

APPENDIX F

CLUB OPTION AND PRIVATE INVITATION PROCEDURES

Amendments to this Appendix F are the responsibility of the International Relations Committee.

ARTICLE 1

1.01 Purpose:

A. Club Option/Private Invitation program:

1. To provide opportunities for United States athletes and coaches to experience and understand international competition.
2. To establish broad-based representation around the world, demonstrating the depth and strength of the USA Artistic Swimming (“USAAS”) program.
3. To identify and motivate developing U.S. talent through performance experience in the international competitive arena.
4. To contribute to club cohesiveness, community involvement and cultural awareness.
5. To provide opportunities for U.S. World Aquatics (“AQUA”, formerly known as the Federation Internationale de Natation “FINA”) and U.S. PanAm Aquatics (“PAQ”) Judges to gain international experience and to be evaluated for the purposes of promotion.

1.02 Eligibility:

A. Club Option program:

1. Interested clubs and/or individuals shall submit a Club Option Application to the International Relations Committee Chair by January 31st to be considered for the current year.
2. Club Option Applications may also be submitted after the deadline and will be considered under the following circumstances:
 - a. No other club or individual has applied for the same event.
 - b. If multiple clubs have applied for the same event, the Club Option Applications received by the deadline will be considered a higher priority in the selection process.
 - c. If the Club Option Application is received between 28 to 7 days prior to the first day of the interested competition, subject to a late fee. No applications will be accepted or approved if received 7 days or less prior to the first day of the interested competition.
3. Athletes participating in international programs and events must be registered as a USAAS Youth or Adult Competitive Athlete Member. Refer to [USAAS Membership and Fee Schedule](#) (Appendix C).
4. Masters Events:
 - a. Qualifications for International Masters competitions with unlimited entries:
 - (1) Must notify the International Relations Committee Chair of intent to enter by completing and returning a Club Option Application.
 - b. Qualifications for International Masters competition with limited entries:
 - (1) Competitors shall be selected by order of finish in the most recent U.S. Masters Championship (results corrected to reflect current AQUA age groups).
 - (2) Athletes who do not meet the eligibility requirements due to extenuating circumstances, may petition the International Relations

Review Subcommittee for consideration. The subcommittee's decision shall be final.

B. Private Invitation program:

1. Open to any U.S. registered club and/or individual by invitation only. Notification to the International Relations Committee Chair is required by completing the Private Invitation Application Form.

1.03 Procedure for Application and Selection:

A. Club Option program:

1. Identification of international events selected by the National Teams and those open to the Club Option program.
2. Forwarding of application form to interested clubs and/or individuals.
3. Clubs submit application forms to the International Relations Committee Chair.
4. Receipt and review of applications by the International Relations Review Subcommittee, matching applicants and their selected competitions, where possible and appropriate.
5. Notification of applicants.
6. Where funding is available, appropriate disbursement as recommended by the International Relations Review Subcommittee.
7. Assistance in preparation for international competition will be provided for selected clubs through the programs currently in effect.

B. Private Invitation program:

1. The Private Invitation program follows the Club Option program application and procedure policies and requirements.
2. In addition to the Private Invitation application, Clubs or individuals wanting to participate in a private invitation must provide the International Relations Committee Chair with a copy of the invitation from the Federation hosting the event.

1.04 Notification and Requirements:

A. Club Option/Private Invitation program:

1. The International Relations Committee Chair shall forward notification of approval to the selected clubs and/or individuals. The approval will include the requirements for participation, information to provide and forms to complete with appropriate deadlines and subsequent fees for noncompliance. Notification will include current requirements for participation to include, but not limited to the following:
 - a. All staff, including but not limited to coaches, managers, chaperones, U.S. AQUA/PAQ Judges and other adults who have regular contact with, and/or authority over, athletes while participating in the Club Option must be members of USAAS and must have a current background check and SafeSport training.
 - **Note:** Masters Athletes who are competing in a Masters club option event do not need a background check while Masters Coaches do need a background check. All Masters Athletes are required to have Safe Sport Training.
 - b. Background checks must be completed by the National Center for Safety Initiatives ("NCSI") and parental consent is required for minors under 18 years of age. Payment for the background check process will be paid for at the time of registration.
2. The International Relations Committee shall select U.S. AQUA/PAQ Judges to accompany Club Option/Private Invitation events. The selection of the U.S.

AQUA/PAQ Judges shall be based on evaluation needs for promotion, consideration of the particular club's request and availability.

- a. Judge selection for Private Invitations may be waived by the International Relations Committee Chair if not a requirement by the Host Federation.
 - b. Judge selection for Club Option events may be waived by the International Relations Committee Chair for applications with 2 or less participating athletes or if not a requirement by the Host Federation.
3. A minimum of one (1) U.S. AQUA/PAQ Judge will be selected per Club Option/Private Invitation event, if available and appropriate. Additional U.S. AQUA/PAQ Judges, if approved, may attend at their own expense or through other sources of funding. Clubs selected to attend Club Option/Private Invitation events shall be responsible for all travel expenses for their selected judge.
- **Exception:** The International Relations Committee may select multiple U.S. AQUA/PAQ judges where required such as for the PAQ Championships.
4. Multiple clubs or individuals that attend a single competition, like the AQUA Masters World Championships or PAQ Championships, may share the cost of the U.S. AQUA/PAQ Judge selected to attend. In the case of multiple clubs/individuals sharing the expenses of the selected U.S. AQUA/PAQ Judge, the clubs shall forward their proportionate share of the expenses to the National Office for distribution to the appropriate judge.
- a. Events attended by the National Team and Club Option/Private Invitation applicants may share the cost of the selected U.S. AQUA/PAQ Judge on a prorated basis per event (i.e., \$50.00 per event) or by splitting the expenses in the case of multiple judges required/selected (i.e., PAQ Championship).
 - b. For Masters events, the Masters Fund will be utilized to assist with U.S. AQUA/PAQ Judges expenses.
5. Within 30 days of the conclusion of the international competition, selected clubs/individuals and U.S. AQUA/PAQ Judges shall provide the International Relations Committee Chair with a written report on the International Competition Report Form.

1.05 Failure to Comply:

A. Club Option program:

1. A \$1,000.00 fee will be paid to USAAS and the club/individual placed in probationary status:
 - a. If the club/individual declines to participate after accepting the competition. Approval by the International Relations Review Subcommittee will be required for extenuating circumstances such as illness or injury of competitors or coaches or if the conditions significantly change.
 - b. If the NCSI Background Check (parental consent required for minors under 18 years of age), confirmation of USAAS membership and SafeSport training reports are not provided to the International Relations Committee Chair two weeks prior to attendance at the Club Option competition.
 - c. If all deadlines listed in the approval confirmation have not been met, including the final written report which must be submitted within the 30 day period following the international competition.
 - d. The club/individual will remain in probationary status until all requirements are met and the final written report is received by the International Relations Chair and the fee is paid to USAAS. Probationary status prohibits the club/individual from participating in any USAAS sanctioned events and/or international events.

2. A \$1,000.00 fee will not be applied by USAAS:
 - a. If the club/individual meets all submission deadlines as outlined in the approval confirmation, including submission of the final written report after the conclusion of the competition.
 - b. If accepted competition is canceled by Host Federation.
 - c. If area of accepted competition is declared unsafe by State Department or United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (“USOPC”) Advisory.
 - d. If 50% or more of the approved Club Option athletes have been selected for a National Team and cannot attend the Club Option event.
 - e. If there are extenuating circumstances such as illness or injury of competitors or coaches or the conditions significantly change. These types of extenuating circumstances will require approval by the International Relations Review Subcommittee.
 3. U. S. Masters clubs entering International competitions with unlimited entries shall be placed on probationary status without fee for non-compliance with the Club Option program, until all requirements are met and the final written report is received by the International Relations Chair.
- B. Private Invitation program:**
1. Same policies as the Club Option program.