

USMS Open Water Swimmer Awards System

Proposed Swimmer Challenge System

This document defines a proposed *OW Swimmer Challenge System* and has been approved by the Open Water Committee for further development. Swimmer challenges will be based on participation in USMS sanctioned events. Data for the compilation of challenges will be drawn from the open water module of the USMS event results database.

The OW Challenge System is designed to provide a series of challenges that can be achieved by swimmers ranging from novice to elite. Achievement in this system is based on participation and not success in competitive races. Data used for determining challenges achieved will be drawn from the open water module of the USMS event results database.

The following eligibility guidelines apply to the challenge system:

1. Only swims achieved in USMS sanctioned open water events shall be eligible.
2. Competitive and non-competitive swims shall be eligible.
3. All eligible open water events and their swims shall be included in the system.
4. All participants are eligible for the challenge system.
5. Achievements for a given open water season will be determined by participation in an eligible event that occurs from January 1 through December 31. Achievements for events that cross year-end will be designated for the calendar year when they terminate.
6. Some challenges may be developed so that a swimmer can work toward the achievement until it is reached, rather than be restricted by the calendar year.
7. Some challenges may be developed that include data from the challenge system and the ranking system combined.

Qualifying Swim

The key element in the challenge system is the **Qualifying Swim**. A qualifying swim is one which is swum in a USMS sanctioned event by an eligible swimmer where the full distance is completed within specified time limits (if any) and without a disqualification. Each qualifying swim achieved by a swimmer will be entered into the challenge system and will serve as the basis for achievements earned.

Building Blocks for Challenges

Building blocks are the variables that will be put together to create challenge definitions. Challenges can be created using this data singly and in combination. The permutations are only limited by our imagination.

The building blocks for the challenges will be from the data collected for the event results database and may include:

1. Number of qualifying swims
2. Total participation points
3. Total miles swum
4. Distance categories
 - a. Short distance: <5K (3.1 MI),

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- b. Middle distance: $\geq 5K$ / $< 25K$ (15.5 MI),
- c. Marathon swims: $\geq 25K$
- 5. CAT1 and CAT2 Swimwear
- 6. Challenges entered by swimmers
- 7. Type of venue (ocean, lake, bay, river, reservoir, rowing basin, sea, pond, cove, lagoon, canal, channel, dam, estuary, fjord, gulf, other)
- 8. Assign points to the venues, water conditions, etc. to create other challenges
- 9. Challenge codes (represents various conditions that swimmers may encounter)

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