

Underwater Society of America [USOA]
STANDARDIZED COMPETITIVE RULES

As of October 1, 2022

Revised October 7, 2023

1 SCOPE

The Standardized Competitive Rules [SCR] document specifies the regulations governing USOA Sanctioned Events.

This document replaces all previous USOA SCR's.

2 GENERAL

2.1 The Underwater Society of America (USOA), hereafter referred to as USOA, is the United States National Governing Body (NGB) for Underwater Sports.

2.1.1 USOA is a charter member of CMAS, the World Underwater Federation, which is the International Governing Body, and

2.1.2 USOA is a member of the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee/USOPC Affiliate Organization Council (AOC).

2.2 USOA sanctions events and competitions for USOA athletes which occur at the local, state, regional, national, and international levels.

2.3 USOA sanctioned events occur for sports which include (but are not limited to) Fin Swimming, Spearfishing, Underwater Hockey, Underwater Rugby and Visual.

2.4 It is the policy of the Underwater Society of America ("USOA") to promote a cooperative work and sports environment that is free of prohibited harassment, and in which there exists mutual respect for all athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, and staff regardless of sex, religion, race, or sexual orientation.

2.4.1 Any violation of the USOA Harassment policy may result in reporting to appropriate local authorities.

3 COMPETITIVE DIRECTORS & COMMITTEES

3.1 Each competitive sport governed by USOA shall have an elected Competitive Director and their committees as per USOA Bylaws.

3.2 Each Competitive Committee shall adopt required regulations specific to their competitive sport. Those rules may not contradict or supersede existing USOA or CMAS Rules and Regulations including those provided in this document.

3.2.1 A Competitive Committee may choose to establish a development fund for its sport, which may be funded by fees collected at sanctioned events. If such a fund is established its purpose, meaning, and intended use shall be specified in those sports committee rules and regulations.

4 SANCTIONED COMPETITIONS

- 4.1 The definition of a USOA sanctioned competition can be found in the 'USOA Sanctioned Events' document, found on the main USOA web site.
- 4.2 Proposals for USOA sanctioned competitions shall be submitted to the appropriate Competitive Director.
- 4.3 All proposals must meet the Sports Regulations and be in the best interest of USOA.
- 4.4 The Competitive Committee shall examine all proposals as per the process defined in the USOA Sanctioned Events Document.
- 4.5 Proposals for National competitions must, in addition to the following, meet the requirements of section 8.
- 4.6 Each request for a USOA sanction of a sports event or competition shall be accompanied by the completed USOA Sanctioned Event Application. (See Appendix A)
- 4.7 Each sport may create their own USOA Sanctioned Event Applications specific to that sport and the specific type of event. All applications must contain all the information of the USOA Sanctioned Event Applications and must be approved by the USOA Executive Committee.
- 4.8 A statement of understanding of the acceptance of complete financial responsibility for the successful conduct of the competition.
- 4.9 A proposal deposit may be required of the host to assure the competition is held in accordance with the proposal and applicable USOA rules. The deposit must be received by the USOA treasurer within 15 days of proposal acceptance.

5 GENERAL RULES

The following rules and procedures shall apply to all USOA sanctioned competitions and shall apply equally to all attendees.

- 5.1 All competitors shall display good sportsmanship during any USOA event. This includes an understanding and commitment to fair play, ethical behavior and integrity and general goodwill to all other attendees.
- 5.2 Rules, which do not conflict with USOA Rules, may be set at the discretion of the host's Competition Committee with the approval of the respective Sport Committee.
- 5.3 USOA rules and regulations may be superseded by National, regional, state, local and/or venue rules and regulations.
- 5.4 All athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, media personnel and staff, excepting facility staff, present at the competition shall sign the USOA Statement of Understanding Assumption of Risk and Release of Liability form.
 - 5.4.1 If a competitor/participant is under 18 years of age, a parent or legal guardian shall also sign the waiver.
 - 5.4.2 Underwater Hockey and rugby players must also sign the USOA Safety Guidelines.

- 5.5 USOA adheres to the USOPC, IOC and WADA guidelines regarding anti-doping policies, rules, and regulations. Infractions may be considered the reason for individual and/or team disqualification.
- 5.5.1 Exceptions may be granted with the written statement by the individual's primary care physician.
- 5.5.2 Infractions shall be brought to the attention of the Tournament Referee or Head Official.
- 5.6 A player may not breathe pure oxygen and/or oxygen enhanced air during play. A player who does so will be removed from play and not allowed to return to that match or event.
- 5.7 All athletes, coaches, and officials' equipment used during the event must meet recognized USOA and CMAS safety standards and practices.
- 5.7.1 Any event referee or event official may make a ruling on the safety of any equipment. Rulings may be appealed to the Tournament Referee or Head Official. Tournament Referee or Head Official decisions are final.
- 5.8 USOA requires all competitors at a USOA Sanctioned Competition be briefed on the rules of the competition.
- 5.8.1 The briefing may be physical and/or virtual.
- 5.8.2 The briefing may be held up to three days prior to the start of the event.
- 5.8.3 Some events may require a physical briefing just prior to the competition.
- 5.8.4 An individual roll call may be part of the briefing.
- 5.8.5 The scheduled day, time and place for the Competitors/Captains Briefing shall be announced to all representatives or attendees participating in the event at least two weeks prior to the briefing.
- 5.8.6 The specific rules and the day/time for said briefing/meeting may be further specified in the Competitive Rules for each sport.
- 5.8.7 This briefing shall include information on available safety and first aid services.
- 5.9 Competition Observers
- 5.9.1 Each sport will define regulations on how non competitors, except underwater referees, coaches, judges and/or safety divers, shall be allowed in the water during the competition.
- 5.9.2 Observers shall be allowed in special boats for open-water events.
- 5.9.3 Observers shall only be allowed outside the competition area for pool events. The exception to this is if USOA has contracted for filming or photography for the competition. Any such individual(s) must not interfere with the competition in any manner.
- 5.10 All marketing material shall include the official competition title, to include the words "sanctioned by the Underwater Society of America, a member of CMAS (The World Underwater Federation), and of the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee", the USOA address, the name of the hosting Council or Club, and the date(s) of competition.

- 5.11 Once competition activities begin, both the Competitive Director / Designee and the Tournament Organizer must agree on any changes to the location(s) and other aspects of the event as specified in the Competition proposal.

6 SAFETY

- 6.1 All safety requirements stipulated in Rules of Play per the individual sport MUST be met,
6.2 All reported incidents/accidents of any magnitude must be recorded.
6.3 The USOA Incident/Accident Form must be fully completed and returned to USOA as indicated in the instructions (see Appendix B)

7 Protest Committee

- 7.1 Each sport will provide specific rules for how a protest committee is formed and how it operates.
7.2 An official competition Protest Committee shall be selected, by the Tournament Referee or Head Official, to rule on any protests by competitors during a competition. No individual with a conflict of interest may serve on the Protest Committee.
7.3 The protest committee shall be composed of three individuals.
7.4 All members of the Protest Committee shall be announced at the Competitors/Captains Briefing and/or at the start of competition.
7.5 All protests shall be submitted to the Tournament Referee or Head Official in writing, signed by the complainant, and shall be accompanied by a \$100.00 (USD) protest fee (cash or check) which will be refunded if the protest is upheld.
7.6 All protest fees not refunded shall be submitted to the USOA Treasurer within 15 days of the end of the competition.
7.7 All protests shall be made within one hour of the incident or within one hour of completion of the event in question.
7.8 The complainant and the defendant may each have no more than two people at the protest hearing.
7.9 Upon receiving a protest, the Tournament Referee or Head Official shall convene the Protest Committee, examine the evidence available and call for a vote of the Committee.
7.10 Each Protest Committee member has one vote.
7.11 If any member of the protest committee has a conflict of interest in the specific protest, the Tournament Referee or Head Official will appoint alternate(s) to replace those members for that hearing.
7.12 All protest hearing decisions shall be made within two hours of receipt and prior to the start of any event affected by the protest.
7.13 Penalties will be defined by each Sports Committee's Rules.
7.14 All protest decisions are final.

8 COMPETITOR ELIGIBILITY

- 8.1 A competitor and/or team who does not fully comply with the following entry requirements shall not be considered to have entered or competed in the competition.
- 8.1.1 Competitors shall be USOA members in good standing prior to the start of the competition.
- 8.1.2 Competitors shall be citizens or legal residents of the United States, or its territories as specified below.
- 8.1.2.1 Underwater Hockey allows one (1) noncitizen or nonresident per team.
- 8.1.2.2 Underwater Rugby allows one (1) noncitizen or nonresidents per team.
- 8.1.3 Nonresident teams in Underwater Rugby may play at all events but may not win the National Championship.
- 8.2 All competitors shall be amateurs in the underwater sport in which they are competing. An amateur athlete is one who engages in competition solely for pleasure and the physical, mental, and social benefits derived there from; one who does not intend to earn a livelihood by their competition.
- 8.3 All competitors shall be a minimum of 13 years of age on the first day of any event.
- 8.4 No competitor may represent more than one Council, Club or Team at any given USOA event. An exception to this rule may be made by the Tournament Director for exhibition games.
- 8.5 All competitors and others involved with a USOA sanctioned competition using SCUBA or breathing compressed gas, shall be appropriately certified.
- 8.6 Each participating Council/Club shall select competitors within USOA and Sport eligibility regulations.
- 8.7 Noncitizen or Nonresident Players
- 8.7.1 Any person who is not a US Citizen or US resident at the time of the event.
- 8.7.2 Noncitizen or Nonresident Players must provide proof of current membership of their respective federation. If no such federation exists for a player, they must join USOA.
- 8.7.3 Noncitizen or Nonresident Players must sign the USOA Statement of Understanding, Assumption of Risk and Release of Liability form before attending a sanctioned event.

9 INTERNATIONAL TEAM SELECTION

Each Competitive Committee's Rules shall establish a procedure for selection of that sport's International Team(s).

- 9.1 Coaches are not permitted to be players on another team at the same competition.

10 AMENDMENTS TO THE STANDARDIZED COMPETITIVE RULES

- 10.1 USOA 's Standardized Competitive Rules may be amended as part of the normal business of the Board of Governors and/or Membership meetings.