

## Masters swimming competitions – A study on applying a registration fee

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### Abstract

At the conceptual level, masters swimming is systematically practiced in an organized environment, by adults as amateurs. According to the level of personal motivation, practicing swimming by adults can be conducted as: a recreational activity (leisure swimming); an activity for maintaining physical capacity (fitness); a therapeutic activity; a socializing activity; an initiation activity for adults; a competitive activity. The competitive activity values the sportive dimension of masters swimming. At a worldwide level, there are many masters swimming competitions, and the vast majority of them are organized by the masters swimming clubs. Taking into account that the financing of masters swimming events is mainly based on income from the participation fees, the choice of the participation fee is an important factor in the financial success of such an event. The purpose of this study is to analyse the financial impact determined by applying the two most common types of participation fees both on the organizing club and on the participants themselves. Furthermore, we aim to find a way of taxing participation so that one may take part in as many competitions as possible, but also to ensure the budgetary balance of the event.

**Key words:** *swimming, masters, competitions, participation fee*

### Rezumat

La nivel conceptual, înotul masters este înotul practicat în mod sistematic, într-un cadru organizat, de către adulți, ca amatori. În funcție de motivația personală, practicarea înotului de către adulți se poate desfășura ca: activitate recreativă (înotul de agrement); activitate de întreținere a capacității fizice (fitness); activitate terapeutică; activitate de socializare; activitate de inițiere în înot pentru adulți; activitate competițională. Activitatea competițională este activitatea prin care se valorifică dimensiunea sportivă a înotului masters. În lume, există foarte multe competiții de înot masters, marea lor majoritate fiind organizate de către cluburile de înot masters. Având în vedere că finanțarea evenimentelor sportive de înot masters se bazează în principal pe veniturile din taxele de participare, alegerea tipului taxei de participare este un factor important în reușita financiară a unui astfel de eveniment. Scopul acestui studiu este de a analiza impactul financiar determinat de aplicarea celor două tipuri de taxe uzuale de participare, atât asupra clubului organizator, cât și asupra participanților. De asemenea, încercăm să găsim o modalitate de taxare a participării, astfel încât aceasta să favorizeze participarea la cât mai multe probe, dar, în același timp să asigure echilibrul bugetar al evenimentului.

**Cuvinte cheie:** *înot, masters, competiții, taxa participare*

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At the conceptual level, masters swimming is systematically practiced in an organized environment, by adults as amateurs. According to the level of personal motivation, practicing swimming by adults can be conducted as: a recreational activity (leisure swimming); an activity for maintaining physical capacity (fitness); a therapeutic activity; a socializing activity; an initiation activity for adults; a competitive activity.

### General considerations

Of the diverse forms of practicing swimming, the competitive activity is the one with the highest visibility and the one which can be promoted in the easiest way. The competitive activity values the sportive dimension of masters swimming. At a worldwide level, there are many masters swimming competitions, and the vast majority of them are organized by the masters swimming clubs.

According to the number of participants, masters swimming competitions ranged from 50 to 200 participants (small local or regional competitions) up to 800 participants (major competitions), and into the ranks of the thousands in the case of European and worldwide competitions.

The financing of these events can be achieved on a number of ways such as participation fees, sponsorships, grants etc. Grants and sponsorships can represent an important part of the income for the organizing and conducting of competitions, but they are not a source of secure financing. On the other hand, the participation fees represent a secure income to the budget of the club.

The level of the participation fees are differentiated according to the importance of the competition. Thus, the participation fee can reach 20 euros / competition, at a European or World Championship. The participation fees decrease once with the diminishing of the level of the competition, reaching a cost of approximately 2 euros / competition.

As regards the type of participation fee, if in the case of major competitions and those organized by countries with a developed masters swimming movement, in which the number of participants is high, each individual competition is taxed, while in the places where masters swimming movements are underdeveloped, there are competitions in which the organizing clubs apply a participation fee per event. In Romania, together with the increase in the number of masters swimming clubs and the acknowledgement of masters swimming as a separate category within the national federation, the

number of masters swimming competitions also increased and are concentrated in a calendar of competitions.

The Masters Swimming Club of Timisoara (CIMT), established in 2007, is the oldest club of this type in Romania, and organizes masters swimming contests of a local or regional level on a yearly basis, addressed to all swimming lovers, regardless of the level of technical and physical training. Thus, in 2014, the calendar of competitions set by CIMT comprises of five competitions: 24AquaMasters, the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, the Family Cup, the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, the Masters Cup, the 7<sup>th</sup> edition, the crossing of Lake Surduc, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, and the DKMT Cup, 6<sup>th</sup> edition. Out of the five competitions organized by CIMT, the taxation per event is applied in the case of 24AquaMasters, the crossing of Lake Surduc and, beginning with 2013, the DKMT Cup, while a taxation per challenge is applied in the case of the Masters Cup, and participating in the Family Cup is free of charge.

### The Issue

Taking into account that the financing of masters swimming events is mainly based on income from the participation fees, the choice of the participation fee is an important factor in the financial success of such an event.

The purpose of this study is to analyse the financial impact determined by applying the two most common types of participation fees both on the organizing club and on the participants themselves. Furthermore, we aim to find a way of taxing participation so that one may take part in as many competitions as possible, but also to ensure the budgetary balance of the event.

In the practice of organizing sports events of masters swimming, there are three types of events, according to the type of participation fee:

- Events in which the individual challenge is taxed;
- Events in which the event itself is taxed;
- Events in which participation is free of charge.

In the present study, we will analyse the events that are taxed per individual challenge and per event because we consider that the events in which participation is free of charge are not eligible from a financial point of view for the Masters Swimming Club of Timisoara.

**Events in which the individual challenge is taxed**

From the point of view of the organising club, the participation fee per individual challenge is the best way of ensuring a budgetary comfort, as the income from the participation tax will depend on the number of challenges that each contestant will take part in, and the balance between the income from the participation fees and the direct spending on participants (the number of medals granted) is positive.

The level of income that comes from the participation fee is calculated, in this case, according to the formula:

$$Vt = NxTxNp, \text{ in which}$$

Vt – income from participation fees  
N – number of participants  
T – participation fee per challenge  
Np – number of challenges tackled

The level of direct spending is calculated according to the formula:

$$Cd = NmxCm, \text{ in which}$$

Cd – direct spending  
Nm – number of medals granted  
Cm – cost / medal

The average number of medals granted according to the total number of challenges in the events taxed per individual challenge organized by the Masters Swimming Club of Timisoara is situated around 95%. From the point of view of the participant, a participation fee per challenge financially limits taking part in a higher number of challenges. The average number of challenges per competitor in the contests organised by the Masters Swimming Club of Timisoara, in which the participation fee per challenge was applied, oscillated between 2 challenges per contestant.

**Events in which the event itself is taxed**

In the case of this type of participation fee, the income will depend on the number of persons taking part in the event; in this way, the higher the number

of participants, the higher the income from the participation fees. The balance between the income from the participation fee and the direct expenses with the participants (the number of medals granted) can be negative in certain situations.

The level of income stemming from the participation fee is calculated, in this case, as follows:

$$Vt = NxT, \text{ in which}$$

Vt – income from the participation fee  
N – number of participants  
T – participation fee per event

The level of direct spending is calculated according to the formula:

$$Cd = NmxCm, \text{ in which}$$

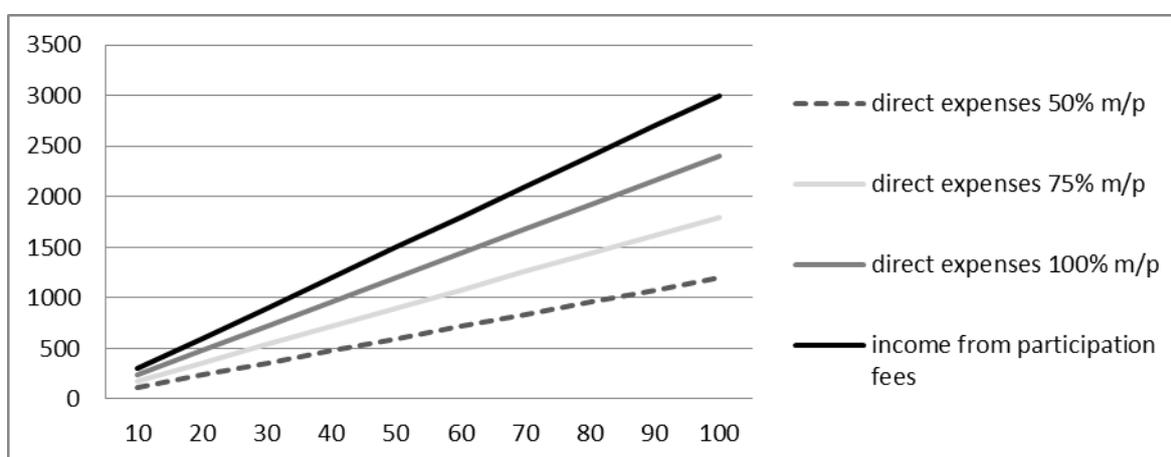
Cd – direct spending  
Nm – number of medals granted  
Cm – cost per medal

As regards the number of participants, a participation fee per event encourages taking part in a higher number of challenges, without any financial limitations. In the events organized by the Masters Swimming Club of Timisoara, the average number of challenges per contestants oscillated around 4 challenges / event, almost double compared to the events in which the participation fee is charged per individual challenge.

For exemplification, we analyse an event of masters swimming with a direct cost of 8 lei / medal granted, having as variables the number of participants and the percentage average of the proportion between the total number of medals granted and the total number of challenges. If we presume that we have an average participation of 3 challenges per contestant, we will have the same income and expenses in both cases of applying the two types of taxes per participation (10 lei/challenge or 30 lei/event) (Table 1). The values of the direct spending and income are depicted in Figure 1, where the variables are in the number of participants and the percentage of medals granted weighed against the total number of challenges.

**Table 1.** Direct expenses and income from participation fees

No. participants	Direct expenses (lei) 50% medals/starts	Direct expenses (lei) 75% medals/starts	Direct expenses (lei) 100% medals/starts	Income (lei)
10	120	180	240	300
20	240	360	480	600
30	360	540	720	900
40	480	720	960	1200
50	600	900	1200	1500
60	720	1080	1440	1800
70	840	1260	1680	2100
80	960	1440	1920	2400
90	1080	1620	2160	2700
100	1200	1800	2400	3000



**Figure 1.** Direct income and expenses according to the number of participants

**Events with a combined participation fee**

To combine the advantages of the two variants of applying the participation fee and to diminish their disadvantages, we propose a combined variant of applying the participation fee: in order to favour the participation in a high number of challenges and, at the same time, to limit the potential financial disadvantages, we propose to convert the participation fee per event into a fee applied on a limited number of challenges.

For the supplementary challenges, a participation fee per challenge will be applied, thus cancelling the financial discomfort that might be created through the participation in a high number of challenges.

The level of income that stem from the participation fee is calculated, in this case, as follows:

$$Vt = NxTxNpsxTps, \text{ in which}$$

Vt – income from participation fee

N – number of participants

T – participation fee per number of challenges

Nps – number of supplementary challenges

Tps – fee per supplementary challenge

The level of direct spending is calculated as follows:

$$Cd = NmxCm, \text{ in which}$$

Cd – direct spending

Nm – number of medals granted

Cm – cost / medal

Exemplifying, we reassume the analysis of the event depicted above, 10 challenges per event, a variable number of participants, 8 lei a direct cost per each granted medal. In the case of applying the

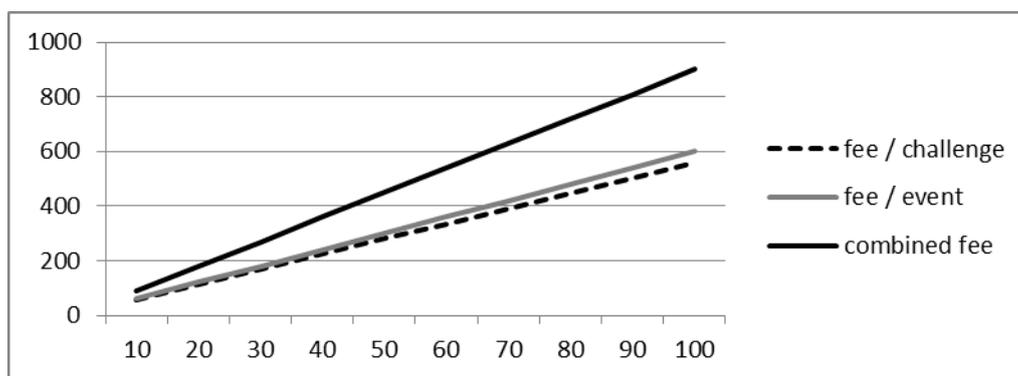
participation fee per challenge (10 lei/challenge), we will consider that the average number of challenges is 2/participant, while the balance between the number of medals granted and the number of starts being approximately 90%.

In the case of applying the fee per event (30 lei), we will consider that the average number of challenges is 4 / participant, while the balance between the

number of medals granted and the number of starts being around 75%. For the variant of applying the combined participation fee (30 lei for 5 challenges + 10 lei for each supplementary challenge), we assume that the average number of challenges is 4/participant, while 30% of participants opt for a supplementary challenge.

**Table 2.** Comparative overview with direct income and expenses, according to the type of participation fee

	Participation fee / challenge (lei)			Participation fee / event (lei)			Combined participation fee (lei)		
	V	C	V-C	V	C	V-C	V	C	V-C
10	200	144	56	300	240	60	330	240	90
20	400	288	112	600	480	120	660	480	180
30	600	432	168	900	720	180	990	720	270
40	800	576	224	1200	960	240	1320	960	360
50	1000	720	280	1500	1200	300	1650	1200	450
60	1200	864	336	1800	1440	360	1980	1440	540
70	1400	1008	392	2100	1680	420	2310	1680	630
80	1600	1152	448	2400	1920	480	2640	1920	720
90	1800	1296	504	2700	2160	540	2970	2160	810
100	2000	1440	560	3000	2400	600	3300	2400	900



**Figure 2.** Difference between income from participation fees and direct expenses, according to the type of participation fee

By analysing the results obtained (Table 2, Figure 2), one can notice that the profit obtained by the difference between the income obtained from participation fees and direct spending is higher in the case of applying the combined fee, which rises with the number of participants. In the case in which 100 competitors take part, the profit obtained is 560 lei in the case of applying a participation fee / event, and 900 lei (approximately 53% higher as opposed to the case when the participation fee per challenge is applied, and 50% higher as opposed to the case when the participation fee per event is applied).

**Conclusions**

The participation fee per challenge ensures a financial comfort to the organizing clubs, as the balance between the direct spending on participants and the income obtained from the participation fees is positive. This type of taxation does not favour taking part is as many challenges as possible because the participation costs rise with the number of challenges.

The participation fee per event favours participation in a high number of challenges, and applying it can be disadvantageous for the organizing club because, in certain conditions, the balance between the

income obtained from the participation fee and the direct spending on participants can be negative.

The combined participation fee brings together the advantages of a participation fee per challenge and the participation fee per event, favouring participation and ensuring a positive balance between the income obtained from the participation fees and the direct spending on participants.

### **Recommendations**

We recommend organizing clubs of masters swimming competitions to adopt a certain type of registration fee, according to the type of competition, its level, and interest for participation. Thus, if the competition is important and the interest for taking part in it is high, we recommend the use of the participation fee per challenge. If the interest for the

competition is lower and if one aims to stimulate participation, we recommend the application of the participation fee per event. If the organizing club wants to stimulate both participation and a positive balance between the income obtained from participation fees and direct expenses on participants, the employment of a combined participation fee is recommended.

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