

# The Deck Referee

USA Swimming

KY Swimming

# The Deck Referee

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# The “Team”

- The Deck Referee is responsible for a fair environment in which the swimmers will be competing. To accomplish that, the deck is staffed with a number of people with different jobs. The Deck Referee must be a facilitator in helping that staff get their jobs done correctly and at the same time allow them the freedom to do those jobs. While the Deck Referee needs to know all the jobs of the others on deck, it is not his or her job to do them all. He or she will have enough to do.

# The “Team”

- Stroke & Turn Judges
  - They are your staff, the people who are working the line
- Chief Judges
  - The manager
  - They are your eyes and ears
  - They are your communications link to the deck
- Starters
  - Key individual for a smooth flowing session
  - A second set of eyes and ears to help “watch your back”

# The “Team”

- Announcer
  - Valuable resource for facilitating communications with coaches and swimmers (e.g. swim-offs)
  - Need to work closely with for finals procedures
- Meet Referee
  - CEO
  - Establishes guidelines regarding protocols/procedures for a given meet that the deck referees, starter and judges need to follow
  - The next level to which coaches can go to on an issue

# The Procedures

- The pool is yours while you are the deck referee
- Work closely with the starter – be sure that each of you knows what the other is expecting (*See Deck Referee & Starter Guidelines*)
  - Relative positions on the deck
  - Who approaches who for a false start?
  - Timing of when the short and long whistles be blown
  - Keeping order of finish
  - Checking the next heat to see if there are any open lanes/missing swimmers
  - Watching for issues/situations that could cause a problem

# The Procedures

- What are the scratch procedures for the meet?
- What are the procedures for “no-shows” and declared false starts?
- What are the procedures for a DQ?
  - Who is writing the slip?
  - Who tells the swimmer/coach?
- Radio Protocols
  - Make sure you and the CJs are on the same page when it comes to how calls are to be made
  - USA Swimming Radio Etiquette and Usage Guidelines

# The Procedures

- The Start
  - Allow the starter to pick his or her best spot and then position yourself appropriately
    - Can see all lanes clearly
    - Does not block the starter's field of vision
    - Allows the starter to see you out of his or her peripheral vision
  - Whistles
    - Blow series of short whistles (> 3) to advise next heat that their heat is coming up shortly
    - Blow long whistle to ask the swimmers to step on the block or step in the water
    - For backstroke, blow second long whistle to call swimmers to the end of the pool – it is recommended that this whistle be blown as soon as all swimmers are in the water and all their heads have come up above the water (not when they are at the wall)



# The Procedures

- The Start (continued)
  - Extending the Arm
    - Extending the arm turns the heat over to the starter and closes the heat
    - Be prompt in turning the heat over to the starter
      - We don't want to wait until the swimmers are ready to start to turn it over to the starter – the swimmers will have to wait too long
      - When all swimmers are on the blocks and getting themselves ready
      - When swimmers in the water are in front of the end of the pool and getting themselves in position

# The Procedures

- The Start (continued)
  - Other considerations
    - Suppose there are some issues behind the blocks – you may delay extending your arm in case a swimmer is trying to get to the block – scan the field for similar issues
    - If you need to take back control of the heat, lower your arm but also give a verbal indication to the starter to hold up the starter process

# The Procedures

- During the race
  - Primarily focus on the race – the CJs are watching the officials
  - Don't “hang out” with the starter
  - By observing the race, you might see the infraction as well as the judge
  - Keep the “table” informed of DQs, no shows, lane/heat changes, etc.
  - Remember, it's your pool

# The Procedures

- Avoid distractions if at all possible – when they happen, keep them short or delay them until after the race
- You have a good team of judges on deck – let them do their job, don't try to do it for them – let them help you have a great meet
- Keep track of your time line (but don't be a prisoner to it) – the swimmers set their preparation based on the time line and we want to avoid any unnecessary delays

# Handling the DQ

- False Starts

- After watching swimmers until they surface and you are sure the start should not be recalled, write a number on your heat sheet for each heat – the lane number(s) of those you saw move or a zero for a fair start
- Depending on protocol selected, either wait for starter to make a call or ask the starter if he or she had anything
- Confirmation is by showing each other the lane number(s) written for the heat – record that a false start has been confirmed on your heat sheet
- Announce a confirmed false start over the radio (identify heat and lane number) so swimmer can be notified and admin will know

# Handling the DQ

- The “call”
  - The three questions
    - What was the judge’s position/jurisdiction?
    - What did he or she see?
    - What rule was broken? What was the infraction?
  - The deck referee should be able to “see” the infraction from the description without having actually observed it
  - If the description is not clear, ask the CJ or judge to repeat the call – do not lead the CJ or judge

# Handling the DQ

- Recording the information
  - When the initial call comes in, make note of it on your heat sheet – when full call comes in, also record in your heat sheet
  - If you accept the call, repeat the call back to the CJ or judge, including event, heat and lane information
  - After accepting a call, make sure the admin table gets the information
  - Check the DQ slip against what you have recorded
    - Reject incorrect slips – have them rewritten
    - If OK, **print name** on slip and get to admin table
    - Is there enough information to define the infraction
  - Who tells the swimmer or coach?

# Handling the DQ

- Relays
  - Make sure that your judges know how to complete the relay take-off form
  - CJs can confirm whether there is a DQ or if the heat/lanes are “all clear” – since no hands are raised on relays, you want to have positive confirmation either way
  - If there is a call, accept or don't accept. Check the DQ slip and take-off slips before you sign the DQ slip
  - If there is no call, confirm “all clear, lanes 1-8”
  - (deck ref should still look at the relay sheets)



# Handling the DQ

- Referee making a call alone
  - Rule 102.13.2 – “The Referee has the authority to disqualify a swimmer for any violation of the rules that the Referee personally observe...”
  - In order to keep balanced officiating, the violation must be observable from anywhere on the pool deck – otherwise, the lanes closer to the referee are receiving more observation than others
  - This should be an extremely rare occurrence

# Working with Coaches

- Coaches are not the enemy – they are looking out for the best interests of their swimmers
- Coaches are smart when it comes to their swimmers and swimming – take advantage of that – they can help solve problems or resolve issues
- Keep the communication lines open
- We are here to support the efforts of the swimmers to excel in a fair and impartial environment

# Working with Coaches

- If a coach comes to you with an issue, listen – don't try to provide an answer prematurely
- Be calm – do not become defensive
- Understand what the issue is about – restate the protest as you understand it to the coach and then investigate
- Use your team - ask for advice from other officials or even other coaches as needed – just because you are the referee doesn't mean you have all the answers
- Make your decision based on the best information you can get
- Be firm but fair
- If the coach is not happy, he or she can go see the meet referee – that is why he/she gets the big bucks

# Swim-Offs

- What is the goal? Determine which swimmer(s) should qualify for what place in the finals or as alternates
- Check the results of your event for ties for 8<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, and 26<sup>th</sup>. Also check for other ties in the top 30 as scratches may create a tie for the last place in a heat
- Get the coaches together to identify the best time to hold the swim-off as provided by the rules – the announcer can be very helpful with this

# Swim-Offs

- Include those “possible” – you’d rather run a swim-off for something you don’t need than not run one when it is needed
- Again, coaches are smart and are thinking of their swimmers so they usually work very well together to identify the best time
- Know the rule regarding when to schedule the swim-off so that you can help the coaches agree on a time
- There have been some unusual resolutions to swim-offs

# The Rules, etc.

- Prepare for the meet
  - Read the rule book regularly so that you can keep those aspects of the rules that don't come up very often fresh in your mind. You may not know every detail but you will know if there is a rule that applies to any situation that arises and you will know where to find it
  - Read the meet announcement to understand the procedures being used for the meet
  - Know which events are yours and be ready to do your job prior to the start of the event
  - If there is more than one deck referee, - if you are “off”, be nearby in case the “on” deck referee needs assistance with a protest or other situation

# The Rules, etc.

- Referees are bound by the rules - we are not god with a little “g”
- Always remain calm and, remember, the benefit of the doubt always goes to the swimmer
- **Good Judgment and Common Sense**

# Additional Resources

- USA Swimming website, [usaswimming.org](http://usaswimming.org)
  - Click on Volunteers > Training Resources
- USA Swimming Deck Referee & Starter Guidelines
- Guide to Officiating – The Referee
- USA Swimming Radio Etiquette & Usage Guidelines
- Referee Safety Checklist
- Situations & Resolutions
- Articles & Procedures – includes articles on how to staff 2 pools, lead/lag method, etc.



# Certification

- Minimum Age – 21
- Education & Training
  - Attend Deck Referee training clinic
  - Must hold Stroke & Turn certification
  - Hold Starter certification for 1 year and have worked as a Starter for at least 5 documented sessions
  - Complete the online Certification-Referee test with a grade of 80%
  - Complete 6 apprentice sessions, at a minimum of 3 different sanctioned meets, with multiple trainers who have at least 1 year's experience as a Referee
  - Must complete apprenticeship within 1 year of clinic and test
  - USA Swimming Non-athlete Registration, Background Check, and Athlete Protection Training must be current

# Re-certification

- Attend clinic and/or take tests every 2 years
- To maintain certification, must work a minimum of 6 sessions per year in Starter or higher capacity with at least 3 sessions at Deck Referee.
- USA Swimming Non-athlete Registration, Background Check, and Athlete Protection Training must be current
- Must be completed by the end of each calendar year.