



Iowa Swimming Official's Newsletter June 2020

A Message from the Official's Chair

Hi Everyone,

As most of you are aware, Gina Mensay passed away on Thursday evening - most of you have had interactions with her on-line as she provided support to all officials. I had the privilege of working and socializing with her many times over the years and she was always supportive of us and athletes, plus to me, she was a great person. I grieve for her departure and her family's loss. She will be sorely missed.

I hope that you and your families are all safe and well and will continue to remain so as the summer progresses.

We had 22 people on the officials call on Thursday evening (athletes and officials). After a rocking start due to webex issues (had the same issue with a business call with another company on Friday morning - so it wasn't just me :) we went through a few items that have been posted on the Officials website. We had some discussion around virtual meets and I received some informative emails from a couple of people Friday morning on some of the things they are doing for virtual competitions for swimming and other sports. I'm waiting on a packet from the Rules and Regulations committee on virtual meets, virtual apprenticing and other "temporary" changes they are making to rules regarding conduct of meets to support the return to swimming. The Officials Committee will be putting together a webinar on virtual meets in the near future.

In the meantime, on-line recertification test results will be accepted as of the 1st of June to extend certifications that are expiring at the end of this year (so you can start testing now!).. The House of Delegates approved the LSC not collecting the LSC portion of registration fees for the 2021 season (so effective from the 1st of June of this year). We are looking to support our athletes and clubs as they return to swimming so don't be afraid to bring forth ideas to your club, the committee and the LSC of how we can enhance and support our athletes.

National Championship meets are scheduled to restart in November with the first TYR Pro series of the season. Applications for the National Championship meets are scheduled to start going online from July 1st.

Phil B.

Updates to Disability Officiating and Accommodations

USA Swimming has put out new disability guidelines that govern inclusion of athletes with disabilities at our meets. These guidelines are to foster further inclusion of athletes with disabilities while creating equitable swims based upon the athletes abilities.

App. 21 is no longer to be used to identify athletes with disabilities. Disabilities should be registered with the LSC on the athlete membership. It is important that we stress that athletes do not require special doctor's notes or official categorization to be considered a disability athlete. There is also no special training needed for USA officials--these are Para requirements, not USAS.

Disability Athlete fall into one of three groupings:

P1 - non-ambulatory (wheelchair bound) – limited use of all four extremities

P2 – dwarfism, multiple limb deficiencies, ambulatory with assistance, can be wheelchair bound with high functioning upper body

P3 – single limb deficiencies, visual impairment, intellectual impairment, ambulatory without significant assistance. P3 athlete grouping is also designated for athletes with Autism and certain medical conditions.

Whichever grouping the parent selects for the child, that's what they are--without question. Identification is meant to foster inclusion. It is not meant to embarrass the athlete, club or family. Athletes with disabilities may ask for specific accommodations. Some may include (but are in no way limited to)

1. Athlete cannot turn their feet out in the breaststroke.
2. Athlete cannot keep their arms and/or their legs on the same horizontal plane during the breaststroke.
3. Athlete cannot use their legs to push off the wall, and need to take a non-asymmetrical stroke to get their body positioned on the breast
4. Due to shoulder issues, athletes cannot bring their arms forward over the surface of the water and will drag their arms through the water during the butterfly
5. Visually and/or hearing impaired athletes may ask for a lane near the starter to assist in seeing the starting signal or hand signals from the starter.
6. Swimmers may request to swim a shorter distance so they can compete with their age group. E.g., Swim 50m in a 100m race.

7. Due to intellectual impairment, the coach or parent may need to accompany the athlete to the starting blocks and may need to instruct/remind them while they are on the starting blocks of the stroke, distance, etc. they are swimming or may need to request accommodations to noise levels in the pool area.
8. Changing room assistance.

Accommodations should be given freely as should inclusion of disability athletes in all meets. The only restriction provided in Article 105 is aid to buoyancy. We want to create an inclusive playing field and level the playing water for all athletes. Try not to get stuck in the weeds. Think fair and equal swim based on what the swimmer is physically able to do. Also remember, this is a protection for all swimmers.

It is the goal of USA Swimming to involve people with disabilities in existing competitions and programs for all swimmers, rather than provide unique disability-only opportunities. Meet Referees and Administrative Officials should be looking to include disability athletes in all meets and disability only heats during finals sessions of championship meets. During championship meets, recognition should be made for disability athletes. It is the goal that Disability athletes be allowed to score and earn points for their team during championships meets in their groupings as do non disability athletes.

Communication is the most important consideration when officiating a disability athlete. Coaches need to communicate the need and extent of the accommodation with meet and deck referees and, if necessary, explain what the athlete's swim might look like. Officials are to officiate as they normally would and call what they see. When vetting a call the deck referee then has the discretion and obligation to accept or not accept a call based upon the ability of the athlete. In some instances, the coach may be unaware the athlete can receive an accommodation. This again provides an opportunity for communication between the Meet/Deck Referee and the coach. These accommodations and considerations ensure that athletes are not penalized for things they cannot physically do. Any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Chrissy Beagle
Officials Committee Secretary

Open Water Clinic and Events

Fellow Officials,

The Open Water event Scheduled for July 10th in Evansdale (close to Waterloo) has been cancelled due to facility closure from Covid.

--Kirstin Oppel
East Zone Rep

Official's Conference Update

Due to Covid, our previously planned Officials Conference to be held in Grinnell will now be held online. More details will be distributed as they become available. If you have any discussion points you would like included, please contact me.

--Kerry Barnes
Officials Committee Vice Chair
