not used.

Swim Meet Guidelines

How to Enter a Meet

Meet announcements. The host club for each meet prepares an announcement which specifies the location, schedule, order of events, and other pertinent details about the meet. Announcements for all MS meets are posted on the MS website typically 6-8 weeks before the meet. The club code of the host team, the type of meet and location for each meet on this year's schedule is included in this guide.

Meet Entries. Electronic entry files are usually submitted by the club entry chairman or coach, although the procedure varies among clubs. These files will require the swimmer's name, age, USA-S ID number, and a *seed time* for each event entered. Swimmers should enter individual events using their best seed times.

Event limits. The number of events swimmers are permitted to enter is listed in the meet announcement. According to USA-S rules, swimmers are limited to a maximum of five individual events per day in a timed-finals meet. Meet directors frequently restrict swimmers to three or four events per session in timed-final meets so that more swimmers can be accommodated, and so that each session of the meet can be completed within a four-hour time period.

Entry fees. The MS BoD establishes maximum entry fees for different types of MS meets after considering typical costs of conducting a swim meet,

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including the number of swimmers who participate, the pool time needed for the meet, the quality of the facility, and the type of awards that are presented. Most of the entry fees (95%) stay with the host club to cover meet expenses. The remaining 5% and the \$1.00-per-swimmer surcharge goes to MS. The MS portion of the entry fees is used to subsidize the operation of MS; conduct camps and clinics for swimmers, coaches, officials and clubs; and support participation of Michigan swimmers in zone and national-level competition.

Meet Formats

There are two general formats for swim meets, *timed finals* and *prelims/finals*. In a timed finals meet, swimmers race once in each event entered. Thus each race is the final race for a swimmer in that event of the meet, with final places determined by swimmers' achieved times.

In a prelims/finals meet, also called a championship format, swimmers compete in *preliminary heats* (prelims) for an opportunity to swim in the championship finals race later in the meet (usually later in the day). Some meets also offer a *consolation finals* heat. Swimmers in the consolation heat cannot displace swimmers in the championship heat in determining the final awards for the event.

Proof-of-Times

Age-group/senior meets. For most meets, swimmers do not have to prove that they have previously achieved the relevant time standard for individual events. This is left to the integrity of the swimmer and the coach. However, once a swimmer enters an event in a claimed time, he/she may not swim that event at a lower ability level within the same age group. When changing age groups, the swimmer's fastest time, claimed or swum, follows him/her.

State championship meets. Time standards for State Championship Meets are published for each meet. Swimmers who enter these meets must have achieved a time in any Course (yards, short course meters or long course meters) equal to or faster than the published qualifying times for the events entered. Qualifying times must have been achieved during the qualifying period specified in the meet announcement. Time conversions are not allowed in state championship meets.

All entries into the MS State Championship Meets are done through Online Meet Entry (OME) which is set up by the MS Permanent Office staff for each meet and made available to coaches and unattached athletes. OME provides the athlete roster for each club to the head coach along with the times swum during the qualifying period by each athlete on the club's roster.

If coaches override a time not in the SWIMS database, the time must be proven. Acceptable verifications for any individual events not pre-proven are official results from: USA Swimming sanctioned or approved meets, College,

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High School, Junior High, YWCA or YMCA, Masters, or FINA meets sanctioned by their respective governing organizations.

Short Course/Long Course Time Conversions

Short course meets are conducted in 25-yard or 25-meter pools; *long course meets* are conducted in 50-meter pools. Unless specifically stated otherwise in the meet announcement, times for meets may be converted from short-course-yards to long-course-meters times (or vice-versa) using one of the following formulas if a qualifying time is required to enter the event. Please note that conversions are approximate. Swimmers must enter times which maintain the levels of competition (e.g., A, B, C) for which they have qualified. For example, if a swimmer has an A time in the 50 yard freestyle (short course), he/she also has an A time in the 50 meter freestyle (long course). Time conversions, however, are not permitted for the State Championship Meets.

Short Course (SCY) To Long Course (LCM)					Long Course (LCM) To Short Course (SCY)				
50y	x	1.127	=	50m	50m	x	0.887	=	50y
100y	x	1.143	=	100m	100m	x	0.875	=	100y
200y	x	1.136	=	200m	200m	x	0.880	=	200y
500y	x	0.892	=	400m	400m	x	1.120	=	500y
1000y	x	0.892	=	800m	800m	x	1.120	=	1000y
1650y	x	1.022	=	1500m	1500m	x	0.978	=	1650y

Short course yards may be converted to short course meters by multiplying the yard time by 1.10. Conversion of 500y and 1650y to 400scm and 1500scm require that the distance be equalized prior to multiplying by the conversion factor of 1.10.

Scratch Rules

Scratching refers to withdrawing from an event. If a swimmer desires to scratch an event after s/he has already checked in but prior to the close of check-in, the swimmer should notify the clerk-of-course. If a swimmer decides to scratch an event after the close of check-in, the swimmer must consult the meet referee. Declaration of scratches from the finals in a prelims-final meet is especially important because another swimmer may then qualify for the finals. The penalties for failing to notify the clerk-of-course and/or meet referee about scratches vary according to the type of meet. All meet announcements shall specify scratch procedures and penalties for violation of those procedures.

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Safety/Warm-up Procedures

MS is committed to maintaining a safe environment at swim meets. A “safety attitude” is expected of all persons at swim meets. Swimmers, coaches, meet workers, and spectators should behave in a sensible manner, observe safety-related rules and procedures, and report suspected hazards or injuries. Accidents should be reported to the MS Safe Sport Coordinator.

Special rules govern warm-up periods. The basic rule is simple - *no diving or jumping into the pool except in designated sprint lanes*. Enter the water feet-first in a cautious manner. A swimmer who is observed violating this rule may be disqualified from his/her next individual event. This rule is in effect during ALL warm-up periods at ALL meets.

The meet officials will establish one-way sprint lanes near the end of the warm-up period. Swimmers may enter the sprint lane by diving from the starting block or wall, or by entering the water feet-first.

Deck Credentials

Only registered swimmers, registered coaches, registered officials, and meet workers are allowed on the deck at swim meets. Coaches, officials, and the meet director must display their USA-S registration cards in a visible location at all times during a meet. Meet workers should wear badges indicating their positions (e.g., timer, clerk-of-course) at the meet. When deck space is limited, the referee and meet director may limit deck access to those swimmers who are participating in a particular event(s) or session.

Travel Fund Policy

Meets that qualify for travel fund reimbursements shall include trials for USA-S national teams, national / international disability meets, U.S. Open, senior nationals, junior nationals, open water national championships and NCSA junior nationals. The minimum criteria for travel fund reimbursements shall include MS registration at the time of the national meet and participation in at least three MS meets and nine (9) individual events during the previous twelve (12) months.

A swimmer who has been registered with MS for 4 years, either continuously or discontinuously, shall receive 1.0 share for each national meet in which s/he participates in an individual event. A swimmer who has been registered with MS for 3 years shall receive 0.75 share, a swimmer registered for 2 years shall receive 0.50 share, and a swimmer registered for 1 year shall receive 0.25 share. The dollar value of a share shall be based upon the current MS budget, the distance to the meet, the number of swimmers applying, and the type of meet. Note that relay-only swimmers are eligible for ½ the eligible amount for the meets listed above.

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Swimmers who qualify for travel funds should complete the Athlete Travel Fund Request Form which is available on the MS website and submit it and all receipts to the address on the form.

Records and Top-10 Times

MS and national records may be established at *sanctioned, approved or observed* meets.

Every year, USA-S compiles a list of the 10 fastest times in every age group from 11 - 18. Relay listings are compiled for ages 11-12, 13-14 and 15-18. To facilitate tabulation of the *National Top 10* USA-S publishes preview lists for short course and long course on the USA-S website (www.usaswimming.org). The National Reportable Time year runs from September 1 through August 31 of the next year for both short-course yards and long-course meters.

Officials

The requirements for becoming a USA-S official include attending an officials clinic, serving as an apprentice official at meets, completing an open-book test on the rules, and becoming a member of USA-S. Further details can be obtained from the officials chair.

Other Sources of Swimming Information

- The MS website, www.miswim.org is a source of information for meet schedules, meet invitations and meet results as well as time standards, meeting minutes and other items of interest to our swimming community. Many items are available as .pdf documents or are zipped within files to facilitate printing of specific pages and/or the electronic transfer of these files from the website to the user's computer. Documents with the .pdf extension require that the user's computer have an Adobe reader to view them. Adobe readers are free of charge from the Adobe website, www.adobe.com. Zipped files require that a program be present on the user's computer to unzip the files. If not already present, this software utility can be purchased online or an office supply store for a nominal fee.
- USA-S Rules and Regulations. The USA-S rule book is available in two forms, the complete book (\$10.00) and a mini rule book (\$6.00) that includes the rules pertaining to starts, strokes, turns, and conducting swim meets. Available from USA-S, One Olympic Plaza, Colorado Springs, CO 80909-5770. The complete rulebook may also be downloaded from the USA-S website.

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- The “web” offers seemingly endless swimming-related information and space is not available to list all of the addresses here. Here are just a few of the more popular ones:
 - Central Zone – www.centralzones.org
 - MHSAA – www.mhsaa.com/sports/girlsswimmingdiving or www.mhsaa.com/sports/boysswimmingdiving
 - MISCA – www.miscaonline.net
 - Swimming World Magazine – www.swimmingworldmagazine.com
 - USA-S – www.usa-swimming.org