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## Officials' Newsletter: August 2023

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USA Swimming Officials <Officials@mail.usaswimming.org>

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### Greetings from the Chair

Another swim year has come and gone. We are now less than 300 days from the biggest swimming event to be held on American soil: The 2024 U.S. Olympic Team Trials - Swimming in Indianapolis. Currently, just over 700 swimmers have qualified for this momentous event. Thank you to all for your

time and efforts this summer to pull off the hundreds of swims at LSC, Sectional, Futures, Summer Juniors and TYR Pro Championships meets over the past few weeks. Your professionalism and “can-do” spirit are so very important and essential to making these events successful. I know I have learned a lot over the summer about how to be the best official I can be, and hopefully you were all able to take advantage of those learning opportunities as they arose.

As we take a minute to breathe and prepare for the run-up to Trials, let’s remember that the first steps toward an event like that begin at the grassroots level and at meets we do almost every weekend. We never know when that 7-year-old swimming a meet for the first time at one of our meets will eventually become one of those athletes we would be rooting for at a future Olympics or World Championships. But it starts at these meets and it starts with you. Thank you all for helping these athletes take the first steps on their journey to whatever they want to achieve. They cannot do it without your time and talents!

Matt Wilson

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## Announcements

- Registration: Membership renewal for the 2023-24 season will be available September 1, 2023. Please renew your membership, including any LSC requirements, to ensure you can be validated in OTS and can be added to 2024 meets.
- Safe Sport Training: presented by USA Swimming Safe Sport Staff and a fellow official to cover your unique role as an official. During the training, we will discuss topics such as reporting, official-to-official conflict, professionalism, conflict-resolution tactics and responding to concerns. THIS IS AN ADDITIONAL TRAINING and does NOT replace your annual required Safe Sport training.
  - Two dates and times, but the content will be the same:
    - Saturday, September 9 at 5:00-6:00 p.m. EST ([Registration link](#))
    - Saturday September 30 at 12:30-1:30 p.m. EST ([Registration link](#))
- USA Swimming’s Annual Business Meeting will be held virtually and in Colorado Springs Sept 21-23. For those participating in this event, thank you!
- Next Officials Chair Quarterly call will be October 4. Please forward agenda items or discussion points through your Officials Chair.
- Applications/Meets -
  - Winter Meets (Toyota U.S. Open and both Speedo Winter Juniors) are full and the applications have been removed.
  - 2024 TYR Pro Swim Series Meets (all applications are posted):
    - Knoxville - January 10-13, 2024. MR - Lucy Duncan
    - Westmont - March 6-9, 2024. MR - Dana Covington
    - San Antonio - April 10-13, 2024. MR - Scott Powell
- National Certifications in OTS are pre-9-1-2022. The spreadsheet on the Officials/National Certification and Education webpage is the only current resource and is being updated at the beginning of each month to reflect changes. This will continue until further notice.

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## Hot August Nights - NOC Educational Series

This summer's five-part, Zoom-based series focused on the role of the Meet Referee. Three of the earlier sessions were specifically designed for newer meet referees as identified by their Officials Chair. The fourth session, “Worlds Colliding - Meet Referees and Evaluators - Who’s in Charge Around Here?” was designed for all N3 evaluators as well as experienced Meet Referees. The final session is for ALL Meet Referees. Links for the sessions were distributed to all LSC OCs, and were different for each session.

All sessions were recorded. Links to the recordings were distributed to every LSC Officials Chair and “Worlds Colliding” was sent to all N3 evaluators as well.

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# Our Kids Initiative - Jay Thomas, secretary, World Aquatics Technical Swimming Committee

Our Kids Initiative is a cooperative effort of the leadership from the member organizations of the 11 governing bodies and associations to “Putting ALL of Our Kids First.” Its purpose is to find ways for competition to be as fair as possible regardless of the organization the swimmer is representing. Additionally, members are working together to find ways to help each other in making swimming in the U.S. the best activity for all Americans.

Now in its 24th year, the program was formed in 2000 in an effort to bring leaders together from all swimming organizations to discuss what could be done to help swimmers in the United States have the ability to compete without fear of being disqualified, regardless of whether the competition was held under World Aquatics-AQUA (formerly FINA), NCAA, NFHS, USA-S, USMS or YMCA rules.

On August 20, 2023 the committee members of ASCA, CSCAA, CSOA, AQUA, NCAA, NFHS, USA Swimming, USMS, and the YMCA met virtually via zoom to continue collaborating regarding recent rules changes by World Aquatics. The different rule-making bodies have different processes and timeframes for adopting and implementing new rules. The reasons for the different implementation schedules are timing of Championship-level meets and coaches, athletes and official education.

The meeting was also an opportunity to discuss safety and training initiatives by each group and how those resources can be shared. The meeting was a resounding success and resulted in the continued commitment to work together for the betterment of the sport for all of our athletes.

Many officials work across multiple organizations. One challenge officials have when they are working meets across different rule-making bodies is maintaining a keen understanding of the differences in rules among the sanctioning organizations. OKI maintains a “Rules Differences” and “Water Depth Differences” summary chart to assist officials with that challenge. These documents can be found [here](http://www.ourkidsinitiative.org) on the OKI website at [www.ourkidsinitiative.org](http://www.ourkidsinitiative.org) under the “Rules” tab. Please take advantage of this tremendous resource.

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## Golden Goggles Auction

The USA Swimming Foundation once again will be hosting an online and live auction around this year’s 20th Anniversary [Golden Goggle Awards Ceremony](#), with proceeds benefiting our mission to Save Lives, Build Champions and Impact Communities!

We are looking for unique items and packages that will appeal to our membership and prospective bidders and would appreciate in-kind donations from you, our esteemed Officials!

No item is too small!

Here are some examples:

- Entertainment Tickets – sports, music, shows
- Vacations – homes, hotels, airline tickets, activities
- Signed Memorabilia
- Art
- Gift Baskets

All donations are tax deductible.

If you have an idea or would like to donate, please contact [Jill Johnson](#) by October 13.

Thank you for all that you do for this sport and the [USA Swimming Foundation](#).

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## World Swimming Championships – Fukuoka, Japan

### Lisa Vetterlein

Subarashii keiken deshita (roughly translated, it was a wonderful experience). Gomen nasai, if the prior statement does not translate well.

The Japanese are so gracious and hospitable, offering such a welcoming culture. I admit, I will likely be bowing to people for months!

What an honor to be at this meet, and what a group of global officials made up the team. So many countries were represented. So many languages were spoken. I will add that I am pleased with English being the spoken language of World Aquatics, but that doesn't mean that the translator apps were not out! That alone makes for fun, yet trying, conversations.

Meeting like-minded officials from around the globe, there is a camaraderie that exists.

### Jamie Cahn

I can't express how honored I was to serve as an International Technical Official. In my wildest dreams, I never expected the opportunity. I can report that I certainly wasn't disappointed.

Upon arrival in Fukuoka, I met up with Lisa Vetterlein, who was selected as a starter, and the other ITOs. The first piece of advice from Lisa was to immediately go to uniforming. Our prelims uniform was a white polo shirt over khaki pants, with black pants, jacket, white shirt and blue tie for Finals. As some of you observed, the female officials wore blue pants for Prelims. The uniform tends to run small and unfortunately my experience wasn't an exception.

Day two was World Aquatics school. Craig Hunter, the chairperson of the Technical Swimming Committee, did an outstanding job of setting the tone. This clinic was like clinics that we run and, in this case, even used our stroke videos. Who would have thought that we would be watching Dan McAllen while preparing for this championship meet in Japan? Our mentors have prepared us well to officiate at any level. Instead of Chief Judges, World Aquatics utilizes Chief Inspector of Turns and a Control Room Supervisor instead of an Administrative Referee. The Technical Committee performs many of the administrative functions.

The World Aquatics Festival was held in two seaport terminals that were converted to pool venues. One housed water polo while the other housed the competition pool and a semi-attached warm up pool. Stands, platforms and pools were all constructed specifically for this festival. The look and feel of the venue felt very much like our National Championships and Olympic Trials.

World Aquatics employed underwater cameras to initiate calls, like we used at the Phillips 66 National Championships. Each official covered two lanes, just as we have done, with calls being reviewed in the same manner as we implemented.

Jay Thomas, Secretary of the Technical Swimming Committee, assigned officials. I worked as a turn judge, stroke judge, CIT, video room official and assisted the Control Room supervisor. Lisa was assigned as the Men's starter. Assignments for prelims carried through to finals. Jay, although extremely busy with his responsibilities, always made time to speak to us and answer questions.

For both of us, the highlight of the meet was the opportunity to work with officials from throughout the world. Even though English is the language used on the deck, communication could be challenging. Despite that hurdle, it was truly a cohesive team that focused on providing the best competition for the athletes.

Between sessions, many of the officials went into Fukuoka for lunch, shopping and touring. This was truly the best opportunity for the officials to spend time together and learn of each others' experiences. I look forward to staying in touch with many that we worked with.

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## **Congratulations to These Officials Who Served at Their First National Meet Recently**

*Note - We apologize for any omissions or errors.*

### TYR Pro Championships

Anqi Wang - Pacific Swimming  
Hillel Weber - Southern California  
Kyrstal Van Buren - Southern California  
Peter Salvadori - Indiana Swimming

### Speedo Junior Nationals

Jim Bey - Indiana Swimming  
William Judd - Pacific Swimming  
John Rojewski - Arizona Swimming  
Andreas Wilderer - Colorado Swimming

### **Congratulations and thanks to the following USA Swimming Officials that Represented USA Swimming in International Competition:**

### World Aquatics Championships

Lisa Vetterlein - Starter  
Jamie Cahn - Official

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## Officials Excellence Award

*Rebecca Binder, MN Swimming*

I am pleased to nominate Rebecca Binder (Minnesota Swimming) for the Officials' Excellence Award. Rebecca is a selfless volunteer who is on deck at local meets most weekends. Rebecca is certified in all positions, Stroke and Turn through Meet Referee. Rebecca most frequently volunteers as an Administrative Referee, and has trained countless Administrative Referees and Officials in her detail-oriented, communication-focused and swimmer-friendly approach to this position.

Rebecca also has frequently served as a Meet Referee for multiple LSC championship meets and prelim/final meets since 2019. While keeping the focus of the meet on the coaches and athletes, Rebecca has gently encouraged officials to try new positions and work towards national certifications, which has increased the number of quality officials in the Minnesota LSC. Rebecca has also been an active Minnesota Swimming Board member, serving as the Administrative Vice Chair and Safe Sport Chair. Rebecca has also represented the LSC by presenting educational sessions on Safe Sport to athletes, parents and coaches. As a Board member, Rebecca has worked to update Minnesota Swimming's policies to make them clear and consistent with current practices. At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Rebecca helped to pilot clinics for new Stroke and Turn Officials. Rebecca is most deserving of this award for her athlete-centered approach to officiating.

Congratulations, Rebecca!