Organizing a USMS-sanctioned Swim Meet

Topics of Discussion:

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1. Entry Form

The standard entry form is generally a two page document.

The **first page** contains information about the specific meet (it sets the parameters of the meet, who to send the entry to, deadline for entries, special fees for late entry or faxed entries, where to stay for the meet, scoring, awards, scratch policy, concessions, order of events, etc). Your best bet is to look at the information pages provided for other meets in the LMSC and develop your specific entry form based on these examples.

The **second page** is typically the entry form. LMSC's do not require a standard order of events.

If you are running a one day deck-entered meet, you just need to get a one-page notice out with information on time, date, location, order of events, and cost.

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2. Sanctioning the Meet

Contact your LMSC sanction chair for the sanction paperwork that must be completed.

There is a sanction fee paid to the LMSC when you submit the required paperwork. You must complete and submit hard copies of the paperwork to the Sanction Chair (a fax of the Sanction Application page is not acceptable); this includes the Sanction Application, the Medical Emergency plan form and a copy of the entry form (all pages).

You should try and complete the above two or three months prior to your event.

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3. Getting the Word Out

Once you have received your sanction number from the LMSC Sanction Chair; update your entry form to include the number. You can get the entry out early by referencing the sanction number as PENDING.

You can E-mail a copy of the info page and the entry form to Dick Brewer (rdbrewer@gmail.com), who will post the forms on the Dixie Zone web site and send an initial a notice out to team reps so they know there is meet info available. Make sure you review what is to be posted, especially your specific meet information.

Provide a copy of the information page to the LMSC newsletter editor for inclusion in the upcoming newsletter (a reason you want to get the entry out early).

Bring entry forms for distribution to meets prior to your own. Meet directors will usually provide you space at their registration table and will also announce that meet entries are available during the meet.

E-mail the entry form to team contacts for distribution on their team. Make sure this includes people in neighboring LMSC's. *This has proven to be a good way to get the word out and generally the contacts make the entry form available for team members who don't have e-mail access.* Send a reminder to the contacts a week prior to the entry deadline and include the entry form again.

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4. Preparing for the Meet

Try and get different team members to handle aspects of the meet. This will reduce the burden to the meet director. Just because you are meet director doesn't mean you have to do all the work – find reliable people to help you run the meet. Be sure to ask the people in charge of each section to keep a written record of their general steps and any contact people they have. It will be invaluable in ensuing years.

Person to handle the Entries:

This person will send out the reminders to team reps, receive the entries and review for completeness (did competitor sign the waiver, send the proper money, include USMS card, etc). Get an electronic copy of your LMSC's registered swimmers from the registrar to ensure all competitors are 'legal'. For other LMSC swimmers, you work from the USMS card provided with the entry. Most swimmers provide accurate information. Spelling the name in the heat sheet and results as the swimmer is registered is very important (this includes middle initials, etc.) – the card is the official spelling regardless of what the person prints on the entry form!

There may be several swimmers with 'pending' registration, usually at meets at the start of a new year, and these are the entries you need to work through. Work with the LMSC registrar to make sure the person gets registered. If something happens and a pending registration cannot be cleared up prior to the meet the swimmer <u>cannot</u> compete. It jeopardizes the sanction, the USMS insurance, and the results of all other competitors.

Experience indicates that most entries are received during the final week and even several days past the entry deadline. Depending on who will be handling the heat sheet and results, that person needs to input the information into the computer – you can determine how to best handle late entries. (Personally, I try to be flexible and accommodate late entrants. I recently took entries by e-mail, fax and phone for swimmers I could verify were USMS-registered and they followed up with the signed form and money.) If someone calls and asks if there is still time - instruct them how you are handling the late entries.

Generally, don't a late entry for someone with a PENDING registration due to the legwork.) **Remember you must be consistent in the late entry policy!** A club can charge an additional fee for late entry. This is strictly up to he club hosting the meet and should be included on the information page of the entry form.

Computer Person:

The person handling entries needs to get the entry information to the person handling the heat sheet and results (the computer person). Determine whether you have a team member handling this or an outsider (someone you pay to handle this during the meet). This will determine the timing referenced above for late entries and who will need to handle getting heat sheets printed prior to the meet and results distributed after the meet.

You should **designate a liaison** during the meet that will take issues to the person handling the computer results. You do not want competitors to have direct access to the computer person during the meet, as it will slow down the availability of results. This person should have forms for USMS and World Record application and should know what is required if an application needs to be made. Also have 'split request' forms available for swimmers who want a split submitted for Top Ten Consideration (i.e. swim the 1650, take the 1000 or 500 split; or relay lead off swimmers). Have these forms available at the meet.

As meet director, you need to let the computer person know how many lanes will be used during competition; how seeding works for events (slowest to fastest); if any events will be deck seeded; make sure they know the requirements for the swimmers name, age, club, LMSC, etc. Don't assume they know what will be required for reporting the results to the LMSC, who in turn prepare Top Ten submissions.

Timers and Timing Equipment:

Try and have someone responsible for lining up the timers prior to the meet and ensuring they show up. This person should try (if possible) to have the timers work in shifts shifts as you can find more people to time if they only have to commit to Saturday morning or Sunday afternoon. This person should act as Head Timer during the meet or appoint someone to handle this function. Plan on two timers per lane if using an automatic timing system. This allows one person to run and record a backup time and the other to handle the button pushing for the electronic system. One person can handle both jobs in a crunch.

If you are using watch times only, you need to have two timers per lane and BOTH TIMES MUST BE RECORDED – the average is the final time for results. A couple of places to look for timers (swimmers like to swim, not time) are the local USA team (kids twelve and up) or a high school service organization where students need community service points.

Officials:

Have one person responsible for lining up the officials for the meet. Read the USMS Appendix B of the Rule Book to determine the number of officials required for each session. This appendix indicates acceptable officials for USMS competition and points out differences in the USMS Rules and other levels of swimming competition. Make sure the officials of are aware of these differences (butterfly kick, backstroke turn, etc.). USMS requires a current rule book be available on deck in case of disputes.

On Deck Check In:

Have a table for swimmers to check in at the meet and pick up their heat sheet. The table can also be used for handing out any event awards; collecting relay cards, and the liaison to the computer person.

Announcer:

Determine if you will use an announcer during the meet. If so, line someone up for each day of the meet.

Concessions:

If you plan on providing concessions during the meet for competitors get someone to organize this. The person will need to know how many swimmers are expected at the meet for planning purposes. You should also provide food and beverages for officials and timers during the meet. Keep these things in mind. If you don't provide a concession stand, consider making water or Gatorade type drink available during the meet for the competitors.

Social:

If there is a social gathering or event on Saturday have someone coordinate this for you. Many swimmers enjoy the social being announced at the meet (i.e. dinner at Julio's Beach Grille tonight starting at 6 pm). If you announce at the meet, you may need a sign up sheet so the restaurant can plan for your crowd.

Heat Sheet Sponsors/Advertisements or Freebees for the registered swimmers:

This can be an easy way to make some money for your meet and offset some of the costs. Find someone who is enthusiastic to head this up. Sell 1/4, 1/2 or full page ads in the heat sheet or find event sponsors. If you keep the price reasonable you can find lots of takers. Some people prefer to provide samples that you can hand out (pens, note pads, sample aspirin packets, suncreen, shampoo, etc.) If you have a lot of out of town swimmers, get some maps and info from the Chamber of Commerce. Announce events taking place in the community (spouses get bored at meets).

Awards and High Point:

This varies from meet to meet and depends on what your club wants to do. Just remember to count all of the age groups and multiply by 2 (men and women). Just remember not to go to overboard on the cost. (At our own meet, if you win a high point award and you don't collect the award or have someone pick it up for you, you are S.O.L.) You don't want to mail this stuff out after the fact – it gets expensive.

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5. Post Meet Wrap Up

Post-meet meeting: Hold a meeting within a week of the conclusion of the meet with all of your committee chairs. That's the time for each to make suggestions for improvements and changes for the following year/meet while everything is still fresh in everyone's minds.

Keep a meet notebook of what was done and what the suggestions are so if a new person assumes the position the next year, there will be some written notes to help guide them.

Reporting results:

Check with your LMSC Sanctions and Top 10 chairs for individual requirements. Generally, the biggest concern is getting the results out within a short time frame.

Results are sent to the LMSC Top Ten Recorder, who needs **both a hard copy** of the final results and an **electronic copy** of the results. USMS provides guidelines in Appendix B of the Rule Book of the proper preparation of results. You also need to provide a hard copy or a legible electronic copy of the results to the LMSC Sanctions Chair for the records.

If anyone at the meet requested a split submission, you need to include the split in a side document summary to the Top Ten Recorder and Sanctions Chair. This will not be something the Computer Person can generally set up.

If you submit the results to the Dixie Zone webmaster, he will be able to post them on the zone web site for people to access (www.dixiezone.org/Meets.htm). If you use Hy-Tek for the results, have the computer person sort the results in "Publication Order" and then export them as "Flat HTML." That works best for the internet.

Some people will want to purchase results so consider offering results for sale, either on the entry form or at the registration table during the meet.