

MN Swimming: National Meet Report

2023 US Open
Greensboro, NC
November 29th – December 2nd, 2023

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The 2023 US Open in Greensboro, NC was an incredible event to be a part of. We had approximately 685 of the top US and International swimmers at the meet after many full meet scratches from the original 800 athlete cap. There were several exciting and fast swims including a couple American Records, but you could tell that many of swimmers were swimming tired from training.

I had the incredible honor of being selected for the Deck Referee/Video Review Team. We had a team of 8 Deck Referee/Video Review Officials at the meet, 3 of which were on deck serving as Deck Referees and 5 as Video Review Officials each day. I was on deck on Friday and had the Women's 400 IM, Men's 100 Fly, Women's 100 Breast, & the Men's 100 Back and was in Video Review the remainder of the meet.

To say I wasn't a bit anxious to be a Deck Referee at a meet of this caliber, with those events listed above, and with the TV and Video Review Protocols we had, would be a complete and total lie. There were so many new things that I had to learn and be aware of that it was impossible not to have some pre-game jitters. But the deck was filled with so many of my swimming official friends and mentors that had my back, and I knew this is what I had trained for. I was confident I could rise to the challenge and give the swimmers the best of me I could. In situations like this it's important to rely on your training that's gotten you to that place, be calm, and focus on the task at hand.

During prelims I had a hand full of calls initiated by video review, one false start, and one or two deck initiated calls. The false start, which everyone around me and the starter agreed with visually, was overturned by the Omega High Speed Camaras and was effectively a perfect start with starting motion initiated 0.13 seconds after the starting signal. I recall all the deck-initiated calls being overturned by video review and most of the calls initiated by video review being accepted.

One of the biggest takeaways from my on-deck experience at the meet was the importance of calm and concise radio protocols. With calls coming in from the on-deck CJs and calls coming in from the Video Review Supervisor, sometimes at the same time, it was important for everyone to speak clearly, calmly, and deliberately about every call. Through the years of being a DR and CJ at many meets using radios I've become proficient at those radio skills, and they proved to be invaluable at this meet. During the IM and the breaststroke calls were coming in on almost every heat and having the ability to handle them quickly and concisely definitely kept the "BOOs" in the stands at bay.

Learning to be an Underwater Video Review Judge was almost like learning to be a Stroke and Turn Official all over again, but with little to no apprenticing. You are tasked with watching either a set of 2 lanes or the 15-meter mark for the session. The angle you are observing the swimmers is completely different then you as use to and "egregious" standard of stroke violations you are looking for takes some dialing in of your "call barometer" in addition to the lightning-fast speed the swimmers are swimming. The procedure for making a call while in video review is the same as any Stroke & Turn call with one

minor exception and that is to say “mark” as you initiate the call. That allows the camera operators to mark the video where the stroke infraction took place and to go back to it quickly at the completion of the race to be reviewed and confirmed or overturned.

Video Review is a very intense situation and calls that are being made through the process are held to a very high standard. I can tell you that every call that was made and confirmed by the underwater review process was an extremely obvious stroke infraction. Almost without exception at this meet when the Coach and the Swimmer came in to review the video, they left with zero debate about the call.

As I mentioned in my report about the Phillips 66 Championships the Video Review process is far too complex to try and explain in this report. However, if someone is interested in hearing more about it, I’m open to discussing it one on one or in a group setting so feel free to contact me and we can chat about it.

It was a privilege to represent Minnesota Swimming at the meet and support a couple of swimmers from Minnesota there. Excited to see you all on deck at the next meet soon.