

Combined, Parallel, and Interwoven Meets

The number of inquiries as to what mechanisms are available for combining USA Swimming and USMS swimming meets has been increasing. The reasons for combining these meets are many, ranging from the limited availability of pool time and officials to the desire to promote the sport as a lifelong activity. There are several ways of accomplishing this goal within the rules and insurance policies of each organization. This document outlines these options.

It is assumed that all competitors are a member of either USA Swimming, USMS, or both. Those that are members of both must select one organization with which to compete for the entire meet. Dual membership cannot be used to exceed the daily event limits imposed by either organization. Automatic recognition of times achieved by a USMS swimmer competing in the USA-S portion is still available.

Any of the joint meets described below must have sanctions from both USA Swimming and USMS. Both sanctions must be held by the host organization. The host organization cannot be required to accept a participant from either USMS or USA Swimming that would otherwise be barred from participation by their respective organizations.

USMS Record and Top Ten submissions must comply with all USMS documentation requirements.

Combined Meets

With the consent of all (co-)hosting teams and the LSC and LMSC, a combined meet may be sanctioned by both USA Swimming and USMS and all swimmers competing according to USA Swimming rules. This mechanism allows the meet host(s) to seed the event as they normally would, based upon times, with USA Swimming and USMS members combined in heats without specific lanes allocated to one organization or the other. There are restrictions however. A divider must separate members of each organization. A lane line is sufficient to achieve the separation. This does preclude, for example, swimming two-to-a-lane with a member of each organization in the same lane. Warm-up and warm-down should be conducted in separate lanes. Relay teams must consist of members of the same organization.

Parallel Meets

The two meets may be swum in parallel by assigning some number of lanes to USMS competitors and a different set to USA Swimming competitors. If possible, separate stroke and turn officials for each set is preferred. It is permissible to adjust, for example, the makeup of the USMS heats so that competitors in a given heat have approximately the same seed times. Each organization's rules would apply to their members.

Interwoven Meets

The two meets may be swum with complete heats of swimmers from both organizations alternating. There would be no need for separate stroke and turn officials. Each organization's rules would apply to their members.

Guidelines for Warm-Up/Warm-Down

To ensure the safety of all swimmers during the warm-up and warm-down period, we ask that you read and practice the following suggestions:

Competition Pool(s)

1. During the first 30 minutes of the warm-up period all lanes should be used for general swimming. After the first 30 minutes, one or more lanes may be designated as sprint lanes. In sprint lanes, swimmers swim in one direction only down the center of the lane. A dive off the blocks or a backstroke start is permitted only in the sprint lanes. Swimmers should leave the sprint lane when they reach the end of the pool.
2. All other lanes are for continuous swimming in a circle pattern, with swimmers staying as close to the right side of the lane as is practical. Swimmers should be considerate of others, by swimming in a speed-appropriate lane and allowing other swimmers space at the walls to turn. Lanes should be designated slow, medium, and fast. No dives, backstroke starts, or jumping entry is permitted in these lanes at any time during warm-ups. "No Diving" signs must be posted on the blocks for these lanes.
3. At no time during warm-up shall swimmers be permitted to enter any lane by jumping into the water from the sides or ends of the pool. Swimmers must enter the pool feet first in a cautious manner. Diving is permitted only from the blocks in the designated sprint lanes.
4. At the referee's discretion, swimmers may be disqualified from competition for diving into the pool during warm-up.
5. No hand paddles are allowed. Kickboards and pull buoys may be permitted.
6. Swimmers are requested to leave the pool when they have finished their warm-up to provide other swimmers an opportunity for adequate warm-up.
7. It is recommended that:
 - A. Marshals at each end of the pool monitor and enforce these safety guidelines.
 - B. An announcer facilitate the conduct of the warm-up.
 - C. A qualified lifeguard be on duty throughout the warm-up period.

Warm-Up/Warm-Down During Competition

1. The same safety regulations as stated above are enforced, except there need not be a sprint lane. However, if space permits, one sprint lane may be available and marked appropriately.
2. If there is no other warm-up/warm-down area available in pools of five lanes or more, one lane must be set aside for warm-up/warm-down during the conduct of the meet. If there is no other warm-up/warm-down area available in pools of four or fewer lanes, swimmers may 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 (article 102.4.1).
3. Swimmers must enter the pool feet first in a cautious and controlled manner. Diving shall be permitted only in the designated lanes (article 102.4.2 of the USMS rule book).