



# AROUND THE DECK

POTOMAC VALLEY SWIMMING OFFICIALS

# NEWSLETTER

2015  
JULY



## FROM THE CHAIRMAN



The Long Course Season has come down to the championship meets. It is always a little more exciting the year before Olympic Trials as swimmers push to achieve those difficult cuts. Nearly a thousand swimmers across the country have already qualified for the Trials and many, many more have aspirations. You can be a part of the excitement by volunteering for the Potomac Valley championship meets. Will we see any Trials Cuts swam at Senior Champs or even Age Group Champs? Come out and see for yourself from the best vantage point as an official. If you sign up in advance you will ease the anxiety of the meet referees, although walk-ons are always welcome.

I had fun the other week at the Eastern Zone Open Water Championships. Read Bob Vincent's account below of our road trip to Atlantic City, NJ.

The new USA Swimming Officials Training Videos are now available on the USA Swimming website <http://www.usaswimming.org/DesktopDefault.aspx?TabId=2775&Alias=Rainbow&Lang=en>. They are free and you are encouraged to view them as often as you'd like.

For those of you that officiate in summer leagues, spread the word among your fellow summer league officials how much fun it is to do year round. A schedule of fall clinics will be announced in early September.

See you on deck!

Tim Husson  
[OfficialsChair@pvs swim.org](mailto:OfficialsChair@pvs swim.org)



## YOU MAKE THE CALL



**Situation:** The multi-whistle command is given and then the one long whistle for the 200M fly. The referee turns over the pool to the starter by raising her/his arm in the designated manner. John, age 12, in Lane 3 is not up on the block and before the starter gives the "take your mark" command, jumps up on the block

**Question:** Is John disqualified for delay of meet rule? If the starter believes that it has not distracted the field, does he/she still ask the swimmers to step down or does the starter start the race?

# WORLD POLICE & FIRE GAMES

By Jim Thompson



The World Police and Fire Games (WPFG), an international, multi-sport event, was held in Fairfax County, Virginia from June 26 to July 5, 2015. Participants in The Games were active duty or retired police officers, firefighters, customs and correction officers, from 60 countries who competed in 61 sports. Indoor Swimming for WPFG was held June 30th to July 2nd at The Jim McKay Natatorium on the campus of George Mason University in Fairfax County.

Potomac Valley Swimming Officials played a key role in supporting this event. PVS involvement began in October 2014 when Doug Shaw, the Indoor Swimming Coordinator, contacted the Officials Committee for help. As a result three members of the Committee, Steed Edwards, Pam Starke-Reed and Jim Thompson, began working with Mr. Shaw on pre-meet planning.



Over the course of nine months the committee assisted Mr. Shaw in setting up the Meet Manager database, establishing staffing requirements and soliciting volunteers for officiating the meet.

Two hundred ninety-seven athletes from over two-dozen countries competed in the meet. Athletes came from as close as Fairfax County and as far away as Russia, China, India and Australia. The oldest competitor was 83 years-old from the United States. The experience level of the competitors ranged from first time swimmers to Olympic medalists.

FINA Masters Swimming rules covered the technical rules for the competition. From an administrative perspective, two significant differences involved relays when compared to US Masters competitions. First, swimmers could swim on any relay team. There were many relays where the members came from four different countries. The second difference involved Mixed Gender relays. Only one member had to be of the different gender instead of having two males and two females. Once the four whistle chirps sounded, the competition ran like any of our PVS meets. Although the number of swimmers was smaller than the typical of PVS meet, the spectator energy and enthusiasm matched any of our most competitive meets.

The top three finishers were awarded medals in the following age groups in individual events: 18-29, 30-34, 35-39, 40-44, 45-49, 50-54, 55-59, 60-64, 65-69, 70-74, 75-79, 80-84, 85 & over. Relays were grouped by the age of the youngest swimmer on the team: 18 & over, 30 & over, 40 & over, 50 & over and 60 & over. Results for swimming can be found on this web page: <http://fairfax2015-results.fusesport.com/extra.asp?sport=swimming>

Team	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Dynamo-Russian Police	27	4	0	31
Russian Revenue Police	17	6	5	28
Modena Fire Department	17	2	1	20
India National Police	7	8	2	17
Quebec Province Corrections	6	1	0	7
Dublin Fire Brigade	6	0	1	7
US Homeland Security Department	5	3	1	9
United States State Department	5	1	1	7
Geneve Police Corps	5	0	3	8
Sao Paulo City Fire Department	5	0	0	5

Russian police agencies took the top two positions in medal count followed by an Italian Fire Department. The table shows medal count of the top 10 agencies.

Overall, it was a great experience for all the officials, being exposed to all of the various cultures competing together. It went off smoothly and was much appreciated by all.

Following is the list of the meet officials. Unless noted otherwise, all officials are affiliated with PVS. **Meet Referee:** Steed Edwards; **Administrative Referee:** Pam Starke-Reed; **Deck Referee:** Al Betts and Jim Carey; **Starter:** John Kost, Kelly Rowell, Jan van Nimwegen and Paul Jampole; **Chief Judge:** Vycke Horbacke, **Stroke and Turn:** J.D. Foster, Lisa Groves, Steven Strazza, Julie Little, Brad Mason, Charles Seltman(VA LSC), Lucy Fitch, Chris Purcell and Mary Burrows; **Timing System Operator:** Jim Thompson; **Computer Operator:** Jim Shaw (Unattached).



Want to do something different, and still officiate swimming? Participate in the next Open Water venue. This past June three of our PVS Officials took part in the 2015 Zone Open Water Championship in Atlantic City, NJ (hosted by Middle Atlantic Swimming). Tim Husson, Dave DiNardo, and I drove up to Atlantic City to have some fun in the sun. We just forgot to bring the sun with us. Upon our arrival on Friday the weather was beautiful. We went to the site and scouted the course finding the water nice and calm.



After spending some time Friday night in the casinos, we were ready for some time on the dock, and in the kayak. Yes, we all got to spend some time on the water kayaking. This was rather fun since I personally had not spent much time on the water since my Boy Scout days, and that was too long ago to remember. Tim and Dave, they were champs, and no one fell into the water. Although by the time all the races were over we were all three soaked. Soaked and loving it. The weather, driving rains, made everything a little more challenging. At least we did not have to deal with abandonment because of lightening. The course was rough, but safe.



Open water is very different than indoor competitive swimming. While there are watches, they are only used to confirm order of finish. There are no record times. This meet used in the water starts. It was the first time that I got to start a race using a bullhorn. I found it interesting that the starting signal was the siren built into the bullhorn.

The Meet Referee was Bob Schailey. Bob has been around open water swimming for a long time. He has been known to work with our own open water official, Kurt Thiel. Kurt was in charge of Safety at last year's Eastern Zone Open Water Meet at Lake Anna. One thing is for sure, if Kurt is in charge of our swimmer's safety, they are in good hands. It is an interesting conflict to have as much fun as we do on the water, but to make sure that we are safeguarding all of the athletes at the same time. Bob and Kurt are two of the best at working with the parents, athletes, coaches, volunteers, and officials to make sure that the entire team has fun while taking safety very seriously.

The meet reminded me of the very first time I attended a summer league meet. What I perceived as chaos, was really organized chaos. As a Meet Referee for open water you have to be a great multi-tasker. You also have to find good people that you can count on to do their assignments so that you can focus on the most important aspect, safety. So the next time you want to officiate, but do something different. Try officiating at an open water meet. If you have any reservations, talk to anyone that has done it. It is very different and very fun.



## **SAFETY OFFICER: (701.13)**

The Safety Officer is an extremely important assignment. In the era of “Risk Management” this assignment should not be overlooked nor trivialized. It is vitally important to the success of the event and for the well-being of all Swimmers, Coaches, Officials and the Organizing Committee. This is a key role for a key person.

What to look for in a Safety Officer?

Look for an individual who:

- Has specialized skills in recognizing risks and dangers.
- Can make suggestions to keep risks to an absolute minimum.
- Can make an objective recommendation to the Referee regarding the “Go – No Go” decision before and during the event.
- Can adapt to rapidly changing situations regarding the event.

Individuals with experience in Police, Fire Rescue or Beach Patrol/Ocean Rescue, Coast Guard or who occupy safety officer roles at their place of employment, may be good candidates for Safety Officer.

In conjunction with the Course Officer, the Safety Officer should carefully inspect the proposed course. The Safety Officer should also study and evaluate the Emergency Action Plan for the event. |

### **The Safety Officer shall:**

- Be responsible to the Referee for all aspects of safety related to the conduct of the competition (701.13.1);
- Ensure that each escort craft is suitable (701.13.2);
- Check that the entire course and especially the start and finish areas are safe and free of all obstructions (701.13.3);
- Ensure that a sufficient number of powered craft are available during the competition to provide safety backup for the escort boats (701.13.4);
- When applicable, provide to all swimmers a tide and/or current charts indicating the time of tide changes on the course and showing the relationship between tides or current and swimmers’ progress along the course; and (701.13.5)
- In conjunction with the Medical Officer, advise the Referee if conditions are unsuitable for staging the competition and/or make recommendations for modification of the course or the manner in which the competition is conducted. (701.13.6)

### **In addition to the Rules, please note that the Safety Officer:**

- Coordinates with the Course Officer on all aspects of the course. Checks the tidal conditions/rates of water flow and be satisfied that the course is safe for the conduct of the event.
- Checks with the Course Officer that suitable warnings of the event have been passed to all other craft using, or likely to use, any portion of the course.
- Briefs Swimmers, Handlers, Race Judges and escort safety craft crews on all or any potential safety hazards and the action to be taken should any happen.
- Ensures that all planned safety and emergency services are in place prior to the start of the race.
- After consultation with the Medical Officer, confirms to the Referee that all safety requirements have been met.
- Inspects the swimmers’ escort safety craft to ensure that it is suitable for the purpose intended. The size, type and style of the vessels will vary depending on availability and the characteristics of the course. It is highly desirable to have “prop guards” fitted to vessels.

*Kayaks/canoes/surfboards/skis can be of use as close-in escort in open stretches of rough water but must always be backed up by a suitable larger craft.*



## **National Certification**

In my years as a PVS parent and official I've seen the overall competence and professionalism of our corps of officials grow immensely. PVS officials are recognized as some of the country's most knowledgeable, proficient, focused, and competent swim officials. One big reason is the vision and diligence of the PVS Officials Committee in designing and implementing training programs. Another significant factor is the National Officials Certification Program.

The National Officials Certification Program is administered by the USA Swimming Officials Committee. Its primary goal is to expand the education of officials through mentoring, participation and evaluation as well recognizing those officials who have demonstrated their knowledge of swim officiating at each level and position. The program's mission 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."

USA Swimming recognizes two distinct levels of National Certification for officials: N2 and N3. N2, the first National level in a position, recognizes that an official is experienced and has been evaluated as capable of working the position at Sectional, Zone, Futures and similar higher profile meets. N3, the second and highest National level in a position, is likewise administered by the National Officials Committee and recognizes that an official has the experience, skills, and knowledge to be considered for selection to work National Championship level meets in the position. Requirements for progression to N2 and N3 levels in the positions of Stroke and Turn Judge, Chief Judge, Starter, Deck Referee, and Admin Referee can be found on the USA Swimming website.

Why would you want to attain National certification as an N2 or N3 official?

- To have the satisfaction that you're recognized as a highly motivated official who demonstrates superior performance standards on deck.
- To receive practical constructive feedback regarding your performance from very experienced nationally-recognized officials.
- To qualify to work at higher level meets.
- To be viewed as a mentor by your fellow officials.
- To help insure that all swimmers, from beginner to Olympian, will have the most professional, most consistent, and fairest officiating possible.

Each year, dozens of Potomac Valley's finest officials go through a mentoring process at Officials Qualifying Meets in the area and around the country with the aim of improving their knowledge and techniques at several of the various officiating positions. Have you considered joining them?

# YOU MAKE THE CALL RESOLUTION



**Recommended Resolution:** This is a situation that occurs at many meets and the decision can vary depending on the type of meet, the crowd conditions around the blocks, etc. The decision to allow the heat to go or to step the swimmers down is the referee's. The starter should probably step the heat down and the referee should investigate the situation. This occurrence should be discussed prior to the start of the session so that the starter knows how the referee wishes to have it handled.

In the situation described, if the meet is running a very tight timeline with a lot of activity and crowds behind the blocks, the referee could permit John to swim as he may have just gotten caught in the crowd. If this is the championship final of a prelims and finals meet and the referee was patient in waiting to raise his/her arm to indicate that the heat was closed, then a delay of meet DQ would be in order. As stated earlier, a lot depends on the circumstances surrounding the meet and all details need to be taken into account in making a fair decision.

**Applicable Rules:** 102.13.1, 102.13.4, 101.1.5B

# UPCOMING MEET SCHEDULE



## JULY

Date	Meet	Host	Location
16-19	<a href="#">PVS LC Age Group Championships</a>	FBST	<a href="#">UMD</a>
16-19	<a href="#">Speedo Championship Series Eastern Zone (Combined Meet)</a>	Syracuse Chargers	Ithaca, NY
23-26	<a href="#">PVS LC Senior Championships</a>	RMSC	<a href="#">UMD</a>
23-26	<a href="#">PVS LC Junior Championships</a>	RMSC	<a href="#">UMD</a>
30-3	<a href="#">Speedo Junior Nationals</a>	USA Swimming	San Antonio, TX
30-3	<a href="#">Futures Championships</a>	USA Swimming	Greensboro, NC

## AUGUST

Date	Meet	Host	Location
6-10	<a href="#">Phillips 66 National Championships</a>	USA Swimming	San Antonio, TX
5-8	<a href="#">Eastern Zone LC Championships</a>	Poseidon Swimming	Richmond, VA
6-9	<a href="#">Eastern Zone LC Senior Championships</a>	Star Swimming	Buffalo, NY

## BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT GOES TO THE SWIMMER

Call what you see and see what you call

