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USA Swimming Officials Newsletter

February 2017

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Follow us and spread your love of officiating with #OfficiallyAwesome!

**MAXWELL
EXCELLENCE AWARD**

Please continue to send in your Maxwell Excellence Awards Nominations. The form can be found in the recognition section of the Officials page on the USASwimming.org website.

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#OfficiallyAwesome Campaign Launches to Attract New Swimming Officials

USA Swimming launched a new social media campaign today to highlight the benefits of becoming a swimming official. The campaign was designed in collaboration with the Officials' Committee, and aims to attract new officials and retain existing officials.

The light-hearted campaign provides a unique insight into the lives of officials, their values and focuses heavily on the benefits of being an official. The posts will be a mixture of fun, inspirational, serious and even lightly sarcastic at times.

"Through this campaign, we wanted to show another side of officiating and the friendships, comradery and sense of pride we share together," said Jim Holcomb, USA Swimming Officials' Committee Chair from El Paso, Texas. Providing a service to the athletes is a role we take seriously, yet we also manage to have a great experience in the process. We even poke some fun at ourselves a bit on some of the 'perks' and quirks of being an official."

The campaign will be ongoing throughout the year through USA Swimming social accounts on Facebook and Twitter, and also supported through the Officials' Committee Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages. We encourage ongoing posts from the 14,000 swimming officials across the country.

"These officials volunteer their time to help every meet run for the athletes and coaches, so getting the swimming community to share these posts will give them a pat on the back and provide encouragement to get involved," said Dan McAllen, USA Swimming Program Operations Vice Chair and member of the Board of Directors from Fallbrook, California. "Getting officials involved is vital to the future of the sport, so we wanted to tell the story in a way that encourages people to come forward and be part of the great culture of swimming officials."

The concept for the campaign originated at the 2016 We ARRE Mentors Officials workshop in Chicago in a collaboration with the

USA Swimming staff and the 90 attendees of the workshop. That mentor workshop was spearheaded by Melissa Hellervik-Bing of Cape Canaveral, Florida, and Gina Mensay, USA Swimming Member Services Program Manager.

There was also a group brainstorming exercise where the officials attending the workshop wrote many of the taglines for the posts.

“The energy of the group in Chicago was contagious in helping create this campaign and make it our own,” said Hellervik-Bing. “Throughout the weekend workshop, this group showed what it takes to be a mentor and now there is also a campaign to help spread it to others.”

Fans, officials and future officials can follow the campaign at #OfficiallyAwesome on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

From the Rules and Regulations Committee Communication

The National Official's Committee works very hard with LSC Official's Committee Chairs to ensure consistent communication regarding standardized rules interpretations and policy. Each quarter, National Officials Committee member Jamie Cahn hosts a conference call with all LSC Official's Committee Chairs. The call covers a variety of topics including a presentation by me. Based on the communication that I receive from the Official's Chairs, Coaches, Officials, Parents and others, I provide clarification on rules topics as well as trends that I see based on the communication I receive. I feel very confident that our Official's Chairs have the exact understanding of interpretations and clarifications of rules.

As a line official, if you have a question regarding a rule or an interpretation while at a meet, your first point of contact should be your Chief Judge (if one is assigned), or your Meet Referee. If you are the Meet Referee, your contact should be with an LSC Official's Committee member or the Chair. If you don't agree with the answer from your LSC Official's Committee, my suggestion is that you do not call me directly. Most of the time I can tell by the nature of the question that you didn't like the answer you got somewhere else (your LSC Official's Committee). One of the first things I am going to ask you is whether you have contacted your LSC Official's Committee. We have empowered your LSC Official's Committee to be awesome – use them! As always, if you have a time sensitive situation while at the meet, you can always call me. My number is in the rule book – I will do my best to help you out.

Be a good steward of the Rules

Be very careful when reading the rules NOT to read too much into the rules, or attempt to simplify or draw conclusion as to what may or may not be a violation based on these conclusions. I will give you two examples below on actual situations that were brought to me for review.

What was briefed: During butterfly, if the ankles cross – that is an alternating kick . Explanation – That statement could be completely FALSE, and that statement has oversimplified the rule. Rule 101.3.3 states that “...the position of the legs or the feet need not

be on the same level, but they shall not alternate in relation to each other.” In swimming, an alternating kick is when one leg or foot is moving in one direction, while the other is moving the opposite direction. If the ankles cross during this type of movement – that would clearly be a violation. HOWEVER – if the amplitude of the left and right leg is different (one leg/foot traveling a greater distance than the other on the kick), then the ankles may cross each other while the legs or feet are moving in the same direction – THIS IS LEGAL. The point of this discussion is that simply stating that the ankles crossing during the butterfly kick is illegal draws an oversimplified and incorrect interpretation of what the rule actually says.

What was briefed: During the breaststroke kick, if you see a big boil of water pop up behind the feet, the swimmer must be doing a downward butterfly kick during the swim. Explanation: While a boil or disturbed water is clearly caused by some sort of leg movement, unless the official actually observes the leg movement to be in violation of the rules (101.2.3 – downward butterfly kick), it would be inappropriate to make the call. This falls under one of the golden rules of officiating – call what you see, not what you think you see.

When an official takes a position on an understanding of the rules, they should consider looking for reinforcement of that position in 1. The Rule Book; 2. The Situations and Resolutions; 3. USA Swimming on-line test; 4. Officials Training Videos on the Training & Education page for Officials on the USA Swimming website; and 5. Discussions with the LSC Official’s Committee. If you find no support for your understanding of the rules – you might have a misunderstanding of the rules. Ask for help, your LSC Official’s Committee is there for you.

Thanks for everything you do for our sport and our athletes – you are #OfficiallyAwesome!

New Rules Effective January 1, 2017

Several new rules became effective January 1, 2017 and are listed on Page One in the 2017 USA Swimming Rulebook. Listed below are some of the new rules.

- “Deck Pass” has been defined and added to the Glossary. It is now allowed as an acceptable proof of membership.
- Drones are prohibited over venues any time athletes, coaches, officials and/or spectators are present.
- Recommendations for swimmers with disabilities are added to Open Water competitions.
- LSCs may impose a fine for false registration only when a swimmer actually competes in a sanctioned competition.
- Titles for elected boards positions and USA Swimming officers are amended to reflect current governance practices.
- Committee Chairs, with the consent of the Board Chair, are provided means to remove non-athlete members failing to

attend or contribute to committee meetings.

- Referees, Administrative Referees and Starters for all Open Water meets are required to pass the online USA Swimming Open Water Referee test prior to officiating sanctioned competitions.

Not taking effect until May 1, 2017 is this rule:

The number of timed finals a swimmer may compete in per day is increased to six (6).

Follow us on Social Media

Are you on Facebook? If you haven't done so already, you should 'LIKE' the USA Swimming Officials page. You will get updates on what's happening around the country in the world of swim officiating. Not sure how to be able to see all the #OfficiallyAwesome posts? It's very simple. First, you have to have a Facebook account. Next, at the top of the Facebook page you will find a "Search Facebook" bar. Click on that and type USA Swimming Officials. The page that comes up will show at the top the link to our page. Simply click on it. There you will find us. In order to receive updates in your newsfeed, you have to 'LIKE' our page. You can find this button at the top of the page. Click on it! Now you will be seeing all of our updates. You can also find the page here: <https://www.facebook.com/USA-Swimming-Officials-234106446641019/>.

Follow us on Twitter: USA Swim Officials [@usaswimofficial](https://twitter.com/usaswimofficial)

Follow us on Instagram: [USA Swimming Officials](https://www.instagram.com/usa_swimming_officials/)

Load your officiating pictures on all of our Social Media sites, but don't forget to include the #OfficiallyAwesome hashtag!