

Decoding "Approaching Sectional Protocols"

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If you're reviewing the requirements for requesting an N3 evaluation and applying for N3 certification, you may come across the phrase "no fewer than 8 sessions at USA Swimming sanctioned prelim/finals meets approaching Sectional protocols." These experience sessions are mandatory prior to requesting both N3i and N3f evaluations. But what does "approaching Sectional protocols" actually mean?

- **Meet Criteria:** The sanctioned prelim/final meet should involve higher-level swimmers aged 13 and older, rather than developmental swimmers.
- **Officiating Requirements:** There should be enough officials to support a deck referee/starter team, a chief judge team with a consistent team lead and two additional chief judges per pool, an administrative team, and a sufficient number of stroke and turn judges on deck.
- **Administrative Procedures:** Administrative operations should include positive check-in events, handling scratches from prelims, managing declared false starts (DFS) from prelims, and penalties for no-shows.

Typically, local swim committee (LSC) championships, large senior invitationals, officials qualifying meets (OQMs), and meets at the Speedo Sectional level or higher will satisfy these requirements. Be sure to check your meet history in the Officials Tracking System (OTS) to ensure you have the correct number and types of prelim/final sessions before requesting an N3i or N3f evaluation. If you have questions about any of your sessions, feel free to discuss them with your mentor or LSC officials chair. They can assist you in planning additional sessions if more are needed.

National certification reviewers will verify the type and number of all sessions when validating an application for N3 advancement. This will include a check of your pre-N3i evaluation sessions, as well as those between the N3i and N3f evaluations.