

RVAA Referee Guide

A Referee is responsible for ensuring that every aspect of a meet is offering a level playing field and equally fair opportunity to each swimmer to achieve his/her best swims possible under the adopted rules and guidelines of the league.

Referee duties include:

- Ensuring that each area of operation is adequately staffed and equipped (Clerk of Course, Timers/Starters, S&T Judges, Tables/computer/awards)
- Supervising & coordinating the training of officials at meets
- Adjudicating protested calls
- Adjudicating timing disparities
- Starting the meet on time
- Monitoring safety during the course of the meet (Weather, safe deck, facility lifeguards)
- Coordinating with pool management and RVAA meet coordinator in the event of weather delays/cancellations
- Ensuring a workable, timely pace for the overall meet
- Validating scores at the end of the meet with Computer Operator

Working a Meet chronologically:

- Introduce yourself to the coaches of all teams, layout your plan, and ask if there are any special circumstances that you need to know (i.e. swimmers with disabilities, restrictions from pool facility, etc.)
- Check in with the Clerk of Course and retrieve Referee's packet, ensure that volunteer signup sheets are out and accessible. Check with Clerk to see if any special circumstances exist.
- Meet with Computer table. Discuss how potential timing issues should be handled.
- Ensure that warm-ups start on time (typically host team first) and that each team has the same time in the water. Make sure that coaches are clear on how to handle starts from the blocks during practice.
- Ask announcer to call Timers meeting (Held by Starter), S&T officials meeting (Referee) and Runners meeting (Referee)
 - Starter should emphasize the importance of accurate timing, as only two points of data available per lane per swim. Starter will assign timers to lanes and explain if strokes for that meet require changing sides (25 mtr. Races)
 - Referee should explain jurisdictions, placement, and rotations to the S&T judges. Time should also be allotted to review of the rules. Must remember that many officials are also swimmers – allow them to step away during their events!
 - Referee should explain runners' duties and place for efficient distribution/collection of time cards. Extra runners needed for 25 mtr races!
- Check in with Clerk of Course and Computer table several times during the race to see if any issues are present.
- When not attending to any other issues, spend time behind the blocks helping swimmers to be in the correct place, moving the next heat forward to the correct chairs. Nothing slows a meet like swimmers that aren't "dialed in" and fail to get to the block when his/her heat is called to step up!
- With the Starter, check for "Early Takeoffs" during the relays, if offered
- Later in the regular season, work with Clerk of Course and Starter to coordinate "Open" qualifying swims.
- Review scoring with Computer Operator at end of meet before posting final results!

Referee tips:

- You are the conduit of information between your judges and the coaches/teams. Parents should NEVER approach judges directly – this is a disturbance to the judges while they are working and could be construed as intimidation. Coaches are the only conduit to protest calls and/or procedures, and those should be directed by the Coach to the Referee.
- In the event a protest is presented by a coach, listen carefully and tell the coach that you will get back to them. If the protest is specific to a stroke call, listen to the coach's question re: the call – in some cases the coaches are not clear on what constitutes a violation! In most cases you need to investigate which judge made the call and seek out the judge to discuss the call directly. While questioning the judge, listen if the explanation of the violation is clear and that it occurred in that judge's jurisdiction (their assigned area of observation). And did the judge raise their hand? Assuming there is not an obvious hesitation, uncertainty, or conflict in the explanation of the call, let the call stand as is and report back to the coach with your decision. If you have cause for concern with the call, you may overturn a stroke-related call at your discretion. Be sure that you are clear on the call and your decision!
- Sometimes a coach or volunteer may approach you with a procedural or timing issue. Because RVAA does not utilize backup timing systems, it can be difficult to determine discrepancies and resolve timing issues. Use whatever resources are available to you. Is there an order of finish? Can the timers confirm a bad time from one of the two watch times? Do coaches or parents have watch times or video? Did the Tables volunteers misinterpret a time? Remember, as a league and as officials, we want to present the most accurate time possible to our swimmers – the times are used to qualify for City/County and gauge a swimmers success through the season. It is a source of pride and encouragement for many swimmers!
- WHENEVER PRESENTED WITH A PROTEST OR QUESTION FROM A COACH OR OTHER VOLUNTEER, SEEK OUT OTHER OPINIONS BEFORE MAKING A RULING OR GIVING AN ANSWER! At any given meet there are typically years of cumulative experience between all the volunteers. Sometimes it helps to have other input and perspectives before making a final decision.
- Be the head cheerleader representing your team – the volunteer corps! If you support them, they will support you.