

2025 Minnesota Senior Short Course Championship Meet

Meet Referee Report

Jack Swanson – Meet Referee

Facility

- The University of Minnesota is one of the premier facilities in the United States and we are very lucky to have this facility available for our LSC championship meet. The staff is very supportive and attentive of the meet.
- The timing system and all equipment worked very well and there were no major issues and few minor issues. Colorado backstroke start wedges were used and functioned well. Automatic relay takeoff equipment was used and functioned well.
- At this meet, Meet Manager was run at the table as opposed to in the back room to allow for the Admin Official/Referee to be closer to the Deck Referee for ease of communication, which worked well (though a couple of hiccups did occur). One suggestion for better ease of communication would be to hook the Meet Manager computer up to a printer to allow results to be printed at the table rather than in the back room. This did present some challenges with the networking of Meet Manager.

Host

- As always, Aquajets and Danielle Wentzel did a great job with pre-meet communication and planning.
- There were some challenges with recruiting volunteers due to Aquajets families being split across the Senior State Meet and the 10 and Under Meet, and also some traveling to NCSA Junior Nationals the following week and not participating in either meet. Hence, only one timer/lane was available for this meet, which is not optimal for a championship meet. Timers were recruited from local high school swim teams and the host made donations to the high school teams for their timers' services.
- Aquajets was very generous in paying for parking for assigned officials, and offering gift cards to reimburse for parking for non-assigned officials.

Pre-Meet

- The Meet Information is mostly clear and I did not receive any questions on the Meet Information prior to the meet.
- Seeding of 'Win It and Swim It' and bonus entries is not clear in the meet announcement. Precedent has been that 'Win It and Swim It' athletes are seeded behind the athletes who have qualified for the meet with a time standard, but this is not spelled out in the meet announcement.
- There is a discrepancy in the Meet Announcement that states that there is a '10 minute break' after the morning heats of the 400 free relay and before the morning heats of the 1650 freestyle. This should be updated to include the 1650 in a separate session.
- Minnesota Swimming held three championship meets this weekend (Senior State, Sectionals, and 10 and Under State), which led to a slight reduction in competing

athletes at this meet compared to 2024. The Sectional Meet in Rochester had many athletes and few officials, and LSC leadership requested that officials volunteering at the Senior State Meet consider volunteering at the Sectional Meet. Jocelyn Richardt (RFSC) had initially committed to the Senior State Meet, but served at Sectionals as Team Lead Chief Judge. Jim Hanton and Kelly Robole each traveled to Rochester for a day. All other officials committed to Senior State opted to honor their commitment to Senior State.

- There were many officials interested in assigned positions at this meet. Hence, the meet was staffed with 3 assigned Deck Referees, 3 assigned Starters, 5 assigned Chief Judges, and 3 assigned Admin Referees each session, all of whom were present the whole meet. The Officials Committee had voted that lead officials would be paid the standard honorarium of \$40/session (e.g. 1 MR, 1 DR, 1 SR, 1 CJ, and 1 AO), and assistant officials would be paid \$20/session so as to avoid going over the Officials Committee budget. Aquajets was very generous in compensating all lead officials \$40/session, some of which came from their team's budget.
- A General Meeting was held via Zoom the Wednesday prior to the meet. One question was received regarding whether jumping in to do a backstroke start in a sprint lane was a violation of Policy 250. I stated that while jumping in to do a backstroke start could be considered a violation of Policy 250 based on the language of the Policy, officials should use common sense as the policy is clearly intended to govern the general warmup period.

Warm-Ups

- Policy 250, the 'sit and slide' rule, was enforced. No violators of Policy 250 were observed by officials. One violator was observed by a Meet Director, which was reported to me. As the offending athlete could not be identified, I addressed the violation with the offending athlete's coach, who addressed the issue with his athletes.
- Warm-ups were run as follows:
 - First 30 minutes: general warmup
 - Final 25-27 minutes: Starts in lanes 2 and 7 and additional lanes as necessary, pace in lanes 1 and 8.
 - Pool was cleared 3-5 minutes prior to the start of competition.
- A relay start lane was requested by one team in the scoreboard pool, which I granted. This lane was open throughout the competition.
- On a couple of occasions, meet marshals were observed being inattentive to warmups (during general warmup and the session), presenting a potential safety issue, which I addressed with the meet host.

Competition

- The meet utilized a 'not before' timeline, which was adhered to. Sessions finished on, or in some cases 2-4 minutes behind timeline.
- Prelims sessions were between 2 and 3 hours and finals sessions were about 3 hours. These seem to be good session lengths to provide for an environment optimal for fast swimming.

- During prelims, I decided results and finals qualifiers should be read between events for events 100 and under, and during heats for events 200 and above, to keep focus on the athletes competing in the pool and to not have any awkward pauses between heats within an event. This worked well for the most part, but did lead to results being delayed for 5-7 minutes after they were ready to be published.
- One athlete no showed a preliminary race on Friday due to lack of understanding of the scratch procedures, and was barred from further competition that day per the Meet Announcement. Another athlete no showed a finals race on Saturday after being announced as a qualifier, and was barred from further competition per the Meet Announcement (though had no further competition planned). Several athletes no showed in finals on Sunday, though not being initial qualifiers, were not penalized.
- Relay judging platforms were used to confirm early takeoffs in accordance with MNSI Policy 292. The RJPs appeared to work well. Few early takeoffs were detected by the RJPs, and not all were confirmed by at least one official on deck.
- I received feedback late Friday to shorten awards breaks (8 minutes) in finals to allow finals to end earlier. Reducing awards breaks from 8 minutes to 6 minutes would have reduced the length of Saturday finals by 12 minutes. During a coaches meeting on Saturday morning, the coaches nearly unanimously agreed to keep the awards breaks at 8 minutes.
- One athlete with a disability participated in this meet (that I know of). I was not notified by the coach of a requested modification/accommodation.

Officiating

- We had a fantastic team of officials for this meet!
- For each session, the deck was staffed with 4 turn judges at each end, and 1 stroke judge on each side. I believe this is appropriate coverage for this level of meet.
- Rebecca Binder and her Admin Team did an excellent job of ensuring accurate times and seeding, and ensuring scratch and check-in procedures were clear.
- Marcus Stromberg and his CJ team did an excellent job of ensuring officials were where they needed to be and understood the protocol, and ensuring calls were accurate.
- Barb Green and the Starter team did an excellent job ensuring fair starts for athletes. Barb also prepared a very clear DR/SR rotation
- Kerra Mayor and the DR team did an excellent job of adjudicating calls and keeping the meet on timeline.
- The Stroke and Turn officials did a great job making calls as necessary, providing athletes with ample benefit of the doubt, and following all deck protocols.
- National Evaluator Anissa Kanzari provided invaluable advice to the officiating team and evaluated several officials. Additional evaluations were conducted by Marcus Stromberg and Kerra Mayor, due to the high demand for evaluations at this meet.

Recommendations

1. I recommend Minnesota Swimming hold a Meet Marshal training for hosts and Referees to maximize safety precautions for meets. On a couple of occasions, Meet Marshals were observe being inattentive to the pool. At least two Meet Marshals, at least one male and one female, are required per USA Swimming Rules and Regulations. Per USA Swimming rules, Meet Marshals: *"Shall wear identifying attire and enforce warm-up procedures and maintain order in the swimming venue. The Marshal shall have full authority to warn or order to cease and desist, and, with the concurrence of the Referee, to remove, or have removed from the swimming venue anyone behaving in an unsafe manner or using profane or abusive language, or whose actions are disrupting the orderly conduct of the meet."*
2. Conducting this meet with 3 Deck Referees, 3 Starters, 3 Admin Referees, and 5 Chief Judges each session as recommended by prior Senior State Meet Referees made the meet flow much more smoothly. We should strive to conduct future State Championship Meets with this number of assigned officials – honorariums for 'non-lead' officials serving in these roles could be split if budget is a concern.
3. I recommend that the Senior Committee review the order of events for Saturday so that the 50 freestyle and 100 IM are not back-to-back as many athletes compete in both events. One coach suggested changing the Saturday order of events to 100 IM, 200 fly, 50 free etc. to allow for a break for sprinters between the 100 IM and 50 free.
4. I recommend that Minnesota Swimming not bid for a Sectional Meet the same weekend as our Senior State Championship Meet. Many officials interested in working Senior State are the same officials interested in working Sectionals. We were able to 'make this work' as several officials were incredibly gracious in traveling to Rochester for all or part of Sectionals. However, this was not a fair position to put our officials in.
5. I recommend that future State Meets utilize two timers per lane at all sessions to maximize the potential for accurate times for athletes.
6. Additional reminders for coaches on reminding the Meet Referee of any athletes with disabilities competing may be wise. I was not notified of any athletes with disabilities competing, but later found out that at least one (who required a rules modification) was competing.
7. Coaches were for the most part, incredibly supportive of the format of this meet (3.5 days, 'Senior' format). I feel strongly this meet format is not something to be messed with. There has been discussion among members regarding returning to a '12 and under state meet.' In my opinion, moving 13-14 athletes into this meet would dilute the quality of the meet. If changes are to be made to our championship meet formats, I'd urge having solid data supporting changes and a process which allows many members to participate and be heard.