

2025 Winter Juniors West Report

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I served as a Chief Judge for the 2025 Winter Juniors West Meet in Austin, Texas. This was my first opportunity to serve in an assigned role at national meet. I am very grateful for the opportunity and learned quite a bit. Several other current and former Minnesota officials attended the meet, including Erin Fauzie, Kerra Mayor, Bill Stephan, and Marcus Stromberg.

My Role at the Meet

- During the meet, I was the Chief Judge responsible for deck assignments and the relief rotation. I used the standard Excel program to do assignments, posted assignments prior to the session, and also met with and distributed a sheet with the relief rotation to all relief officials. This seemed to be well received.
- On deck, chief judges vetted calls, mentored and encouraged officials, and ensured all equipment necessary was where it needed to be.

Unique Aspects of this Meet

- Prelims at this meet were conducted in two pools, and finals were conducted in one pool (C, B, and A final). The officials from both pools were on the same radio channel, which did lead to officials speaking over the whistles from the other pool from time to time. It was stressed to always radio in 'men's pool' or 'women's pool' as the first piece of information.
- Officials' briefings in prelims were in a recreation center across the street, and officials' briefings in finals were in a smaller room at the aquatic center. This meant that finals briefings had to be split up (first start end judges, then stroke judges and turn end judges. Relief officials were in both lanes). This meant that briefings had to be concise.
- In prelims, there was one official at the end of each lane at the start end. Officials in odd lanes only had timing responsibilities while officials in even lanes were timers and observed two lanes of jurisdiction. In finals, two officials were at the start end in all lanes in finals (Right chair was the turn judge and operated a button, and middle chair was the relay takeoff judge and operated a stopwatch and button. The left chair was reserved for the athlete).

Learning Opportunities

- I learned a great deal about how chief judge teams function at higher levels. All of the chief judges on the team were very supportive and I felt we worked well together. One of the aspects of this meet that I liked was that chief judges focused on one job at this meet but supported each other in other chief judge responsibilities (e.g. when someone was busy, team members asked each other if they needed help). This may not always be feasible at LSC meets, but it worked well for me as it allowed me to focus on one job which I personally like.
- Relay takeoffs were observed by off deck referee and starter teams from the sides and by middle chair judges in the middle. The process for clearing relay exchanges was efficient and seemed to be well executed by the officiating team. Notably, one DR was responsible for monitoring the RJP's for the entire meet, allowing him to be proficient at that duty and improve the procedure as the meet went on. He called in either 'one confirmation required' or 'two confirmations required' for the swimmer's event, heat, lane, and swimmer number.

It was a pleasure to attend this meet and catch up with old friends and make new friends. Thank you to Minnesota Swimming for the support.