

BLOCK PARTY PILOT FAQ

What is a pilot? *Pilot programs are vital testing grounds that allow organizations to evaluate the potential effectiveness of new initiatives or solutions. The Block Party pilot program is a USA Swimming Board of Directors approved initiative designed to help clubs with membership growth and retention.*

What is a Block Party meet? *Easy to run, easy to sanction, short, family-friendly one-day meet. Ideally the meet lasts less than two hours, no limit on the number of teams, just keep the session timeline short.*

Why do we need Block Party meets? *Athletes stay in the sport when they compete, right now we have a declining number of sanctioned meets and a high percentage of athletes that are not competing in USA Swimming Meets. The best way to grow is to retain current members. We also need a way to onboard families to competition, and those competitions need to be comparable to other sports first competitions- short, nearby, and easy to be a part of the process.*

What is the goal of the pilot? *The goal is to increase the number of teams offering meets, increase the overall number of meets available to families, increase the percentage of athletes participating in meets, and build best practices for growing USA Swimming opportunities through competition. The simple goal is to provide more meets, more types of meets, and increase the number of athletes competing in USA Swimming meets - help athletes and families move from Learn-to-Swim to Learn-to-Compete to Love-to-Compete.*

Who sanctions Block Party meets? *The meets are directly sanctioned by USA Swimming. Clubs can access the sanction tool through their SWIMS account, as well as the meet recon tool, and results upload for the Block Party Meets. The sanctions are for one-day meets only.*

Who can participate in Block Party meets? *Block Party meets are hosted by USA Swimming clubs and USA Swimming members in good standing may participate. Only USA Swimming members are eligible to participate.*

Can Flex and Seasonal USA Swimming members participate in Block Party meets? *Yes, and Block Party meets are exempt from the two meet Flex limit.*

How long is the Block Party pilot and how many teams are involved? *Phase 1 of the pilot is from April 2024 to September 2024 and will include approximately 30-60 teams in 15 LSCs. Phase 2 of the pilot will start October 1, 2024, and conclude September 2025 and will include approximately 10% of USA Swimming Clubs. The number of participating clubs will continue to expand as we move through the pilot period.*

How were teams selected for the pilot? *Consideration was given to the following:*

- *Team size and location*
- *Engagement and willingness to try a new approach.*
- *Ability and desire to share resources and results of their efforts.*
- *Willingness to contribute to the greater good of USA Swimming*
- *Desire to improve on-boarding of their learn to swim (LTS), pre-competitive, or new members.*

Who is USA Swimming working with to implement the pilot? *Reimagine Sports Co LLC is working in direct partnership with USA Swimming Staff to provide support, build best practices, assist in assessing the efficacy of the pilot, and onboard teams and LSCs to the opportunity provided by the program. Reimagine Sports is owned and operated by John Bradley, Julie Bachman, and Pam Lowenthal.*

Why not limit Block Party meets to new members? *We want these meets to promote a team atmosphere for both the athletes and the families - new parents can meet other parents on the team, learn volunteer roles in a low-pressure environment, kids can see older kids and get inspired, and older athletes can mentor younger teammates.*

Who can officiate Block Party meets? *Preferably USA Swimming Officials but knowing that some teams have challenges getting enough officials, those USA Swimming Non-Athlete members in good standing (Current APT and Background Check) who are certified by NFHS, Summer League Swimming, NCAA, YMCA, or current USA Swimming Coach may officiate. The requirements for the number of officials are the same as 102.10.4 for Dual, Developmental, and Intrasquad meets.*

Why do you allow non-USA Swimming Officials to officiate the meets? *Our goal is to increase the number of meets available, which may exceed the current capacity of our official pool. A sub-goal of Block Party meets is to attract and recruit more USA Swimming Officials to increase competitive opportunities.*

Do Block Party Sessions Count in OTS? *Yes, only if USA Swimming Officials are used to meet the requirements of 102.10.4. During the sanction process, the team will need to input the name of the referee for the meet to receive an OTS-eligible designation.*

Do the times count? *The times are loaded into SWIMS, but they are not eligible for OME selection, from a USA Swimming 5-Star Meet (Speedo Sectionals and above) standpoint these times will not be eligible, nor will they be eligible for NAG records. If an LSC wishes to use the times for LSC championship meet qualification and uses OME for their championship meets, they may use the existing override function.*

How much does a Block Party sanction cost? *\$175. The money will be used to cover costs associated with the technology, contract with support and program development from Reimagine Sports, and create grants for Clubs/LSCs around growth and retention utilizing Block Party meets and other methods.*

What happens to regular meets? *The goal is to create new meets/new market, not cannibalize existing two and three-day meets. With increasing pool rent, and fewer sanctioned meets, we have fewer athletes competing and lower retention rates. An increase in swimmers and providing a path from Learn-to-Compete, to Love-to-Compete, will mean more eligible swimmers to participate in traditional meets. More athletes in USA Swimming benefits clubs, the LSC, and USA Swimming.*

This is a pilot, we will learn, gather data, and share it with our community and in that spirit this FAQ will be updated as more questions are asked.