

Splash Times

MANAGING MASTERS MEETS

Though club meets outnumber Masters meets in our area, Florida plays host to several popular competitions for adult swimmers. For example, the Rowdy Gaines Masters Classic attracts over 400 swimmers at its Jan/Feb meet. A first-time Masters meet at UNF recently played host to nearly 150 athletes, though the vast majority held both a Masters and college club membership. And on a smaller scale, the Ormond Senior Olympics is staged each Fall for about 20 swimmers. There are quite a few other Masters competitions throughout the state, with an occasional Masters Nationals taking place at large facilities in Sarasota, Fort Lauderdale and Coral Springs, some of which have hosted nearly 2,000 athletes.

Setting up and running a Masters meet in Meet Manager is similar to a club meet, with just a few differences. Masters meets are always a Timed Finals meet, with ages 18 and up and age groups in five-year increments. Actually, the youngest age group is 18-24, then 25-29, 30-34, 35-39 and so on. For relay events in SCY pools, the age of the relay is determined by the youngest member of the relay team, while in SCM and LCM meets, the relay age is determined by the cumulative age of the four swimmers. Relay age groups for SCY meets start as low as 18+, then go to 25+, 35+, 45+ and up to 95+. For meter meets, the younger possible age group is 72-99, then 100-119, 120-159, 160-199, 200-239, etc.

When setting up a Masters meet, simply choose "Masters" for the Class of the meet. Age-up date for SCY meets is the last day of the meet, where age-up for meter meets is the last day of the current year.

An important distinction is made in Seeding. Most Masters meets will seed strictly by Time (without

regard to swimmer age). However, at larger National or World Championship meets, the seeding can be by Age Group first, then Time. This will allow all or most swimmers in an age group to compete directly against one another in the same heat or heats.

Interestingly, when designating the meet as Masters, Meet Manager will automatically create the multi-age groups needed for both individual and relay events.

The entry process for Masters is different from a club meet. Usually, each Masters swimmer will enter themselves using Club Assistant, an online management tool. Like club swimmers, Masters swimmers must be registered members of their national organization, USMS, and their ID number should be listed in their Athlete screen.

Meet, National and World Records by age group can be an important part of large meets. Typically, record files for each level, both individual and relay, can be provided for import into the meet database, which can check for any records broken. For National and World records, Meet Manager will create the form that is submitted to USMS for verification and, if necessary, forwarding to World Aquatics.

Another adjustment made for Masters meet is the break between heats. For example, at the Rowdy Gaines meet, high walls warranted most swimmers exiting the pool on the side of lane 1 or lane 8 at each heat's conclusion. The value for break between heats was set for 60 seconds. For relays, swimmers most often stayed in the water, hanging on the rope away from the wall, until the race was concluded. This does result in occasional inadvertent touches on the pads, so the console worker is forced to make periodic adjustments to the lap count.