

Masters Swimming Association of British Columbia



Meet Manager's Guide

Initially Prepared by: Rod Carmichael & Len Martel

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Last Updated by John Holmwood: March 2, 2020

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INTRODUCTION

This document will outline some of the items to consider when a club wants to decide whether or not to host a swim meet. This document is a guide to share information for clubs, but does not cover everything that needs to be considered. It has been prepared to give a sense of what needs to be considered for clubs hosting an MSABC swim meet.

THINGS YOU NEED

The following are items you will need as a bare minimum to host a swim meet:

1. Pool and Pool time
2. Expertise
3. Sanction
4. Bodies
5. Food
6. Insurance

INITIAL DECISIONS YOUR CLUB WILL HAVE TO MAKE

The following questions are all things your club will need to consider when deciding about hosting a swim meet:

1. What type of meet you would like to host?
2. What resources and expertise your club already has?
3. What resources are available in the community?
4. Where do you want to host the meet?
5. When would be ideal time to host and is that time available?
 - a. At the pool
 - b. On the MSABC Calendar

POOL NEEDS

Your pool must have the proper amenities to run a meet. At a bare minimum the following needs to be considered:

1. Wave damping Lane Lines.
2. Starting blocks.
3. Backstroke flags
4. Proper depth
5. False start rope
6. A starting system and electronic timing is preferred, but not strictly required.

POOL TIME

Determine what the booking procedure is for your pool and what the timelines for that are. Look at the MSABC competitive calendar for the year that you would like to hold your meet and glance at past seasons to see what has happened. For instance, the MSABC Provincial Championships are usually near the end of April, and MSC Nationals are near the long weekend in May. You will find some dates are already taken by other proposed meets. MSABC has a policy that will not allow two meets in the same region less than 2 weeks apart. To put a meet on to the MSABC competition schedule, there are a few things you must do before a meet will be accepted.

You need a confirmed date with your pool.

You will need to contact the MSABC Competition Coordinator () to confirm your date. Once confirmed that the date is available, your meet will be added to the MSABC Meet schedule and marked as unsanctioned. You will need to start the sanction process (see below) . Once the Liaison Officer is satisfied with the preparation, the unsanctioned label will be removed from the Meet Schedule.

EXPERTISE

To run a meet, you will need certified officials and experienced people to deal with the entry data and the data inputs during the meet. You will be required to name a Level 4 certified referee for the sanction process while the other officials required can be brought in later.

One way to accomplish this is to contract this out to one of the local swim clubs in your community. They will have experience, officials and data experts. They are familiar with the ins and outs of running a meet and in your initial talks with them you can quickly determine what service they will provide and what you as the manager and your club will need to provide.

You also need to look at the benefit going to the club for the service. You may make a specified donation to the club or an exchange of services between the clubs. Your contact here needs to be early, and lines of communication established. The two groups can look at the meet types and determine the best fit for your situation. If it is your club's first meet, they can help with meet information requirements, lists of things needed to run a meet, timelines etc. If it is their first Masters meet, you will need to point out the differences between Masters and SNC rules and things like it takes longer for MSABC swimmers to get on the blocks and out of the pool. There is a document on the MSABC Officials web page that documents most of these differences.

MEET TYPES

Once your club has decided to host a meet, you need to determine what type of meet you wish to host. Most clubs start with a one-day meet with a schedule of events that fits the pool time that can be obtained. The events and their order are up to the club requesting the sanction.

The second option is to run a small meet with limited events and a limited time frame. All sanctioned events where times are to be official must be open to all Masters swimmers. However, it is unlikely that many swimmers from other clubs will enter a 1-hour 2 event meet on Wednesday night in a small centre. Larger places with multiple teams may find a few extras though.

A third option is to run a Meet within a Meet. This is where a Masters or age group club hosts a meet that happens within an age group meet. Two things are important here.

1. Masters heats MUST BE separate from the Age group heats; and
2. The officials apply Masters rules to those heats being run as Masters.

Our Sanction Liaison Officer can explain this concept to the head referee so all understand how it works. For this type of meet, you can offer whichever events you want, only a few for masters or everything the age group guys are doing.

SANCTION

Applying for a sanction is done through the MSABC Sanction Liaison Officer who is currently Leon Politano (leonpolitano@gmail.com). There is a [Meet Package Template](#) (available on the MSABC web site resources page) which must be completed and sent to the Sanction Liaison Officer. Without all of the requirements being met, a sanction cannot be issued. This is the first place you will need expertise. The MSABC Sanction Liaison Officer will need to know who the referee will be. The other

officials must be qualified SNC officials. The minimum number of officials is listed on the form. The SNC Warm Up rules included in the Template can be found on the [Swimming Canada website](#). The FINA Masters rules can be found on the [FINA website](#).

The meet package created from the template is an official document and some things once approved in a sanction are set in stone and cannot be changed. Events and order of events are two of these. Swimmers make choices based on swims and rest intervals; they make choices of when to arrive at the pool based on the event schedule published. After the entry deadline, some events may be empty due to lack of interest but meet managers cannot move events around to make more efficient use of time. The best way to determine the order of events is to look at the meet package from a previous meet and use it as a template for yours. If a problem arises, confirm with the Sanctioning Liaison Officer prior to making ANY changes after the sanction has been issued.

The meet package also has all of the details like date, warm up times and meet start time, place, as well as important details like cost (flat rate or by event entry fees), Instructions for meet entry, payment methods, entry deadlines (these can be extended), and relay deadlines if different from the entry deadlines (often a time on the Day of the meet to have relays to the clerk of the course). As pool and time constraints can limit entries, a statement of the maximum number of swimmers accepted for the event **must** be in the meet package. **If the maximum is reached before the entry deadline then entries can be closed.** A statement that the FINA Technical Guide is in effect for all sanctioned meets in BC needs to be included. This will include the rules for warm up. For insurance purposes, **the SNC warm up rules must be published in your package.** The options for warm up and warm down during the meet should be stated.

The types of awards are usually mentioned here as well as anything unique to the pool. i.e. Best parking, Lockers needing quarters or tokens etc.

Once the meet package is assembled and the officials are booked, forward the package to the MSABC Sanctioning Liaison Officer. The package will be reviewed for any missing pieces. Once the package is complete, a sanction number will be issued and the meet information will go on the Swim Canada website. You will need to provide a copy of the sanctioned meet package to the MSABC webmaster (MSABC website and provide the links for entries).

Once your meet is sanctioned and on the calendar, you get to pace yourself and start to organize the things that will have to be in place before the day of the meet.

Bookkeeping systems need to be in place for money and entries, people need to be found to take over key tasks, food, awards, set up/clean up, sponsorship etc. The more of this you can delegate, the better for you.

You may also want to write a blog article, or use the MSABC Face book and tweets to get the word out. Connecting with Alberta Masters and Pacific Northwest Masters never hurts.

MEET REGISTRATION

The method of submitting entries must be clearly stated in the meet package. The options here are paper, phone, by club, email or totally electronic including payment. Each entry method has advantages and drawbacks. Below we have provided information on possible types of registration methods.

CLUB ASSISTANT

MSABC has contracted with Club Assistant () to process meet entries and payments online. The link goes on the MSABC website with the meet package and the entrant then follows the steps to register

Advantages

- You are not required to do much bookkeeping as entries will not be processed without payment;
- You get a Hy-Tek Meet Manager ready entry file to import. There is no manual data entry;
- The entrants put in events and times for themselves so any data entry errors are theirs;
- Club Assist will not allow incomplete entries; and
- The fees are collected by MSABC and are forwarded to the club in one cheque for the total cost less the processing costs.

Disadvantages

- There is a small cost that must be covered in your entry fee.

Meet managers often will select a choice like Club Assistant, and then allow an option for paper or phone entries to accommodate those in the Masters community who do not have computers or skills to use the electronic option. Sometimes this involves a different entry deadline for those doing mail or phone, as you need will to do special input for these entries. Remember that Masters swimmers are extreme procrastinators.

PAPER

Advantages

- It allows those without computer skills to enter easily; and
- You have a record of what was sent.

Disadvantages

- Hold ups in the mails create havoc;
- Sometimes cheques do not come with entries; and
- Sometimes entries are lost;

PHONE

Advantages

- Easy for the person entering

Disadvantages

- You have to be around to answer the phone;
- Things get muddled in translation that are awkward to fix;
- There is no record of conversation; and
- No cheque with entry *so money collection must occur later.*

EMAIL

Advantages

- Easy for entrant, and
- There is a record of what was sent.

Disadvantages

- People have a tendency to not be as complete as needed;

- There will be entries that are sent after the deadline; and
- No cheque with entry *so money collection must occur later.*

CLUB ENTRIES

Advantages

- If the participating clubs use the Hy-Tek Team Manager software, then it is possible for clubs to create a file of entries that can be directly imported into Hy-Tek Meet Manager.

Disadvantages

- The cheque has to be sent from the club; and
- Not all clubs have this software or are able to do it.

COSTS AND ENTRY FEES

Your club will have to do a budget for the meet. Include in your calculations pool costs, award costs, officials costs (if you are bringing them in), fees you negotiate with a club for the services they will provide, food, the Club Assistant costs from MSABC, day of the meet printing costs, postage, and any other things you think will be necessary.

Once you have all of these down you need to estimate the attendance at the meet and set your entry fee. Be conservative in your attendance numbers. Too high a fee will discourage swimmers from attending where too low a fee could leave the club on the hook for a budget short fall.

Some clubs actively pursue sponsors for their meet to keep costs down. Offering advertising in the heat sheets or signage at the pool for the day are some of the ways you might appeal to sponsors in the community. The opportunities here are only limited by your creativity.

VOLUNTEERS

It takes a large number of people to make a swim meet happen. You will need the required officials, timers, food servers, runners, set up and clean-up crew, data entry people, data checkers, awards need to be labeled and distributed, heat sheets need to be produced, records need to be processed, and somebody has to keep track of the money.

Which of these things, you as the meet manager need people for, depends whether or not you are using a local club for assistance or your club is doing it on its own.

If you are responsible for timers, then you will need a minimum of 2/lane or 3/lane, and some extras for relief and record attempts.

If it is a long meet you may want two sets each doing half. Club members, who are not swimming, are a good source, children of club members who have spent hours timing at kids meets may *get* some payback here. Sometimes a local high school may have students who need community hours and will be available. Some businesses also have staff community commitments and may be available.

For set up, you need to talk to your pool. Some pools require you use their people for set up of timing equipment, lane lines, flags etc, and the cost will be in your rental contract. Other pools may expect you to provide the bodies. Expect to provide your own clean-up crew to pick up the lost and found, litter, and clear up any food you served.

Warm up Marshalls will need to be there whether supplied by you or the club helping. They will need to be in place before warm up can begin. They also need something to ID them so they have the

authority to enforce the no diving and no equipment rules. A yellow or orange safety vest is the usual practice. If they are your people, they will need to understand their tasks.

Food is normally provided for the timers and officials during the meet. You will need someone to organize this distribution and a couple of people to take it around.

Records that are set need to be processed by an official and then the paper work done to send them off to the Provincial Records person. Julie Jones is the record keeper for MSABC. The current record application form and details for forwarding them can be found on the MSABC site ().

FOOD

Your club will need to provide food for the meet. This can be purchased, or club members can provide it. It helps to have a list of things needed and how much of each so members can sign up to bring things. If you are holding a social afterwards, you will need the food for that as well. The pool may require a person with Foodsafe to be responsible here.

INSURANCE

If you are holding the meet at the same pool you train at, your club insurance through MSABC will be valid for all Masters swimmers registered with their National Swimming Organization. Our insurance covers all swimmers that belong to an association that is tied to FINA; MSABC, SNC, US Masters etc. If you were to allow swimmers who are not registered with a FINA affiliate (eg: TRIBC members who are not also with MSABC come to mind), **then the insurance for all swimmers at the meet would be void.**

If you are holding it at a different pool, you need to check with the pool management about what they require and contact MSABC to get an insurance certificate for that pool. The form needed is on the MSABC website.

As the entry deadline approaches, you will want to be keeping track of numbers and increasing advertising to get people out. Remember that master swimmers are procrastinators. You may wish to extend the registration deadline.

BEFORE THE MEET

Before the meet you need to get the entry data into whatever meet program is being used. If it is Hy-Tek, you can then post a copy of the Psych sheets and let people know they are posted. This will be posted by the MSABC webmaster ().

Some mistakes will surface here, and can be dealt with ahead of the meet. The next thing would be to run the Hy-Tek program to produce heat sheets and estimate timing of the meet. If you are using an SNC or BCSSA club for your data/computer work, have them allow extra time between heats for Masters swimmers to get on the blocks and out of the pool.

You will need to supply copies of the heat sheets to the officials and, if you are supplying heat sheets to clubs, someone has to get them printed. You can warn swimmers that there will be limited copies available at the pool, at whatever price or encourage them to download them to their phone or print their own copy before leaving for the pool.

For records, you will need a system in place that identifies potential record swims so the proper number of timers (3) can be on those lanes as they happen. If you have three timers /lane this will not be needed. The swimmers will need to know what is required of them when they are going up to swim.

You will need some stationary supplies for the day of. Pens pencils, paper clips, highlighters and whatever you feel will be necessary.

If you have an early warm up start you may want to ask the pool if you can set up the night before. You will also want to request tables for the clerk of the course and for the food service area and get them set up the morning of or the night before.

DAY OF THE MEET.

The manager needs to have the heat sheets ready for the officials, the people in place to answer questions for people and then be prepared for all the things that may go wrong. Timing pads will fail, someone will not show up, seemingly everyone will want something from you. Each problem will have a solution; The Referee and Clerk of the Course can help you deal with any issues around swimmers, protests, records and events. Your techies will probably be able to fix hardware and software problems.

You do need to track down the people who have not paid and you can use your announcer to get all relay cards to the clerk in a timely manner. You may need to organize the measuring of the pool if US or World records are set. This would only be necessary if the pool does not have a current measurement on file. Check with the pool management for laser measurements

During the meet, people who have set records need to fill out the forms. This is the record setter's responsibility. Coaches typically do it for relays. At the end of the meet, the referee will have to sign off on the records based on the information provided by the timing room people. The manager will be responsible for sending these on to the MSABC records person.

MEET RESULTS

The approved meet results need to be forwarded to two places in two different formats. The first and most time sensitive is to produce a copy of the Hy-Tek results in .pdf format. The Hy-Tek Meet Manager operator can run a file that includes splits, relay splits and Combined Team Scores using the default Hy-Tek scoring system. That file needs to be sent as soon as possible to the MSABC Webmaster () for immediate posting.

A second Hy-Tek results file needs to be sent to Swimming Canada. The result of this Export will be a standard Hy-Tek Zipped Results file that will be imported into the SNC Results Database. The zipped file contains both the "old" CL2 file format and the "new" HY3 format. The HY3 file format contains additional features including results by age group and other capabilities. The current SNC Masters Coordinator is Cynthia Pincott (masters@swimming.ca). This file needs to be submitted within a week of meet completion. **Note that from the perspective of Swimming Canada the results are not final until they are posted on the Swim Canada web site. If SNC requests any changes then the .pdf file sent to MSABC will also have to be updated.**