

Inclusion Guidance for Meet Referees, Officials, and Coaches

Central Zone USA Swimming

Inclusion means providing equitable access to competition and resources for all athletes, including those with disabilities. The Central Zone prioritizes diversity, equity, and inclusion through clear communication, consistent procedures, and appropriate accommodations aligned with USA Swimming Rule 105.

Core Principles

1. **Equal Competitive Opportunity:** Ensure swimmers with disabilities can participate without disadvantage while maintaining rule integrity.
 2. **Permanent Impairment Requirement:** Accommodations and modifications must be based on long-term impairment, not temporary injury.
 3. **Collaboration Between Coach and Referee:** Decisions should be made jointly, focusing on fairness and athlete needs.
 4. **No Medical Documentation Required:** Coaches advocate for athletes; officials enforce rules.
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Meet Information Expectations

Meet announcements should: - Welcome swimmers with disabilities explicitly. - State requirements for declaring modifications/accommodations with entries. - Inform coaches that late requests may not be accommodated. - Include relevant Parallel Time Standards if required.

Entry personnel should notify the Meet Referee of all swimmers with disabilities to ensure no athlete is overlooked.

Seeding Considerations

Discuss options with the athlete's coach: - Manual placement for appropriate competitive experience. - Use of longer-distance heats or different age-group heats when beneficial. - Ensuring distance between events remains manageable. - Clarifying procedures for prelim/finals notification and scoring.

Athletes entered using Parallel Time Standards should be manually seeded based on comparable performance, not automatically ahead of bonus entries.

Information Sharing Among Officials

Prepare a session-specific list including: - Athlete name and club. - Coach contact during meet. - Required accommodations and modifications. - Event-by-event notes.

Distribute to: - Deck referees - Starters - Admin officials - Chief judges (if used) - Facility staff (when equipment placement is needed)

One designated official should distribute updates each session.

Competition Protocol

- All observed potential infractions should be reported normally.
 - Referee evaluates under Article 105 whether modification rules apply.
 - Keep written documentation of all Article 105-related decisions.
 - Copies of Article 105 applications should be shared with LSC and Zone disability chairs when requested for data collection.
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Communication and Problem-Solving

Success relies on proactive, transparent communication: - Pre-meet conversations between coaches and referees. - Ongoing updates throughout the competition as needs arise. - Inclusion extends to **non-athletes** such as coaches, officials, and spectators who may also require accommodations.

Additional resources are available through: - LSC Disability Chair - DEI Committee members - Central Zone Disability Coordinator

Attachments (Recommended Tools)

- Necessary Accommodation Form – Athlete
 - Suggested Meet Announcement Statements (Club, LSC, Zone formats)
 - Summary Sheet for Officials
 - Necessary Accommodation Form – Non-athlete
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Prepared for Central Zone USA Swimming