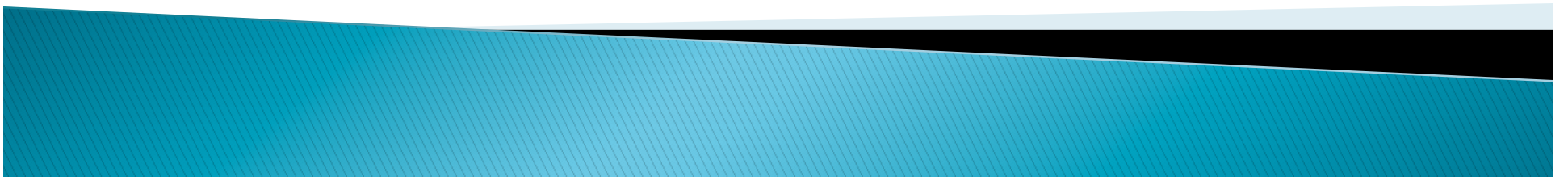




Naperville Swim Conference

Referee and Starter
Training Module



The Principles of the Starter or Referee

- ▶ Illinois Swimming Officiating Philosophy:
 - “Fair and equitable conditions of competition are maintained and uniformity in the sport is promoted so that no swimmer has an unfair advantage over another.”
- ▶ What does that mean:
 - “Success of every meet depends on the official’s integrity, knowledge, concern, and regard for the competitive interest of the swimmer.” – Impartiality and professionalism are key!
 - One set of rules applies to each and every swimmer in each and every event.
 - An official judges the technical components of the swim, not the style components.
- ▶ The key theme for Referees and Starters: You are ***“IN CHARGE”***
- ▶ An official works in a team:
 - Referee
 - Starter
 - Scoring
 - Stroke and Turn Judge
 - Timers

What is a Referee and Starter

- ▶ What is a Referee?
 - In charge of the event
 - In charge of the timeline
 - Partner to the starter
- ▶ What is a Starter?
 - In charge of the swimmers
 - In charge of starting events
 - Partner to the Referee
- ▶ This module is an overview of the positions and responsibilities of Referee and Starter.

Referees: The Officials Meeting

- ▶ Check Credentials
- ▶ Conduct Stroke Briefing
 - Stay up to date with rules interpretations
 - Consider your audience (how detailed, who should do what)
 - Be clear, knowledgeable, certain
 - Use notes if you have to
 - Engage your audience
- ▶ Explain Jurisdiction and Protocol
- ▶ Give Assignments



Referees: The Timers Meeting – Part 1

- ▶ Referees can conduct this meeting or can delegate the meeting to the scoring table or starter.
- ▶ The timers' briefing should include:
 - 1. Timing is one of the most important functions at the meet as your input is needed to determine the swimmer's official time.
 - 2. The Chief Timer will assign each timer a specific lane and designate one Timer per lane as the Head Lane Timer.
 - 3. Familiarize yourself with the watch you will be using. Know which button starts, stops, and clears the watch. Always start and stop the watch with the same finger.
 - 4. A Lane Timer should check each swimmer's name, preferably by asking for the swimmer's name. For relays, the team and order in which the swimmers compete should also be checked.
 - 5. Do not engage in conversation with the swimmers prior to the race unless they initiate the conversation.
 - 6. Prior to the race you should be sitting or standing far enough back so that you will not distract the Starter or competing swimmers.
 - 7. At the start, focus on the strobe light on the starting unit and start the watch on the flash, rather than on the sound. When electronic timing equipment is being used, do not push those buttons at the start.
 - 8. Once the heat has started, check to be sure your watch is running. If it is not, or you think you started it late, signal the Relief Timer by raising your hand with the watch showing.
 - 9. Stand directly over the edge of the pool at the finish and stop your watch and/or button when any part of the swimmer's body touches the wall. You are not concerned with the legality of the finish.

Referees: The Timers Meeting – Part 2

- 10. Always push the same electronic timing system at the finish.
- 11. Times should be recorded to the hundredths of a second (two decimal places). If the watch records to the thousandths of a second, drop the last digit without rounding. Always record the times in the same timer order and please write legibly.
- 12. If you know that you stopped the watch/button early (for example, you were sure the swimmers hand was going to touch the wall, you commit to pushing the button, and the hand pulls back without touching), please record “early button/watch”; or “No Time”; or “N/T”.
– DO NOT MAKE UP TIMES
- 13. If the listed swimmer doesn’t swim, record “No Show”; “N/S”.
- 14. If the swimmer does not finish their race, record “Did Not Finish” or “DNF”.
- 15. If the swimmer misses the pad at the finish or touches the wall and then touches the pad, record “missed pad” or “late pad” as appropriate.
- 16. If for whatever reason a swimmer does not swim because of a mistake you made (you tell the swimmer the wrong heat number, you interfere with the swimmer getting to the blocks, etc.), please bring this to the attention of the referee. We do not penalize swimmers for mistakes made by officials (and timers are officials).
- 17. Be aware of combined heats or lane changes.
- 18. Always say “Thank you!”

Referee: Managing a timeline

- ▶ Deck Referees are responsible for managing the timeline for a session
- ▶ Heat sheet with heat start times can help (ask table nicely)
- ▶ Record start times for each event on master timeline
- ▶ Watch where you are gaining or losing time and adjust accordingly
- ▶ NSC meets are scheduled to run for four (4) hours from warm-ups to finish.
- ▶ If meet is runs long, consider canceling free relays
- ▶ If a meet is stopped or canceled due to weather, work with coaches and conference reps to formulate plan

Referee: Interacting with Scoring

- ▶ Introduce yourself to the computer operator, Administrative Official, and announcer (if present)
- ▶ Find out how they are used to operating
- ▶ Confirm with announcer when he/she will talk
- ▶ Determine where DQ slips should be placed
- ▶ How will you find out about timer problems?
- ▶ Do they want you to call out NS?
- ▶ Who will handle swimmers who missed their heats, or late additions to the heat sheet?
- ▶ How do they want to handle combined heats?
- ▶ How will you be notified about changes?

Referee: Working with the Starter

- ▶ Talk with the Starter prior to the start of a session:
- ▶ Ask your starter where he/she will prefer to stand for forward and backward starts
- ▶ Review false start reporting procedures, and what constitutes a false start
- ▶ What, if, and when you would like your starter to say more than “Take Your Mark”
- ▶ How you would like problems or no shows communicated
- ▶ Remember that the Referee’s job is to help keep the starter calm and focused
- ▶ Do not let franticness with DQ slips or concern about timeline spill over to the starter

Blowing the Whistle – General Starts

- ▶ With authority
- ▶ Loud
- ▶ Short whistles notify swimmers to get ready to swim
- ▶ At least four bursts, staccato (very short) in nature
- ▶ Long whistle is signal for swimmers to get onto blocks
- ▶ When personnel and swimmers are ready, extend hand to starter
- ▶ Check location of hand in advance with starter
- ▶ Avoid flamboyancy or ostentation
- ▶ Keep hand extended until after starting signal, then take down
- ▶ Walk away from start area – at least to backstroke flags

Blowing the Whistle – Backstroke starts

- ▶ Determine starter's position
- ▶ Give an extra 15 seconds in time interval
- ▶ Blow short whistles to notify swimmers to get ready to swim
- ▶ Blow first long whistle as signal to enter the water
- ▶ Look for swimmers in prior heat to start to get out of pool
- ▶ Blow second long whistle to signal swimmers to take starting position
 - Ideally when last head surfaces
 - Just like whistle to step up on blocks



Blowing the Whistle – Fly-over starts

- ▶ Rarely used at NSC meets and only for forward starts
- ▶ Referee controls the pace of the meet
- ▶ Considerations:
 - How tight is interval?
 - How good are timers?
 - How deep is the pool?
 - How good are table people?
 - How good are the swimmers?
- ▶ Goal: to have next heat ready to start when heat in water finishes
- ▶ Short whistles no later than last swimmer at flags; sometimes as early as mid-pool
- ▶ Long whistle no later than when last swimmer touches; sometimes as early as backstroke flags
- ▶ Do not rush your starter or the starts



Starter: The rule (101.1.2)

- ▶ A. At the commencement of each heat, the Referee shall signal to the swimmers by a short series of whistles to remove all clothing except for swimwear, followed by a long whistle indicating that they should take and maintain their positions on the starting platform, the deck, or in the water.
 - In backstroke and medley relay events, at the Referee's first long whistle, the swimmers shall immediately enter the water and at the second long whistle shall return without undue delay to the starting position.
- ▶ B. When the swimmers and officials are ready, the Referee shall signal with an outstretched arm to the Starter that the swimmers are under the Starter's control.
- ▶ C. On the Starter's command "take your mark," the swimmers shall immediately assume their starting position, in the forward start, with at least one foot at the front of the starting platform or the deck.
 - Swimmers starting in the water must have at least one hand in contact with the wall or starting platform.
 - When all swimmers are stationary, the Starter shall give the starting signal.
- ▶ D. When a swimmer does not respond promptly to the command "take your mark," the Starter shall immediately release all swimmers with the command "stand up" upon which the swimmers may stand up or step off the blocks.

Starter: How to Deliver a Good Start

- ▶ Understand your equipment
 - Many different kinds of equipment in use
 - Become familiar with quirks and restrictions
 - Pre-meet check
 - Make friends with your microphone
 - How do you sound, how does the start button feel, how much cord do you have to manage
 - Let it do the amplifying
 - Speak normally and
 - Check volume at the starting blocks
- ▶ Find your “spot”
 - Position yourself on the deck so that all swimmers can be clearly and individually viewed
 - Experiment to be ready for different situations
 - Think perspective and peripheral vision
 - Stand within approximately 5m of start end
 - Be sure to be able to see Referee’s hand
- ▶ Observe the heat behind the block
 - Check for swimmers behind each block
 - Look for any potential problems
 - Missing swimmers
 - Confused timers
 - Cap or goggle malfunctions
 - Be an extra set of eyes for the referee
 - Be ready for a long whistle
 - Hold microphone and cord in a relaxed way

(Continued)

Starter: How to Deliver a Good Start

(Continued)

- ▶ Watch swimmers onto the blocks
 - Be ready to start at the long whistle
 - Microphone in place
 - Stay focused on the field
 - Between two center lanes, with peripheral vision
 - Know when you've been given the heat by referee
 - Use your peripheral vision
 - Read the athletes
 - Are they ready to swim?
 - – Take a breath –
- ▶ Let swimmers tell you when they are ready for “Take Your Mark” (TYM)
 - Invite the swimmers into their starting positions
 - Relaxed
 - Conversational
 - No jerks or lalts
 - Save the songs
 - Don't ask, tell
 - Don't yell (you have a microphone!)
- ▶ Are they ready to swim?
 - Allow swimmers time to get into their positions
 - At least one foot at front of block
 - Be patient
 - A second or two here will reap dividends down the line

Starter: Are they Ready to Swim?

▶ YES

- Launch!
- Follow the field into the water to be certain the start is fair
 - If start is fair, step out of the immediate starters area and begin preparations for the next heat
 - If no, recall the race
- Talk to the referee ONLY if you have a potential false start
- Your work is done for that heat; begin to focus on the next behind the blocks

▶ NO

- “Stand Please”
- Take a breath, “TYM”
- Still no?
 - “Stand, please. Swimmers, step down, please”
 - Regroup, “Step up please” (or long whistle)
 - Take a breath, “TYM”
- Still no?
 - “Stand, please. Step down, please”
 - Confer with referee

Starter: Backstroke Starts

- ▶ Find your position
- ▶ “Take your mark”
- ▶ Read the swimmers
 - They come up, and often need to settle back down
 - Be patient!
- ▶ Move to “Are they Ready to Swim”
 - If swimmers are not ready, say “Relax, please”
 - Do not have swimmers get out of the pool. Try to restart as many times as necessary



Starter: Rules of Thumb

- ▶ Be really patient!
- ▶ Use the “stand” command sparingly
- ▶ Stay calm
- ▶ Trust the swimmers to settle
 - A prompt response is required
 - But not “Come down together”
 - We are not synchronized swimming

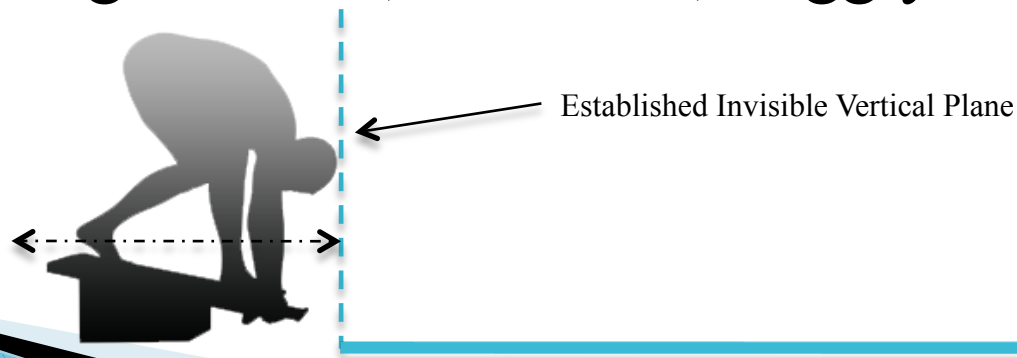


False Starts

- ▶ The rules state... “When all swimmers are stationary, the starter shall give the starting signal” (101.1.2.C) and “Any swimmer starting before the starting signal is given shall be disqualified if the Referee independently observes and confirms the Starter’s observation” (101.1.3A).
- ▶ It is critical that you understand and recognize false starts and how to handle that if you are the sole Starter/Ref or if you have a starter/ref team
- ▶ Before the starting signal:
 - Starter should stand the heat, step it down
 - Starter and ref indicate a lane on heat sheet
 - Starter alerts referee: “I have a potential false start”
 - If just one Starter/Ref – mark down DQ on heat sheet and write DQ
- ▶ After the starting signal:
 - Follow the heat into the water by walking to at least backstroke flags; be certain you have a fair start
 - Starter and ref indicate on heat sheet the potential lane or lanes
 - Referee should walk out of starting area before marking sheet
 - Circle lane or write lane in margin
 - If sole Starter/Ref, write DQ
 - If a Starter/Ref Team, the Starter approaches the referee “I have a potential false start”
 - If a Starter/Ref Team, compare sheets without discussion
 - If confirmed, write DQ
 - If not confirmed, continue to watch pool

False Starts: Being Stationary

- ▶ Stationary does not mean motionless
- ▶ A stationary swimmer establishes a vertical plane at the front of the block
- ▶ Breaking that plane (forward or backward) before the starting signal = false start
- ▶ Watch for movement relative to that plane - Not twitching muscles, back feet, wiggly butts, etc.



NSC Rule Variances

NSC modifies several USA Swimming Rules for the benefit of the summer swimmer.

Please note these differences between the materials and the instructional videos.

- ▶ **Backstroke Turns** – NSC uses Illinois High School Association Backstroke Turn Rules.
 - During turns (usually between the backstroke flags and the wall), a swimmer MAY go past vertical to the breast and MAY utilize a continuous single or continuous simultaneous double arm pull to initiate the turn.
 - After the initiation of the turning action, no other arm pulls may be started.
 - However, kicking and gliding actions are permitted.
- ▶ **6&u Infractions** – In 6&u events, NSC rules do not permit swimmers to be disqualified, unless the swimmer doesn't maintain the correct body position. (e.g. A swimmer swims the backstroke by using the freestyle stroke/body position).
- ▶ **Definition of Arms during the Butterfly** – NSC relaxes the arm recovery interpretation during the Butterfly stroke. Any part of the arm brought forward (breaking the water) simultaneously over the water is legal.
 - In USA Swimming, the arms of a swimmer are defined from the shoulder to the wrist.
 - In *NSC Swimming*, the arms of a swimmer are defined ***from the shoulder to the fingertips.***
- ▶ **15m Mark Violations** – Most swimming pools used by the members of NSC do not mark the 15m length. Therefore, the backstroke flags are commonly utilized for any 15m disqualifications.

Common Infractions for all Strokes

- ▶ Did not finish
- ▶ Walking on or pushing off pool bottom
- ▶ Pulling on lane lines – Propulsion from lane lines
- ▶ Not touching the wall at each end of the pool
- ▶ Interfering with another swimmer
- ▶ Not starting and finishing in the same lane
- ▶ Unsportsmanlike conduct
- ▶ Delay of meet (Referee's jurisdiction)
- ▶ False start (Starter's and Referee's jurisdiction)



Judging Swimmers with Physical Disabilities

- ▶ USA Swimming/NSC Rule 105
 - “If there are swimmers with disabilities participating, Referee will notify judges in advance.”
 - Judge any part of the body that the swimmer uses.
 - “Do not judge a part of the body that cannot be used.”
 - Base any judgments on the rule, not on technique.
 - Physical Disabilities can include broken or injured limbs at the discretion of the Referee.



How to Judge – “Fair and Equitable”

- ▶ “Judging should be consistent among different officials at a meet.”
- ▶ “Judging should be consistent at different meets.”
- ▶ “All of the rules are enforced.”
- ▶ “The rules are enforced across all age groups and levels of ability.” – for 8&up events
- ▶ “Officials should demonstrate impartiality in their enforcement of the rules.”
- ▶ Officials should work at their positions and take it seriously. “Competitors have a right to expect officials to know the rules and interpret them correctly, fairly, consistently, and courteously.”

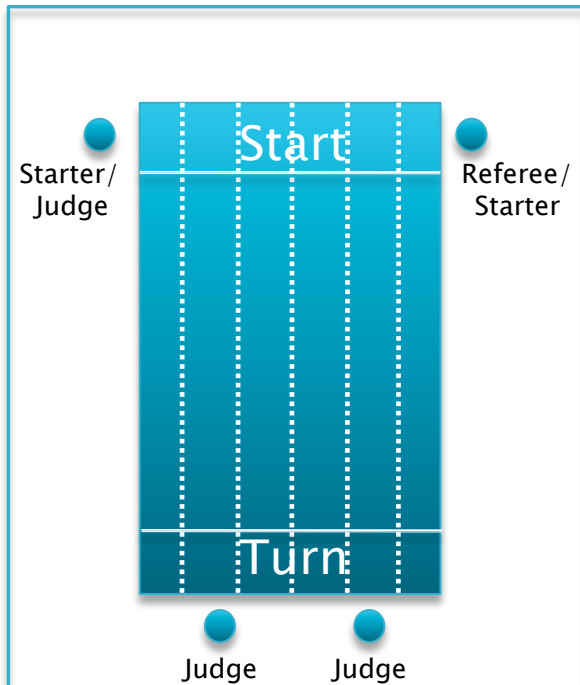
Guidelines for Officials

- ▶ Familiarize yourself with the facility.
- ▶ Let people know when the officials' meeting will be held.
- ▶ Let people know when the timers' meeting will be held.
- ▶ Take officiating seriously. Be professional in manner. Be prepared to officiate.
- ▶ At the Official's Briefing, discuss the protocols specific to this meet.
- ▶ Be courteous, but don't let anyone interfere with the performance of your job
- ▶ If someone engages in abusive or unsportsmanlike conduct, deal the matter the immediately.
- ▶ Apply the rules uniformly and consistently. Always use the same pattern of observation. Distribute your attention equally.

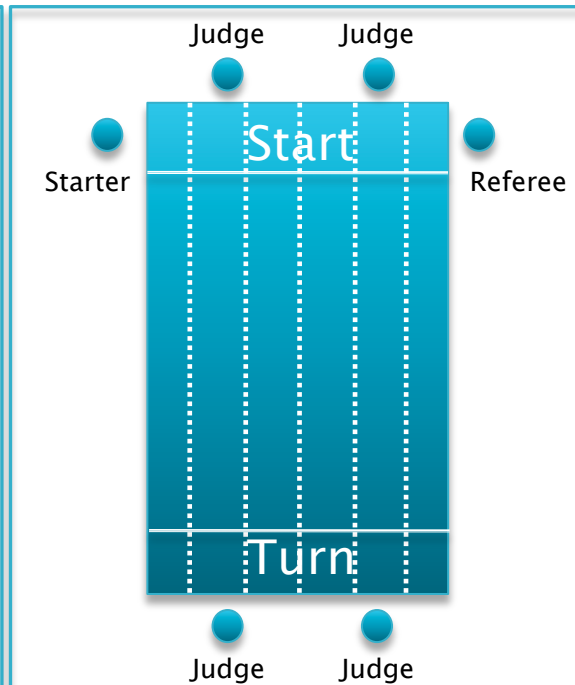


Placement of an Official

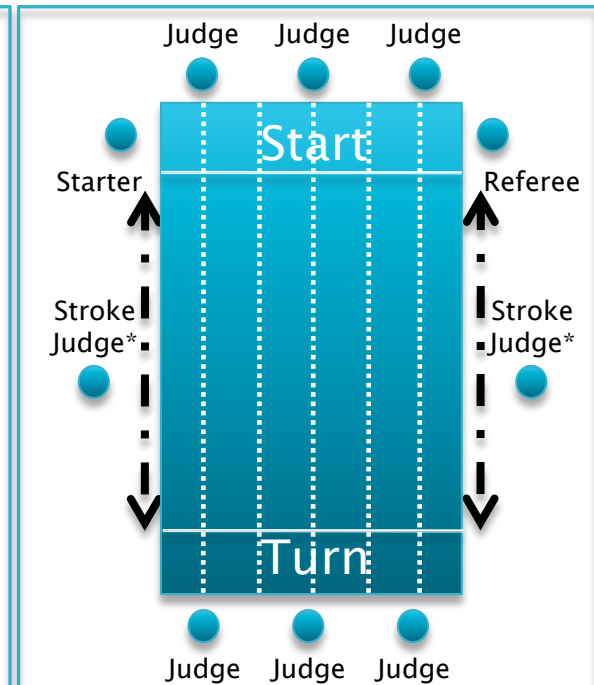
- ▶ “Determined by Meet Referee”
- ▶ “Dependent upon pool configuration”
- ▶ “Dependent on the number of officials”



Minimal



Recommended



Ideal

*Depending on Pool Shape

Reporting an infraction

- ▶ If a Referee needs clarification of a call, they should ask these questions:
 - Where did the infraction happen?
 - Which lane?
 - Where in the lane?
 - Was the infraction in the official's jurisdiction?
 - What happened?
 - Ask the official to a picture of what happened?
 - Don't use your hands to communicate the infraction.
 - Which rule was violated?
 - Help officials use DQ card/rule book terms.
 - When did it happen – Start, Swim, Turn, Finish?

Meet Safety Procedures

- ▶ **Arrive 15 to 30 minutes prior to warm-up**
- ▶ **Note, Locate, Resolve**
 - Locate nearest exits
 - Locate and meet facility Manager and Safety Staff leader
 - Check Emergency Action Plan
 - Locate first aid equipment
 - Is the pool chemical balance and temperature OK?
 - Locate emergency call phone and numbers
 - Locate: backboard, blood spill equipment and AED
 - Note dangerous areas including loose cords or electric wires – resolve
 - Forms – Are Report of Occurrence forms available?
- ▶ **911 and Lightning Protocols – Convey to coaches, officials. Are there “Safe” areas?**
- ▶ **Pool and Equipment**
 - Blocks: stable? not slippery?
 - handgrips safe?
 - sharp edges?
 - Is pool deep enough to use starting platforms?
 - Is diving board blocked off, and not hazardous?
 - Are the lane lines safe? loose wires, stable anchors.
 - Are ladders safe?

(Continued)

Meet Safety Procedures

(Continued)

▶ **Pool and Equipment**

- Is training equipment out of the way?
- Are there any open pole or starting block holes?
- Consider accommodations for swimmers with disabilities Is there sufficient gathering area behind the blocks?
- Are Spectators separated from Meet Operation areas?
- Can Officials operate safely and without interference?
- Don't hesitate to stop the meet and resolve any safety issues anywhere in the venue!

▶ **To help provide a safe environment: Enforce the warm-up rules!**

- No diving - feet first entry - except during portion of controlled warm-up starts.
- No Backstroke starts except during portion of controlled warm-up starts. (They are dives.)

- No socializing in warm-up lanes. Swimming only.
- Remind swimmers that running, horse play, whipping towels, etc. are dangerous and must be stopped.
- Blood on the deck or a bleeding swimmer?
 - Immediately notify the first aid staff.
 - Help cordon off the bloody area until it is properly cleaned.

▶ **Unauthorized people on Deck? In the venue? Watch for inappropriate camera use in locker rooms & in or around the venue.**

▶ **Remember: Safety is the Primary Concern. Be firm! But not a Tyrant.**

Other things to know

- ▶ Remember: NSC Rules are based on USA Swimming Rules
- ▶ What to Wear:
 - White Shirt over Khaki Shorts or Pants
 - Shoes, crocs, or sandals
 - NSC nametag
- ▶ Problems or Questions:
 - Contact Dave Fox – mail@foxville.net
- ▶ Don't forget about volunteering for the Classic Meet
 - We need officials for 3 classic sessions
 - The more officials we have, the less work there is

Resources

- ▶ Naperville Swim Conference:
http://www.teamunify.com/SubTabGeneric.jsp?team=recnpdsc&_stbid_=104882 - many officials-related documents are located here
- ▶ Please refer to “Naperville Swim Conference Training Materials for Swim Officials”
- ▶ Illinois Swimming Website: www.ilswim.org - to become a certified USAS official - go here first
- ▶ USA Swimming Website: www.usaswimming.org
 - For rules and rulebooks: <http://www.usaswimming.org/DesktopDefault.aspx?TabId=1636>
 - For training resources:
www.usaswimming.org/DesktopDefault.aspx?TabId=1509&Alias=Rainbow&Lang=en
- ▶ Links to USA Swimming training videos (shown at the Beginner’s Training):
 - Breaststroke – <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xj8YzwB7B18>
 - Butterfly – <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JYLaAq7puHU>
 - Backstroke – <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hwj7zPQ4D00> - REMEMBER: NSC allows swimmers to turn past vertical towards the breast and glide into the wall; in USA Swimming Materials and this video, it will say otherwise.
 - Freestyle – <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=79pdZgcJWSw>
 - IM/relays – <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rpk6YboSLsQ>

Training materials are based on Illinois Swimming, Inc., Illinois High School Association, and USA Swimming Materials

