

Officials Chair Report  
Maine Swimming, Inc.  
2021 House of Delegates Meeting – May 22, 2021

Reflections and the Future:

- 2020-2021 was unlike any other in MESI history. Since August 2020, MESI officials have volunteered to run over 32 approved or sanctioned meets....and still counting. A very heavy meet load! Some of these meets were multiple sites and over multiple days. This was an unprecedented volume of meets driven by COVID-19 restrictions. Significant additional coordination, training, and communication was implemented in order for officials to make these meets successful for clubs, coaches, parents, and athletes.
- COVID-19 Protocols. For the safety of our MESI community, much time was spent developing, monitoring, updating, and encouraging use of the MESI Return to Competition guidelines in order for MESI to be in compliance with both USA-S and State of Maine expectations for allowing athletic competition during the COVID-19 pandemic. These guidelines and expectations will hopefully be removed from use in the near future.
- Despite a busy year for officials, our official numbers were down by over 20%, with a total currently active pool of 79 officials across the State. The primary drivers for this decrease were loss of athletes due to COVID-19 (assumed parental safety concerns), combined with typical attrition as athletes age out. However, the numbers are poised to rebound in 2021-2022.
- Training was and is a significant focus for officials. Despite numbers being lower this past year, access to training increased significantly due to more available online clinics. The use of online clinics will be a permanent (and improved) change moving forward. Additionally, we had many officials upgrade their certifications and experience via access to so many meets. These two factors have set up MESI with a solid base of officials for the 2021-2022 season and helped establish training partnerships with other LSCs (Potomac Valley and New England, in particular) that will likely remain in place for years.
- Collaboration with YMCA. The intent next year is to improve synergies between YMCA officiating and USA officiating (they are different in certification and some rules). Specifically, making it easier to become a Maine/LSC official, as well assisting clubs manage meet expectations to improve the athlete and coach experience. Overall, the theme of “officiating consistency” across the State is a much-needed focus and priority.
- In 2021-2022, we will also be helping to promote officiating across all clubs to increase our ranks through volunteer engagement and improve the overall experience for officials via MESI uniforms, guidance / mentoring, and fun!

Respectfully submitted,  
Henry Clauson