

APPENDIX F

CLUB OPTION, PRIVATE INVITATION AND INTERNATIONAL CLUB EXCHANGE POLICIES

Amendments to this Appendix F are the responsibility of the International Relations Committee. The International Relations Committee can modify this Appendix by recommending changes to the Board of Directors for approval.

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 U.S. Synchronized Swimming 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. FINA Judges to gain international experience and to be evaluated for the purposes of promotion.

B. International Club Exchange (ICE) program:

1. To provide opportunities for United States athletes and coaches to have a cultural and educational exchange in addition to a synchronized swimming experience by developing a “sister club” relationship with another club in a foreign country.
2. To develop and foster friendships and encourage mutual exchange of information and ideas.
3. To foster knowledge of and to experience different cultures through synchronized swimming.

1.02 Eligibility:

A. Club Option program:

1. USSS Competitive Athlete Members:

- a. Participating Solos, Duets, and Teams in the most recent U.S. National Championship shall be eligible to apply for Club Option consideration under the following classification:
 - (1) **CLASS A:** Open to clubs who have placed Solos, Duets and Teams in the top 10 in the most recent U.S. National Championship and who participate in the U.S. National Championship in the year under consideration. CLASS A competitions may be awarded outside of the top 10 only in extenuating circumstances and considering rank order of applicants.
 - (2) **CLASS B:** Open to clubs who have placed Teams ranking 11 through 15 and Solos and Duets in the Preliminaries in the most recent U.S. National Championship and who participate in the U.S. National Championship in the year under consideration. CLASS B competitions may also be awarded to competitors from the top 10 should it be deemed equitable.
- b.** Finalists from the U.S. 13-15, the U.S. Junior, the U.S. Senior/Junior Open and the U.S. Junior Olympic Championships will be considered where deemed appropriate.
- c.** Duets, Mixed Duets and Teams must retain 50% of the members qualifying.

- d. Candidates must plan to participate in the U.S. National, U.S. Junior, U.S. 13-15, the U.S. Senior/Junior Open or the U.S. Junior Olympic Championship in the season applying.
 - e. Clubs outside of the aforementioned may request permission for participation and/or special consideration from the International Relations Review Subcommittee. Such requests must be made in writing prior to January 1 of the calendar year in which consideration is sought.
2. USSS Masters Competitive Athlete Members:
- a. Qualifications for International competition with unlimited entries:
 - (1) Must notify the USSS National Office of intent to enter by completing and returning a Club Option Application.
 - b. Qualifications for International 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 FINA 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. International Club Exchange (ICE) program:**
- 1. Clubs who are interested in developing a "sister club" relationship with a club in another country.
 - 2. Clubs must be willing to travel to a foreign country and in turn host their "sister club" in their club and hometown.
- C. Private Invitation program:**
- 1. Open to any U.S. registered club and/or individual by invitation only. Notification to the International Relations Review Subcommittee Chair is required.

1.03 Procedure for Application and Selection:

- A. Club Option program:**
- 1. Identification of international events to be assigned to the National Teams' Solos, Duets, Mixed Duets and Teams and those open to the Club Option program.
 - 2. Classification of the Club Option events to determine eligibility of preliminary applicants.
 - 3. Forwarding of application form to interested clubs.
 - 4. Clubs submit application forms and a \$500.00 deposit. In addition, all adult personnel, including but not limited to coaches, managers, chaperones, U.S. FINA Judges, etc., participating in the Club Option must be members of USSS and must have a current background check and SafeSport training. If a club is unable to provide an acceptable "green light" background check report from the company approved by USSS, the cost of the additional background checks will be paid by USSS and invoiced to the club for payment. The company contracted by the USSS National Office will conduct the background checks.
 - 5. Receipt and review of applications by the International Relations Review Subcommittee, matching applicants and their selected competitions, as classified, where possible and appropriate.
 - 6. Notification of applicants.
 - 7. Where funding is available, appropriate disbursement as recommended by the International Relations Review Subcommittee.
 - 8. Assistance in preparation for international competition will be provided for selected clubs through the programs currently in effect.
- B. International Club Exchange (ICE) program:**
- 1. Identification of potential Foreign Federations whose clubs are interested in a foreign exchange program.
 - 2. Communication of program components and protocol to Foreign Federations and identification of potential foreign clubs for exchange. Identification of age group, skill level, and size of club for matchability purposes.

3. U.S. and foreign clubs submit application forms. In addition, U.S. clubs must submit current background check reports, confirmation of USSS membership and SafeSport training for all adult personnel participating in the International Club Exchange program.
4. Receipt and review of applications by the International Club Exchange Subcommittee, matching U.S. applicants to Foreign Federation clubs, where possible and appropriate.
5. Notification of applicants and communication of information to U.S. clubs and Foreign Federations of the match/selection.
6. Where funding is available from USSS, appropriate disbursement as recommended by the International Club Exchange Subcommittee.
7. Assistance in preparation for the foreign exchange, along with communication of exchange protocol and guidelines, will be provided to selected U.S. and foreign clubs.

C. Private Invitation program:

1. The Private Invitation program follows the Club Option program application and procedure policies and requirements, without the requirement of a \$500.00 deposit.
2. In addition to the Private Invitation application, Clubs or individuals wanting to participant in a private invitation must provide the International Relations Review Subcommittee Chair with a copy of the invitation from the Federation hosting the event.

1.04 Requirements:

A. Club Option/Private Invitation program:

1. The International Relations Committee shall select U.S. FINA Judges to accompany Club Option/Private Invitation events. The selection of the U.S. FINA Judges shall be based on evaluation needs for promotion, consideration of the particular club's request and availability. Note: Judge selection for Private Invitations may be waived by the International Relations Review Subcommittee Chair if not a requirement by the Host Federation.
2. One U.S. FINA Judge will be selected per Club Option/Private Invitation event, if available and appropriate. Additional U.S. FINA 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.
3. Multiple clubs that attend a single competition, like the FINA Masters World Championships, may share the cost of the U.S. FINA Judge selected to attend. In the case of multiple clubs sharing the expenses of the selected U.S. FINA Judge, the clubs shall forward their proportionate share of the expenses to the USSS National Office for distribution to the appropriate judge.
4. Within 30 days of the conclusion of the international competition, selected clubs and U.S. FINA Judges shall provide the International Relations Review Subcommittee Chair with a written report on the International Competition Report Form.

B. International Club Exchange (ICE) program:

1. U.S. clubs must follow established protocol and guidelines for the visit.
2. Within 30 days of the exchange, selected clubs shall provide the International Club Exchange Subcommittee with a written report to include, but not limited to:
 - a. Responses to the protocol visit checklist.
 - b. List of contacts and relationships developed. (Photo of officials and coaches attending is desired.)
 - c. Recommendations for future visits.
3. The International Club Exchange Subcommittee shall share information with the High Performance Director, Vice President Olympic International, Vice President Education & Certification, and other appropriate committees.

1.05 Deposit Refund Policy:

A. Club Option program:

1. The \$500.00 deposit will be refunded:
 - a. Upon submission of the final written report after the conclusion of the competition.
 - b. If accepted competition is canceled.
 - c. If area of accepted competition is declared unsafe by State Department or USOC Advisory.
 - d. If 50% or more of the Club Option athletes have been selected for a National Team and can not 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.
 - f. Minus the cost of background checks, where necessary.
2. The \$500.00 deposit will become non-refundable:
 - a. If the club declines to participate after accepting the competition.
 - b. If background check, confirmation of USSS membership and SafeSport training reports are not provided prior to attendance at the Club Option competition.
 - c. If the final written report has not been submitted within the 30 day period following the international competition.
3. Clubs entering International competitions with unlimited entries shall not be required to pay the \$500.00 deposit.

B. International Club Exchange (ICE) program:

1. No deposit required.

C. Private Invitation program:

1. No deposit required.