

2022 Central Zones 14 & Under Championships Minneapolis Minnesota

Referee's Report

638 athletes registered for the meet which was held at the University of Minnesota Natatorium supported by 43 officials. Sessions started at the published times (which were standardized to be 8:40 am, 2:00 pm and 5:30 pm each day – we did change the last session start time to 5:30 pm with the concurrence of all teams and the facility) and finished at the published time. There were a number of new zone records set (I can't say the exact number as I don't know if the other Zone meet had times that were faster in those events) and 3 swimmers with disabilities were accommodated and recognized. A national officials' evaluator was in attendance and 6 officials were evaluated for N2 positions. There were two potentially facility ending incidents at the meet:

- A glass bottle was broken behind the bleachers on Saturday night which briefly halted the meet while the facility staff determined the impact. It was determined that glass couldn't have entered the pool tank so the meet continued.
- A gas leak was detected on University Avenue early Sunday evening which may have required the Natatorium to be evacuated. The Deck Referees and Chief Judges were alerted to the potential for an evacuation, and we continued with the meet, then emergency services determined evacuation wasn't required.

I was asked to be the meet referee around 8:30 pm on the Tuesday before the meet as Pam tested positive for COVID. I hadn't had much preparation for the meet beforehand and I was busy with my full time job on Wednesday so I was catching up on Wednesday evening and Thursday morning. I appreciated the coaches, host team and officials support while I reviewed and got into the meet referee role – specifically the senior coaches from each LSC, Kelly Auerbach (Foxjet Meet Director), Pam Lowenthal (CZ Director), Betsy Purcell (Head Admin), Kim Togstad (Entries Chair), Anne Lawley (TLCJ) and Kerry Barnes (who organized the Deck Referees and Starters in the absence of the Head Starter who was delayed arriving at the meet). We did the awards for the 11-12 800 free at the beginning of the first finals session rather than at the end of the prelims as per the schedule of events – I missed that in the morning as it wasn't on the timeline.

There was some discontent amongst coaches with the meal-times as set by the meet host – however the meet host was willing to (and did when requested) put aside food for people that were not available during the published times. We should have communicated that better at the General Meeting. I didn't have notes on any eligibility or technical committee members prior to the General Meeting so I took names for those at and immediately after the meeting.

The following are my recommendations for the meet in general and some specific to officials:

1. Meet announcement
 - a. There's repeated reference to pool events – I'm assuming that this is to separate this from Open Water but the scoring and awards are site specific, so I believe these words are redundant.
 - b. The NT entries caused confusion amongst parents, coaches and a lot of work for the admin team – I directed that for the 11-12 timed finals heats in the evening where (due to the small number of AAA entries) there was at least one NT swimmer, the swimmer(s) with the fastest conforming AA or slower time were to be seeded in the finals

session. It also added time to the 1500 event as the NTs were randomly seeded and the slowest swimmers were seeded through the last three heats rather than the final heat. Eligibility language in the last sentence of that section should be modified to "Entries for times below the event qualifying time shall be entered at the swimmer's fastest conforming time in SWIMS for that event."

- c. Entry Limit language should be modified to "D. No limit exists on the number of *qualified* swimmers that an LSC ..."
 - d. There were LSC entries received on Tuesday afternoon – the meet announcement doesn't impose any penalty. My reading of the meet announcement is that the entries shouldn't have been included unless they were updates or corrections. These were incorporated into the meet before my arrival, so I didn't call the eligibility jury (which I hadn't yet formed). Similarly, the meet recon wasn't completed until Wednesday evening.
 - e. Seeding order should be modified "Third – Bonus times"
 - f. Relays should be modified "with the exception of the 11-12 and 13-14 200 M freestyle relays".
 - g. Positive Check-In should confirm if there is or is not a penalty for a No Show after positive check-in. The national scratch rule would bar any swimmer who is positively checked in from competing in any further events (relay or individual) for that day – there is no allowance for a DFS. This would also apply the \$100 fine if the 1500 was the last event for the athlete on Sunday.
 - h. The qualifying standard for 13-14 50's of technical strokes should be spelt out. It was assumed that this was the 100 M AAA for that stroke but I couldn't find that written down anywhere. I would suggest it be the AAA for the event (LCM then SCM then SCY) followed by the 100 M AAA (LCM then SCM then SCY) followed by bonus. That would be explicit and would allow those swimmers with just a 50 M AAA to be seeded in the event.
 - i. I would recommend that the 1500 and 800 M freestyle events have a maximum time for bonus swimmers and that qualifying in the 1500 M qualifies the athlete for the 800 M freestyle and vice versa. The seeding order for the 800 M would be 800 M LCM, 800 M SCM, 800 M SCY, 1500 M LCM, 1500 M SCM, 1500 SCY, bonus times. Similarly for the 1500 M.
 - j. The awards for the 1500's were moved to the start of the last session since the fastest heats of the 1500s were swum first in the long distance session and most of the medalists could be expected to be in those heats. This would have required them to remain at the pool for another 3 to 3 ½ hours to receive their medals. If the medals are to be awarded at the end of the long distance sessions, the events should be swum slowest to fastest.
 - k. OME would aid in the receipt of entry times but that would probably be a burden on LSCs.
2. Other items:
- a. The pre-scratch timelines that are uploaded prior to the meet should be representative of the way in the which the session will be swum – specifically for events that are alternating with others (e.g. 800 Free, 11-12 400 Free). As an example, the 800 Freestyle was represented pre-scratch as 11-12 girls, followed by 11-12 boys, followed by 13-14 girls then 13-14 boys. In fact, it's swim fastest heat of 11-12 girls then boys followed by mixed multi-age fastest to slowest with the fastest 13-14 heats swum with finals. Since

the actual timelines weren't uploaded to the website till late Wednesday evening, there were some athletes who arrived late for their swims Monday morning.

- b. The officials' sign-up should be online with the release of the meet announcement – so that this link is available within the meet announcement. This should be part of the announcement release process within the Zone activities for the meets. I believe we lost out on the opportunity for officials as they made other plans while waiting for the announcement to be available.
- c. I did change the officials dress code for finals to include shorts as this provided additional officials on deck.

I didn't see any issue with order of events – we didn't have any swimmers with less than 17 minutes between swims in any session. I did adjust awards breaks and heat intervals slightly from session to session based on the previous day (to minimize "dead time" while ensuring we didn't get down to 15 minutes between swims).

Thanks for the opportunity!

Phil Barnes

August 9th, 2022