

**Michigan Swimming Draft Policy on  
Inclusion of Swimmers with a Disability  
as of 10/22/09**

**A. Inclusion of Swimmers with a Disability**

**1) General statement:**

Swimmers with a disability are highly encouraged to participate in any MS sanctioned or approved meet. "Disability" is defined as a permanent physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. It is not necessary to have an International Paralympic Committee (IPC) or any other classification. For more information, see Article 105 of the USA Swimming Rulebook and the disability swimming section of the USA Swimming website.

**2) General entry procedures:**

The swimmer or representative (coach) should contact the meet host at the time of the entry if any disability accommodations are needed. Between the time of the entry and the start of the meet, the coach, meet host and meet referee should discuss and decide any special accommodations and seeding arrangements. Entry and seeding arrangements must not have an unreasonable impact on any session timeline and must not adversely affect the opportunity for all swimmers to fairly compete. Appropriate seeding arrangements include but are not limited to: (a) swimming *out-of-event* by completing an intermediate distance of a longer race in the swimmer's actual age group, (b) swimming *out-of-age-group* with swimmers of a different age who are achieving comparable times, (c) special lane assignments (e.g., deaf swimmer near strobe light, etc.) and (d) swimming in time trials, etc.

**3) Personal assistants:**

Swimmers with a disability may need help from personal assistants who can assist with meet routines, safety provisions, personal care, etc. Personal assistants should be regarded as disability accommodations that must be approved by the meet referee. Personal assistants: (a) are not required to be members of USA/Michigan Swimming, (b) may not coach unless registered as coach members, (c) must not interfere with meet operations and (d) may be covered by certain provisions of current USA Swimming insurance (contact USA Swimming for details).

**4) Places and awards:**

Places and awards for swimmers with a disability can only be earned in the swimmer's actual event and/or age group. At the discretion of the meet host, an awards mechanism specifically designed for swimmers with a disability may be implemented.

**5) Proof of time:**

Swimmers with a disability are subject to the same proof of time requirements as any other swimmer as stated in the meet announcement or these applicable rules.

**6) Entry into regular season meets with no time standards**

Swimmers with a disability may enter any meet in which there are no time standards (for example, a "C" meet or a "senior" meet with no time standards). In this scenario, the swimmer's coach is responsible for determining readiness for a particular event and, at the direction of the meet referee, the swimmer is seeded appropriately in ways that do not adversely affect the meet timeline.

#### **7) Entry into regular season meets with time standards**

As a general rule, swimmers with a disability who have not achieved the time standard for the length of the event may enter and swim an intermediate distance of the event for which their entry does meet the qualifying standard (for example, swim a 100 or 200 free within a 400 free, meeting the 400 Free QT).

The meet host also has the discretion to waive any requirements to achieve the qualifying time for swimmers with a disability if the meet host so desires. In this circumstance the meet referee and the swimmer with a disability shall use seeding arrangements that do not adversely affect the meet timeline.

#### **8) Entry into Junior Olympics and other meets with faster than/slower than time standards**

As a general rule, swimmers with a disability may enter this type of meet without having met the minimum time standard for the event, i.e. the "faster than" qualifying standards are waived for swimmers with a disability. However, swimmers with a disability must be seeded into an event in a manner which the swimmer is not expected to exceed the "slower than" time standard for that event.

#### **9) Entry into the State Championships**

Swimmers with a disability shall compete in the appropriate meet for their actual age groups (e.g., 12 & under swimmers shall compete at the 12 & under state meets).

Swimmers with a disability may enter MS State Meets if they satisfy either of the following conditions:

- a. They have a current qualifying time for at least one event for the US Paralympic Can Am Championships. If they have at least one qualifying time, they may enter more than one event (up to the maximum allowed as stated in the meet announcement). Current qualifying times are posted at <http://usparalympics.org>. Choose the sport/swimming menu, and then choose events.
- b. They contact the MS Disability Swimming Chairperson with a request to participate and a rationale indicating ways in which they have earned the right to compete. Requests should provide contact information for a coach or official who has observed the swimmer in competition and who can attest to the swimmer's ability. If the request to compete is approved by the MS Disability Chairperson, the General Chair shall be contacted by the Disability Chair and, if the General Chair concurs, the athlete may enter the State Championships in the events specified.

Note to Board of Directors: Michigan Swimming should provide a way in which swimmers with a disability can qualify for championship meets solely through their participation in Michigan Swimming events, without reliance on non-USA Swimming classification systems and time standards. Point "b" above was written with that goal in mind. Other suggestions are welcome.

#### **10) Entry into Central Zone and sectional meets, etc.**

Please consult those meet announcements and appropriate web sites/manuals for current rules concerning entry into those meets. At the time of this writing, 4 swimmers from Michigan are allowed into the Central Zone Championships (2 from the 12 & under age group and 2 from the 13-18 age group). Swimmers with a disability who are interested in applying for the Michigan zone team should

contact the Michigan Swimming Disability Chairperson at least two months prior to the zone meet entry deadline for information.

Note to Board of Directors: The Central Zone is considering permitting LSCs to enter two swimmers with disabilities per age group (10&under, 11-12, 13-14) in the age-group zone meet. There is no current proposal for the senior zone meet. Clarification probably will not occur until the success/future of the senior zone meet has been determined. Given this information, do we want to mention specifics of the zone policy in this document?