

TO: Jack Swanson, MNSI State Officials Chair

FROM: Scott Hauch, 2024 Single Age Group State Meet Referee

DATE: December 30, 2024

RE: Final Meet Report - 2024 Single Age Group State

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as the Meet Referee for the 2024 Single Age Group State Championship Meet held December 6-8, 2024, at Minnetonka Middle School in Minnetonka, MN. This meet was hosted by the AquaJets Swim Club, with support from Minnetonka Public Schools. The organizing committee did an excellent job preparing for this large and growing championship meet. I want to especially thank Danielle Wentzel, MNSI Executive Director/Treasurer and AquaJets Advisory Board Member, for her extensive contributions and partnership in planning and hosting this meet. Without her contributions, this meet would not have been possible.

The following are my observations and recommendations following this year's meet.

Meet Registration

- 800 athletes from throughout the LSC participated in this year's meet – 200 athletes more than the prior year or a 20% increase in year over year participation.
- Registrations were accepted up until the Monday prior to the meet but were handled efficiently by the Host Club and our Administrative Officials - Tom Bose and Aaron Junkert.
- Recon reports were run and all membership/credential issues were addressed prior to the start of the meet.

Facility

- The eight-lane, 25-yard pool with an adjacent diving well for individual warm-ups, supporting equipment (blocks, lane lines, ladders, etc.) were safe and in good working order for the meet.
- Backup touch pads, timing buttons and cables were available but were not needed.
- Backstroke ledges were provided by the AquaJets for athletes choosing to use them.
- At the request of the Meet Referee, the AquaJets provided an additional Colorado timing system and printer for backup purposes.
- John Bradley, MNSI General Chair and Minnetonka Head Swimming Coach, along with building staff did an excellent job preparing the facility for the meet, provided pre-meet access to the building for meet staff to conduct walkthroughs and setup.

- The Small Gym was leveraged for coach/official hospitality and official's briefings and provided a nice, controlled space for individuals to refresh and recharge off-deck.
- Award preparation was conducted in the room and hallway space directly above the Butterfly Room. This location, near the Timing Table, provided ample working space and help facilitate award preparations.
- The West Stairwell was used for Timer's Meetings. This area, while near the pool deck, was cramped and not conducive for the meetings. An alternative area, such as the open area at the bottom of the West Stairwell that was used in prior years for official's briefings may be a better location.
- Generally, the facility was able to accommodate the large number of athletes participating in this year's meet but with the following challenges:
 - Limited on-deck seating for athletes. The deck was very crowded. Athletes from larger clubs were asked to hotel in the Large Gym in the lower level. This worked for the most part thanks to pre-meet communications to coaches asking swimmers to pay attention to the available livestream service and to be on deck several heats in advance to their race. There were only two reports of missed swims – even with the livestream service in the large gym unavailable on Sunday due to the Wi-Fi service in the building being oversaturated.
 - Athlete locker rooms/restrooms were located on the lower level. Athletes needed to leave the deck frequently to use the lavatory, shower, etc. On occasion, athletes were observed running in the hallways and reminded to walk for their own safety. In addition, Meet Marshalls needed to be stationed on the lower level to monitor access to the locker rooms – limiting their presence on deck.
 - Water/Air quality. Several concerns were raised about the potential for air quality issues given past facility challenges and the number of participating athletes. A contingency plan to move the meet to the AquaJets facility was created prior the meet but was not needed. Water/Air quality issues were largely avoided thanks to pre-meet communications to coaches asking swimmers to shower prior to warm-ups and to use the lavatories/locker rooms as needed. While no unsafe water/air quality issues were detected, water clarity and air quality was starting to degrade toward the end of the Sunday PM session with minor complaints of irritated eyes, chlorine smell, etc.

Meet Operations

- Volunteers
 - Registration – Danielle Wentzel and several AquaJets volunteers did an excellent job vetting credentials and issuing wrist bands to coaches, officials, and on-deck volunteers.
 - Announcer – Ann Watanabe, MNSI Immediate Past General Chair, and assigned AquaJets volunteers did a solid job announcing athletes during races and the award ceremonies.
 - Timers – Unlike other championship meets, we were unable to consistently obtain seventeen volunteer timers for each session to have two timers per lane. As such, for fairness and timeline purposes, only one timer per lane responsible for one button and one watch was used throughout the meet. Additional volunteers, where available, were leveraged as scribes to record times on timesheets. Volunteer timers remained to time distance events which was greatly appreciated.
 - Meet Marshals – AquaJets provided enough meet marshals to monitor deck and locker room access. Most marshals were advised of and familiar with their duties prior to the meet with some requiring on the job coaching. Additional meet marshals to monitor activities on the deck would be helpful in future years.
 - Awards – Medals and patches were provided to the top eight athletes/teams in each age group for each event. Unlike prior years, periodic award ceremonies were conducted for athletes to receive recognition on the podium for their efforts. The meet committee received positive feedback from on this new addition. However, not enough time was scheduled into the meet timeline for the award ceremonies resulting in modest delays. The officiating team did an admirable job clawing back time without disadvantaging swimmers with most sessions finishing within 10 minutes of the published end time. The awards process and timeline need to be revisited for next year.
- Official Personnel and Protocols
 - We had solid official participation for this meet with forty-five officials representing approximately twenty clubs throughout the LSC working one or more sessions during the weekend.
 - We had a strong and experienced crew of assigned officials working this meet. The team worked very well together and adapted to and overcame challenges as they arose during the weekend. I am proud of the team and

their efforts to help me provide a safe, fair and fun meet for all the athletes and participants. Of note:

- Tom Bose and Aaron Junkert worked very well with each other handling all aspects of the timing table and administrative functions. Events were scored quickly for awards to be processed. They provided recommendations for the Meet Referee's consideration to consolidate heats for positive check-in events.
 - Anne Stout and Lutfi Tardia did an exceptional job setting the overall tone on deck, managing the timeline, dispatching calls and addressing inquiries from the coaches. No judgement call protests were escalated to the Meet Referee's attention during the weekend. No meet juries or meet committees were needed.
 - Erin Stiers and Mark Sorenson-Wagner, worked with the Meet Referee prior to the meet to establish goals, protocols and deck organization for each session and worked with the CJ Team (Ian Moon and Mark St. Germain) to insure, with some exceptions, that officials were aware of meet expectations, in position to observe infractions, and make informed calls as required. Radios, using established protocols, were used to relay possible infractions to the Deck Referees with most calls being dispatched promptly. Athletes eleven year of age and older were notified of disqualified swims during the Saturday and Sunday sessions.
 - Eugene Tomasevich did a great job as Lead Starter establishing the DR/SR teams, rotations, and worked with assigned starters Charles Vazac, Chee Pang Chua and the relief starters to emphasize fair and consistent starts for the athletes throughout the weekend.
- We encountered some issues with officials showing up late for the official's briefing – showing up 15 minutes prior to the start of the session instead of the requested one hour. In addition, we had a couple of officials show up for different sessions than those they signed up for. This caused challenges for the Chief Judge team organizing the deck and communicating expectations for officials for at least one session – most notably during the Saturday AM session.
 - Unlike other State Championship Meet weeks, there were several other LSC sanctioned invitational meets scheduled during the weekend – ex. ASF, OMNI and RIPT. This impacted official recruitment/participation. Despite this challenge, we were able to set the deck in alignment to championship meet expectations.

Miscellaneous Issues

A few issues arose throughout the weekend that I would like to call your attention to:

- We had two medical emergencies that occurred during the weekend. First, a male athlete collapsed on deck Friday evening shortly after completing their race. Doctors in the audience assisted meet staff and EMS called for preventative purposes. It was later determined that the swimmer had not had food or drink for several hours prior to competition. An incident report was filed. Second, a female athlete collapsed on deck Saturday afternoon prior to her race. Again, doctors in the audience along with meet staff responded to the situation. EMS was not called as it was determined that the swimmer was not injured but extremely anxious about her upcoming race. She chose not to swim her race and was moved off deck.
- On Saturday morning meet personnel were informed that male athletes were destroying the stuffed animals provided by MNSI in their SWAG bags and jamming the remnants into the shower floor drains in the locker rooms. Facility staff cleared the floor drains, meet marshals were asked to increase locker room patrols and John Bradley made a public announcement requesting the destructive behavior to cease immediately. There were no further incidents of vandalism reported.
- We had three Policy 250 violations throughout the weekend of which only one could be confirmed and acted upon. The offending athlete from the WAVE Swim Club had already swum their last event for the weekend. The WAVE Coach was very cooperative and instructed the athlete to exit the warm-up pool, gather their belongings and sit with their parents in the stands.
- We had a Proof of Time inquiry from a coach who noted that a athlete registered with a long course time for the 100IM. This was missed in the recon report. The athlete failed to make the required time for the event. As Meet Referee, I informed the offending swimmer's club and informed them of the proof of times requirement but chose not to impose a fine as the athlete's swim was previously disqualified.
- We had a coach attempt to enter an unregistered swimmer into a relay event during the Sunday PM session. I informed the coach of the registration requirements outlined in the meet information and denied the request.
- There were some questions raised within the officiating team about seeding for the meet – seeding by age or by time. For this year, seeding was conducted in the same manner as prior years – by age. The meet information is not overly clear and could be interpreted either way and should be reviewed for next year. For this year, seeding was conducted in the same manner as prior years – by age.

Summary

I am very proud of the efforts of the host, officiating team and volunteers. Based on comments and feedback I received from participating coaches and athletes, I believe we represented Minnesota Swimming well and met the goal of providing a safe, fair and fun championship meet for all participants.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to serve. Please let me know if you have any questions or if I can be of further service.