

TO: Ozark LMSC Membership
FROM: Catherine K. Kohn
DATE: November 9, 2009
RE: 2009 USMS Convention, Chicago, Illinois

My primary responsibilities as an Ozark Delegate and member of the USMS House of Delegates are to represent Ozark LMSC and the Breadbasket Zone on the USMS Rules Committee. I am an automatic voting delegate at Convention by virtue of my appointment to this important committee by the President of USMS.

The Rules Committee meets by teleconference monthly, and confers on any necessary changes to the USMS Rules each fall at Convention. The "Rules" and "Legislation" Committees alternate years of importance at Convention, otherwise the Delegates would never finish! This year was a Legislation year, which ordinarily means that The Rules Committee has a reduced workload. (Legislation involves administrative laws for USMS while "Rules" controls the technical aspects of swimming itself and competition.) Consequently, any proposed "Rules" changes must be deemed "Emergency" to be discussed by the Rules Committee in a Legislation year.

However, the Rules Committee had a very stressful Convention this year anyway because of the new FINA ban on "tech or body suits" effective January 1. We attempt to deal with rules being passed by USA Swimming at Convention as well. We normally adopt most USA Swimming rules for consistency sake, but this year, on the swimsuit issue, we chose not to do so.

As you may already know if you have children who compete, USA Swimming voted to ban all bodysuits effective October 1, 2009, even though FINA's ban does not apply until 1/1/2010. There was some considerable pressure to do the same thing for Masters competition as well, but the Rules Committee took no action to ban the suits immediately for several reasons. First of all, FINA rules pertaining to Masters Swimming must be recommended to the FINA Board by the FINA Masters Technical Committee (separate entity from the subdivision controlling elite-level swimming). The Masters Technical Committee had taken no action on the suit ban at the time of Convention, so no suit ban was in effect for Masters at that time. The USMS Rules Committee felt that it was unnecessary and ill-advised to adopt such a ban before FINA's action required it.

The FINA Masters Technical Committee did meet the last week of September and recommended to the full FINA Board that Masters be subject to the same suit ban as elite USA Swimming, but, until the full FINA Board meets again in January, they won't adopt the Masters Technical Committee's recommendation. So, for the time being, Masters suit rules differ from USA Swimming rules, and we can wear any suits that have been legal since April, including the BlueSeventy Nero and the Speedo LZR. When the full FINA Board makes a pronouncement after January 1, the USMS Rules Committee will act to implement that FINA rule as appropriate.

FINA rules govern both short-course meters and long-course meters competitions ONLY. Short-course yards competitions, which take place primarily, but not exclusively, between January 1 and May 31, are governed strictly by USMS rules because the US is the only country in the world conducting competitions in that length course. Some members of the RULES Committee felt strongly that USMS should ban bodysuits immediately and in advance of FINA's decision, like USA Swimming did. The Rules Committee did not agree, but it did conduct a "straw poll" at Convention to see whether the House of Delegates had a strong opinion on the issue. While a simple majority of 107 voted for an immediate ban for scy season upon FINA's pronouncement, a significant number (97) voted to wait until the end of the 2010 scy season, 5/31, because some significant scy meets have already been held which will figure into the 2010 season, especially the National Senior Olympic Games in California in early August. The large minority felt that it would be unfair to declare a ban in mid-season. It is my opinion that the longer the FINA decision is delayed, the more likely it will be that the ban will not go into effect until the end of scy season, May 31, 2010.

The BOTTOM LINE on the swimsuit rule for Masters is that any suit that was legal last April is still legal until further notice. **USE THOSE BODY SUITS WHILE YOU CAN!** Sometime next year, bodysuits will be illegal.

I also attended all Meetings of the House of Delegates, one Registration Committee Seminar, one Club Development and Coaching Seminar, 1 meeting of the Championship Committee and The Breadbasket Zone Committee meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Catherine K. Kohn