

FLEX MEMBERSHIP - FAQs

Q: Is an LSC required to offer the Flex membership?

A: No, it is an optional membership category. Most LSCs will likely need to approve this at an LSC House of Delegates meeting.

Q: If the LSC chooses to offer Flex, do the clubs in that LSC have to offer Flex?

A: No, it is not required that a club offer this membership category - it is optional.

Q: Is there an age restriction for Flex athletes?

A: There is legislation at the 2018 convention to limit Flex membership to athletes 18-Under. If approved, the rule would go into effect retroactively to 9/1/18. (LSCs should not process Flex applications in September for any athletes who are 19 or above.)

Q: What happens to Flex members on their 19th birthday?

A: Athletes can retain their Flex membership through the end of the year in which they turn 19.

Q: Could a club limit Flex to a certain age on their team (i.e. only 12-Unders or only 10-Unders)?

A: Yes, a club may not have space for additional swimmers, so they may determine that they only want to offer it in/for a certain age group.

Q: Can athlete members who are currently registered as year-round (Premium), renew as Flex members?

A: Yes, at the time of renewal only. We expect that there will be some current year-round (Premium) members who will take advantage of the Flex membership. The only caveat is that they must be under the age of 19.

Q: Why is USA Swimming proposing using the word "Premium" to describe year-round athletes?

A: Flex is also a year-round membership but with different membership benefits.

Q: When can an athlete upgrade from Flex to Premium?

A: A Flex member can upgrade to a Premium membership at any time during the current swim year.

Q: Can a Flex member transfer from one LSC to another LSC that does not offer Flex?

A: Yes, but only if they upgrade to Premium prior to transferring to the new LSC. LSCs that do not offer Flex are unable to accept incoming transfers from Flex members, so the change must be made by the current LSC.

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Q: What happens when a Flex member transfers to another LSC, then the Flex member upgrades to the Premium membership in the new LSC?

A: The transaction will be recorded as follows:
\$10 to old LSC on the original Flex registration
-\$10 to the new LSC on the upgrade to Premium
\$60 to the new LSC on the upgrade to Premium (the member owes the difference \$50, plus any LSC membership fees)

Q: What happens if a Flex member wants to transfer to a different club within the same LSC, but the new club does not offer Flex?

A: The Flex member must upgrade to the Premium membership prior to transferring to the new club. The new club would inform the Flex member that they don't offer Flex and they will need to contact their LSC Registration Chair to upgrade them to the Premium membership.

Q: Can a Seasonal member transfer as a Flex member and vice-versa?

A: No. A Flex member can only upgrade to Premium and pay the difference.

Q: Are there any restrictions on the number of times an athlete can switch types of membership at the start of a registration year?

A: No. If that is happening a lot we'd suggest having a talk with the team that the athlete is registering with to find out what is going on. The whole goal of Flex is to introduce the sport in a more cost-effective way for new swimmers. If someone is bouncing back and forth there is probably something else going on that needs to be addressed.

Q: What's the main difference between Seasonal and Flex memberships?

A: With Flex an athlete is only allowed to participate in two sanctioned swim meets and the membership is upgradeable to a Premium membership. A Seasonal member may participate in as many meets as they'd like within their season, and it is not upgradeable.

Q: Is there a restriction on the type of sanctioned meets a Flex member can participate in?

A: Yes; they may not swim in an LSC Championship meet or above. It is up to each LSC to determine what constitutes an LSC Championship level meet.

Q: Do approved and/or observed meets count as part of the two meets allowed for Flex members?

A: No, they can swim in unlimited approved and observed meets. They do not count against the two-meet limit; it applies to sanctioned meets only.

Q: How will the two (2) sanctioned meets that are swum by a Flex member get tracked?

A: SWIMS will keep track of the events swum by a Flex member the same as they are tracked for all other athlete membership types.

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Q: When an athlete renews as a Flex member, when does participation in their two allowed sanction meets start?

A: Theoretically, on the date they officially become registered as a Flex member. Therefore, if athletes are renewing from Premium to Flex, the LSC could wait to renew them until January 1st so that their Premium membership stays intact, allowing them to swim in as many meets as they want until they officially get renewed as Flex members for the next registration period. Ideally this is better tracked at the club level.

Q: How will you know if a Flex member has already swum in two (2) sanctioned meets?

A: When a meet recon report is generated prior to a meet, the following will be displayed:

1. All Flex members will be flagged, and you will know they are Flex members
2. If the Flex member has already swum in their two (2) sanctioned meets, and they are being entered in a third meet, a warning message will appear on the pre-meet recon. The LSC should then notify their coach, the meet host, and/or parent/guardian that they will need to upgrade to Premium membership if they plan to swim in the meet.

For this reason, we highly encourage all LSCs to run a meet recon report prior to every sanctioned meet.

Q: What happens if a meet recon report is not run and the Flex swimmer has already been entered in and swims in a third meet?

A: When loading meet times, SWIMS will do a check to determine if a Flex member has already swum in two meets. If they have, their times will be flagged and will stay in the holding tank with an error message and not be loaded into the SWIMS times database.

Q: If a Flex member swims in a third meet will the Premium membership automatically be invoked (will they automatically be upgraded to a Premium membership)?

A: No, there is not anything in SWIMS designed to automatically change someone's membership from Flex to Premium.

Q: How do Flex members impact relays?

A: If it is a sanctioned meet and a Flex member only swims a relay it would count as one of their two meets that they participated in.

Q: What happens to times flagged in the holding tank if a Flex member decides to upgrade to a Premium membership (even after they have swum in three or more meets)?

A: Once the Flex member upgrades to a Premium membership the error flag will be removed from their times and the times will be available for approval into the SWIMS times database. This feature will most likely be available in SWIMS in December. Once a year, usually in October, after the past swim year is over, uncleared/flagged/times with error messages are deleted from the times holding tank.

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Q: Are the team management software vendors doing anything to help a coach avoid entering a swimmer in more than two meets?

A: The best way for the two-meet maximum meet entry to be “policed” is on the front-end of the entry process when a coach is actually entering swimmers in a meet.

- Team Unify has said that in September they should have a warning message delivered to the user generating a meet file that includes Flex athletes with something to the effect that “your meet file contains Flex Membership swimmers who are only allowed to swim in two sanctioned meets”. This will only be a warning message and will not check against swimmers’ meet results.
 - Team Unify does plan to add the meet check feature down the road so it will notify a coach that tries to enter a Flex swimmer in more than two sanctioned meets (this could be a 2019 Team Unify feature).
 - We realize that not every team uses Team Unify software, but they are the one vendor that we have heard from that has said that they will try to help with this on the front end of the entry process. This doesn’t mean that other vendors won’t offer this option.
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Q: How does a member upgrade from Flex to Premium during the year?

A: The LSC registrar can update a Flex member to a Premium member at any time. The LSC’s transaction report/invoice will reflect the monetary transaction. The LSC will be able to keep track of this in the reports generated by SWIMS and it will also appear in the member’s registration history.

Q: How are the fees managed when a Flex member upgrades to a Premium member?

A: SWIMS will credit the Flex member the \$10 USA Swimming fee and charge the difference of the Premium (\$60 - \$10) \$50. The LSC will credit their Flex member fee (up to \$10) plus the USA Swimming fee (\$10) and charge the member the difference of the USA Swimming Premium fee of \$60 plus any LSC Premium fees. The process remains the same if the Flex member is transferring to an LSC that does not offer Flex as an option (see question on page 1); the former LSC will charge the difference.

Q: Can an LSC impose any additional administrative fees for changing a Flex member to a Premium member?

A: No, the fees that an LSC charges for a Premium membership are the only fees that can be collected. The whole intent of the Flex membership is to get “swimmers in the door” and hopefully have them upgrade to the Premium membership.