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New U.S. Olympic Team Trials - Swimming Format

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2020 U.S. Olympic Team Trials - Swimming Split Into Two Events

COLORADO SPRINGS, COLO. – USA Swimming, the national governing body for the sport of swimming in the United States, in partnership with the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USOPC) and the Omaha Sports Commission today announced a revised plan and schedule for the 2020 U.S. Olympic Team Trials – Swimming. The Olympic Trials will be divided into two competitions, with Wave I on June 4-7, 2021 and Wave II on June 13-20, 2021. Wave II will continue to serve as the sole qualifier for pool swimmers on the U.S. Olympic Team for the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020.

Following the extraordinary events of the COVID-19 pandemic, USA Swimming developed a revised plan to conduct Trials in a safer and healthier environment for the competitors and everyone involved. As of January 20, 2021, 1,305 (unique) athletes had qualified for the Olympic Trials since the qualifying window opened on Nov. 28, 2018. Given the current environment, and the need to address concerns related to over-crowding in the athlete areas, warm-up pool and athlete seating areas, the decision was made to divide the event into two.

“We undertook a thorough and methodical evaluation of the Trials over the last several months and factored in several critical considerations in our decision,” USA Swimming Chief Operating Officer Mike

Unger said. "Our number one priority was to find a way to host Trials in the safest possible environment while also giving the athletes the best opportunity to succeed. While selecting the Olympic Team for Tokyo is a critical goal for the Trials, it is important to note that the experience gained at Trials by some of the lower seeded athletes has historically provided a great experience for future Olympic Trials (and Games), which fueled our desire to host two events."

Josh Todd, President/Executive Director of the Omaha Sports Commission added: "The Omaha Sports Commission is excited with the new, dual event plan for Trials, which provides us with the opportunity to stage not one, but two marquee events in the city of Omaha. We are working closely with the CHI Health Center team and are committed to delivering a safe and memorable experience for every athlete coming to Omaha to chase their dreams and to compete for a spot on the U.S. Olympic Team."

A thorough evaluation of the past five Olympic Trials (2000-2016) was undertaken to review what seeds entering the Olympic Trials previously qualified for the Olympic Team, and the Olympic Trials finals. Given this and other data, USA Swimming will adjust the current Trials time standard in each event to the current 41st seeded time, and athletes who have met or bettered that time will automatically advance to Wave II of the Trials.

These newly adjusted Wave II time standards also factor in a possible modest growth to 50-60 athletes per event in the four months leading into the Olympic Trials, generating a final field of approximately 750 total athletes.

This new Wave II standard will take effect on January 28, 2021 and run through the close of qualifying for the Olympic Trials on May 30, 2021. Athletes who have already achieved the revised time standard do not have to requalify.

Athletes who qualify using the original time standards, but do not meet the Wave II time standards prior to May 30, 2021, will be invited to compete in Wave I of the Trials where they still swim for a chance to advance to Wave II by finishing first or second in the finals of their individual event.

The event Organizing Committee (OC) is working with USA Swimming National Team physicians, along with the Douglas County Health Department, CHI Health (which is providing medical services for the Trials), the venue in Omaha and the USOPC in the development of the Trials health and safety plans. The OC will also ensure that anti-COVID measures are enforced and widely available throughout the venue.

Further information regarding spectator access and tickets will be released as soon as possible. For more information, visit: www.usaswimming.org/trials.

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