

Appendix B - Referee Guidelines for Masters Competitions

Based on material prepared by the Ontario Swimming Officials Association.

Meets sanctioned for Masters' swimming competitions in Canada have unique differences to age group, elite, high school or university competitions. They are set up, seeded differently with differences in rules and a different atmosphere. It is important that the referee and other officials make themselves aware of these differences. The following outlines issues to be aware of.

General Items

- Masters' swimming competitions in Canada are governed by the Masters Swimming Canada 2013-2017 Rule Book which can be found on the MSC website, www.mymisc.ca. There is a printed hip-pocket version available from MSC.
- Masters meets are always timed-finals. They are swum slowest to fastest by time, by time and gender or by time, age and gender, the latter usually only in championships. 400m and over and sometimes 200m events are not swum by age.
- MSC warm-up procedures (Appendix F) shall be posted on a wall in the pool area and complied with. Two marshals per course are required for general warm-up.
- Continual warm-up/cool-down must be provided if possible. One outside lane may be used during the competition for this purpose if necessary.
- There is a greater diversity of skill and understanding of rules and procedures by Masters than in SNC meets. Many Masters are there for the fun and socializing, creating a more relaxed atmosphere.
- Swimsuits at Masters competitions shall be made from textile materials with maximum body coverage as outlined in CMGR 5.
- Few Masters clubs have coaches at meets.

Notes for Pre-Meet Briefing

- Officials check-in and introduction. Make final position assignments.
- Instructions to senior officials on protocols and coverage.
- Explain seeding and check-in procedures.
- Explain DQ processing and provide DQ list and forms. Swimmers should not be informed of a DQ until the Referee has approved it.
- Explain timing system configuration and number of timers required, assign chief timer or other to carry out timers briefing.

- Provide session overview and note time line. In small meets it may be necessary to take short breaks to allow time for swimmers to recover from back to back events. In large meets it may be necessary to have dive-over starts.
- Deal with unusual circumstances or items of interest.
- Brief those judging strokes, turns and relay turnovers. This should include all strokes swum at the session, including recent rule revisions or clarifications and Masters variations (below and Appendix C).

Remind the deck officials of rule differences between SNC and MSC Rules and procedures (Appendix C). Note areas where some leniency may be applied in consideration of the swimmers age or infirmity to ensure consistency.

- Some older or infirm competitors may have difficulty getting on the block, it is appropriate to allow a deck official or timer to assist them and stand beside them so they can steady themselves until the start is given. Similar consideration is given to PARA swimmers, stroke rules can be adjusted according to their capabilities. The starter may say “Relax swimmers” instead of “Step down” in an aborted start.
- Competitors shall place at least one foot at the front of the block as soon as they get on the block. One false start is no longer allowed.
- Competitors are allowed to start from the block, from the deck or in the water where they must keep one hand on the end of the pool until the start signal is given. A backstroke start is allowed in freestyle.
- In backstroke double arm stroke, whip kick and reverse turns are allowed.
- In breaststroke a swimmer need not be fully submerged when they push off the wall on the start or turn.
- In butterfly events the breaststroke kick is allowed. They may be used interchangeably with dolphin kicks. Only a single breaststroke kick is allowed off the start, turn or between each arm stroke. A downward butterfly kick at the end of the breaststroke kick is allowed in butterfly events. A breaststroke kick may be taken before the touch or turn without a stroke as long as there is no underwater recovery. The elbows must clear the water in the recovery. A one-armed butterfly is not allowed if one has a “sore shoulder”.
- Relay swimmers are allowed to stay in the water on the completion of their leg. Inform timers and timing equipment operators on this.
- It is acceptable when there is an extremely slow swimmer in a race of 400m or more to place that swimmer in an outside lane in the first heat and then start the second heat with that lane empty prior to this swimmers completion of the race.

Records procedures

- It is meet managements responsibility to post their current provincial and national records on a wall in the pool area.

- The Meet Manager and Referee shall ensure that the pool measurement requirements of sanctioning are complied with.
- Swimmers should be asked to notify the referee if they require a time for a record or official split in an event including the first leg of a relay. The event must be completed in accordance with the rules for a split to count.
- Sign record forms for provincial or MSC Records if requested by meet management.
- For World Records there is a protocol with time lines to be followed. Ensure that Meet Management is prepared to deal with this should there be potential World record breakers at the competition. FINA now recognizes 4 x 100m relays and 4 x 200m free relays for Masters World Records.

Finally, provide meet management with the names of referees and other officials required in the provincial and national meet report.

NOTES