



Chief Judge's Manual

Chief Judges used to be a luxury at a swim meet. Now they are a staple; at long course meets they are pretty much a necessity. The Chief Judge is an assistant to the referee. The Chief Judge is the stroke and turn judges' mentor. He/she is one of the keys to the smooth running of a swim meet. The Chief Judge is responsible to the meet referee and the deck referee(s). The Team Lead Chief Judge is the deck officials' representation of the meet referee.

At non-championship Potomac Valley Swimming meets, the Chief Judge's role may be more informal. He/she should discuss his/her responsibilities with the referee prior to the start of warm-up. This brief manual, though, describes the procedures and functions of the Chief Judge within championship protocol. It borrows liberally from USA Swimming's "Guide for Officiating."

It is assumed that the Chief Judge has a solid knowledge and understanding of the current technical rules of USA Swimming and the procedures used in Potomac Valley Swimming. The Chief Judge should also be familiar with the information contained in the meet announcement.

Pre-Meet

The chief judge should get together with the meet referee to coordinate all duties the chief judge will be expected to perform. Verify the terminology the meet referee expects during the meet. If there is a meeting of the assigned officials, attend this meeting and make sure of the jurisdiction and protocol the referees expect from the officials.

Typically, the chief judge is responsible for the officials' sign-in-sheets, introductions, and assignments of officials for deck coverage, rotation schedule, deck protocol, jurisdiction, communication and radio etiquette. The chief judge will conduct stroke briefings and answer officials' concerns before each session. If the session includes relays, the briefing must include instructions for relay take-off judges. It is also helpful to remind judges that relay take-off judges **do not** raise hands for take-off violations, but turn judges **do** raise hands for stroke/turn violations during the relays. Instruct officials on how to stand while judging. An official should stand erect, hands behind the back, one foot slightly in front of the other. Nothing should be in the hands – no heat sheet, clipboard, pen, etc. Not only does this look more uniform, but it helps maintain balance while the official is at the edge of the pool.

Deck assignments should be made using the available personnel as effectively as possible. Care must be taken to ensure balanced and fair judging at all sessions. Assignments should take into consideration the available officials' levels of experience. Keep in mind that stroke judges (officials who walk the sides of the pool and judge swimmers' strokes and kicks) are a necessity for long course sessions, unless staffing rules this out. If it is a lengthy session, the chief judge must also determine an equitable schedule of relief. If there are "off-referees" or "off-starters," these officials can be assigned deck positions, if necessary.

Together with the Meet Referee or the Officials' Chair, the chief judge will coordinate any guest speakers for the group. He/she also makes sure all officials' equipment is in working order, and that equipment and supplies have been placed in the correct places:

Heat Sheets	Two-way Radios w/Headsets
Assignment Form	Pencils
DQ Slips	Lap Counters
Clipboards	Split Sheets
Relay Take-Off Slips	Bells
No-Show Slips	Chairs
Watches	Any other equipment deemed necessary

During the Competition

Unless they are also serving as stroke & turn judges, the chief judges stand inconspicuously at the pool corners. During the freestyle events they may be seated as long as they can still view their officials watching the turns. If two chief judges are used, one should be stationed on the turn end of the starter's side and one on the recall side at the start end. If three chief judges are used, the third should be in the "hot box," on the start side near but not in the starter's area.

The chief judge's focus is on the officials in his/her quadrant. The chief judge should observe that the stroke & turn judges are following the specified protocol when observing the swimmers; if there is a violation of protocol, the chief judge should remind the judge of the proper procedures in a positive and constructive manner.

The "Hot Box":

The area of the pool where the Referee and Starter are positioned is referred to as the Hot Box. This area also typically includes the Admin Referee, the timing operator, and other "table workers." The chief judge assigned to this busy quadrant must be especially attentive and prepared to assist any of these officials without being a distraction or getting in the way of their activities.

Disqualifications

When observing an infraction, the official shall raise a hand immediately. Without delay, the chief judge then alerts the deck referee of a possible disqualification in a calm, clear, concise manner. At the same time, the chief judge identifies the quadrant of pool, turn or start end, stroke side, where the potential infraction occurred (e.g. "possible disqualification, stroke judge lane 1 side" or "possible disqualification, lanes 5/6, turn end"). Upon reaching the official making the call, the chief judge begins by verifying the lane where the potential infraction occurred, and then **immediately** relays that information to the referee and other CJs via the radio (e.g. "the possible disqualification is in lane 2"). The chief judge will then engage the official in a discussion of the disqualification, without interfering with the judge's ability to observe swimmers within the jurisdiction. The chief judge will ask:

- What did you see?
- What is the rule?
- What is your jurisdiction?

After the chief judge gathers information from the official, the infraction is reported to the referee using correct terminology. The chief judge also recommends to the referee that the DQ be accepted if all information is correct **or** that the DQ not be accepted if something was wrong with the information or the jurisdiction:

“Possible disqualification in event # ____, heat # ____, lane # ____, for (description of the violation). I recommend that the disqualification be accepted.”

OR

“Possible disqualification in event # ____, heat # ____, lane # ____, for (description of the violation). I have concerns with this disqualification and recommend that it not be accepted.”

The decision to accept or reject a disqualification is the responsibility of the referee. The referee will likely have questions of his/her own, and may pose these questions to the chief judge. If the disqualification is accepted by the referee, the chief judge completes the DQ report, has the stroke & turn judge review it for accuracy and signature, and initials next to the official’s signature. Depending upon availability of referees or runners, the chief judge will either remain in place or bring the DQ report to the deck referee for a signature.

It is then the responsibility of the chief judge at the finish end of the pool to notify the swimmer if the disqualification stands. It is recommended that the chief judge call the swimmer to a position behind the seated officials to notify him/her of the disqualification. After informing the swimmer, the chief judge uses the radio to report to the referee: “Swimmer notified.”

In the event that an official’s call is overturned or not accepted, the chief judge should inform the official and explain the reason(s) for the decision.

A Note on Radio Protocol:

Extended conversations concerning the details of a disqualification should not take place over the radio. If additional information is needed beyond that which can be briefly communicated, the deck referee should have another referee step in, and should then go confer with the stroke & turn judge, or the stroke & turn official or chief judge should come to the deck referee.

False Starts

In the event of a false start, the lead chief judge or the chief judge assigned to the quadrant where the false start occurred will notify the swimmer of the infraction. After informing the swimmer, the chief judge uses the radio to report to the referee: “Swimmer notified.” The “hot box” chief judge will complete the disqualification report and present it to the deck referee for approval and signature.

Declared False Starts

When a swimmer has chosen to take a declared a false start, the lead chief judge or the chief judge assigned at the starting area corner (or “hot box”) will complete the disqualification report. After the heat has been started, the chief judge will give the DQ report to the deck referee for his/her review and signature. The chief judge then gives the DQ report to Admin Referee.

No Shows

When “No Show” slips are used, the lead chief judge or the chief judge assigned at the starting area corner (or “hot box”) will complete the “No Show” slip when a swimmer fails to appear for an assigned heat. The chief judge will give the slip to the deck referee for his/her review and signature. The chief judge then gives the “No Show” slip to Admin Referee.

Approaching the Referee:

When approaching the deck referee with paperwork, a question, or other information, try to approach the referee in a manner that allows him/her to keep watching the pool and the swimmers. Don’t make the referee turn his/her back to the pool in order to see you or the paperwork.

Relays

During relays, the chief judges are assigned to look for dual confirmation of an early take-off from the side and lane judges by comparing the relay take-off slips from each lane and those of the side official covering the same lane. If an official on the side has marked his/her slip, the chief judge uses the radio to state “Possible disqualification, lane X” and immediately goes to the furthest part of his/her quadrant and gathers all the ballots. As soon as he/she sees there is a confirmation, the chief judge confirms the early take-off to the referee (“Confirmed early take-off, lane X”). If there is no confirmation, the chief judge states “All clear lanes 1-4 or 5-8,” so the referee knows there is or is not a disqualification. In the event of a confirmation, the relay take-off slips must be turned over to the referee as well as the completed DQ slip; the chief judge informs the team that has been disqualified and tells them which exchange left early, (e.g. 2nd swimmer or 1st exchange). After informing the swimmer, the chief judge uses the radio to report to the referee: “Swimmer notified.”

Distance Events:

If you are on the turn end during distance events, please alert the counters to the problem of touching the pads with the lap counting numbers. This can distort the splits of their teammates.

Officials' Relief

If it is a lengthy session, the chief judge should determine an equitable schedule of relief for the stroke & turn judges, using additional personnel if possible. If an official needs to be excused for any reason, the chief judge has the responsibility to maintain equal coverage on the deck at all times and may assign relief officials to the vacant position or may assume the vacant position themselves if necessary. Sometimes other officials (i.e. the off duty starters or deck referees) are asked to fill these positions.

Smile!

Clap and smile when the swimmers are introduced before a race, or when they are being honored on the awards stand.

Post Meet

It is very important that the chief judges thank every official appropriately for the generous contribution of their time.

Equipment and supplies should be collected, prepared for the next session's use, and stored in the appropriate location. Report any problems or circumstances that should be taken into account before the next session.

Chief judges are often asked to evaluate the performance of the stroke and turn judges. Their observations include the protocol established for the meet, as well as the technical aspects of judging. This is meant to be educational and to point out where improvement in certain areas will help the stroke and turn judge become more knowledgeable and continue to improve, as everyone of the officials' crew should always be trying to do their best for the athletes. If there is a need to talk with an official about suggestions for improvement this is to be done in a constructive manner not to embarrass or berate, but rather to educate. The chief judge should especially note the outstanding qualities of the exceptional official.



Use of Radios

Two-way radios are commonly used to conduct meet business including disqualifications, safety incidents, injuries, equipment failures, and other information critical to the operation of the meet. Used properly, they can improve the efficiency with which communication takes place among deck officials.

1. Radios are to be used strictly for the efficient administration of a meet. Extraneous chatter is **not** appropriate.
2. Always assume that an athlete, coach, or parent with another radio is listening to your conversation, and conduct your communication in a professional and responsible manner.
3. Radios should never be used to call attention to a swimmer (i.e. one official should not use the radio to ask other officials to observe a swimmer's stroke, turn, or finish).
4. Radios should never be used to tell jokes or off color stories of any kind.
5. Abusive language or swearing of any kind, in any language, should never be used.
6. Radios should never be used to talk about any coach, swimmer, parent, or volunteer.
7. Radios should never be used to transmit any information that could be misconstrued as being unprofessional in nature.
8. Key the microphone briefly before speaking; firmly hold the microphone key down during speaking, then stop speaking before releasing the microphone key.
9. Strive to speak in a calm, clear, natural voice.

A Tip:

Before using the radio, be aware of the starting area. Try to avoid speaking while a start is taking place – this can be **very** distracting to the deck referee.

Some radios can be switched to “voice activated” or “VOX” which can lead to the transmission of any audible activity. It is therefore important to make certain that these radios are switched to “manual” mode before they are used. All officials using radios should spend some time getting familiar with the operation of the radio before the session begins.



DISQUALIFICATION REPORT



EVENT # _____ HEAT _____ LANE _____

SWIMMER _____

BREASTROKE

DURING: START _____ SWIM _____ TURN _____ FINISH _____

10 KICK: ALTERNATING _____ BUTTERFLY _____ SCISSORS _____

11 ARMS: NON-SIMULTANEOUS _____ TWO STROKES UNDER _____
NOT IN SAME HORIZONTAL PLANE _____ PAST HIPLINE _____

12 ELBOWS RECOVERED OVER WATER _____

14 CYCLE: HEAD NOT UP _____ DOUBLE PULLS/KICKS _____

15 TOUCH: ONE HAND _____ NON-SIMULTANEOUS _____

16 NOT TOWARD THE BREAST OFF WALL _____

19 OTHER _____

BUTTERFLY

DURING: START _____ SWIM _____ TURN _____ FINISH _____

20 KICK: ALTERNATING _____ BREAST _____ SCISSORS _____

21 ARMS: NON-SIMULTANEOUS _____ UNDERWATER RECOV. _____

23 TOUCH: ONE HAND _____ NON-SIMULTANEOUS _____

24 NOT TOWARD THE BREAST OFF WALL _____

25 HEAD DID NOT BREAK SURFACE BY 15M _____

29 OTHER _____

BACKSTROKE

DURING: START _____ SWIM _____ TURN _____ FINISH _____

30 TOES OVER LIP OF GUTTER AFTER START _____

31 HEAD DID NOT BREAK SURFACE BY 15M _____

32 NOT ON BACK OFF WALL _____

33 NO TOUCH AT TURN _____

34 PAST VERTICAL AT TURN:
DELAY INITIATING ARM PULL _____ MULTIPLE STROKES _____
DELAY INITIATING TURN _____

35 SHOULDERS PAST VERTICAL _____

36 COMPLETELY SUBMERGED PRIOR TO TURN OR FINISH _____

39 OTHER _____

INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY

41 STROKE INFRACTION(S) # _____

42 OUT OF SEQUENCE _____

FREESTYLE

50 NO TOUCH TURN # _____

51 HEAD DID NOT BREAK SURFACE BY 15M _____

RELAYS

70 STROKE INFRACTION # _____ SWIMMER # _____

71 EARLY TAKE OFF SWIMMER # _____

72 CHANGED ORDER: SWIMMER _____ STROKE _____

OTHER

60 FALSE START _____ 61 DELAY OF MEET _____

62 DID NOT FINISH _____ 63 DECLARED FALSE START _____

69 OTHER _____

JUDGE: _____
(print name clearly)

REFEREE: _____
(print name clearly)

NOTIFIED: _____ SWIMMER _____ COACH _____

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DESK/REFEREE

Completing the Disqualification Report

The DQ report is our primary and official means of articulating disqualifications to the Coach/Swimmer. To ensure that the report is clear and accurate, and to prevent misunderstanding, confusion, and frustration, please observe the following standards for completing it in a consistent fashion.

When a call is accepted:

1. Enter the Event, Heat, and Lane Number.
This critical information identifies the swim in which the infraction occurred. There must be no corrections to this information on the DQ Slip (scratch outs introduce doubt with regards to the identification of the correct swim).
2. Enter the Swimmer's/Relay's Name if you have this information.
3. Write the swimmer's team abbreviation in the upper right hand corner, above Lane.
4. Circle the name of the Event. Except for "Other," this corresponds to the event being swum. "Other" is used for non-stroke violations.
5. For regular stroke Events, mark with an X, or checkmark, when in the swim the infraction was observed (Start, Swim, Turn, or Finish).
This is a very important component in the articulation of the infraction – we need to be able to match the violation with the part of the swim during which it occurred. Generally, we define these parts of the race as:
Start – From the start of the race until the head breaks the surface.
Swim – From the head breaking the surface until the beginning of the last full stroke into the turn/finish.
Turn – From the beginning of the last full stroke into the wall until the head breaks the surface.
Finish – From the beginning of the last full stroke into the wall to the touch at the end of the prescribed distance.
6. If the event is longer than two lengths, write the number of turn above your X, or checkmark.
Remember, it's the Swimmer's turn, not yours. Odd-numbered turns are on the turn end; even-numbered turns are on the start end.
7. Mark the infraction with an X, or checkmark. If the infraction is not listed, write it in next to "Other" for that stroke (e.g., hands past the hips in Breaststroke). Use the correct terminology from the rulebook. There's no need to circle the number.
8. When the report is complete, the official making the call prints his/her name where it says "Judge." Add first name if it's needed for clarification (when two or more judges with the same last name are working in that session). Please make sure the name is legible.
9. The chief judge should initial next to the judge's name.
10. The deck referee prints his/her name where it says "Referee," and marks an X or checkmark next to Swimmer or Coach, as appropriate.
11. Refrain from making other marks or writing extra information on the report.
12. If you make a mistake, tear it up and start over!

Conventions

Individual Medley – Judge the IM as four separate segments, each its own “race”. Each “race” has all four components (Start, Swim, Turn, and Finish).

- Circle the Event (Individual Medley).
- Mark when in the swim the infraction occurred under the stroke in which it was observed.

Remember, transitions are judged as Finishes, then Starts, so they are marked as such, depending on the part of the “race” in which the infraction was observed. Intermediate turns are judged as turns, and marked the same.

- Mark the infraction(s) under the appropriate stroke(s) (there’s no need to circle it/them), and write the number of the line(s) next to line 41 ‘Strokes Infraction #’ under Individual Medley.

Relays – Mark Relay stroke infractions just like those for the individual events and write the number of the line(s) next to line 70 ‘Strokes Infraction #’ under Relays and enter the Swimmer number(s) who committed it/them.

While our goal is to have all DQ reports filled out in a standard and consistent manner, failure to do so does **not** constitute automatic grounds for not approving or overturning an otherwise valid disqualification. Referees should continue to use their best judgment and common sense when processing a disqualification report.

Sample “No Show” Slip:

NO SHOW FOR EVENT

Name _____

Event # _____ Heat # _____

Age Group _____ Lane # _____

Have swimmer contact the Meet Referee if he or she has any question regarding: SCRATCH FROM NEXT EVENT.

Referee: _____

Meet Name:					Location:																																				
OFFICIALS ASSIGNMENTS:																																									
___ PRELIMS					___ TIMED FINALS					___ FINALS					___ TIME TRIALS																										
Day/Date:										Session No:					Team: ___																										
Meet Referee:										Head Starter:																															
Deck Referees:										Starters:																															
Team Lead Chief Judge:																																									
Assistant Chief Judges																																									
S/L 1					S/L 8					T/L 1					T/L 8																										
Stroke Judges																																									
S/L 1					S/L 8					T/L 1					T/L 8																										
TURN JUDGES																																									
Ln.	Notes										Start End										Turn End										Relief										Ln.
1																															S T										1
2																															S T										2
3																															S T										3
4																															S T										4
5																															S T										5
6																															S T										6
7																															S T										7
8																															S T										8
Additional Notes																																									

Name of Meet:						Session Number:							
Deck Officials Assignments: ___ PRELIMS ___ TIMED FINALS ___ FINALS						___ TIME TRIALS							
Meet Referee:						Head Starter:						Day/Date:	
Referees:						Starters:						Meet Day Number:	
Chief Judges: Team Lead Chief Judge:													
S/L1		S/I 8				T/L1				T/L8			
Stroke Judges													
S/L 1		S/L 8				T/L1				T/L 8			
Chief Timers:													
Lane 1:						Lane 8:							
START END													
LEFT CHAIR				CENTER CHAIR				RIGHT CHAIR				TURN END	
Watch/Button/Relay Take-off				Recorder/Button/Bell				Turn-Finish Judge/Button				Turn Judge	
Ln.												Ln.	
1												1	
2												2	
3												3	
4												4	
5												5	
6												6	
7												7	
8												8	
Relief Officials													

Chief Judge Checklist

The following checklist is used by USA Swimming to evaluate Chief Judges as part of the National Officials Certification program. It is also useful as a self-evaluation tool for chief judges at any level.

LSC, N2, N3

● Knowledge of current rules and procedures.

- Understands the importance of the Meet Information document. LSC, N2, N3
- Governing policies and procedures (LSC, Region, Zone and National). N2, N3
- Familiarity with National Championship deck positions and their responsibilities – turn judge, stroke judge and, when used, relay takeoff judge, head lane timer and lane timer. N2, N3
- Familiarity with disqualification and radio protocol. LSC, N2, N3
- Familiarity with “declared false start” and “no show” procedures. N2, N3
- Notifying swimmers or coaches of disqualifications – appropriately for meet level. LSC, N2, N3
- Familiarity with the differences between USA Swimming, FINA and modified FINA deck protocol. N3

● Meet Operations

- Pre meet Clinics and, if necessary, stroke briefings. LSC, N2, N3
- Assign stroke and turn judges, balanced deck, and relief and rotation schedules – appropriately for level of meet. LSC, N2, N3
- Use of National Meet formats for higher level meets. N2, N3
- Use and management of Disqualification Logs, if assigned. LSC, N2, N3
- Deck presence (Poise and Positioning). LSC, N2, N3
- Interaction with the Deck Referee, Admin Referee, other CJs and S&T Judges – teamwork. LSC, N2, N3
- Equipment and form confirmation, set-up, preparation, etc., for meets. LSC, N2, N3
- Familiarity with use of the “hot box” concept at higher profile meets. N2, N3
- Awareness of Judges within the Chief Judge’s area of responsibility. LSC, N2, N3
- Objectively evaluate Stroke and Turn Judges and compile and submit reports in accordance with LSC or National Officials Committee requirements. LSC, N2, N3
- Proactive management – ability to anticipate problems and to take appropriate advance action. LSC, N2, N3
- Implementation of Meet Referee directives. LSC, N2, N3

● Interaction with, and respect for, all meet participants; management, coaches, swimmers, officials, parents, spectators, guests. LSC, N2, N3 – all bullets

- Diplomacy.
- Understands and communicates that swimmers are the focus, not the officials.
- Understands and communicates that officials need to be attentive without appearing to “scrutinize.”
- Ability to keep a calm demeanor during stress or crisis.
- Ability to communicate in a clear and precise manner.
- Maintain a positive attitude.
- Leadership and team player qualities.
- Trainer for apprentice judges.