

Subject: Officials Newsletter: Summer Officiating Going Strong

From: USA Swimming <officials@usaswimming.org>

Date: 7/2/2019, 1:47 PM

USA Swimming Officials Newsletter | July 2019



OFFICIALS NEWSLETTER

From the National Officials Committee Chair

Greetings to all of you and a Happy 4th of July!

I would like to take this opportunity to keep you updated within the scope of officiating by summarizing the work that the committee members have accomplished over the last few months.

The Zone Workshops were held on two separate weekends during May, where three committee members presented Meet Referee information that was related to the overarching workshop theme of Communication. If you are a meet referee, then you know the consequences of breakdowns in this area, as well as the ease of a smooth-running meet when the connection between you and the meet director, coaches, officials, athletes, and other volunteers is a solid one. Those in attendance were audience for an exercise in Diversity and Inclusion and the roll-out of MAAPP. If you are interested, please ask your LSC representative official for information that was shared at this event.

The LSC Officials Chairs Workshop in Charlotte, NC, on June 21st and 22nd was centered around the journey of officiating from the first clinic one takes, followed by teaching/mentoring, to succession planning which is a conscientious act of bringing along those who follow in your footsteps. These are pursued, all the while endeavoring to be our best at the roles of teacher, learner, mentor, and evaluator. Over the next few newsletters, articles summarizing each of the individual presentations from the two-day agenda will be featured.

Kathleen Scandary
Chair, National Officials Committee

What Is Learned Through Swimming

My name is Jack Swanson and I am one of the athlete representatives on the USA Swimming National Officials Committee. I presented a workshop at the LSC Officials Chairs meeting entitled, "What is Learned Through Swimming" on June 22nd, 2019. In my presentation, I focused on how LSC Officials Chairs and all officials can engage with current athletes, athlete representatives and



ex-athletes interested in staying involved in the sport of swimming.

1) Athletes and Officials - Athletes are motivated to swim and improve by many different factors, including their friends, the thrill of winning as a team, and qualifying for LSC, Zone, and National Championship meets. Through swimming, athletes build and develop skills that will be useful throughout their lives and careers, such as leadership, hard work, perseverance, dedication and goal-setting. In managing swim meets, officials should create atmospheres that are reflective of the motivations that athletes at the meet and in the LSC have for swimming and of the life skills that athletes learn through swimming. By keeping in mind the athletes' motivations for swimming and what athletes learn through swimming, officials can bring discussions regarding the meet back to the fundamental question, "what's best for the athletes?"

2) Athlete Representatives and Officials - LSC athlete representatives are athletes serving on the LSC Board of Directors or an LSC committee; ALL LSC Boards and committees must consist of 20% athlete representation per USOC and USA Swimming requirements. Many officials hold positions on the LSC Board of Directors or an LSC committee, and work in tandem with athlete representatives. Many new officials in USA Swimming have one or more mentors to whom they can direct questions regarding USA Swimming rules and regulations, deck protocols, and advancing to higher level meets. Similarly, officials serving on LSC Board of Directors or LSC committees are encouraged to mentor athlete representatives to help them to gain confidence with skills such as presenting their opinions clearly and concisely, managing budgets, and empowering other committee members. Discussions at swim meets, all decisions and votes on LSC Boards and committees should come back to the question, "what's best for the athletes?"

3) Young Officials and their Mentors - Many officials are certified as stroke and turn officials when their children join a swim team. However, few LSC Officials Chairs and other leaders in the officiating community have strongly considered recruiting athletes and ex-athletes who have recently finished their swimming careers. As officials, recently retired athletes can apply the leadership skills they learned as athletes, giving back to the sport they love.

Jack Swanson

Athlete Representative

National Officials Committee and Athletes' Executive Committee

MAAPP Reminder

At its April meeting, the USA Swimming Board of Directors enacted the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy (MAAPP) to ensure that keeping athletes safe is its top priority and is upheld. All clubs and USA Swimming members were required to be MAAPP compliant as of June 23rd, 2019. All USA Swimming officials are required to read and understand the MAAPP policy. Please refer to usaswimming.org/maapp to read the full MAAPP policy and FAQs. Additional questions can be addressed to Abby Howard at ahoward@usaswimming.org.

Admin Official Task Force

Recently, we were asked to participate on a task force to review certification and roles of the Administrative Referee (AR) and the Administrative Official (AO) on the national deck. This task force discussed many topics including - does the Admin Official have a role at a national meet and whether an N3 Admin Referee needs wet-side experience.

In regards to the AO having a role on the national deck, it was determined that there isn't a need at the Junior or higher levels meets. We felt that many AOs do not have national protocol experience with tasks such as No Shows, Intents to Scratch and scratch boxes. Also, at these meets, the computer operator running Meet Manager has significant experience at national-level meets and lends itself to a complete and capable admin team. Since LSC requirements vary when certifying AOs, it would be very difficult to know what their capabilities truly are and, at this level meet, training isn't appropriate. It was agreed, however, that at a Futures meet, an N2 AO could act in the role of an Assistant Admin working alongside another certified Admin Ref in an assistant role as well as the Lead Admin Ref. It is highly recommended that only one N2 AO work in this role per meet. We also recommend that the N2 AO at a Futures meet have experience in working

a meet in which national protocols were used.

As far as an Admin Referee progressing to become an N3 certified Admin Ref, it was agreed that it is important to have a wet-side background. There were numerous reasons in this decision. One is that as a Deck Referee, you learn a number of things we believe make an Admin Referee stronger including how to speak to coaches, how to manage and understand disqualifications, and the process that makes a deck run smoothly. We did feel however that LSCs have the option to certify their Admin Referees without having wet-side experience.

During our discussions, we found there are no LSC minimum standard guidelines for the Administrative Referee. We recommended to the National Officials Committee that guidelines be set and this task force would be willing to work on those.

*Lisa Olack
Tim Husson
Sandy Drake*

Summary of Mentor/Evaluator Session at LSC Officials Chairs Workshop

After looking at different learning styles, we dove into identifying the qualities that make a good official and the qualities that make a good mentor. Some of these qualities overlapped and some did not. We discussed mechanisms for mentoring mentors and what the mentoring process looks like- acknowledging success yet communicating in a way to make success out of failure. We then rolled out the new process for becoming a National Evaluator and maintaining current National Evaluator status. All LSC Officials Chairs have access to this process and it will be posted on the USA Swimming website. It was shared that the National Mentor/Evaluator subcommittee will also be working in the future to help standardize a template for national evaluations. The National Mentor/Evaluator subcommittee is comprised of: Trish Martin, Jamie Cahn, Matt Wilson and Dana Covington, Chair.

*Dana Covington
Sub-Committee Chair, Mentor/Evaluator Sub-Committee*

Situations & Resolutions from The Rules Chair

Situation:

A female swimmer steps up on the blocks. You notice (or another official notices) she is wearing a legal swimsuit, but is also wearing an additional garment or garments that cover the entire back and front of her torso and extends over her shoulders and armpits down the arm as far as the wrist. You also notice that she is wearing a garment that extends past her knees as far as her ankles. These additional garments do not have any zippers or other fastening devices, are made of textile material and do not contain any rubberized type of material such as polyurethane or neoprene. Prior to the start of the competition, the athlete did not provide you with an exemption letter from the Rules & Regulations Committee allowing her to wear the additional garments for religious reasons. What should you do?

Resolution:

You should allow the swimmer to swim and disqualify her for wearing a non-conforming swimsuit. You should treat this like a false start and not prevent her from swimming. Also, you should not approach the swimmer and engage her in a conversation regarding the issue, especially if the athlete is 12 or under. After the heat, you should contact the coach and inquire if the swimmer is wearing the suit for religious reasons and if he/she is aware of the option to obtain an exemption from the swimsuit rules based on the athlete's religious preference. You can also call or text Rules and Regulations Chair Clark Hammond at 205-910-5390 and seek to obtain an immediate exemption for that meet pending the formal request and approval process if you believe the athlete is wearing the additional garments based on their religious preferences. You do not have the ability on your own to grant the waiver.

*Clark Hammond
Chair, Rules & Regulations Committee*

Officials' Excellence Award May 2019

Lisa Vetterlein - Pacific Northwest Swimming

Lisa Vetterlein began officiating over 15 years ago while her daughters were swimming. From local summer league, to high school, to Pacific Northwest Swimming (PNS) meets and beyond, Lisa has been an asset on every deck she touches.

Over her career, she was also the backbone of one of the LSC's biggest teams (taking care of the books, helping recruit officials, etc.). Working tirelessly behind the scenes on the LSC's Board and its Officials Committee or on a pool deck, she exemplifies the qualities of a great official. Many know her to be a calm, level-headed, fair and approachable official. Well respected and liked by coaches, officials, and athletes alike, Lisa is always a cheerful presence on deck.

Not limiting herself to just a few meets, she can often be found on decks from simple dual meets to the National level (e.g., Pro Swim Series, Junior Nationals, Nationals, and Olympic Team Trials) as well as USA Masters meets. Lisa gracefully and easily shares this vast experience with PNS via her support of all officials, including those just starting out in the sport. As a Stroke & Turn Clinician, Lisa has an enviable track record of training qualified officials. She has been (and continues to be) a strong supporter of PNS, its athletes and officials.

Regardless of the level or complexity of the meet, she models the behaviors that represent the Ideal Official.



Congratulations, Lisa!

Gina Mensay | USA Swimming | Senior Program Manager, Member Services |
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