

The background features a large, light gray watermark of the USA Swimming logo. It consists of a shield with a white star in the center, and the words "USA" and "SWIMMING" in a stylized font. The shield is flanked by two vertical stripes on each side. A registered trademark symbol (®) is visible on the right side of the shield.

Minnesota Swimming
Meet Referee 101 Clinic

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Clinic Overview

- Welcome!
- Referee Definitions
- Philosophy, Principles, and Purpose of the Meet Referee
- The Meet Referee BEFORE the Meet
- The Meet Referee AT the Meet
- The Meet Referee AFTER the Meet
- Review, Questions, Conclusion



Referee Definitions

- **Deck Referee**
 - The on-deck official who is in charge of the competition during the events.
- **Administrative Referee**
 - The official who is in charge of:
 - Seeding the meet events (*Most Timed Finals meets are pre-seeded*).
 - Determining accurate meet results and publishing them.
 - This role may be filled by an Administrative Official who is not a Referee.
- **Meet Referee**
 - The official who is in charge of:
 - The conduct of the meet.
 - The officials,
- *This clinic focuses on the role of the Meet Referee at in-season timed finals meets.*



Referee Definitions

- In Minnesota Swimming, the Meet Referee for Timed Finals meets often has a dual role and will also act either as the Deck Referee or Administrative Referee.
- This dual role can complicate your role as Meet Referee as you may be occupied by deck or administrative duties during the meet.
- This clinic will focus on Meet Referee duties and not review the duties of the Deck or Administrative Referee.
 - Please attend Deck Referee or Administrative Referee clinics.

The Philosophy, Principles, and Purpose of the Meet Referee



Ensure a Successful Meet

- The primary goal of the Meet Referee is lead a successful meet.
 - Run in a timely fashion.
 - With accurate results.

- As a Meet Referee and the lead official, you assume an obligation beyond the meet – to swimming competition and officiating in general.



Fair and Equitable Competition in Accordance With USA Swimming Rules

- The purpose of all officiating is to ensure fair and equitable competition.
 - Is the meet structured and conducted in accord with the USA Swimming rules and LSC policies?
 - Are the needs of the swimmers and the general competition met without favor to individuals or teams?



Swimmer Friendly Officiating

- Decisions about competition should have a 'swimmer friendly' focus.
- Try to solve issues in favor of the competition and swimmers so long as that can be done in accordance with the rules.



Strive for Consistency

- All meets are different!
 - How the meet has been structured.
 - The venue.
 - The host and volunteer level of experience.
 - The number and experience of officials.
- The Meet Referee must operate within the limits and effects of these factors.
- Strive for consistency both within the meet and with other meets.



Strive for Consistency

○ **Consistency in Venues**

- Does the venue conform with USA Swimming rules?

○ **Consistency in Judging**

- Use deck protocols consistent with other meets
 - For Short Course, use '4 quadrant' jurisdiction. For Long Course, use lead/lag protocol.
 - Avoid 'split box' protocols with starter and referee across the pool
- Use language consistent with rules in stroke briefings

○ **Consistency in the Conduct of the Meet**

- Stick to published timeline
- Apply rules fairly, without favor to individuals or teams.
- Participants benefit from consistent expectations



Lead By Example

- As Meet Referee, you set the tone.
 - Dress properly.
 - Be timely.
 - Be collegial to all – officials, coaches, volunteers.
 - Be accessible.
- Encourage a positive atmospheres and rewarding experience for officials.
 - Mentor and encourage officials – establish deck rotations to allow for practice in multiple positions and shadowing.
 - Let them know that their talents, time and work are appreciated.

The Meet Referee BEFORE the Meet



Prepare for the Meet

- When you are requested to serve as Meet Referee for a meet, respond quickly.
 - The Meet cannot be sanctioned without a Meet Referee.
- Read and become familiar with the Meet Information for the meet.
 - Ideally, ask to review the Meet Information before sanctioning.
- Be familiar with the meet venue. Ensure it meet the Facilities Standards of Article 103 of USA Swimming Rules.



Working with the Meet Director

- **Contact the Meet Director in advance of the meet.**
 - Does the Meet Director anticipate any issues?
 - With the venue.
 - With equipment.
 - With volunteers and staffing of the meet.
 - Is there an experienced announcer?
 - 4 Hour Rule
 - Be prepared to assist the meet host to make adjustments if the timeline for a session exceeds 4 hours.
 - Modify interval between heats and events.
 - Use chase starts (long course only).
 - Ask host club or visiting clubs to limit entries.



Your Team

- **Minnesota Swimming currently requires the host to obtain the 'assigned' or 'lead' officials.**
 - Meet Referee.
 - Deck Referee.
 - Starter.
 - Administrative Official/Referee.
- **The Host is also responsible for ensuring that the minimum number of officials under the rules is present.**
 - For intrasquad and dual meets, a Referee, Starter, and Admin Official/Referee are the minimum officials.
 - For meets larger than dual meets, a Referee, Starter, Admin Official/Referee, and 1 additional Stroke and Turn Official are the minimum officials.
 - *Referee may NOT serve as a stroke and turn judge, but the Starter may.*
 - It is the recommendation of the MNSI Officials' Committee that each meet is staffed with at least 1 Referee, 1 Starter, 4 Stroke and Turns.



Your Team

- Build your team!
 - Make your expectations clear to members of your team.
 - Take action if needed to secure adequate officiating coverage on deck.
 - The required minimum may be met but there is always a need for more officials.
 - More complete coverage and consistency from meet to meet
 - Officials can get relief and breaks.
 - Invite officials to the meet and make sure that they know that they are welcome and appreciated on deck.
 - Send an email message to officials who are registered with teams invited to the meet and unattached officials (Request list through Officials' Chair or Operations Manager).
 - Team officials coordinators.



Your Team

- As you prepare, review how the entire meet will happen.
 - Does the venue present any need for adjustments in protocols?
 - Diving board between lanes.
 - Diving well/waterslides at long course facilities.
 - What staffing will you need for different events?
 - How will you handle transitions between events?



Meet Recon

- All athletes, coaches, and officials must be current members in good standing of USA Swimming to be on deck at the meet.
 - The Meet Referee and Meet Director (or their designees) must validate this at the meet.
- The MSI office will send documents before the meet to the Meet Referee and Meet Director.
 - You will be notified of athletes who are not current members or must complete Athlete Protection Training (APT) who have entered the meet.
 - You will receive a sign in sheet for coaches and officials.
 - Arrange for a place for this sign in and have a designee appointed if you can't be there for all sign ins.

The Meet Referee AT the Meet



Arriving at the Meet

- Arrive in time to do final review and preparation - 15 minutes prior to warmups.
- Are there any issues to be addressed?
 - Venue.
 - Equipment.
 - Coordinate with the Meet Director.
- Check with the Announcer.
 - When to announce and when to be quiet.
 - What to announce and how.
- Ensure the Officials' and coaches' sign in is properly staffed.
- Have a method of recording the sessions worked and roles of officials.



Officials Meetings

- Delegate the meeting , or parts of it, to other officials if appropriate.
- Before each session
 - Set time for each meeting – enough time to complete meeting.
 - Private, quiet setting.
- Officials Meeting Agenda
 - Assign officials to their positions.
 - Jurisdictions of officials.
 - How officials should conduct themselves on deck (protocols).
 - Positioning.
 - Handling DQs.
 - Stroke Briefing.
 - Review previous sessions (optional).
- Encourage and mentor officials.



Coaches Meetings

- At the start of the meet or before each session.
 - Introduce yourself and the Meet Director.
 - Have the Meet Director or designee talk about the venue and safety procedures at the venue.
 - Review the session and the timeline.
 - Review any special procedures at the meet.
 - Positive check in and time.
 - Chase starts, flyover starts.
 - Health and COVID guidelines.
 - Review what to do if a swimmer misses a heat.
 - Review what a coach should do to inquire about a DQ.
 - Always end by asking if there are any questions or concerns.
 - *If a small meet or the same coaches, it's not necessary to repeat yourself before each session. However, it's always wise to afford an opportunity for questions or concerns before each session.*



Protests – The Deck Referee

- Protests of Judgement Decisions by Officials.
 - Ensure that your team understands how to handle them.
 - Coaches should go directly to the Deck Referee for the event.
 - The Deck Referee should gather all available information
 - If the decision of the Deck Referee is not satisfactory to the protestor, the matter should then go to the Meet Referee.
 - If the Deck and Meet Referee are the same person, then there is no review after Deck Referee.
- **The decision of the Referee is FINAL. There is no further avenue of protest.**



Protests – The Meet Jury

- Be familiar with the provisions of Rule 102.23.3.
- The Meet Referee should be prepared to appoint and facilitate a meet jury.
 - As a practical matter, Meet Juries are rarely appointed during Timed Finals meets.
 - **Remember that judgment decisions are not to be heard by a Meet Jury. It involves other issues, such as entries.**
- Should have no less than 3 but no more than 5 members and should include at least 1 athlete and 1 coach (not from the team making the protest.)
- Most Meet Juries have 3 members, an athlete, a coach and an official.
- Avoid appointing 4 members to avoid a tie vote.



Protests – The Meet Jury

- It is the responsibility of the Meet Referee to facilitate the Meet Jury's meeting.
 - In a quiet, private location.
 - Allow the protestor to present the protest case.
 - Allow any opposing view to be heard.
 - Be prepared to assist if they need direction regarding rules.
 - Have them deliberate privately. Ask them not to discuss their deliberations publicly.
 - Ensure that the decision is announced to anyone effected.



Be Open and Accessible to Coaches

- Keep an open line of communication with coaches. Let them know that you are available.
- Remember that coaches have a duty to advocate for the best interests of their swimmers.
- Coaches can often help to anticipate and resolve problems. Use them as a resource.
- Remember that your job is one of customer service to facilitate fair and equitable competition



Perform Your Other Duties as Deck Referee or Administrative Referee

- Set an example for other officials as you perform your role as Deck Referee or Administrative Referee:
 - Professional appearance and conduct.
 - Knowledge of rules.
 - Welcoming and collegial atmosphere.



Chief Judges at Timed Final Meets

- Minnesota Swimming presently does not assign Chief Judges for Timed Finals meets.
- If you have sufficient personnel at your meet, you are encouraged to use Chief Judges.
- Choose certified Chief Judges, Referees or Stroke and Turn Judges.
- Make their expected duties plain.



Chief Judges at Timed Final Meets

- Handling DQ slips before delivering them to the Deck Referee.
 - Not a paper runner.
 - Review each slip.
 - Make sure that it is filled out correctly.
 - Make sure that it makes sense.
 - Review the slip with the Stroke and Turn official if a problem.
 - Mentor the official if necessary.
 - Deliver the slip to the Deck Referee.

- Delegate Officials Meeting duties to a Chief Judge.
 - What you delegate depends on staffing and the experience level of the person acting as a Chief Judge.
 - Stroke briefing.
 - Protocol and Jurisdiction briefing.
 - Assignment of officials to their Jurisdictions.



Thank Everyone for Their Service!

- Thank officials and club volunteers!

The Meet Referee AFTER the Meet



After the Meet

- Check with the Admin official or Admin Referee to ensure that the meet results are complete.
- Enter officials into the Officials Tracking System (OTS).
 - Name.
 - Sessions worked.
 - Roles, and sessions served in role.

Final Thoughts



Final Thoughts

- The role of the Meet Referee at Timed Finals meets can be challenging.
 - The venue may require adjustments in protocols and meet staffing.
 - The equipment at the venue may present challenges.
 - Your host club may be experienced or inexperienced.
 - Your officials may be few or inexperienced.
- Qualities of calmness, fairness, flexibility, collegiality are key.

Questions?



Appendix:



Deck Officials

- Each official plays an equally important role on deck.
 - **Stroke & Turn** – Observes the swim.
 - **Chief Judges** – Ensures calls are appropriate, manages the deck.
 - **Starter** – Ensures a fair start.
 - **Admin** – Ensures times are accurate.
 - **Deck Referee** – Keeps pace of meet, accepts or overturns calls from stroke and turn officials
 - **Meet Referee** – “CEO” – Establishes guidelines regarding protocols/procedures for a meet that the deck referees, starters and judges should follow.

Non-Athlete Volunteers

- Other non-athlete volunteers play key roles in ensuring a successful meet.
 - **Meet Director** – Organizes the meet, oversees all non-official volunteers at the meet.
 - **Announcer** – Communicates with coaches and swimmers
 - Adding a break, combining heats, time trials