

The background features a large, dark green monstera leaf on the right side. A white silhouette of a car is positioned behind the text, partially overlapping the leaf. The overall design is clean and modern, with a light blue and pink geometric pattern in the bottom left corner.

MN Swimming Pre-season Officials Meeting

September 2025

Agenda

Welcome and introduction

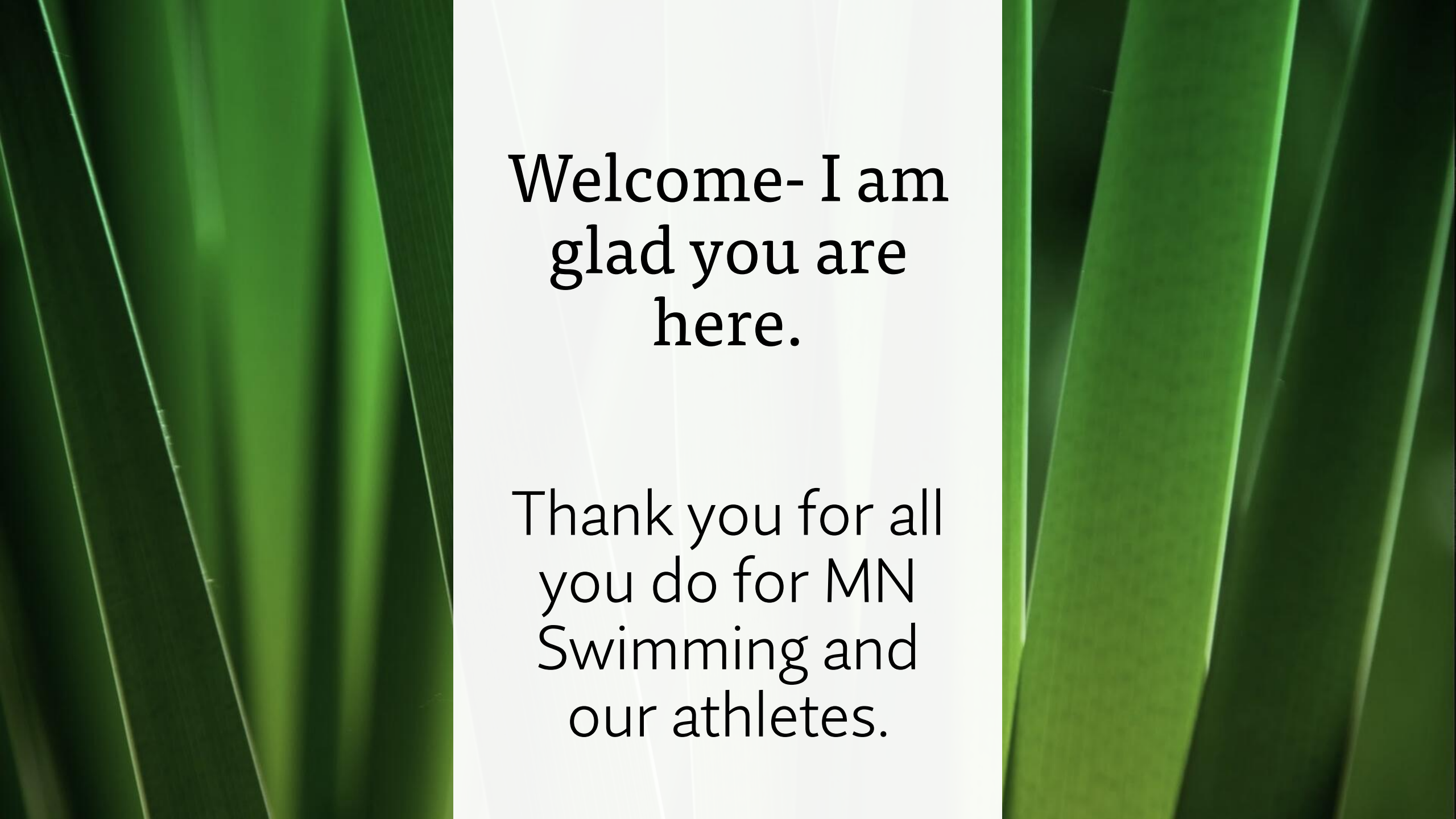
Survey Results

Working Groups

Reminders

A Few New Things

Q and A

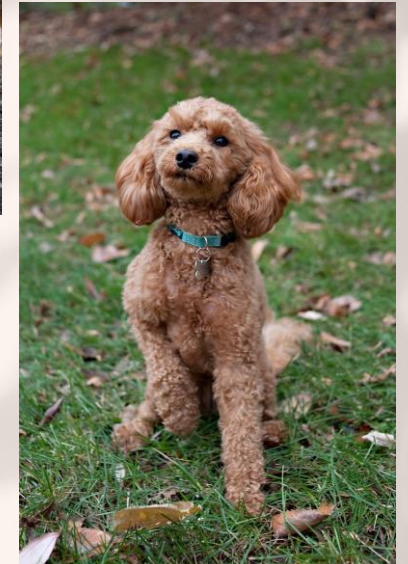
The background of the slide features a close-up, slightly blurred image of green leaves, likely from a plant like a peace lily, with long, pointed leaves and prominent veins. The leaves are arranged vertically, creating a sense of height and depth. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the leaves.

Welcome- I am
glad you are
here.

Thank you for all
you do for MN
Swimming and
our athletes.

Who am I?

- my family
- official since 2018, truly enjoy all positions on deck
- learner, encourager, question asker
- was not a swimmer, was a tennis player
- interests outside of swimming- strategy games, reading, psychology/counseling, my dog
- I hope you will find me to be a good listener, approachable, and compassionate
- understand juggling being a parent and officiating



My Hopes for MN Officiating This Year

- Be an inclusive and welcoming community
- Have high quality, well trained officials who also love officiating
- Recognize people so they feel appreciated, seen, and valued
- Foster joy on deck
- Provide opportunities for mentoring so we can all continue to grow
- Increase the number of people who want to and choose to officiate so that no one feels pressured or burned out

Survey Results (July 2025 survey)

136 responses received

Reasons I created the survey- we really had to beg for officials this summer at many meets and I want to avoid begging, and I also wanted to get a sense of how officials feel and think about our community.

What kept you from officiating more meets or more sessions this summer?

1. Time constraints
2. Officials preferred to watch their kids swim or only wanted to work if they child was in the meet
3. Financial reasons- gas, parking, lodging

Survey Results cont. (July 2025 survey)

What would inspire or motivate you to officiate more often?

1. Compensation and financial support- gas, free parking, gift cards, check
2. Shorter shifts and flexibility
3. Better hospitality and recognition
4. More officials
5. Less formality in meets making it more fun to officiate

Survey Results cont. (July 2025 survey)

Strengths of Our Community

1. People and community- friendly, supportive
2. Mentorship and training
3. Commitment and professionalism
4. Communication about meets

Survey Results cont. (July 2025 survey)

Weaknesses of Our Community

1. Low numbers and volunteer burnout- same officials doing most of the work
2. Unequal contributions across clubs- large clubs aren't seen as contributing enough
3. Recruitment barriers- process to get certified is confusing and has a steep time commitment
4. Retention issues- new officials don't always feel part of the community, feedback can be critical and discouraging
5. Culture and deck dynamics- too much emphasis on choreography, some decks are fun while others feel stressful, cold, and cliquish
6. Inconsistent rule interpretation and training gaps- AOs need more support in particular

Survey Results cont. (July 2025 survey)

Ideas Mentioned for How to Improve

1. Require clubs to provide a minimum number of officials based on entries
2. Create small incentives- gift cards, comped meet entries, etc.
3. Simplify and update the certification process and documentation
4. Build a stronger community
5. Develop a central platform for sign-ups and coverage tracking
6. Find ways to lighten the commitment load- shared roles, shorter shifts
7. Streamline admin training in particular
8. Recruit more officials especially younger ones

Structure of the Officials Committee 25-26

12-13 person committee

4 working groups



Working Groups

1. Training, mentoring, and certifications- led by Kelly Robole

Note- USA Swimming clinics are required for certification (DR, SR, ST, admin). Our MN Swimming clinics are a great way to meet local people and hear the information again but are only required for CJ.

2. Assignments- led by Kelly Burrows
3. Officials Qualifying Meets including national certifications- led by Marcus Stromberg
4. Recruiting, retention, and recognition- led by Scott Hauch and Cheepang Chua

Working groups will meet on their own and their leaders will be part of the officials committee and report back to the committee. If you are interested in being on a working group, please contact the leader of the group. (Assignments group is full.) We especially need people to help with recruiting, retention, and recognition.

Officials Committee Members 25-26

Kerra Mayor (chair, AQJT)

Kelly Robole (HAST)

Kelly Burrows (UN)

Scott Hauch (SEMS)

Wendy Peterson (RIPT)

Marcus Stromberg (SDVL)

Cheepang Chua (AQJT)

Jesse Schmidt (NOR)- coach

Andy Allocco (EDI)- athlete

Olivia Dammann (TUNA)- athlete

Elizabeth Matsura (NOR)- athlete

Ayden Pena (WEST)- athlete

Staff liaison- Tracy Meece (ALEX)

Meetings are the second Monday of the month at 8:15 pm and are open for anyone to attend.

Reminders

- Apprentices and Registration
- Approved Meets
- How to Officiate Short Course
- Atmosphere
- We need volunteers

Apprentices and Registration

Apprentice officials must be registered- either as an apprentice official which is good for 60 days (does not require fees, APT, background check, or concussion training) OR as a non-athlete member of USA Swimming (requires fees, APT, background check, and concussion training).

It is the Meets Ref's job to make sure all apprentice officials are registered before being allowed on deck.

All officials on deck need to be certified (required number of sessions, exam, and clinic every 3 years) and members in good standing (APT, background check, concussion training, registration).

It is also Meet Ref's job to make sure all athletes are in good standing (i.e. registered, APT completed if over age 18). No athletes on the recon should be allowed in at warm-ups unless they have shown proof of registration/APT via club portal or USA Swimming app.



Certifications

All officials on deck need to be certified (required number of sessions, exam, and clinic every 3 years) and members in good standing (APT, background check, concussion training, registration).

When we look at the USA Swimming app, we are checking that you are in good standing. The app will be red if you need to do a background check, complete APT, register, or do concussion training.

It is every official's responsibility to make sure they have taken an exam in the last 3 years. You need to use a computer and log onto USA Swimming. If you login and you do not see any positions listed under certifications, it means that you need to take a test. Or if you click on show certification history and the dates are expired, it means you need to take a test. You are not allowed to be on deck if your certifications are not up to date. This is to make sure everyone's knowledge is up to date and we are officiating fairly.

Approved Meets

Approved meets are meets that follow USA Swimming rules and they allow both USA Swimming athlete members and athlete members of other organizations (YMCA, AAU, etc) to be able to participate.

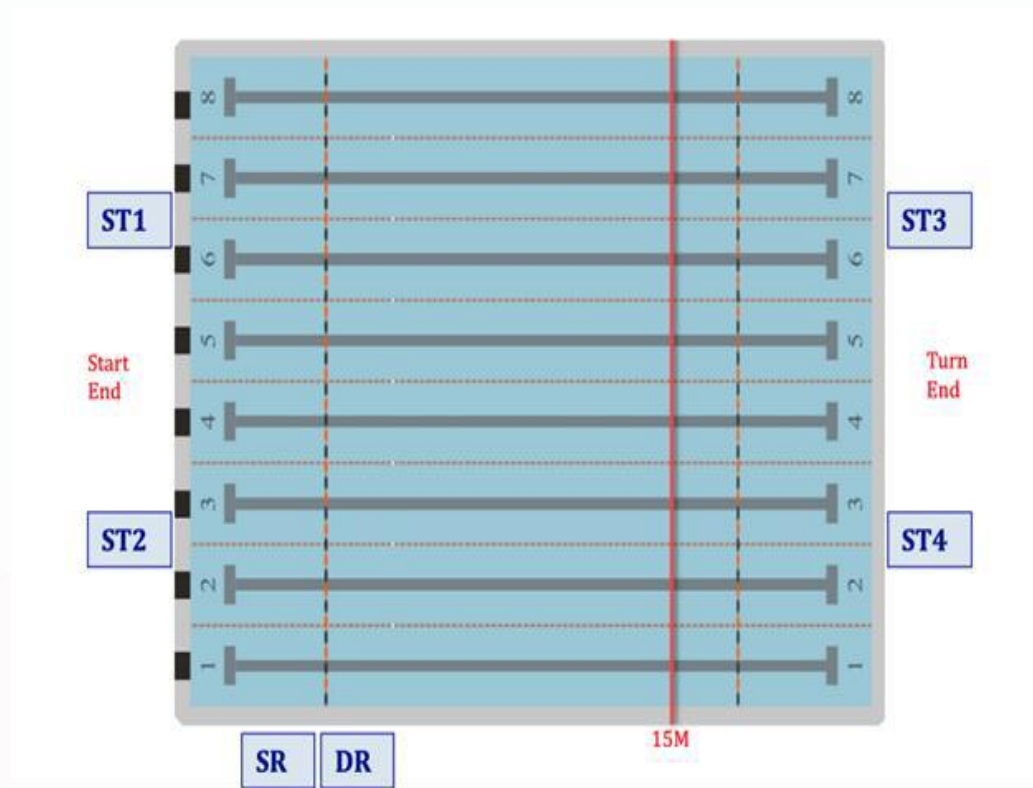
Due to USA Swimming certification rules, apprentice sessions at these meets do NOT count towards certification. In addition, sessions at these meets may NOT be used when applying for national certifications.

Apprentices are welcome to take part in order to gain more practice.

Block Party Meets

- easy, fun, short meets to get athletes interested in and accustomed to competing
- NOT sanctioned by the LSC
- May be run as OTS (officials tracking system) approved which means certified officials need to serve in all positions and then the sessions count towards certification
- OR may be run at non-OTS approved which means any non-athlete members (coaches for example) may serve as an official but the sessions cannot count towards certification
- OTS approved meets require 1 certified referee, 1 certified starter, and 1 certified admin. The referee and starter must also serve as stroke and turn.

How to Officiate Short Course



This staffing is ideal for short course meets- 6 officials on deck plus an admin.

The referee and starter stand next to each other so they can communicate when needed.

Extra officials for relief are ideal.

At championship meets having one stroke walker on the side is also ideal (as well as more officials on the ends if possible- we want to prepare our athletes for what higher level meets will look like).

The bare minimum staffing for 3 plus team meets is 1 referee, 1 starter (also doing ST), 1 other ST, and 1 admin.

Sit and Slide Entry Required

- Officials in MN currently have a bad reputation for enforcing this rule inconsistently.
- Per policy 250, all athletes must sit and slide when entering the pool for warm-up or cool down.
- If an athlete does not sit and slide, that athlete will be disqualified from their next individual swim.
- Just like with DQs, we will miss things. However, we need to try our best to enforce this rule consistently.
- Meet marshals (at least 2 are required) can help monitor this as well as enforce all aspects of safety.

New Ideas We are Trying

Google sign-up forms for every meet- these are on the MN Swim Website under the events tab for each meet. Applications for the assigned team will also be there.

For assignments we are also going to try to reach out to invite people who might be hesitant to apply but who others have noticed have experience and are doing well. But please, advocate for yourself as well. We want more people and new people to apply.

Open zooms- 2 for stroke and turn officials, 1 for DRs/SRs- anyone can ask questions on what they have seen, new ST and new DR/SRs will be specifically invited to attend but all are welcome

We are looking for great ideas for recruiting and recognition!

Atmosphere on Deck

- No question is a dumb question. We are all learners.
- MRs- please be flexible when people need to leave early, want to step off deck to watch their kids, etc
- Think about the level of the meet- do we need to nitpick on protocol? Are we officiating fairly? We always want to be fair and officiate well but we also want to have fun.
- What can we do to make this a positive experience that others want to return to?
- Make stroke briefings engaging and times of learning.
- Encourage others to learn a new position and/or to keep growing their current skills.
- Give people freedom to make mistakes and to learn from them.
- Foster a welcoming, inclusive community.
- Both mentoring and evaluations are GREAT ways to IMPROVE your skills and gain confidence.

Why Get a National Certification or Go to a National Meet?

- You get great mentoring possibly from people you have likely not worked with before.
 - It is a great way to keep developing and growing your skills as an official.
 - It can give you confidence to then step into an assigned position or learn a new position.
 - We all have blind spots.
-
- National meets are FUN! You get to meet a lot of new people and make new friends.
 - You get to witness and participate first hand in a very professional deck.
 - You learn new skills to bring back to MN.
 - You get to watch some amazing athletes compete as well as smile at and be a familiar face to athletes from MN.

Open Forum

Please reach out with any questions or concerns.

Kerra Mayor
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