



Tim Husson &lt;tim.husson@gmail.com&gt;

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## Officials Newsletter - October 2020

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**USA Swimming Officials** <Officials@usaswimming.org>  
Reply-To: Officials@usaswimming.org  
To: tim.husson@gmail.com

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# Officials Newsletter



### Greetings From the Chair

I trust that you all are safe and are enjoying the change to Autumn, at least that is something predictable! One of the things I find most remarkable is that we are meeting the challenges we face with extraordinary resolve and character. You have been forced into flexibility, but have adapted quickly. Recently, I have been witness to this through the completion of a form by your LSC Officials Chairs that summarizes what is being done by committees in the absence of swimming competitions. We have learned that clinics can be taught and briefings can be held virtually. Zoom meetings can be just for fun! Whistles can be blown quite efficiently through masks and the Deck Ref-Starter team is still able to communicate within the framework of social-distancing. Some LSC Officials Committees have heightened their focus upon the recognition of their officials in a more pronounced way. Through your dedication, courage, and hope, we have overcome. Congratulations!

And just like the rest of the membership, we'll be ready.

Kathleen Scandary

## Announcements

### National Meets

- US Open - Meet Referee Lucy Duncan; Nov. 12-14 at nine sites
  - Beaverton, OR - Site Ref: Ron Van Pool
  - Des Moines, IA - Site Ref: Amy Hoppenrath
  - Greensboro, NC - Site Ref: Jay Thomas
  - Huntsville, AL - Site Ref: Clark Hammond
  - Indianapolis, IN - Site Ref: Lucy Duncan
  - Irvine, CA - Site Ref: Dan McAllen
  - Richmond, VA - Site Ref: Jamie Cahn
  - San Antonio, TX - Site Ref: Jim Holcomb
  - Sarasota, FL - Site Ref: Trish Martin
  - Due to the timing of site announcements and the extremely limited number of officials needed, assignments were made from winter meet applications and to fill specific needs
  
- 18 and Under Winter Championships - December 1-13. Run by LSCs (in lieu of Winter Juniors)
  - Please consider helping out if your LSC is hosting a meet
  
- USA Swimming intends to proceed with the 2021 TYR Pro Swim Series in the new year and will reaffirm dates and locations in the coming weeks.

## Timing Systems for Sanctioned, Approved, and Observed Meets

***Will an automatic system (pads) be used as the primary timing system? If yes,***

- A secondary system must be used which may consist of:
  - One, two, or three buttons (auto start/manual stop) per lane, each operated by a separate timer, or

- One, two, or three manual watches per lane, each started and stopped by a separate timer
- If a semi-automatic system is your secondary system, a tertiary system of manual watches shall be used; at least one per lane started and stopped by a separate timer

***Will a semi-automatic system (auto start/manual stop) be used as the primary timing system? If yes,***

- Two or three buttons per lane, each operated by a separate timer, and
- A secondary system of manual watches shall be used; at least one per lane started and stopped by a separate timer

If no automatic equipment is used, three manual watches, each started and stopped by a separate timer, shall be used as the primary timing system.

**NOTE:**

- NO manual synchronized starts may be used (one individual simultaneously starts all watches and the lane timer stops it)
- One timer may operate a button and a watch but may not operate two like kind systems
- The following are not approved timing systems for sanctioned, approved, and observed meets at this time:
  - Swimmingly
  - Dolphin as a semi-automatic system; Dolphin watches may be used as a manual watch that is started and stopped in each lane.
  - These systems are under review.

***Non-Sanctioned Meets***

- “Pick up” meet; fun; no timing or official requirements
- Times are to be sent to [virtualmeets@usaswimming.org](mailto:virtualmeets@usaswimming.org) and not uploaded by the LSC
- Times are not eligible for meet entry purposes or recognition programs
- All Clubs must be USA Swimming clubs.
- All Athletes must be USA Swimming members and must be Athlete Protection Training (APT) compliant. Any non-compliant athletes will not be loaded into the SWIMS database.

***Sanctioned Meets (includes Approved and Observed)***

- The timing rules governing the meet do not change; no exceptions
- Times sent to your LSC Times Officer
- Times are eligible for meet entry purposes and recognition programs (except July 2020)
- All Clubs must be USA Swimming clubs
- All Athletes must be USA Swimming members and must be Athlete Protection Training (APT) compliant. Any non-compliant athletes will not be loaded into the SWIMS database. LSC's will be responsible for Meet Recon, following normal Sanctioned Meet Protocol

## Swim Offs

So, what is a swim-off?

The rule provides that a swim-off is necessary when swimmers tie or it is determined there is a tie. Specifically, the Rule provides:

In no case may a swimmer with a faster time displace another who placed ahead of him within a heat as the result of a decision by the Referee or Place Judges in accordance with Section 102.24. If this situation results in disputed qualifications, all swimmers having times tied or within the disputed times shall swim-off to qualify for the disputed place or places in the final.

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### ***Q. When is a swim-off to be conducted?***

The Rule states:

This elimination may be held at any time set by the Referee, but not more than 45 minutes after the last heat of any event in which any one of these swimmers is competing in that session. There may be times, due to unique circumstances and with the agreement of the swimmers, coaches and the Meet Referee that a swim-off is held later, but this is the exception and not the rule.

### ***Q. What happens if all swimmers are all disqualified during the swim-off?***

Certainly not something I have ever seen, but if it does occur, the Rule provides that you continue to conduct swim-offs until there is a winner.

### ***Q. What happens if one or more but not all of the swimmers is disqualified?***

In the case of a disqualification in a swim-off, the swimmer so disqualified is relegated to the lowest qualifying position for which he/she is competing.

If disqualifications leave a vacancy for the full complement of finalists, swim-offs shall be continued among the disqualified swimmers until a full complement of finalists is assured.

### ***Q. Can the swimmer who is disqualified still compete in finals?***

Disqualification in a swim-off for a qualifying position shall not eliminate a swimmer from eligibility to compete in the accompanying finals, or as an alternate.

### ***Q. Can the swimmers choose to swim a different distance and/or stroke in the swim-off than the one swum in the preliminaries?***

No. There has been some discussion or practice of allowing swimmers to swim a different stroke and/or distance for the swim-off. This is not appropriate. The rule states the swim-off should be "timed and judged in the same manner as the original event" and that it is a part of the preliminary process for qualifying. It also states: "For the seeding of finals, the times used for the swimmers involved shall be the times achieved in their original preliminary heats."

These statements make it clear that you swim the same stroke and distance. The only way the statement that you use the preliminary time and not the swim-off time makes sense is if you swim the same stroke and distance in the swim-off as the preliminary event.

Moreover, if you allowed the athletes to choose the stroke and distance, they are not qualifying for the event at issue. Additionally, you also run the risk that one swimmer is better at the chosen other stroke

or distance and thus you have impacted the competition and you have potentially given an advantage to one swimmer over the other. And you cannot rule out peer pressure in the process where one swimmer or coach is less aggressive or knowledgeable regarding the process and gives in to the other.

The only option other than actually re-swimming the event is to flip a coin or for one swimmer to defer to the other.

***Q. Which time is used for the swimmer that advances to finals: the preliminary/heat time or the swim-off time?***

Swim-off times do not replace the times swum in the heat or semifinal.

***Q. Who is responsible to be aware of information regarding Swim-offs?***

It shall be the swimmer's responsibility to become acquainted with information pertaining to swim-offs, final events and the participants therein.

## **Sessions that Count for Advancement**

Due to our current meet environment, there is not an ability to hold meets of significant structure to count towards advancement in the National Certification process. The requirement for sessions at LIKE MEETS allows you to practice the skills that you will need to be successful at the next level. When looking at the prerequisites for an evaluation, please be looking for LIKE MEETS, not just number of sessions to meet the prerequisites needed before or between evaluations.

For example: part of the required learning prior to receiving a N3i CJ evaluation are eight sessions as a CJ following the N2 evaluation. These sessions where the learning is occurring should be at a meet that is like an OQM. It doesn't have to be an OQM but similar components should be present in those meets where the learning for that position is occurring. A meet where there is only one CJ should not apply to the eight required sessions for an N3iCJ evaluation. Being a N3 CJ requires the ability to work on a team with many shared roles and responsibilities while interacting with many different people. So the prerequisites sessions should have components of a "CJ team". The ultimate desire is that officials will obtain the experience needed to be successful at the next level and reach their goal.

This should be monitored by all involved in the process of evaluation. The mentee should only count "like meets" for the prerequisites when requesting an evaluation. If the mentee has questions about "like meets" ask the Meet Referee or LSC Officials Chair for input. The mentor/evaluator should take a look at the mentees OTS record and look for "like meets". If there is uncertainty, then start the conversation between mentee and mentor prior to the meet.

All this is an effort to provide the best opportunity for all officials to be successful in reaching the goals that are desired for our officiating careers. The National Officials Committee is aware that due to the lack of Like Meets being held in 2020 it will be necessary to extend the time allowed between an N3i and N3f evaluation. These will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

You have always had the ability to recertify at a level for three (3) years after expiration. Details on the National Certification Recertification requirements can be found [here](#).

Ultimately we are a team working together to learn and help one another be the best we can be at every stage of our officiating journey so we can best serve the athletes and coaches.



## Officials Excellence Award

### *Orlene Lockhart-Rykosky - Louisiana Swimming*

Orlene became an official when the youngest of her four children was 8 years old. During her 16 years as an official, she has achieved N3 stroke and turn and N2 deck referee and starter certifications. She has represented Louisiana Swimming at numerous Zone meets in Texas, Florida, Georgia and North Carolina. Orlene has also officiated on the collegiate level. Three of her four children swam collegiately at Division I schools. All four achieved sectional qualifying times with two of them qualifying for fall Nationals as collegiate swimmers.

Orlene has coached and officiated high school swimming since 2001 and continues to do so with her youngest son, Dylan, who graduated from college in 2016. She has run the Louisiana State High School Championship meets for the last 8-10 years.

If you were to ask Orlene why she still officiates, she would tell you "for the kids." Numerous times she has mentioned how she enjoys watching the 8&under swimmers progress to confident high school and often collegiate swimmers. She takes great pride in being fair, unbiased and educating the swimmers about sportsmanship, competitive spirit and the rules of swimming.

Recently, Orlene was mentioned in an interview about a collegiate swimmer on how she was a person they admired, respected and who had mentored him after being scolded by her, when he did a cannonball into the pool at his first meet at the age of four. This is why Orlene still officiates, to pass her love for swimming on to others, and the long-term relationships she develops with the athletes.

Talk to us today  
**719 866 4578**

**1 Olympic Plaza, Colorado Springs, CO 80909-5780**

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