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OFFICIALS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Conference Call January 6, 2025

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Coleman. He read the Mission, Officials Committee Mission, and Conflict of Interest statements. Gwenn took the roll call.

PRESENT: Coleman Bye*, Gwenn Lochstet*, Mary Poletto*, Rick Carson*, Tiffany Epoca*, Mike Wigginton*, John Nelson*, Kylie McMurray*, Mike Petrakis, Mike Seip, Jamie Platt (*Denotes voting members)

VOTING MEMBERS ABSENT: Nick Furia

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The December 2024 minutes were approved.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Coleman passed along a note from Ginny Kimbel, the Zone Chair, that they are looking for officials for the Zone and Super Sectional meets, especially referees. Let Coleman know if interested.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Staff Liaison – Mike Seip

- He reports that there are 177 Sanctioned meets, 27 Approved meets, and 18 Observed meets so far. YMCA and high school championships contribute to the increase in Approved and Observed meets.
- The SC Championships announcements are all posted, except for Silvers. It is taking extra time to get OME working for Seniors, Juniors, and Silvers. The 10&U champs will be traditionally run.
- He is working to get meet marshals certified for the SC Championships. It is an important step to protect clubs from liability and to prepare for Meet 360 compliance requirements.

OC Chair – Coleman

- The 2025 SC Championship leadership teams have been selected. They have been notified. Coleman will also notify those who have not been selected, thanking them and encouraging them to apply again.
- Mike Seip asked if an AR should be listed on the 10&U Championships announcements, since there are no prelim/finals events there. It was decided that a "Lead AO" should be listed. Since an AR is not strictly needed to handle the prelim/final procedures at Silvers, the title will be listed as "AR/Lead AO".
- Coleman would also like ideas to incentivize more officials to work at the Champs series, perhaps offering swag beyond a shirt.
- He would also like to use Sub-group reports to get OC members thinking about what to share before each meeting, so that our meetings could be more productive.

Training

- Tiffany reported that there will be a Referee clinic on January 30 and a CJ clinic on January 23.
- She would like to post notices to clinics on social media. It was suggested that the posts include a link to the requirements, along with graphics and perhaps an appearance from MASI.

Certification

- Rick reported that the new database is up and running.
- He is working with Rob to resolve some Wallet app issues, such as an official getting someone's else's official card. Also, officials are still confused on the difference between information on the Wallet card and the USAS card, and when to show which card.
- Rick is working with Amy to issue name badges to new officials.
- He sent a report at the end of December to all official who have expired or are expiring to renew their certification. It generated a flurry of activity.
- Rick suggested that congratulatory/appreciative emails be sent to all new officials and those who have recertified.
- He is having trouble accessing the shared point site for operational officials documents. A discussion ensued as to what documents will be housed on this site, as opposed to the organizational server on the cloud which contains historical documents accessible only to the staff. It must also be determined who will have access to which documents on the shared point site.

OTS

- Mary provided the following updates on her OTS Sub-Group report.
UPDATE FROM USA SWIMMING NEWSLETTER 12/31/2024:
 - Everyone who is nationally certified should now see their national certifications reflected in OTS.
 - New reporting features have been introduced for Officials' Chairs to assist with mentor identification and to support those advancing within the LSC.
 - Meet Referees and LSC Officials Chairs now have access to a session report from within a meet, which includes names, IDs, emails, and sessions worked. (Some MASWI club lead officials have started to use this report. Recommend: posting/sharing this info.)

SWIMS UPDATES:

- As of December, the following notifications are sent to Officials Chairs (access level to SWIMS)
 - New Official Notification – when a member registers as an Official
 - New Officials Course/Test Completions for Officials – when a member completes a certification course
- As of January 1st, non-members (USA Swimming) will be charged for the Officials' Certifications courses in the USA Swimming University. These courses, as well as most of the courses in the USA Swimming University, will remain free for members.
 - This information must be clearly communicated to those beginning the process of becoming an official. Registration as an official must be the first step.
- A graphic has been added to multiple pages on the MASwim website to inform.

Advancement

- Mike Wigginton reported that half a dozen applications had come in after the holidays.
- He is working with Barb Ship to revise our evaluation form to be like the one that PVS uses. He can work with Jamie to use organizational accounts to set up a similar form.

Athlete Representative

- Kylie had nothing to report at this time.
- Coleman shared that he had received a document from Nick with thoughts on improving communications via Instagram.

Coach Representative

- John reported that this would be his last meeting. He is now the Chair of the Travel Committee and must spend his efforts there.

NEW BUSINESS

Championship Meet Announcements

- Coleman encourages members to review the meet announcements and email any necessary edits to Mike Seip.
- Mike Seip will use the MR/AR Assignment spreadsheet to list the assigned leads of each Champs meet.
- It was noted that Senior Champs will run Finals in A, B, C order, while Juniors will run them in C, B, A order. Also, wording needs to be included on the proper procedure to substitute in alternates in the A, B, C Finals order.

Athlete Representatives

- Coleman would like the athlete representatives to be more involved, perhaps in helping to decide the theme for Senior Champs and ways to recognize Senior athletes.
- Jamie reminded us that decisions must be made within the purview of our responsibility, including other authorities when necessary.

Communication on Certification

- Coleman, Rick, and Jamie had a discussion on improving communication in the process, to make sure accurate data is conveyed to officials.
- He hopes to have individual meetings with each OC member to discuss how we might contribute individually in our respective responsibilities to enhance communication.

Junior Officials

- Rick wanted to know if an unattached USAS member could become a Junior Official. Jamie believed that any member fitting the criteria could become a Junior Official. Coleman will ask Curtis about it.
- Jamie also indicated that revisions are coming concerning the Junior Officials initiative.
- Rick suggested that "Junior Official" should be indicated on their name badge. Mary asked if their Wallet card should be a different color.

Official without Sufficient Sessions to Recertify

- Rick brought up the issue of what to be done concerning an official who has not worked the required number of sessions to recertify.
- There was discussion of possibly giving a 30-day grace period by moving the expiration date back. Jamie cited the USAS bylaws, indicating that we may not make exceptions to the certification requirements without the approval of the NOC. Coleman will contact Dana to get guidance on this issue.

NEXT MEETING: The next meeting is on Monday, February 3, 2025.

ADJOURN: The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 pm.

Minutes Submitted by Secretary, Gwenn Lochstet