

To: Officials Chair Jack Swanson

From: Meet Referee Pat Thompson

Subject: Meet Referee Report

Re: 2024 Minnesota Senior Long Course State Championship Meet

Rochester Swim Club did an excellent job being the host of the 2024 Minnesota Senior Long Course State Championship Meet. The meet was held July 18-21, 2024 at the Rochester Recreation Center which has a 50 Meter, 8 lane pool with starting blocks at the turn and start ends. The Recreation Center pool deck gets very crowded like most pools in MN. This should not be considered a detractor as the space was adequate for hosting this level of meet. It is a well-known fact that no matter how large a pool deck is, it could always use more space.

Time Highlights:

1. There were 237 athletes who improved over their seed times for a total of 457 improved times.
2. There were 23 athletes who achieved a 2024 18&U LC Future Times with a total of 29 qualifying times.
3. There was one athlete who achieved a 2024 18&U LC Open qualifying time with a total of one time.

Assigned Officials:

The selection/application process used by the officials committee is a fair and impartial process. This was a great asset in helping me recommend assigned officials for the meet. There was a balance of very experienced officials along with some officials who worked at the state meet in their assigned role for the first time.

This team of officials ended up being an excellent group to work with because of the cohesiveness of the team and their ability to adapt to the ever-changing issues that occur on deck, with little guidance from myself. This helped the meet flow with very few interruptions. As the meet referee it was truly humbling in the fact that this team deserves the ultimate credit for the success of the meet. Their professionalism was unmatched. The following officials accepted assignments for the duration of the meet:

Administrative Official: Kelly Burrows (Lead) and Brenda Green

Deck Referee: Jack Swanson (Lead) and Geoff Larson

Starter: Joe Cucchiaro (Lead) and Kelly Robole

Chief Judge: Kerra Mayor (Lead), Aditi Salunke and Chris Hetzler

National Evaluations:

Bruce Green was the national evaluator for the meet. Two stroke and turn officials and one starter advanced to an N-2 certification.

Evaluation/Lessons Learned:

This meet was extremely successful because of the team effort put forth by everyone who participated in the meet. The athletes, coaches, volunteers, spectators, facility staff, and officials made this a great meet. The credit belongs to each and everyone at the meet who did their part to make it a great experience. The meet required very little tweaking by myself, which is not a reflection on me, the focus should be on the aforementioned individuals.

Areas of improvement and lessons learned are always a takeaway from any event. MNSI should take a serious look at simplifying the meet information. There were areas in the meet information where you needed to look in three different areas for an answer. I ask myself when reading the information, with the technology that exists today, is it necessary to have written directions to the venue. I understand the importance of a specific entrance and where to park is important.

The on-line sign-up sheet for officials coming to the meet is an excellent tool provided by the officials committee, however, on the Tuesday before the meet start day it was concerning if there would be enough officials to hold this level of meet. The past practice and current practice are to cross your fingers and hope you get enough officials. As it turned out, and because of the wonderful officials who stepped up to help we managed to get adequate help.

A suggestion on how to improve in this area would be to consider a fourth assigned chief judge. The fourth chief judge position would provide more flexibility on deck assignments and insure better coverage in the event a shortage of officials would occur. Another consideration would be to require the host club to provide a minimum number of officials per session as a requirement of being the meet host. This would lower the burden on the officials committee/meet referee and help share the responsibility.

When attending a meet, the focus of everyone is the athletes and what is going on in the pool. Little focus or attention is on the individuals working behind the scenes in the admin area, unless the results aren't coming out fast enough on meet mobile.

A minor issue occurred during the meet involving athletes scratching into finals. The admin officials did the best that they could in contacting coaches. At times, it was unclear if the coach received the message or if the correct coach was contacted. A lesson learned for future meets would be to require one or two primary points of contact for clubs who we know are at the meet and are aware they need to respond. Also putting language in the messages sent out from the admin officials indicating a deadline for the required response.

Consideration should be given by the officials committee regarding the assignment of a third administrative official. This would provide further flexibility for the administrative team. This would also provide for a consistent computer operator for the entire meet. At this level of meet the benefits of having an official working on the computer would provide for numerous safeguards such as being aware of the rules/meet information, provide for a final check of results, and being aware of what should not be changed in the computer. This position would also not be easily influenced or intimidated by a coach\official.

I realize there is a cost in adding two additional officials to the assigned team. At many championship level meets the message has been we want to run the deck like a national deck. This cannot be obtained by crossing our fingers. One needs to consider if the benefits outweigh the cost of not being able to hold the meet or with substandard deck coverage.

Closing/Summery:

Minnesota Swimming should be proud of another very successful championship meet. The volunteerism in this sport is second to none. As previously mentioned, Rochester Swim Club did a great job in making the meet enjoyable for all.

The evaluation and lessons learned should not be considered criticism regarding the host, they are simply suggestions to make the meet better. At the end of the day, everyone is trying to do the best job they can to make the swimming experience a great one. This was clearly accomplished at this meet. It was my honor to serve as the meet referee and I consider it a highlight in my career.

