

To: Central Zone Membership

From: Jack Swanson, South Section/Region VIII Meet Referee

Re: Report to Central Zone Regarding Columbia, MO Sectional Meet (July 9th-12th, 2025)

I had the honor of serving as the Meet Referee for the Region VIII/South Sectional meet held July 9th-12th, 2025, in Columbia, Missouri. I thank the Central Zone Officials Chairs, Phil Barnes and Anissa Kanzari, for the opportunity to serve. My perception was that the meet was very successful. The few issues that did arise were addressed promptly.

Meet Host and LSC

The meet host staff and volunteers from Columbia Swim Club was highly collaborative and easy to work with. Meet Directors Mary Barnes and Monica Miner were responsive prior to and during the meet to requests from coaches and the officiating team. Matt Hansen was highly responsive to technical needs (RJPs, touchpads, etc.) that required adjustments during the meet. The announcer, George Young, was highly communicative and maintained timeline well in both prelim and finals. The host LSC staff, including Scott Bliss and Greg Huskey (who also served as entry chair), were prompt in running the recon report and addressing APT issues prior to the meet. This was the last meet for many of the host staff and volunteers, which will be a loss for the club.

Facility

The facility is a high caliber facility which has held many championship and national level meets. Air quality and deck space were both exceptional. Matt Hansen, a host club volunteer, and facility staff were prompt in addressing facility questions that arose. Upon discussion with the host club prior to the meet, the decision was made to start all events (including 50 meter events) at the diving well end as the start signal was determined to be more audible and reliable at the diving well end. As such, timers moved to the scoreboard end for 50 meter events.

Two facility challenges that arose during the meet included the “wedges’/fins’ on the blocks and the relay judging platforms (RJPs). Due to RJPs being on the blocks, some challenges were encountered in locking the fins into place. Additionally, there were a couple of instances in which it was necessitated for RJPs to be switched out during events, which led to minor delays.

Officials

The officiating team for this meet was excellent. Anissa Kanzari (OH) served as lead Admin Referee, Marcus Stromberg (MN) served as Deck Referee/Starter Team Lead, Judith Deedy (MV) served as Team Lead Chief Judge, and Robert Broyles (IE) served as lead evaluator. The leadership of all team members was extremely appreciated. All had served as Meet Referees for this level of meet or higher in the past. Richard Allen (MV) was originally scheduled to serve as the Head Starter, but graciously agreed to move to the Admin team after a health-related withdrawal.

Suggestions for Future Meets

As stated, the meet was successful, with few issues that arose. I believe athletes, coaches, and official had great experiences at this meet. In the interest of improving the meet further, I would make the following recommendations:

- **Include an option to indicate an application for multiple Sectional meets, if held the same weekend.** Several officials applied for both the Columbia Sectional and the Minneapolis Sectional. With no option on the application to indicate this, it was not clear which officials had applied for both meets and as such, some officials were offered assignments at both meets. This information would make it easier for Meet Referees to communicate with one another regarding staffing needs of each meet.
- **Educate officials on application procedures for championship meets.** Several officials withdrew from this meet, one the week prior to the meet. This led to strain on meet officiating leadership, as rotations needed to be adjusted. Further education on officials on expectations when applying for meets (e.g. an application is generally considered a commitment) would be appreciated.
- **Clarify the use of equipment in the competition pool.** The Meet Announcement stated that *“No equipment to be used during warm-ups in the competition pool. Pull buoys and kickboards may be used in the warm-up pool.”* I interpreted this statement to mean that only pull buoys and kickboards are permitted in the competition pool. However, many athletes were also observed using paddles and fins in the warm-up pool. A compromise was reached to allow paddles and fins in 4 of the 8 lanes in the warm-up pool to accommodate athletes’ warm-up routines. I recommend the use of paddles and fins be clarified in the meet announcement.

I thank the Zone Officials Chairs for the opportunity to serve as the Meet Referee for this meet. If you have any questions, please let me know.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jack Swanson
Meet Referee