

CLERK OF COURSE

The Clerk of Course shall be provided an clearly marked area where all swimmers must report as soon as their event is called for seeding. He shall be provided with a list of the names of all swimmers in all events, including relay swimmers. The Clerk of Course shall notify the swimmers to wait behind or next to the starting position until the Referee signals them to take their places; if they leave the area, it is their responsibility to return in time for their heat.

Scratches occurring after the heat sheet is printed shall be reported to the Clerk of Course. The Clerk of Course, in turn, must notify the Referee and the scoring desk, in writing, of the failure of any swimmer to report.

Program Changes. The order of events as laid out in the official program **cannot** be changed and the arrangement of heats in any event cannot be added to or altered, except by authority of the Referee, and then **ONLY** to consolidate heats. At the Referee's discretion, individual events may be combined by age, sex, distance, and/or stroke, provided there is at least one empty lane between any such combination.

Consolidation.

1. When consolidating heats, the contestants shall be assigned to lanes in the following descending order of achieved (or qualifying) times:
 - a. 5-lane pool: lanes 3-4-2-5-1
 - b. 6-lane pool: lanes 3-4-2-5-1-6
 - c. 7-lane pool: lanes 4-5-3-6-2-7-1
 - d. 8-lane pool: lanes 4-5-3-6-2-7-1-8
 - e. 9-lane pool: lanes 5-6-4-7-3-8-6-4-1
 - f. 10-lane pool: lanes 5-6-4-7-3-8-6-4-1- 10

(* NOTE: Lane 1 shall be on the swimmer's right when he faces the turning end of the pool. When starting from the turning end, Lane 1 will be on the swimmer's left as he faces the pool; however, the seeding remains as shown above.)

2. Swimmers with identical times should be assigned a lane determined by draw.

3. Swimmers with no times shall be considered the slowest and placed at the end of the list by draw.

Seeding.

"Seeding" is the assignment of a heat and lane to each swimmer or relay according to submitted entry time. It can be done either prior to the meet (pre-seeding) or during the meet (deck seeding).

1. **Pre-seeding.** Seeding is often done in advance with the heats shown on a program ("heat sheet"). In Potomac Valley (PVS), our computer-supported meets are pre-seeded. This is the responsibility of the Meet Committee or the Meet Manager. All that is left on the day of the meet is to pass out the cards (or computer sheets). In PVS, reseeding is normally unwarranted for events that are shorter than 200 yards/meters. For these and longer events, the meet may require "Positive check-in," and an official, serving as the Clerk of Course, sends the names to the computer operator for automated reseeding after sign-in for the event is closed.

2. **Deck Seeding.** The seeding is done *during* the meet. Swimmers "check in," and only those present are given heat and lane assignments. If many "scratches" is expected, deck seeding is the most efficient and practical means of running the meet. In PVS, "Mini" meets as well as some others are occasionally deck seeded.

Types of Meets.

Timed Finals

Each event is complete after all its heats are over. All entries for the event are placed in order from the **slowest** to the **fastest**. (An exception is the 1000/1650 yard and 800/1500 meter freestyle events—the normal order of heats may be reversed by swimming the fastest heats first and alternating

women's and men's heats. The meet announcement must state the order of heats for these events.)

The number of heats is then determined (divide the total number of entries by the total number of competitive lanes available at one time). Initially *no* heat should have **fewer than three swimmers**. Scratches *may* reduce this number to less than three!)

If there is more than one heat, the **last** heat consists of the **fastest** swimmers, then the next fastest, etc. Thus, each event starts with the slowest and ends with the fastest swimmers.

Within each heat a specific method is used to assign lanes. Lanes are assigned with the "center" going to the fastest swimmers and working outward to the slowest in each heat. Lanes 3, 4, or 5 respectively are the center lanes in pools having 6, 8, or 10 lanes. The swimmer having the second fastest time is to be placed in the lane to the left, then alternate the others to the right and left in accordance with the submitted times, as shown on page 1.

Prelims and Finals

Also referred to, popularly, as "trials and finals" meets, competitors must swim in a "preliminary" heat of an event to qualify for, and be seeded in, the "finals" of the same event later in the meet. To seed the "prelims" if there is to be more than one heat, competitors for the final three heats are arranged by "circle seeding."

The swimmer with the fastest entry time is assigned the center lane (lane 4 in an 8-lane pool) in the final heat; the second fastest entrant is assigned the center lane in the next to last heat; the third fastest entrant is assigned the center lane in the third from last heat. The fourth fastest entrant is assigned to the lane left of the center lane (lane 5 in an 8-lane pool) of the final heat; fifth fastest to the lane left of the center lane in the second from the last heat; etc.

After all competitors have been seeded in the final three heats, the remaining swimmers are seeded in the same manner as that used for Timed Finals. Thus, the heat preceding the last three heats shall consist of the

next fastest of the remaining swimmers. Lanes are assigned in descending order of submitted times as with a timed final meet.

Relays.

Relay teams may NOT compete unattached. They must be composed of members of the same club, school, or organization which is a member of USA Swimming. Relays may be conducted on as timed final or with preliminaries and finals.

Timed final relays should be swum in seeded heats, with not more than two heats (which shall be the fastest heats) conducted during the final session of the day in meets holding pre-liminaries and finals, and the balance of relay heats will be conducted during the preliminaries. Relays conducted as preliminaries and finals shall be seeded in the same manner as individual events.

Clubs entering two or more relay teams in an event shall designate them on the entry blank as Team A, Team B, etc. The best time of each relay team shall be entered on the entry for seeding purposes. No change in time is permitted.

First and last names of swimmers eligible to compete in relay events, and their ages, shall be entered on the entry form. There is no limit to the number of eligible swimmers who may be listed. Their order of swimming shall be declared to the Clerk of Course (if used) or to the Head Lane Timer immediately prior to the start of the relay heat. No changes will be permitted thereafter.

The composition of a relay team may be changed between prelims and finals, but all members competing on a relay team disqualified during prelims may not compete further in that event.

The meet announcement shall specify check-in and scratch procedures for individual and relay events and penalties for violations of those procedures. Each contestant shall know the meet starting time and shall report to the proper authorities promptly upon call.

PREPARATION

Obtain official meet program, entry cards (when applicable), and team Master Entry Lists from the Meet Director (Meet Manager). Identify the Clerk of Course area (and Ready Area, if separate) with a sign. Ready area must also command a clear view of the starting area. Easy access to the blocks avoids delays

Set up working table and chairs. Set up communications system for announcements, either by bullhorns or runners. Bring shoe box to hold entry cards, paper clips, pencils, rubber bands, etc.

For deck seeding, select an area free from congestion which swimmers can reach without interfering with the officials. It is helpful to have a bench or a row of chairs for each heat, with the first row for the first heat and so on. Place the swimmers in the order of their lane assignments. As each heat is called, all the contestants move forward one row. Before the end of one event, the entries in the next event have started filling in the back rows.

Call for scratches approximately 20 minutes before start of meet. Scratch names from program and remove entry cards (if have). Call for first event 10 minutes before scheduled starting time. Alert Announcer to call up events periodically throughout the meet or make other arrangements with the Referee, but ensure some system is established beforehand. Request the relay cards from the coaches at least one-half hour prior to the event.

ASSEMBLING SWIMMERS

Once they have reported, contestants must remain in the assigned area unless excused by the Clerk of Course. (NOTE: Do NOT let them go back and wait with their coach! That's a good way to lose control.) Keep **at least** one event ahead at all times.

If a swimmer does not report promptly after the final call, consider the contestant scratched. (You must know what event is in the water when you make your final call. Contestants in the water or still waiting to swim in a preceding event cannot report for a final call

until they complete their earlier event. This often arises in the Mini meets.) Don't delay the meet waiting for contestants to report, unless so directed by the Referee.

Be pleasant with swimmers but keep them *quiet* and controlled. Too much noise will interfere with your calling out swimmers' names.

As you finish seeding an event and send the first heat to the Ready Area, send a note/card to the Starter or Referee with the number of heats in that event and how many swimmers there are in heats that are not full (e.g., "Event 6 has 7 heats. Heat 1 = 3 swimmers; Heat 2 = 5 swimmers " or "Event 4 = 5 heats, all full.")

The Clerk of Course may not reseed events, only combine heats if too many scratches have been turned in, and then only with the Referee's approval.

Send the next heat to the starting area when the preceding heat has started. In long events, send the heat when the swimmers in the water are on the last leg of the race. Keep a constant, flow of swimmers moving to the starting area. An assistant can take the heats forward to the Ready Area and can keep you advised on how the meet is progressing. The assistant may also need helpers to take the swimmers, particularly the younger ones, to the blocks.

CONCLUSION

This is pleasant work, getting to know the swimmers, but it can also be tiring. Be relaxed as possible and pleasant with everyone, but firm and "on your toes." The result will be an efficient and happy meet.