

Central Zone Sectional Summary - IU Natatorium

Venue- Great facility to host the event, the venue was clean and the staff was very helpful in making sure the needs of the coaches and athletes were addressed. The entry and check-in process seemed to flow well with minimal delays. Once checked in the athletes and coaches were directed to areas on deck where they could sit and prepare for the meet. The Meet Directors, Arlene McDonald, Ed Merklung and their respective teams did a great job of making sure that the athletes and coaches maintained the required protocols for the meet. I thought it was great to see that the coaches and athletes were on the deck for the entire meet cheering and encouraging each other in the competition.

Timelines- Managing the timelines was not an issue for this meet overall. There were challenges linked to entries related to not having the use of the OME system. Entries were handled manually which caused athlete over entries not only in qualified events but also bonuses. There were a number of coaches that struggled to make sure their swimmers swam the correct events before they had to be scratched down to meet the entry limits. Despite what was presented in the coaches meeting and via email, the Admin team had to make an extra effort to make sure the coaches understood what needed to be done to make athletes compliant. This did not always work so I also had to help by speaking to coaches to ease their frustrations. The longest sessions were on Thursday and Sunday, which lasted about 6.5 hours which included distance events. The shorter sessions were on Friday and Saturday, which allowed us to host time trials.

400 IM-There were some changes to the 400 IM prior to the start of the competition. There was a new requirement that all events 400M and above would be subject to positive check-in. This was communicated to coaches via email and discussed in more detail in the Technical Coaches meeting before the start of the meet. Most coaches followed what was presented. However, there were 6 athletes that failed to be positively checked-in for the 400IM before the scratch deadline. Coaches from Elkhart (IN) and MAST (IN) brought their complaints to my attention and after a lengthy discussion I decided to call a Meet Jury to resolve the issue. Both Coaches presented their case to the jury. Discussion of the complaint by the jury found that the coaches were at fault, but they did not want the athletes to be penalized. So, it was decided by the jury that the athletes affected would not be able to compete in the event but could enter the Time trials for that event at no charge.

Para-Swimmers- It was great to have several para-swimmers compete at this competition. A number of coaches came to me wondering why the event did not offer these athletes a final event to compete. I explained that this was not in the meet letter and thus would not be offered at the event. I said that they should bring this up at the coaches' meeting for further discussion. A meet committee meeting was called by Arlene McDonald to look for a way to rectify this oversight. The Meet Committee decided and voted to allow the para-athletes to swim a 50M event of their choice in finals. The heat was put together to showcase these athletes on Friday evening.

Volunteer Organization & Communication- The Natatorium team was able to handle the challenges of the meet and host it successfully. The timing system ran smoothly with the Admin officials doing a great job of getting events processed and published in a timely manner and making sure they were sent to Indianapolis for combining. Technical infractions were minimal for the meet as expected at this level of competition. We did have several calls contested by coaches, but these were vetted and reported as needed.

General thoughts- Overall I thought the meet ran smoothly, there were challenges related to not having the entries come through the OME system. These frustrations were handled in a very

professional manner by me and/or the Amin Referee making sure there was little disruption to the meet or timelines. I had minimal complaints brought to my attention by athletes or coaches, which speaks for itself. I have to say that my Admin team, Team Lead CJ, and the entry Chair were exceptional and without their help I could not have done my job. It was a great competition and I think everyone involved was happy and excited to have been able to contribute to a competition of this caliber. Overall, it was a great experience for me and I am thankful for the opportunity.