



## INLAND EMPIRE SWIMMING POLICY ON 4-HOUR RULE

As of 10/23/24

### **From USA SWIMMING:**

Rule 205.3.1F, commonly referred to as the four hour rule, was adopted by the USA Swimming House of Delegates in 1989 to ensure that swimming would be competitive with other youth sports, namely baseball and soccer, insofar as time commitment for both athletes and parents was concerned. Clearly, it was not in the best interest of our sport for developmental athletes to be at a pool all day or for the entire weekend to the exclusion of other family interests, particularly when other athletic activities could be completed in a far more reasonable time. With that by way of background, it has come to my attention that rule 205.3.1F is being improperly interpreted and enforced in some LSCs

### **RULE 205.3.1F:**

*With the exception of championship and open water meets, the program in all other age group competition shall be planned to allow the events for swimmers twelve (12) years and younger to be completed in four (4) hours or less per session (prelims, finals, timed finals). Events for the same 12 & under swimmers shall be limited to one session per day, except for prelim/final meets where events for 12 & under swimmers may be offered in both prelims and finals.*

*\*As USA SWIMMING has left this rule to the LSC the following are Inland Empire interpretation and policy\**

### **When does the 4-hour start?**

Measurement of the time duration applicable to this rule begins with the published meet start time of a session/event that offers 12U events and ends with the conclusion of the last 12U event of the day for the same gender. (IE if the first 12&U event was Boys 8&U 25 Freestyle with a published start of 8 AM the last event open for Boys 8&U would need concluded by Noon. )

### **What happens if our meet goes over?**

This must be reviewed at two different phases (Prior to the meet and during the meet):

Prior to the meet: this must be reviewed and adjustments made as outlined within the Meet Announcement due to over subscription as would need to occur for any meet that is over subscribed to bring the meet into compliance with the rule and our timelines.

During the meet: Under NO circumstances may a meet or meet session be terminated before all individual events have been concluded as a means of complying with the rule. Relays may be eliminated only if the meet announcement clearly states the conditions under which relays will be eliminated and whether relay entry fees will be refunded.

### **If we ran 12&U in am and then a 2nd session as distance with all open events would this work?**

The 2nd session if open to 12&U athletes would be subject to the 4-hour rule. The time would start with the published meet start time of a session/event that offers 12U events and ends with the conclusion of the last 12U event of the day for the same gender. (So any events offered for 12&U for the day would need to be concluded within the 4-hour time.)



**Who is checking this and how are they doing this?**

The LSC is checking with the Host Club/team to see as part of their planning this has been addressed. The Host (Entry chair, Meet Ref) should be involved to ensure that their meet complies with this rule and all rules of USA Swimming.

**Do we need to add language to our meet announcement about this and if so what do we add?**

No set language at this time has been adopted by the LSC. Meet announcement should in general outline how they will limit entries to prevent an oversubscribed meet and the process should this occur.

**If we offer open events and age events do they both need to meet this?**

Any event offered or scored as 12&U event must comply with this rule. If both open and age group events (12&U) are open to all athletes within the same day then they must be completed in compliance with the 4-hour rule. If all events were swam and scored as open this would meet the rule. If open events were limited to age 13+ they would not need to comply however if 12&U events are offered would need to comply.

**Can we offer open events and then score or award by age?**

If events are swam or scored by age group that includes any grouping of 12&U athlete the meet would need to comply with the 4-hour rule. Events that are scored multi-age are impacted by the rule if the multi-age scoring involves 12U designations, such as 11-12, 10U, 12U, etc.

**Are we required to use a specific time interval to check this?**

The LSC is not requiring this at this time. Host should as part of generally planning use appropriate time intervals for their meet/session.

**If we offer a prelim/final format for 12&U how does this rule apply?**

Each session preliminary and finals must comply individually but not additive time of both preliminary and finals if 12&U athletes are included as an age/competition class.