

MENTORING in NORTH TEXAS

Mentoring is coupled to human behavior for both the mentor and the mentee. That means there's no silver bullet and there's 1,000 different ways to think, do, and discuss everything. Being a strong mentor is key in your role as an official. This personal approach to mentoring is something to consider when evaluating your own effectiveness and philosophy at being a mentor.

One definition of a mentor:

- Unlocking full potential with others
- Maybe unlocking a new potential within yourself
- Helping someone help themselves

What's your definition?

Responsibilities of a Mentor:

- The most important thing is to listen (verbal cues, body language, facial expressions, behaviors, etc.)
- Be mindful of the mentees needs, feelings, and progress towards becoming an official or a chief judge, starter, admin, or a referee.
- This can be very difficult because it's human nature for an instructor/mentor to be focused on getting their point across versus being mindful of the mentees needs.

The Mentee tell us:

- When to provide more information
- When they're overloaded
- They tell us how to help them succeed

Be willing to be personal with someone, which also means being vulnerable. A strong mentor/mentee relationship helps both people (even if just for a single training session).

How does all of that apply to us as leaders within North Texas Swimming?

Assumption on needs:

- New officials have no knowledge of how the officiating elements work or what officials do.
- All officials need training clinics for recertification.

Your goals should be to provide new people with an introduction to officiating. Officials do not need, want or require a comprehensive discussion on all things normal, bad, and odd in the officiating world.

Provide seasoned officials with the same (fundamental) information that's provided to newbies which helps them fix bad knowledge/habits and fine tune their existing skills.

Think about this:

- When working with a new official they've probably heard several buzz words such as recovery, simultaneous, horizontal, past vertical plus many others.
- We don't expect anyone to know the true meaning of those buzz words until they've had experience and practice.
- They have a chance to see/hear/field the officiating world and then ask questions.
- They've been given a new perspective to think about compared to being a parent who sitting in the stands.

- Know how to get started with training and how to help others.
- New officials have been given a lot a ton of information during their online training clinic. We may need to help them understand that eventually it will all come together, and they'll simply observe swimmers in the pool and react to what they see (like driving a car, eventually it all comes together and you don't think about all the little parts of how to drive a car). Remember, you also didn't get where you are quickly or easily. You did not become an "overnight" success.
- When training on deck, ask your mentee to discuss and show how to judge a rule. Reading the rulebook is easy away from a swim meet, but the main purpose of the hours and sessions on deck is to learn how we observe and judge those rules.

One more thing, we must never forget about being a mentor, is how well you lead, determines how successful they'll be.

Everyone gets training, but not everyone gets equal value from the training. Everyone gets exposure to swimming, but not everyone gets equal value from it. Just like us, the mentee is a volunteer (at all positions and all levels). Everyone's reason why they are volunteering is different. Being personal and mindful of why a person volunteers can help you help them.

The best thing that can happen to people is good leadership. The worst thing that can happen to people is bad leadership. Leadership is influence and positive influence blesses others while negative influence curses them. Be the example of leadership.

