

Meet Referee Report
11-14 State Meet – March 14-17, 2024
Tracy Meece



Facility: University of MN – Jean K. Freeman Aquatic Center

1. Seating around the pool deck was more than adequate for all swimmers/coaches.
2. Utilized staging area by the diving well during finals which helped to ease the congestion behind/around the timers.
3. Worked with Gopher Swim & Dive Team practices to run warm-ups. This meant that we ran general warm-ups for all but the last 12 minutes of the scheduled warm-up time. Then opened up all lanes in the competition pool and 4 lanes in the Scoreboard pool for 1-way sprints. Coaches were told during the General Meeting that no relay starts would be allowed. We also kept 1 lane of the Scoreboard pool open for 1-way sprints during the competition. (All start-lanes had backstroke wedges on them to allow athletes the opportunity to practice using them.)
4. Backstroke ledges caused delays for many of the backstroke events. The issue seemed to be that the swimmers did not understand how to use the backstroke ledges or the rule that a toe from each foot needed to be in contact with the pad. Some of the ledges were having trouble locking which I talked with the Aquatics Director about.
5. Spectator seating –more than enough as the seating runs the full length of the natatorium on both sides.
6. Auxiliary rooms and space - Hospitality room was good, officials' room was good, awards staging area was good.
7. Timing equipment was great no issues. Ran 2 Gen 7 Colorado Timing Systems for all sessions except 1650s.
8. Award platforms were great, very visible to spectators on the start end of the pool behind the timers. Timers rotated their chairs and moved by starting blocks to be out of the way of photos.
9. Parking was okay. Due to MSHSL Basketball tournament also happening on campus the ramps got backed up at times.
10. Facility Manager – University staff were great at dealing with any issues that occurred. Lifeguards and techs were always prepared to deal with anything that came up.

North Suburban Aquatic Club Host:

1. Staff of volunteers good
 - a. Timing – two per lane with head timers with the exception of the 1650's portion when swimmers were told to provide their own lap counter and timer.
 - b. Awards – Staging by the diving well, staff was great, very organized, right-on time for awards breaks.
 - c. Announcer – Tom Hodgson for entire meet. Tom always makes the meets fun!
 - d. Timing table – University staff ran the timing table. No issues.
 - e. Safety/ Security – Lifeguards on duty for entire meet. Coach credentials

- were checked before entering pool deck. No issues.
2. Provided a GREAT experience for the swimmers.
 - a. Provided fun toys to use for team cheering, photos, etc. (The noise makers did cause some annoyance during races, but I walked around asking swimmers to keep flashing lights away from the starting area of the pool and noise makers off during starts of races.)
 - b. Bag tags were given to swimmers in the meet.
 3. Hospitality
 - a. Meals for coaches and officials were brought in. A great variety and the host did an amazing job taking into account various food allergies/preferences and supplied alternative options for many of the meals.
 - b. Concessions were open upstairs for spectators.
 4. Provided shirts with the meet logo on them for officials and dry socks to go home in.

Officiating Personnel and Protocols:

1. With this meet running 3 ½ days, and relays running in both prelims and finals, there were times when we weren't sure what deck coverage would be like. MNSI officials responded to emails and came to help out with relays and for final sessions that may have otherwise had light coverage. THANK YOU to all officials that helped out during the weekend. 52 officials helped at some point during the meet!!
2. This meet was set up as an Officials Qualifying Meet (OQM) for officials to be evaluated. Robert Broyles from Inland Empire Swimming was our National Evaluator for the meet. Jim Meece & Kerra Mayor also helped complete evaluations during the meet. 10 MNSI officials received evaluations during the meet.
3. The deck was set with 2 stroke & turn officials on each end of the pool and for most sessions 2 stroke judge walking the sides of the pool.
4. Protocols were sent out to officials prior to the meet. During the meet the Chief Judges then worked with officials to ensure that the protocols were being followed. There were a few adjustments made during the meet, and officials adapted quickly to those changes.
5. The assigned team was amazing!
 - a. Linda McKee and her team of admins worked to ensure seeding was accurate and results from each session and programs for the following sessions were sent to teams after each session. Time Trials (when offered), Seeding for Finals/Prelims was always timely. Her team included Rick Biggs, Marcus Stromberg and shadows Wendy Peterson and Kim Robertson.
 - b. Deck Referees did a fantastic job of keeping the timeline given, adjusted well to changes in protocols (backstroke events) and worked great as a team. Calls that coaches had questions about were investigated and discussed with coaches as needed. DR team included: Gary Albrecht, Eugene Tomasevich and Jack Swanson.
 - c. Team Lead Starter Erin Stiers set the rotation for starters and deck referees. All starters and deck referees worked well with each other and covered for each other when needed.
 - d. Team Lead Chief Judge Jim Meece set the tone for the officials working the deck. He and his team (Chris Hetzler, Cheepang Chua and Kerra Mayor) worked

- together to set the deck, give stroke briefings (at all sessions due to officials coming and going throughout the meet) and explain protocols for the meet.
6. Radios were used throughout the meet. Swimmers were notified of disqualifications by the chief judges.
 7. A meet Jury was requested by one Club. The meet jury was called together during the Thursday Timed Finals session. As meet referee I provided a summary of the issue and some historical information that related. The requesting club was given the opportunity to present additional information/thoughts. The Jury was left to discuss the situation and came to a unanimous decision. Teams in the meet were informed of the decision in the email that was sent to all teams following that session. I did personally call one team to make sure that they know that the original decision was overturned by the jury so that they could plan accordingly if needed.
 8. An overturned disqualification during the Sunday Finals session caused some controversy. The deck referee that overturned the call did so within the rules and no one protested the revised results. As the meet referee, I was not made aware of the call being over-turned until after the results had been changed. I discussed the situation with the National Evaluator, and he agreed that the process was followed and unless anyone protested the updated results, there was nothing that I, as the meet referee, should do to intervene.

General Comments:

1. There were a couple reports of accidents during the meet. Lifeguards helped the injured swimmers and filled out the necessary paperwork for the University. I requested that the USA Swimming Report of Occurrence be filled out for each by the Meet Directors. Copies of the University Accident reports were sent to the Meet Directors.
2. Even with the 10&U swimmers being moved to their own meet this season, this meet was still a marathon for all involved. MNSI needs to evaluate max entries and time standards to assist in making this meet more manageable in length for swimmers, coaches and volunteers.
3. Clarification needs to be made to the Meet Jury policy emphasizing that after the Meet Referee present facts and associated factors, and the plaintiff presents their arguments, that the meet jury is to deliberate in private to ensure that no outside influence, or appearance of influence, is brought to bear on the jury members.
4. I was also made aware that a member of the meet jury was contacted prior to the meet to discuss the reason the jury was being called. Because of this, I feel that announcing members of the jury prior to the meet start should not be required/encouraged. Members of the jury can be posted once the meet has started.

I would like to thank the Committee for providing me the opportunity to serve as meet referee for this meet. My goal going into the meet was to provide a fun, fair meet for all swimmers, coaches and volunteers. I believe that with the help of the host, the volunteer officials, and the University staff this goal was met.