

TOP TIP #2

Without sport officials, it's just recess: Welcome to the dance.

One of the key characteristics of a successful competitive swim meet is the ways in which the different parts of the meet interact and work together. We have all been at a meet where it feels “in sync” and we have all been at a meet where everything feels “out of sync” and nothing seems to run smoothly.

Successful interactions between the athletes, the officials, the timers, the runners, and the announcer can be described as like a well-rehearsed dance routine. Everyone knows their part, understand how their part fits in the overall routine, can execute their part consistently heat after heat, and are able to make swift changes to the rhythm when necessary. When successfully executed, it has a direct impact on the athletes and how they prepare for their events, and even influences the audience too!

For officials, there are few pivotal factors that help make this dance successful:

1. Making sure everyone knows their own roles and the roles of other officials and volunteers on deck.
2. First five whistles set the rhythm between the athletes, the deck referee, the starter, the timers, and the announcer.
3. A balanced deck referee-starter requires tuning into each other's strengths and weaknesses.
4. A good official recognizes how they respond to, and cope with situations that do not go as planned.

Useful links to position descriptions (Click):

[Stroke and Turn Official](#)

[Administrative Official](#)

[Chief Judge](#)

[Administrative Referee](#)

[Starter](#)

[Meet Marshal](#)

[Referee](#)

[Timer](#)

[Meet Referee \(not an official USA Swimming Document\)](#)

[Announcer \(not an official USA Swimming Document\)](#)

[Stroke Briefing](#)

[DQ Slip/Timer Sheet Runner](#)

No formal position guide available from USA or Wisconsin Swimming. It is important for the meet/deck referee to ensure the runners know what is expected of them BEFORE the meet starts.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

A meet that feels in “sync” creates an environment that fosters positive, safe, and healthy environment for peak performance.

Critical Questions:

With a goal to create a successful meet, as an official, reflect on the following:

1. How well do I, as an official, understand the roles and responsibilities of others on deck?
2. What does my part of the dance look like, and how does it connect with others?
3. What is my routine as an official? What are my strengths?