



AROUND THE DECK

POTOMAC VALLEY SWIMMING OFFICIALS

MARCH 2014 NEWSLETTER



Recently I was the Meet Referee for a Sectional Meet. During that meet we were met with some indoor air quality issues during prelims the second day. Being proactive, I met with the Meet Director and the Manager of the facility immediately following that session. We agreed to meet at the warm-up pool after the first event to evaluate the air quality and determine if we needed to insert some breaks into the schedule.

That night at warm-ups I was walking around the pool and letting coaches know that we were being proactive and had a plan to deal with the air quality should it become an issue. I made it about a quarter of the way around the pool and a coach replied to my comments that our plan did not make any sense and that it was not in the best interest of the athlete. I listened as the coach told me in a very “passionate” manner that it would be better to plan the breaks now, even if not needed, so that the athletes and coaches could plan their finals session. While I was shocked at the challenge and the “sternness” of the coach’s comments I thanked the coach and continued around the deck thinking that maybe that coach just had a bad day and was taking it out on me.

As I got about half way it dawned on me that the coach was right. The decision we made could be improved by giving the athletes and coaches a solid timeline so that they could prepare for their events. Although I was not happy about how the message was delivered, the message was the right thing to do.

I went back to the coach and said “thank you for looking after our athletes, you are exactly right” and explained that we would put the breaks into the program now and that would allow for proper planning for all of the events that night. The coach gave me a funny look as I am sure that my response and change of direction was somewhat of a surprise.

We put the breaks in the program and I never received one complaint about our decision. I also never got a “thank you” from that coach, but then again like most officials I don’t volunteer based on the number of thanks I get. Being a Meet Referee, or any kind of official, does not mean that you always have the right, or even the best answer. My change of direction was easy for me when I realized it was the best thing to do for the athletes. Sometimes there is wisdom even in the worst delivery of a message. **Never let pride get in the way of being flexible to do the right things for our athletes and when in doubt, don’t be afraid to ask for input from the coaches.**

Bob Vincent



FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Why Do We Officiate Swimming?

There are many different answers to this question. Most of us got involved because our children are or were swimmers. Swimming is the only youth sport I know of that uses volunteer officials, and swimming requires more officials than most sports to put on a competition (not to mention the number of volunteer timers). Many of us started in a summer league to support our neighborhood club. Some of us do it because we enjoy swimming and being a part of the competitions. Others do it because it beats sitting in the stands for a 3-4 hour session. And, some of us do it for the coffee and donuts!

But, no matter what the reason, we are an integral part of swimming and the meets couldn't happen without us. Although they may not always say it, the coaches and swimmers appreciate what we give to the sport. We train and get certified just like officials in any other sport. And, we can progress to higher levels of officiating through the Officials Qualifying Meet (N2/N3) process.



I have friends now all over the country that I would not have met if it weren't for swimming. And I always look forward to getting together with them and sharing our officiating experiences from different parts of the country. I've learned a lot that way.

March is one of the most exciting months for swimming as we have our short course championship meets. We get to watch our swimmers who have worked so hard since September close out the season. As you can see from the list below there are a lot of meets this month. Come out to one or more of the meets and be a part of the excitement.

As always, if you have any questions about officiating, don't hesitate to contact me as the email address listed below. I hope to see you on a pool deck soon. Thank you for your service to Potomac Valley Swimming.

Tim Husson

OfficialsChair@pvswim.org

You Make the Call!



Situation:

A swimmer with a disability wishes to swim in a USA Swimming meet but does not have the qualifying time for that meet. Is there anything that can be done to permit the athlete to participate?

My Experience at Winter Nationals



Last December I had the distinct pleasure to officiate at the 2013 AT&T Winter National Championships in Knoxville, TN. This wasn't my first application for a national meet, but it was the first time I was selected. I had been applying for national meets for about a year because I was required to officiate at a national meet in order to complete my certification requirements to become an N3 starter. About six years ago I began working on national official certifications. It wasn't that I aspired to work the national deck, but rather I wanted to be a better official and have more knowledge so I could teach and mentor our local officials better. I began by certifying as an N2 stroke and turn judge at JOs and have continued advancing over the years.

The goal of the National Certification Program is "to develop officials who are competent, current and consistent from the LSC level meet to the highest level in our sport through a progressive training program based on an accumulation of experience acquired by specific meet attendance, mentoring and constructive evaluation." We are fortunate that this month in Potomac Valley Swimming we will have two meets that are "Official Qualifying Meets." PVS Junior Olympics will be an N2 qualifying meet. N2 is the first national level for a position and prepares the official to officiate at Sectionals, Zones, Grand Prix and similar higher profile meets. The PVS Short Course Championship meet will be an N3 qualifying meet. N3 is the second and highest national level for a position and prepares officials to work at national championship meets. Even if you never want to officiate at these higher level meets, however, OQM meets provide amazing opportunities for learning and will help you become a better mentor to other less experienced officials.

My experiences at Winter Nationals reflected my previous experiences at our local PVS Officials Qualifying Meets as well as Zone and Sectional meets. I had the opportunity to work with and share experiences with officials from different parts of our county. I had the opportunity to be mentored by some of the most experienced and knowledgeable officials in USA Swimming. I learned to be more professional in both my appearance and my actions on deck. I learned to respect the individuality of the athletes and their coaches. I learned how valuable USA Swimming has been to the promotion of the sport! (We did our best to provide fair

and equitable officiating while “dancing” around the cameras.) I saw that our country’s best swimmers were still just teenagers and young athletes who have the same giggles and emotions as our own kids. And I learned it is so much fun to watch some of the world’s best athletes complete and perform at the highest level, especially those athletes that I had watched for years in PVS!

Please consider applying for N2 or N3 certification at one of the upcoming championship meets. As you know, our sport is officiated by volunteers, and the better we do our job, the better environment we provide for our swimmers and coaches. From the local level to Olympic Trials and the Olympics, our sport still relies upon unpaid volunteers for its officials. You will most certainly have fun interacting with and learning from some very experienced officials. And who knows – maybe you too will end up on deck at a National Championship Meet before too long!

Barbara Ship

United States Paralympics



The United States Paralympics (USP) is the governing body for Paralympic swimming in the U.S. USP is a division of the U.S. Olympic Committee. Currently USP provides certification for officials in two areas: Starter and Judge of Stroke (stroke judge and turn judge). USP runs meets throughout the country including meets in Santa Clara, CA, Cincinnati, OH, Atlanta, GA and Colorado Springs, CO. This year, for the first time, USP conducted a USP meet in Richmond, VA. Training classes for officials desiring USP certification are usually held the day before the meet and last about 3 hours. After completing the class, officials then train during the meet in the position for which they are seeking certification. Most, but not all, USP officials started their officiating career as an official with USA Swimming officiating meets with able-bodied athletes.

The transition to officiating athletes with disabilities at USP meets is usually very smooth. It is very rewarding to officiate USP competitions as the swimmers are incredible athletes and really showcase that the sky is the limit!! More information regarding USP swim meets and certification as a USP official can be found at the USP website: <http://www.teamusa.org/US-Paralympics>

Upcoming Meets



MARCH				
Date	Meet	Host	Location	Notes
6-9	PVS Short Course Championships	NCAP	GMU	Application to Officiate Qualifying Times
6-9	PVS Junior Championships	NCAP	GMU	Application to Officiate Qualifying Times

8-9	RMSC Mini Championships	RMSC	Olney	
8-9	NCAP Mini Championships	NCAP	GMU Freedom Center	Note: Site change
13-16	PVS 14&U Junior Olympic Championships	MACH	Univ. of MD	Application to Officiate Qualifying Times
20-23	Speedo Championship Series Eastern Zone Northern Sectional Meet	SYCH	<i>Ithaca, NY</i>	Qualifying Times Application to Officiate
20-23	Speedo Championship Series Eastern Zone Southern Sectional Meet	VA Swimming	Christiansburg, VA	Qualifying Times Application to Officiate
21-23	RMSC Spring Finale	RMSC	Germantown	
21-23	March Madness	YORK	Oak Marr	
22-23	MAKO Spring Invitational	MAKO	GMU	
21-23	Spring Championships	MSSC	Fairland	
27-29	<i>Eastern Zone SC Championships</i>	<i>Fairport Swimming</i>	<i>Webster, NY</i>	Application to Officiate
27-30	Speedo Championship Series Eastern Zone Spring LC Meet	<i>Star Swimming</i>	<i>Buffalo, NY</i>	Qualifying Times Application to Officiate
APRIL				
Date	Meet	Host	Location	Notes
5-6	FISH LC Fever Invitational	FISH	Fairland	
24-26	<i>Grand Prix Series (LCM)</i>		<i>Mesa, AZ</i>	
26	10&U Spring Penguin Meet	PAC	Fairland	
26-27	Spring Sprints Invitational	SDS	South Run	
27	Spring Champ Invite	ERSC	PGCC	
MAY				
Date	Meet	Host	Location	Notes
2-4	Spring LC Classic	RMSC	KSAC	
2	SNOW SC Spring Classic Invitational	SNOW	Claude Moore	
3-4	SNOW LC	SNOW	Claude Moore	

	Classic Invitational			
3-4	LC Derby Meet	FISH	GMU	
3-4	Early Bird LC Invitational	MSSC	Fairland	
3-4	Mini Olympics	MACH	Maderia	
9-11	Long Course Classic	MACH	Lee District	
15-18	<i>Grand Prix Series (LCM)</i>		Charlotte, NC	
23-25	Virginia State LC Championships	PM	Oak Marr	
30-1	Maryland State LC Champs	RMSC		

You Make the Call Resolution



Recommended Resolution: The LSC can do the following:

- The meet time standards could be waived for swimmers with a disability.
- Special time standards, based on a percentage of the normal standards, could be established.

Applicable Rules: 202.2.13

One Last Thing



There are multiple Official Qualifying Meets (OQMs) that will take place in our LSC and the Eastern Zone. You can find those on the [Potomac Valley Meet Schedule](#) page.

If you have any stories or pictures about experiences you have had concerning any of our officials please send them to [Bob Vincent](#) so that we can get them in the newsletter.

BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT GOES TO THE SWIMMER

Call what you see and see what you call

