

GUIDE TO OFFICIATING SWIMMING

INTRODUCTION

Preface

The chapters of the *Guide to Officiating* represent what is good about the sport of swimming and why many officials make it their lifetime avocation. The text represents the efforts of over 65 people working on this as a volunteer project. The team was the entire National Officials Committee for 1998. This included the steering group and each of the 59 LSC Officials Chairs. These individuals worked in small project sub-teams to pool their many years of varied experience. In is no small measure of the progress in nationwide training that these individuals were able to communicate and come to well-respected approaches to the instruction and description of swim officiating.

Since that time, the various chapters have been updated to reflect the changes in rules and procedures that have occurred in our sport. We welcome any critical comment or improvement in practices. Please submit those by e-mail to the USA Swimming Officials Committee at onthesamepage@optonline.net for consideration by the USA Swimming Officials Committee.

Rules

Any discussion of officiating and a manual to assist with that activity must be based on a sound understanding of the rules of the sport. The basis for the rules of swimming are found in the rules used by the Federation Internationale de Natation Amateur (FINA). FINA governs the international competitions. In most instances the rules specified by USA Swimming in the Rules and Regulations conform directly to the FINA rules. In fact, our own rule book requires USA Swimming to conform to FINA rules when they change.

The USA Swimming rules form the basis upon which all decisions are made. One of the most frequently asked questions is, "Why aren't the rules written so clearly that we don't need interpretations?" The answer is that when it comes to rule interpretation, there are sometimes situations where there are no right or wrong answers. Long time Rules Chair, William A Lippman, Jr. stated in October, 1981, "It is my philosophy that we cannot, in advance, provide a "How to Do It" for every possible happening. Nor can we always strongly see alike on everything that can take place. If we cannot, as the foremost authority on USA Swimming rules, strongly agree on an interpretation, then we should leave such adjudication for referees and juries who are at the scene."

In April 1982, Lippman further stated, "*Let's not try to cover every possible situation in the swimming rules. Let's not write rules to cover these strange and rare possibilities. Leave something for the referee to decide. Let the humans present consider the facts, and come to their own decision on how to handle it. It is impossible to make rules absolute in every instance. There must be room for human judgment to adapt to the intent of the rule to the incident and to the physical factors and make the final decision. That is my philosophy. It is based too on a belief that most adults involved in our sport are fundamentally honest and are willing to exercise their judgment for the best interests of all parties involved.*"

The competent swimming official is a judge of the competition not a judge of the rules.

The swimming rules must be followed. The official who has standards that differ from those set down in the rulebook will be open to negotiation on every decision made. Following the rules puts a stake in the ground that tells everyone concerned with the competition that the decisions will be made in a fair and equitable manner against a known standard. As an official, an individual must operate from a strong base. That base is made up of two factors – one is the authority of the rulebook and the other is the basic



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philosophy that the officials conduct the competition in accordance with the rules. Each time a rule and the purpose of that rule are explained, the rule becomes easier to accept. Rather than hiding behind the statement "It's the rule", an official should explain why there was a violation so the official does not appear to be arbitrary. The official's job is to uphold the rules by applying them intelligently and communicating their interpretation effectively.

This officiating manual was constructed by the LSC official's chairs of USA Swimming to provide a tool for learning, consistency, training and application of judgment. It should be used in conjunction with the rulebook and not as a standalone document. There are additional documents published by the USA Swimming Officials Committee that complement this manual and provide guidance regarding some of the procedures and protocols used at meets. These can be found on the USA Swimming web site at www.usa-swimming.org.



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CHAPTER 1 - THE REFEREE

Referee

The Referee must be a leader whose natural inclination is to serve; an inclination that may lead one to accept this leadership role in the sport of swimming. To serve others, means to understand and be aware of the athletes, officials, coaches, parents and others in the sport. The Referee leads by example in showing respect, honesty, fairness, integrity and responsible behavior that characterize authentic sportsmanship.

The Referee provides the example to the swimming community through his/her commitments to the sport of swimming. The Referee is committed to:

- ensuring the integrity of the sport and the profession of officiating;
- conducting him/herself with dignity and good humor, while ensuring fair and equitable conditions for the competition;
- remaining impartial, while sustaining positive relationships and building trust in the swim community;
- maintaining a current understanding of the rules and their application; and
- fostering the growth in expertise of all officials through teaching, providing workshops and working with officials on the deck. The Referee is the primary leader and educator for both new and experienced officials.

The magnitude of the referee's responsibilities is quickly realized by a review of the Referee section in the *USA Swimming Rules and Regulations*.

The Deck Referee:

- Shall have full authority over all officials and shall assign and instruct them; shall enforce all applicable rules and shall decide all questions relating to the actual conduct of the meet, the final settlement of which is not otherwise assigned by said rules; can overrule any meet official on a point of rule interpretation, or on a judgment decision pertaining to an action which the Referee has personally observed; may also disqualify a swimmer(s) for any violation of the rules that the Referee personally observes and shall at the same time raise one hand overhead. If the Referee does not make such a signal there shall be no penalty.
- Shall signal the starter that all officials are in position, that the course is clear, and that the competition can begin, before each race.
- Shall give a decision on any point where the opinions of the judges differ; shall have authority to intercede in a competition at any stage, to ensure that the racing conditions are observed.
- For LSC and local records only, may assign three (3) additional official timers on request to record a record attempt at initial distances in accordance with the USA Swimming Rules.



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- When automatic or semi-automatic officiating equipment is used and an apparent malfunction occurs it shall be his/her responsibility to make an immediate investigation to determine whether the swimmer finished in accordance with the rules and/or if there was an actual equipment malfunction.
- May modify any rule for a competitive swimmer who has a disability. Such modification shall be in accordance with the USA Swimming Rules
- Refer to 102.11 concerning protests. Specifically, rule 102.11.1 stipulates:

The referee must be knowledgeable of:

1. Timing procedures, equipment and the specific rules that apply to each type of equipment used.
2. Across-the-board judging procedures.
3. Check-in and seeding procedures.
4. Starting procedures, rules and application.
5. Recording and balloting procedures.
6. Stroke and Turn Judging, stroke rules, jurisdiction, application and enforcement.

The referee must have mastered the application and use of the starting and stroke and turn rules, their fair enforcement and appropriate judging. She/he is responsible for the effective functioning of the meet and will monitor, and assist as necessary, all officials in performing their functions to ensure the participants are provided with a quality competitive swimming environment.

The referee must have learned, acquired and possess: sound swimming leadership, a positive swimming attitude and effective administrative skills.

1. Sound Swimming Leadership

Sound swimming leadership is based on a thorough knowledge of the rules and the reasons for the rules - to ensure fair and equitable conditions of competition and uniformity in the sport. Swimming leadership is a skill that can only be developed through participation.

2. Positive Swimming Attitude

The referee's confidence in understanding the swimming rules, his/her respect for the other officials and his/her understanding for those who are still gaining knowledge of the sport contribute to a positive swimming attitude. The attitude is manifest in the referee's efforts to ensure that all other officials, swimmers and coaches are able to perform their respective tasks to their greatest potentials.

3. Effective Administrative Skills



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During the meet - The referee's full attention must be given to every start to observe and concur with the starter's false start disqualifications. (The rules require that the starter and referee agree for disqualification of a swimmer for a false start). Between the starts, the referee oversees the competition and evaluates the performance of the other meet officials. If a rule is misunderstood, the referee must correct the misunderstanding. If the referee personally observes an infraction, he/she may disqualify the swimmer and then determine why the assigned official(s) did not. The referee clarifies rules and jurisdictions, suggests appropriate judging techniques, assigns and may reassign officials. He/She also answers questions, protests and appeals, maintaining his/her sense of humor and keeping a positive attitude. All questions should be politely answered to the best of his/her ability. Protests and appeals are sometimes difficult because they tend to be emotionally charged. The referee must always display a moderate temperament. It is inexcusable for the referee to become visibly angry at a distraught swimmer, coach or parent.

The following communication guidelines for dealing with a concern arising during the competition are recommended:

1. The referee listens to the person who has a complaint or concern. The referee must avoid becoming defensive.
2. The referee indicates that he/she understands the person's perspective, and that he/she wants to resolve the conflict. He/She repeats his/her understanding of the protest or appeal to the person who has the complaint.
3. The referee then confers with all parties involved to ensure proper interpretation and understanding.
4. The referee then communicates his/her understanding of the problem and his/her decision to all affected parties.

The Meet Referee

The meet referee has responsibilities before, during and after the competition.

Before the meet - The referee should contact the meet director and coordinate any special requirements for the meet before the day of competition. On the day of competition the referee should arrive at least one hour prior to the meet to adequately perform pre-meet responsibilities. He/She should confer with the meet director; obtain a list of meet officials; inspect the facilities, with specific attention to any safety issues in the meet venue; review seeding and administrative procedures; conduct a coaches' briefing (if needed), and assign and instruct the other officials. The referee's attitude during the pre-meet briefing can establish a tone for the meet. He/She should assume complete control, but do so in a pleasant, confident manner. A sample referee's check list can be found in the officials section of the USA Swimming web site.

- May prohibit the use of any device that disrupts or interferes with the meet, such as a laser pointing device or artificial noisemaker.
- When the meet sanction allows conducting the events by starting them for the alternate ends of a 50-meter course, the Referee shall establish the necessary administrative and officiating procedures to conform to the USA Swimming Rules and local conditions.



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After the meet - The referee must remain at the pool long enough after the last race to ensure that final results have been announced in case there is a problem or a protest. This time can be used to evaluate the meet with the meet director and to sign any referee forms pertinent to the meet. As soon as possible after the meet, the referee should write an evaluation of the meet officials. This will be filed with the Official's Chair and/or with the Meet Director according to the regulations of the local swimming committee sanctioning the competition.

In summary, a referee must attend to many responsibilities during a swimming competition. The referee's knowledge, honesty and fairness will create a climate for an equitable and rewarding competition. The referee's service is a source of building the entire swim community for the betterment of all those who participate in USA Swimming. It is a challenge worth accepting, and doing well.



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While the Meet Referee is in charge of all competition and administration of the meet, he or she will frequently delegate certain areas of responsibility to the Deck Referee who supervises the actual competition and to the Administrative Referee who supervises the logistical (administrative) part of the meet. The larger a meet, the more useful the positions of Deck and Administrative (Admin) Referee become.

The position of Admin Referee encompasses not only knowledge of the Technical rules found in Part One of USA Swimming Rules and Regulations, but also the Administrative Rules of Competition found in Part Two, Articles 201 through 207. If a meet is conducted under the Age Group or Senior Program of an LSC or Zone, then specific rules concerning eligibility, registration and conduct of the meet may apply which will be addressed in the LSC's Handbook or Zone by-laws. Therefore, this position requires a Referee with a high level of experience.

DUTIES OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE REFEREE

- Deputy Meet Referee if the Meet Referee is called away
- Supervision of:
 - Clerk of the Course
 - Entries/Registration
 - Timing Equipment Operator & Timing Judge
 - Computer Operators and Desk Personnel
 - Results from Preliminary and Final Heats
 - Runners
- Director of Intelligence for Meet Referee:
- Develop a feel for what issues are arising
- Entry Problems, Scratch Issues, Timing Resolutions, Report of Occurrence (injury or sickness of an athlete)
- Be a sounding board for the Meet Referee
- Coordinate the information from the Hy-Tek and Computer people to the Announcer
- Trainer for Apprentice Admin Referee

PRE MEET RESPONSIBILITIES

The first priority of any administrative responsibility, whether it is a National, Zone or LSC meet is to obtain a copy of the meet information for review. Know which rules are applicable to the specific meet you are working. The difference between a mediocre or poorly run meet and a highly successful one is usually found in the level of advance planning. If an Admin Referee pays attention to the details of preparation, he or she will have a significant influence upon the success of the meet. Being proactive really pays off. This is true for a meet that is being held for the first time, as well as the "annual" meet which has been held for several years. Simply copying the previous years meet information, while only changing the dates, is fraught with problems. It is usual for Zone policies & LSC policies to change which may impact significantly upon the "annual" meet and render the previous year's meet information invalid.

Particular attention should be paid to clarity of information. Any statements regarding procedures which conflict with rules, and potential areas of confusion, must be corrected prior to distribution. At the very least the Admin Referee must know how the meet information presents direction and guidelines to the



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athletes and coaches. Having studied the meet information in advance will enable you to intercept many situations and answer many questions.

Particular points that an admin referee should remember in his or her pre-meet preparations include the following:

- Eligibility, Registration, Proof of Times

Check the meet information as it pertains to eligibility, and make sure there are no conflicts with Zone, LSC or USA Swimming rules. Particularly review relays and who is allowed to swim. Be prepared to address issues of eligibility and what a swimmer might have to do to ensure eligibility. Determine how USA Swimming registration requirements have been met. Be alert for potential problems dealing with club transfer issues. In regard to entry times, will proof of time be required? If so, what method will be used to verify times? Will a post-meet verification of time be required? In age group meets, be alert to time standards and how they apply to eligibility in qualifying for events?

- Meet Entries

Check with the Meet Referee to see if he or she wants you to supervise the entry process. If the meet has a Hy-Tek entry person check with this person to ask if there are any outstanding issues that need to be resolved. Are there a number of over swims entered? Are there any questions about entry times on any participants? If there is a Hy-Tek person, request a psyche sheet and Alpha listing of teams and swimmers by gender. This is information you will share with your Clerk of the Course so you may need two copies. Be prepared prior to seeding to catch potential errors and prevent re-seeding an event (the PINK Paper) and reprinting a heat sheet. Check the heat sheet well before the session to head off any problems.

- Clerk of the Course

Although many Local Meets are pre-seeded, a Clerk of the Course is a valuable ally at any level of competition. At a deck seeded meet, or prelim/finals meet where there are deck-seeded events, they are indispensable. This is especially true for distance events and/or relays, which often require a positive check in. The Clerk of the Course helps with prelim scratches, relay cards and is a general communicator with coaches. Often the clerk's station will handle heat sheets for coaches as well as general information. At the younger levels of age group meets the clerk and assistants usually see that the swimmers are arranged in heats and directed to the starting area. If a scratch box is used at meets, the clerk supervised it. The clerk must be informed as to how you want scratches handled. In the case of scratches from finals, only you, the Admin Referee, should accept the scratches from finals. Meet with the clerk early and explain how you wish to handle relay cards. When do relay swimmers need to be listed on the card? What time do the cards need to be returned to the clerk's station so they can be distributed to the lane timers and announcer? If the meet will have time trials, the clerk shall appoint an assistant to accept entries and fees and set up the information on a separate computer so as not to interfere with the meet information.

- Timing Equipment Operator and Timing Judge

This is the most visible area in which the Admin referee works. It is most important to develop a rapport and mutual respect early on with your Timing Equipment Operator. Make sure you are familiar with the equipment being used and the features of the system. Identify what the operator can deal with and what



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you will approve or adjust for the athlete. **Remember that you are responsible for the official time for each swimmer.** Determine early whether you will use a Timing Judge or perform timing adjustments yourself. Make sure you have set up to collect the necessary, secondary information needed. Run system differences between pads and watches during non-pressure parts of the meet. This will give you an idea of timers' accuracy and consistency. Determine in advance how you want all timing records maintained and filed. Determine who and how you will watch for records.

- Computer Operations and Desk Personnel

Typically, the computer operator has done the meet entries. Establish rapport early with this individual. Find out what system and software is in use and determine how flexible the system is. Make sure it will generate time lines and flag swim-offs, cut times, and records. Find out how it reports qualifications for Finals. Determine what reports he or she can give you to help manage the meet. Occasionally, a change must be made to the database, such as name, team, or age. Establish a control protocol for these changes. A specific "Change Form" should be used signed by either the Meet Referee or the Admin Referee and only the computer operator enters that data.

Identify Desk Personnel and their jobs early. If you use runners determine where things get posted. Make sure they are only posting what you have approved. Announcers should be given instructions as to what to announce, and when. Particular attention should be given to recording the time when announcing finalists following preliminary events. Review with the announcer the exact wording and information to be announced as it conforms to the scratch rule.

- Heat sheets

How are heat sheets laid out? Determine seeding requirements (fastest to slowest, circle seed, etc.). For both preliminary and finals sessions, the Admin shall approve heat sheets before they go to print. If you are working a National or Sectional Meet the font may have to be changed to allow for the advertisements that need to be placed on the sheets for copy. Keep some type of log of entries, scratches, DQ's and changes for a system of checks and balances against the seeding for Finals. If anything appears out of the ordinary, investigate and resolve it. If necessary, be prepared to consult with the Meet Referee and affected coaches. Check scoring at the end of each Finals session for the next day.

PRE-COMPETITION DUTIES

- Meet with the Referee to determine any special needs or trouble areas.
- Meet with the Meet Director to determine any special situations or concerns.
- Ask the Deck Referee if they have any specific requests.
- Tour areas for meet check-in and deck locations
- Meet with the individuals handling entries, registration, and proof of time.
- Introduce yourself to the Hy-Tek person, Computer Operator (if they are different people), Clerk of the Course, Announcer and Timer Operator. If the people in charge of Time Trials are available introduce yourself to them as well. Make sure they have their own computer and can do entries during the prelims.
- Determine the paper flow
- Will the Head Timer have a head set to get a lane time for you or will you use the Chief Judges.
- Meet with the Team Lead Chief Judge to go over the DSF, DQ's and No Show slips.
- Will you keep the DQ log or will the Team Lead?
- Will you attach the relay take off slips to DQ slips?



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- Verify forms and reports you need are on hand
- Verify the over-swims and contact the coaches to allow for the athlete to scratch what they do not want to swim

DURING THE COMPETITION

- Always have your Rule Book available
- Always have the Meet Information available
- Make sure you have an Admin Box of supplies, scissors, rulers, markers, post-a-notes, stapler, etc.
- Be alert for specific lane problems on timing.
- Double check the number of swimmers is correct
- Watch splits to insure they are being picked up by equipment.
- Receive preliminary results and review
- Watch for a swim-off particularly ties affecting alternates and potential swim-off in the event of a scratch.
- Approve distribution for posting and Announcer
- Make sure the announcer is announcing preliminary results and the times of the winner (at least)
- When a scratch from finals occurs, not an intent to scratch but an actual scratch from finals, immediately call for the coach of the remaining swimmers affected. Be cognizant of any swimmer that may move into the alternate position or an alternate moving into the finals.
- Keep a DQ Log and record of who had made the call and the referee who accepted the DQ. Make a copy of the DQ log for the officials for education purposes only.
- Coordinate with the Deck Referee and the Team Lead Chief Judge on the DFS. Do not accept them until the event is being swum and then post them in the files of the meet.
- In the event there is an error in an event, re-seed in PINK Paper and distribute to the coaches and key officials as soon as possible.

AFTER THE MEET

- Make sure the scores are correct before leaving the venue
- Make sure you know of any records and all paper is processed.
- Touch base with the computer operator and Meet Director on distribution of final results
- Combine all paperwork of the meet and present to the Meet Director for LSC or USA Swimming
- Thank everyone who has been on your team.
- Do the after action report for the Referee if he or she desires.
- Make sure the Meet Host has your phone number, e-mail address, if applicable, and mailing address.
- Do your own post-meet evaluation reflecting on what you will do better the next time.



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CHAPTER 3 - STARTER

Starter

The starter has the responsibility to ensure that all swimmers receive a fair and equitable start. It is important that each competitor be given the opportunity to achieve the best start possible within the confines of the rules. The starter must know the rules governing starting procedures.

Starter Preparation

Personal Preparation - The starter should review the rules and schedule of events and establish protocol procedures with the meet referee. In addition, the starter should be familiar with the guidelines for officiating swimmers with a disability.

Competition Course - Preparation begins long before the start of the first heat in the meet. The starter should become familiar with the competition course and determine the location where the starter will be positioned. This position shall be within 10 feet of the starting end of the pool and should be free from any obstruction that might block or restrict the view of the athletes on the blocks. This position should also be coordinated with the referee. Each block should be examined for proper position and ability to support the starting action of an athlete. If used, the location and operation of the recall rope should be reviewed and tested.

Equipment - The starter must become familiar with the type of equipment that will be used. If a pistol is to be used for either starting or for recall, the starter must be certain it is in working order, that there are enough shells to finish the meet, and that a backup starting pistol is available. The starter must check that the pistol is loaded prior to each heat and double check that there are enough shells in the pistol to recall the heat if there is a need.

When a horn start system is used, the starter should check the system at least one-half hour before the first race so that any needed repairs or modifications can be made. The system should be retested with the timers in place just before the start of the meet. Since horn start systems are electrically operated, it is important for the starter to know how to prevent common malfunctions and how to repair the simple problems that may occur. The starter should also test the functioning of the recall system verifying that the microphone works properly. The number of speakers and their placement and proper operation should be checked verifying that there is proper volume to be clearly audible to all starting positions. The strobe light for the starting signal should be located such that it is clearly visible to all swimmers and timers (including backstroke events).

Starting Procedures

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. This procedure allows the athlete to take any position desired on the starting platform. 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 return without undue delay to the starting position.

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.



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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 block, or, in backstroke and medley relay events, assume the backstroke starting position. When all swimmers are stationary, the Starter shall give the starting signal.

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.

Backstroke Starts-The backstroke requires different starting conditions, since the swimmers start the race in the water. The swimmers line up in the water facing the starting end with both hands placed on the gutter or on the starting grips. The swimmer may not stand in or on the gutter nor curl the toes over the lip of the gutter prior to the start. It is the duty of the starter to ensure that these requirements are met prior to giving the starting signal.

False Starts

Any swimmer starting before the starting signal is given shall be disqualified if the Referee or a designated Assistant Referee confirms the Starter's observation that a violation occurred. Swimmers remaining on the starting blocks shall be relieved from their starting positions with the "Stand Up" command and may step off the blocks. The Starter shall restart the race upon signal by the Referee.

When it becomes apparent, because of uneven motion or delay of the swimmers in assuming their positions, that a fair start will be difficult to achieve, the starter should give the command "stand up" or for backstroke starts, "stand down". Upon hearing this command, the swimmers should stand up on the starting platform; backstrokers may relax. Any swimmer who enters the water or backstroker who leaves the starting area shall be charged with a false start, except that a swimmer who would otherwise be charged with a false start may be relieved of the charge if the false start was caused by the swimmer's reaction to the command. This, however, does not relieve any swimmer from disqualification for deliberate delay if he intentionally enters the water.

If a false start is observed and the starting signal has been given, the race should be continued and not recalled. In this case, any swimmers charged with a false start will be notified of the disqualification upon completion of the race. If the recall signal is activated inadvertently, no swimmer shall be charged with a false start and the Starter shall restart the race upon signal by the Referee.

If the starter or referee observes a false start, each should write down the lane of the swimmer committing the false start so that conversation is needed to have dual confirmation of the infraction.

Philosophy

Starters are charged with a great amount of responsibility in seeing that one swimmer does not gain an advantage over the others during the start. This responsibility requires concentration, quick reactions and fair decisions. It takes practice to become a good starter. With experience, the starter will be able to accurately judge when the field is ready to race. This will help to prevent the false starts caused by the swimmers being jumpy or in a hurry because they aren't ready.



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Starters should speak in a conversational tone, avoiding rapid instructions and sharp commands. The voice of a good starter will lead the swimmers into their starting positions, not break their concentration with unexpected orders or remarks. At the same time, the starter must protect all of the competitors by not allowing any one swimmer to gain an unfair advantage.



GUIDE TO OFFICIATING CHAPTER 4 - CHIEF JUDGE

The Chief Judge is the stroke and turn officials' mentor. This person is one of the keys to the smooth running of a swim meet. The chief judge position may be combined with another stroke and turn assignment if necessary. The chief judge is responsible to the meet referee and the assistant referees. The Team Lead Chief Judge is the deck officials' representation of the meet referee.

At national meets there is one team lead chief judge with four assistant chief judges. The team lead chief judge is usually stationed in the starting area to assist the deck referees with any no-shows and declared false starts that need to be recorded. The remaining four judges are stationed around the pool to watch the officials in their quadrants. At local meets, two chief judges, one at each end of the pool, are recommended for any large invitational meet and at 50-meter pools.

DUTIES:

Pre-meet: Meet with the meet referee to coordinate all duties the chief judge will be expected to perform. Solidify the terminology the meet referee expects *during the meet*. Attend the assigned officials meeting and make sure of the jurisdiction and protocol the referees expect from the officials. Ask if the referee wants the officials to parade into the finals sessions and if the announcer needs any specific information on the officials working the meet, (ex: hometown, years of volunteering to USA swimming). Also ask where the staging of the awards will take place and agree on how or where the officials should move to if needed. Make sure you send a letter to each of your chief judges welcoming them to your crew and give them a head-up of what the meet is about. If you do not know any of the chief judges assigned to you ask if any of them have worked this position before. Let them know when you expect to meet with them for pre-meet assignments. This is the meeting where you go over the information the referee and you have discussed. Review the letter you have sent to them to make sure they have no questions about their duties during the meet. At this meeting time it is a good suggestion to have already done the first day's assignment and give copies to each of your crew. Make sure the officials are rotated around the deck and explain how they will accomplish this. As the assignments are done the day before each session, post them so the officials will know ahead of time their schedule for the next day.

PRE-MEET SESSIONS: CONDUCTING THE OFFICIALS' MEETINGS (BRIEFINGS):

The chief judge is responsible for the officials' sign-in-sheets, introductions, and assignments of officials for deck coverage, deck protocol, jurisdiction, communication and radio etiquette. The chief judges should establish a rotation system and arrange relief shift if possible. The chief judges will conduct stroke mini-clinics and answer officials' concerns before each session. The team lead, with the Vice-President of Operations and/or the Officials' Chair schedules speakers for the group during the course of the meet if it is a National Championship Meet. The chief judges also make sure all officials' equipment and supplies are working and in the right places. Included in the appendix to the Swimming Officials Manual is a "Recommended Stroke Briefing" outline. Make sure you have the latest version. This outline is also on the USA website. If the meet is a camera ready meet you will not have timers. You will not need to be concerned about staffing this position nor the supplies that are needed for this job. Below is listed the deck equipment needed for your meetings and the meet.



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Equipment and Forms from Facility Personnel/USA Website

Bells/Lap Counters	Split Sheets for Distance Events	Towels (to wipe chairs off)
Pencils	Relay Take-Off Slips	Chairs
Heat Sheets	Officials Sign-In Sheets	Refreshments
Two-way Radios w/Headsets	Spare Batteries	Jurisdiction Document
Assignment Form	Stroke Information	Timers Recording Sheets
DQ Slips	No-Show Slips	IRS letter from Meet Referee
Certification Evaluation Forms	*Clipboards	*Watches

*Clipboards and watches are not needed for a meet using cameras as back-up timing.

DURING COMPETITION:

The chief judges are placed inconspicuously at the pool corners. During the free-style events they may be seated as long as they can still view their officials watching the turns.

The chief judge's focus is on the officials in his or her quadrant. When noticing an infraction, the official shall raise a hand immediately or make eye contact (for FINA protocol meet) immediately to the chief judge. The chief judge alerts the deck referee by two-way radio of a possible disqualification and at what position the infraction occurred, (e.g. "possible disqualification, stroke judge lane 1 or 8 side" or "possible disqualification, lane X start/turn end"). The team lead shall insure continued deck coverage during the discussion of the disqualification. The chief judge will approach that official and ask:

- What did you see?
- What is the rule?
- What is your jurisdiction?

After the chief judge hears the answers from the official, the infraction is reported to the referee using correct terminology. The Radio Etiquette and Protocol guidelines are available on the officials section of the USA Swimming website.

The chief judge then should recommend to the referee that they accept if all information is correct or not to accept the disqualification from the official if something was wrong with the information or jurisdiction. It is then the responsibility of the chief judge at the finish end of the pool to notify the swimmer if the disqualification stands. It is recommended that the chief judge call the swimmer to a position behind the seated officials to notify him/her of the disqualification. It is also the chief judges' responsibility to notify the swimmers that if they do not agree with the infraction their coach has a right to talk with the referee about the call that was made.

The decision to accept or reject a disqualification is the responsibility of the referee. When the decision to accept has been made the chief judge fills out the disqualification slip and verifies all the information is correct, has that official sign the disqualification form and then turns over the slip to the referee. If a slip is filled out at the turn end of the pool, use the stroke judges as couriers to turn the slip into the referee on duty.

In the event there is a false start the team lead chief judge or the chief judge assigned at the starting area corner will notify the swimmer of the infraction.

If an official needs to be excused for any reason, the chief judges have the responsibility to maintain equal coverage on the deck at all times and may assign relief officials to the vacant position or may assume the



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vacant position themselves if necessary. Sometimes other officials (i.e. the off duty starters or deck referees) are asked to fill these positions if possible.

During relays, the chief judges are assigned to look for dual confirmation of an early take-off from the side and lane judges by comparing both the ballot slips from each lane and the ballot slip from the side official covering the same lane. If an official on the side has marked his/her ballot, the chief judge states possible disqualification lanes 1-4 or 5-8 and immediately goes to the furthest part of his/her quadrant and gathers *all the ballots*. As soon as he/she sees there is a confirmation, the chief judge states confirmation lane number or if there is no confirmation, the chief judge states “all clear lanes 1-4 or 5-8” so the referee knows there is or is not a disqualification. If there is a confirmation, the relay take-off slips must be turned over to the referee as well as the completed DQ slip. It is important to tell the team that has been disqualified which exchange it was, (e.g. 2nd swimmer or 1st exchange).

POST MEET DUTIES:

It is very important that the chief judges thank every official appropriately for the generous contribution of their time to the meet.

Chief Judges are often asked to evaluate the performance of the stroke and turn judges. Their observations include the protocol established for the meet, as well as the technical aspects of judging. This is meant to be educational! It is meant to point out where improvement in certain areas will help the stroke and turn judge become more knowledgeable and continue to improve, as everyone of the officials' **crew** should always be trying to do their best for the athletes.

If there is a need to talk with an official about suggestions for improvement this is to be done in a constructive manner not to embarrass or berate, but rather to educate. If this cannot be done while at the site, then chose to do it soon after the meet, but not by an e-mail. A phone call or letter would be appropriate with a copy to the Officials Chair.

The team lead needs to make sure he/she has input from his/her chief judges and especially note the excellent qualities of the exceptional official for recommendation to the Officials' Chair. The team lead needs to evaluate his/her team of chief judges and send that report in to the Officials Chair as well. It is also important for the team lead to submit an overall view of the chief judges and officials to the meet referee in a very timely manor so he/she can complete his/her report.

All evaluations will be sent to the Officials' Chair and a copy for your records for one year. This becomes important when the Vice President of Program Operations and the Officials Chair are looking for upgrading officials and need more information on particular officials that worked your meet. It is important to be fair and educational in evaluating all stroke and turn officials.

SUMMARY:

There are many meets where there are not an adequate number of officials. In the case where there are only four stroke and turn judges in addition to the starter and referee, two of them could be made a chief judge and two can be the stroke judges. However, when there is a real shortage of officials, it is imperative that radios be used to expedite the flow of the meet. The idea that a chief judge is only for championship meets is simply not true. An advantage of using this position whenever possible is that it becomes a teaching tool or mentoring opportunity for anyone that fills this position and can assist the other deck officials.



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CHAPTER 5 - STROKE & TURN, RELAY TAKE-OFF JUDGE

INTRODUCTION

Well run meets and good competitive results are directly related to good officiating. Thorough knowledge of the rules, coupled with fair and consistent application of them, make a good official. To confidently work on deck, a Stroke & Turn Judge must study the rules, attending training sessions and working regularly at meets.

Officials should always keep in mind that the swimmers have worked hard to achieve their successes and deserve a fair and equitable competition. Officials must apply the rules intelligently at all times, using common sense and good judgement. The rules of swimming are intended to provide fair and equitable conditions of competition. Officials must work hard to fully understand the rules and their responsibilities in applying them.

The authority of Stroke/Turn/Relay Take-off Judges (like that of the Referee and Starter) to disqualify a swimmer makes these positions particularly important. To function properly, one dominant principle must prevail:

*"Fairness to all competitors, giving the benefit of the doubt,
in every instance, to the swimmer."*

The rules of swimming define the acceptable form for each stroke. Many variations of form are possible and may still comply with the letter of the rules. Decisions regarding the form of strokes and turns must, therefore, be subject to flexible judgment and common sense. "Ugly isn't necessarily illegal."

I. BASIC CONCEPTS

a) Take officiating seriously and work hard at it. Competitors have a right to expect officials to know the rules and interpret them correctly, fairly and courteously.

1. Study USA Swimming's official rulebook.
2. Uniformly apply rules regardless of the level of athletes.
3. Call violations as seen; don't guess or anticipate.
4. Be fair and consistent; always give the swimmer the benefit of any doubt.
5. Disregard club affiliation.
6. Exercise good judgment.

b) Work regularly at the job.

1. Officials need practice, just as competitors do.
2. Working regularly builds confidence.
3. Attend training sessions regularly to keep up with rule changes and new interpretations.
4. There is no substitute for experience.



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c) Be professional in manner.

1. Fairness to all competitors must dictate actions.
2. Dress properly.
3. Make decisions quickly and decisively.
4. Don't smoke within venue.
5. Avoid coaching swimmers.
6. Refrain from cheering--control your emotions.
7. Don't fraternize with swimmers, coaches or spectators during competition.
8. Admit a mistake if wrong; competitor's welfare is more important than your own ego.

d) Uniform. (Varies in LSC's)

1. Men: navy blue slacks (no jeans) or shorts, white polo shirt and rubber soled white shoes.
2. Women: navy blue skirt, slacks (no jeans) or shorts with white polo shirt and rubber soled white shoes.
(Officials look much more "official" if dressed properly.)

II. RESPONSIBILITIES

STROKE JUDGE -- ensures that the rules relating to the style of swimming designated for the event are being observed.

TURN JUDGE -- ensures that, when turning or finishing, the swimmer complies with the turning and finishing rules applicable to the stroke used.

RELAY TAKE-OFF JUDGE -- ensures that a relay swimmer does not leave the starting platform before the preceding swimmer has touched the end of the pool.

The Referee (or, at the Referee's discretion, the Chief Judge) assigns and instructs Stroke and Turn Judges and Relay Take-off Judges. Before the competition begins, the Referee determines the respective areas of stroke and turn responsibility as well as jurisdiction.

Position:

The Referee will assign each Stroke and Turn Judge an area of responsibility before the competition begins. This will include the manner and sequence in which he wants the judges to move to different areas.

Stroke Judge -- At the start, the Stroke Judge is responsible for observing the swimmers at the 15 meter mark for all strokes except the breaststroke.

After the start, the Stroke Judge walks the sides of the pool, preferably abreast of swimmers during all strokes except freestyle. The breaststroke and butterfly are best judged by walking slightly behind the swimmers. Judges should walk at a pace that is sufficient to stay with the swimmers. If the field spreads out, the stroke judge should maintain a position slightly ahead of the trailing swimmers while maintaining contact with the lead swimmer(s). If there are two (2) stroke judges working one side of the pool (usually



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in long course meets), a "lead-lag" observation pattern could be utilized as the field spreads out; i.e., the leading stroke judge takes jurisdiction over the faster swimmer(s) while the following stroke judge takes jurisdiction over the slower swimmer(s). After each turn, the stroke judges switch jurisdictions as they begin to walk in the opposite direction. Teamwork and coordination are important between the two (2) stroke judges to ensure that all of the swimmers are observed on a fair and equitable basis.

The stroke judge must clearly be in position to watch swimmers in the backstroke, butterfly, and freestyle events who are submerged after the start or any turn to ensure that their heads surface before the 15-meter mark.

Turn Judge -- The Turn Judges are positioned at either end of the pool.

Turns and finishes are best judged from the ends of the pool directly over the lane if possible. If a judge must observe more than one lane (the norm for most meets at the LSC level), the official will have to adjust his position to best observe all assigned lanes.

A Turn Judge at the starting end of the pool must position himself so he can step forward quickly to observe the first stroke and kick in the breaststroke, butterfly or individual medley events as soon as the starting signal is given and the swimmers leave the blocks. (NOTE: A judge in this situation must not block the Timers' view of the Starter, the starting device, or the Starter's view of the swimmers.)

The Stroke and Turn Judge's responsibilities begin after the start. Any action prior to the start is the Starter's responsibility or, in the case of relay take-offs, it may be the Relay Take-off Judge's responsibility. Each Stroke and Turn Judge should observe the start; however, his duties commence immediately after the start.

There are two positions for **Relay Take-off Judge**: one stands immediately beside the starting block (the LANE judge) while the other looks across the lanes from the side of the pool (the SIDE judge). Depending on the number of people available and the lanes to watch a side judge could be assigned 2 but not more than 4 lanes and lane judges (depending on availability) could be assigned to watch from 1 to 4 lanes. It is preferable to have the lane judges watch fewer lanes than the side judges if a choice on assignment must be made. For example one side judge watching lanes 1-4 and a lane judge watching lanes 1&2 and a lane judge watching 3&4, instead of the other way around.

Finally, where limited personnel or the pool's configuration does not permit the ideal arrangement of officials, common sense and equity in judgment must prevail.

III. REPORTING VIOLATIONS

1. Only the Referee or a Stroke and Turn Judge can disqualify for stroke, turn or finish violations. A Relay Take-off Judge is the only official, other than the Referee, who can disqualify for an infraction of the relay take-off rule.
2. Upon observing an infraction in their jurisdiction, the Stroke/Turn Judge or Referee shall immediately raise one hand overhead with open palm. (This requirement is intended to encourage officials to act decisively and to preclude consultation with other officials or reflection on the consequences of a call.) If the official does not raise his hand immediately following an infraction, the Referee should not allow the disqualification



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unless the Referee personally observed it. However, since "double confirmation" on an early relay take-off is required, a Relay Take-off Judge does NOT indicate an observed early take-off with a raised hand.

3. Report violations, in writing, to the Referee, detailing the event, heat number, lane number and violation. Use the standard USA Swimming DQ form (if available) and be specific in describing the violation utilizing the language of the rulebook.
4. Be prepared to accurately answer the "3 Questions" from the Chief Judge or the Referee, if asked, with the language of the rulebook - "Where were you? (Jurisdiction)," "What did you see? (Description)," and "What rule was broken? (Infraction)." Take a deep breath and think carefully before answering - try to visualize the swim in your mind, remembering that when you watched the swimmer approach you that their right arm was on your left, etc. And finally, do not take it as a personal offense if your DQ call is overturned - you did your job and the Referee must do her job, too.
5. The Referee, Chief Judge or designated official must make every reasonable effort to seek out the swimmer or his coach and inform the individual of the reason for the disqualification. **Never suggest to a swimmer or coach that a swimmer "came close" to being disqualified; "close" is perfectly legal!**
(NOTE: Officials should never give advice or talk to swimmers or coaches except to explain a disqualification actually cited.)

Disqualifications:

1. Can be made only by the official within whose jurisdiction the infraction has been committed.
2. Must be based on personal observation.
3. Give the swimmer the benefit of any doubt.
4. Disregard the opinion of others.
5. Apply simple test: BE SURE THE VIOLATION OCCURRED, UNDERSTAND CLEARLY WHAT IT IS AND BE PREPARED TO EXPLAIN IT.
6. Any swimmer who acts in an unsafe or unsportsmanlike manner observed by the Stroke/Turn Judge may be considered for disciplinary action at the Referee's discretion.
7. Swimming across lanes does not disqualify a swimmer unless interference occurs at the Referee's discretion; however, the Stroke/Turn Judge should report any observed interference to the Referee. The swimmer must start and finish in the same lane.
8. Standing on the pool's bottom during a freestyle race shall not disqualify a swimmer unless he leaves the pool or walks or springs from the bottom. (NOTE:



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other than at the turn, standing on the bottom after the start and before the finish of any *other* stroke shall constitute a disqualification.)

9. A swimmer not entered in a race who enters the pool or course in the area in which a race is being conducted before all swimmers therein have completed the race shall be barred from the next individual event in which he is entered on that day or the next meet day, whichever is first (Referee decision). A competitor who dips his goggles in the water or splashes water on the face or body prior to his next event shall not be considered "entering the pool" unless the Referee concludes such an action interferes with the competition.
10. No swimmer is permitted to wear or use any device or substance to help his speed or buoyancy during race. Goggles may be worn and rubdown oil applied if not considered excessive by the Referee.
11. Relay disqualifications (NOTE: all these calls are Referee's or, in some cases, Relay Take-off Judge's decisions):
 1. No swimmer shall swim more than one leg in any relay event.
 2. A swimmer other than the first swimmer shall not start until his teammate has concluded his leg.
 3. Any relay team member and his relay team shall be disqualified if a team member, other than the swimmer designated to swim that leg, shall jump into or enter the pool in the area where the race is being conducted before all swimmers of all teams have finished the race.

IV OFFICIATING STROKE

A. Butterfly

1. Starts

a) Rules

"After the start and after each turn, the swimmer's shoulders must be at or past the vertical toward the breast. The swimmer is permitted one or more leg kicks, but only one arm pull under water, which must bring him to the surface. It shall be permissible for a swimmer to be completely submerged for a distance of not more than 15 meters (16.4 yards) after the start and after each turn. By that point, the head must have broken the surface."

b) Swim Mechanics

- 1) The swimmers usually remain on their breast with the hands extended forward while kicking with a butterfly-type kick.
- 2) Some swimmers kick out on the start while on their side. This position is legal as long as the swimmer remains past vertical toward the breast.
- 3) When the hands begin the first pull it must bring the swimmer to the surface.



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c) **Observation**

- 1) From the end of the pool the official should observe the swimmer from over the lane. It is important for you to determine “with certainty” that the swimmer is past vertical toward the breast if the side kick-out is used and that the distortion from the water surface and the movement of water did not interfere with the observation.
- 2) From the side of the pool it is not always possible to observe the swimmers until they break the surface of the water at or before the 15-meter mark.

2. Swim

a) **Rules**

Stroke *“From the beginning of the first arm pull, the body shall be kept on the breast. Both arms must be brought forward over the water and pulled back simultaneously.”*

Kick *“All up and down movements of the legs and feet must be simultaneous. The position of the legs or the feet need not be on the same level, but they shall not alternate in relation to each other. A scissors or breaststroke kicking movement is not permitted.”*

b) **Swim Mechanics**

- 1) The stroke requires over the water recovery of the arms.
- 2) The swimmer shall use a butterfly kick with no scissors or breaststroke kicking movements.
- 3) Rounding motion of the feet is allowed as long as the toes are pointed backward or inward.

c) **Observation**

- 1) From the side of the pool the stroke judge should have a clear view of all swimmers within their jurisdiction, (usually slightly behind the slowest swimmer).
- 2) One foot may be higher than the other as long as the feet do not alternate position in a stroke cycle.

3. Turns/Finish

a) **Rules**

Turns *“At each turn the body shall be on the breast. The touch shall be made with both hands simultaneously at, above, or below the water surface. Once a touch has been made, the swimmer may turn in any manner desired. The shoulders must be at or past the vertical toward the breast when the swimmer leaves the wall.”*

Finish *“At the finish, the body shall be on the breast and the touch shall be made with both hands simultaneously at, above, or below the water surface.”*



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b) Swim Mechanics

- 1) Two hand simultaneous touch.
- 2) Shoulder position not relevant.
- 3) Remain on breast until touch.
- 4) No under water recovery.

c) Observation

- 1) From the side of the pool the stroke judge should observe the swimmers to assure proper kick.
- 2) From the end of the pool the turn judge should observe the swimmer into the wall. When the eyes shift from the full body to observe the simultaneous two hand touch the judge should not look back.

B. Backstroke

1. Starts

a) Rules

“The swimmers shall line up in the water facing the starting end, with both hands placed on the gutter or on the starting grips. Standing in or on the gutter, placing the toes above the lip of the gutter or bending the toes over the lip of the gutter, before or after the start, is prohibited.”

b) Swim Mechanics

Some swimmers will kick out from the start while on their side. This is legal but the swimmer must remain past vertical toward the back during this portion of the race.

c) Observation

At some competitions a turn judge may be assigned to observe the swimmer’s toes after the start of the race. The position of the hands and the toes before the start are the responsibility of the Starter.

2. Swim

a) Rules

“The swimmer shall push off on his back and continue swimming on the back throughout the race. Some part of the swimmer must break the surface of the water throughout the race, except it shall be permissible for the swimmer to be completely submerged during the turn and for a distance of not more than 15 meters (16.4 yards) after the start and each turn. By that point, the head must have broken the surface of the water.”

b) Swim Mechanics

Backstroke is essentially “freestyle on the back.”

c) Observation

- 1) From the end of the pool the turn judge shall observe that the swimmer remains on the back.



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- 2) From the side of the pool the stroke judge shall observe the head breaking the surface at or prior to the 15 meter mark and that some part of the body remains on the surface throughout the race.

3. Turns

a) Rules

“Upon completion of each length, some part of the swimmer must touch the wall. During the turn the shoulders may be turned past the vertical toward the breast after which a continuous single arm pull or a continuous simultaneous double arm pull may be used to execute the turn. The swimmer must have returned to a position on the back upon leaving the wall.”

b) Swim Mechanics

At the turn, three (3) things can happen:

1) The swimmer touches the wall while on their back. They may turn in any manner they want as long as they are past vertical towards the back when their feet leave the wall.

2) The swimmer begins to turn past the vertical towards the breast, but touches the wall with some part of their body (including the hand, arm, forehead, chin, etc.) before going into the turn. As long as their turning motion was continuous once they went past vertical towards the breast, it's still legal, and they may turn in any manner they want as long as they're past vertical towards the back when their feet leave the wall. If, however, they go past vertical towards the breast, and extend the arm but don't immediately begin a pulling motion, that's a DQ for “non-continuous turning action.”

3) The swimmer turns past vertical towards the breast and executes a single or simultaneous double arm pull to initiate their turn. Once the arm(s) has (have) stopped moving (and you're *sure* it [they] has [have] stopped moving), the swimmer must be doing *something* to initiate their turn. If they're not doing something to initiate the turn as soon as their arms stop moving, that's a DQ. They can kick throughout the turn, as long as it's part of a continuous turning action. They must touch the wall (usually with their feet) and they must be past vertical towards the back when their feet leave the wall. If they miss the wall, they cannot “scull” back to touch the wall as that reverse motion would constitute a “non-continuous turning action.”

c) Observation

As the turn judge, you should stand over the lane looking down to at the swimmers to observe the turns. Once a swimmer passes vertical toward the breast, you should observe that all actions of the swimmer were associated with a continuous turning action and that the swimmer is past vertical toward the back when their feet leave the wall.



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4. Finish

a) **Rules**

“Upon the finish of the race, the swimmer must touch the wall while on the back.”

b) **Swim Mechanics**

A swimmer may swim in any manner desired while remaining on their back and must remain on their back until the finish of the race.

c) **Observation**

As a turn judge, it is important to watch the swimmers as they approach the wall at the turns and at the finish of the race. If, while watching a swimmer as they come into your jurisdiction, you see the swimmer’s body go totally submerged, that’s a DQ. When you transition your attention from watching the swim to watching the swimmer’s shoulders at the touch, do not look back.

C. Breaststroke

1. Start

a) **Rules**

“From the beginning of the first armstroke after the start and after each turn the body shall be kept on the breast. It is not permitted to roll onto the back at any time. Throughout the race the stroke cycle must be one arm stroke and one leg kick in that order. After the start and each turn, a single downward butterfly kick followed by a breaststroke kick is permitted while wholly submerged. Following which, all movements of the legs shall be simultaneous and in the same horizontal plane without alternating movement. The feet must be turned outwards during the propulsive part of the kick. A scissors, flutter or downward butterfly kick is not permitted except as provided herein. Breaking the surface of the water with the feet is allowed unless followed by a downward butterfly kick.”

**After the start and each turn a single downward butterfly kick followed by a breaststroke kick is permitted. The swimmer does not need to be completely submerged*

b) **Swim Mechanics**

An alternating kick is the most common disqualification call during the start of the breaststroke. It is important to observe the timing of the movement of the legs. As the swimmer executes the first arm pull past the hipline, the swimmer is permitted one downward butterfly kick followed by a breaststroke kick.

The position of the shoulders is not relevant when the swimmer executes the first arm pull except the swimmer must be past vertical toward the breast. The arms must be on the same horizontal plane for this first arm pull.

c) **Positioning and Jurisdiction**

The turn judge at the start end of the pool should stand at the appropriate signal and walk forward after the start of the race. They should watch the swimmer during the pull out observing the first arm pull, which may be past the hipline, the leg kick, followed by the second arm pull. At the widest part of the second arm pull the head must break the surface of



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the water. If the hands turn inward beginning the recovery portion of the next arm pull prior to the head breaking the surface of the water, that's a disqualification.

2. Swim

a) Rules

“All movements of the arms shall be simultaneous and in the same horizontal plane without alternating movement. The hands shall be pushed forward together from the breast on, under, or over the water. The elbows shall be under water except for the final stroke before the turn, during the turn and for the final stroke at the finish. The hands shall be brought back on or under the surface of the water. The hands shall not be brought back beyond the hip line, except during the first stroke after the start and each turn. During each complete cycle, some part of the swimmer's head shall break the surface of the water.”

b) Swim Mechanics

The recovery motion of the arms may be made above, at or below the surface of the water, but must be made inside the limits of the shoulders (“from the breast”). The elbows must stay “wet” (in contact with the froth and foam and not completely out of the water) during the recovery phase of the arm pull throughout the race except at the turn and at the finish. However, it's OK if the elbows clear the water during the pullback part of the stroke. As in butterfly the position of the feet is the key to judging the breaststroke kick. If the toes are pointed outward during the propulsive part of the kick, that's a legal breaststroke kick. If the toes are pointed straight back or inwards, that's a butterfly kick and a DQ in the breaststroke (other than during the first stroke after the start and each turn).

It is important to remember that some, if not most, elite swimmers will have a significant linear undulating motion as they race through the water. This may result in their feet breaking the surface of the water, often accompanied by a “roostertail” of spray, as they begin the recovery phase of their kick. This is NOT, however, a DQ UNLESS accompanied by a distinctive downward butterfly kick! USA Swimming rules do not require a “flexion of the knees” for a butterfly kick so be sure to remember that “the benefit of any doubt always goes to the swimmer.”

c) Positioning and Jurisdiction

The stroke judge on the side of the pool frequently has jurisdiction over the swimmer from the head breaking the surface of the water to the completion of each length. If FINA jurisdiction rules are used in the meet, the stroke judge on the side of the pool has jurisdiction after the first arm pull including the kick and second arm pull, at which point the head must break the surface of the water at the widest reach of the arms.

When walking the side of the pool, the stroke judge should be slightly behind the swimmers so that they can observe the entire swimmer, not just the feet. As the swimmers finish their leg kicks (which might result in the feet rising upward out of the water), you should observe the legs. If the knees are being drawn up and feet begin to separate to begin the recovery portion of the next stroke cycle, there is no DQ. If there is a downward butterfly-type kick with the legs, or a downward “flipper kick” of the feet prior to the legs being drawn up for the recovery portion of the next kick cycle, then a DQ should be called.



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3. Turns/Finish

a) Rules

"At each turn and at the finish of the race, the touch shall be made with both hands simultaneously at, above, or below the water level. The head may be submerged after the last arm pull prior to the touch, provided it breaks the surface of the water at some point during the last complete or incomplete cycle preceding the touch."

**After the start and each turn a single downward butterfly kick followed by a breaststroke kick is permitted. The swimmer does not need to be completely submerged*

b) Swim Mechanics

"Hand-over-hand" touch is OK since you probably can't see if the intertwined fingers are touching or not. Be very aware of the "swipe" touch where one hand clearly touches the wall but the second hand quickly (but simultaneously) just barely swipes at the wall and begins the turning action. Elite swimmers are really good at it and sometimes you're not sure if they touched the second hand at all. Once again, "only call what you see, not what you don't see." After the final pull into the wall at turns and finishes, the shoulders do not have to be level. In fact, the only thing that you have to watch the shoulders for is to see if they go past the vertical towards the back prior to the touch at the turns and/or finish.

c) Positioning and Jurisdiction

The turns and finish are in the jurisdiction of both the stroke judge and the turn judge. The stroke judge should observe the swimmer into the wall/finish watching the lower portion of the body verifying that a proper kick is executed. The turn judge should be positioned over the lane watching the upper portion of the swimmer's body for the proper touch.

D. Freestyle

1. Start

a) Rules

"In an event designated freestyle the swimmer may swim any style, except that in a medley relay or an individual medley event, freestyle means any style other than butterfly, breaststroke or backstroke. Some part of the swimmer must break the surface of the water throughout the race, except it shall be permissible for the swimmer to be completely submerged during the turn and for a distance of not more than 15 meters (16.4 yards) after the start and each turn. By that point the head must have broken the surface."

b) Swim Mechanics

Any stroke or combination of strokes (including "dog paddle") may be used. Freestyle is freestyle; i.e., anything goes, including doing other strokes during the race and even changing strokes in the middle of the race. UNLESS it's in the Individual Medley or the Medley Relay (more on that later). The head must break the surface of the water at or before the 15 meter mark.



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c) **Positioning and Jurisdiction**

The stroke judge should stand at the 15 meter mark to ensure that the heads of all of the swimmers break the surface of the water by the most generous of all the 15 meter marks on the lane lines.

2. Swim

a) **Rules**

‘In an event designated freestyle the swimmer may swim any style, except that in a medley relay or an individual medley event, freestyle means any style other than butterfly, breaststroke or backstroke. Some part of the swimmer must break the surface of the water throughout the race, except it shall be permissible for the swimmer to be completely submerged during the turn and for a distance of not more than 15 meters (16.4 yards) after the start and each turn. By that point the head must have broken the surface.’

b) **Swim Mechanics**

Some part of the body must remain on the surface throughout the rest of the swim, except for the first 15 meters after each turn. Any stroke or combination of strokes may be used.

c) **Positioning and Jurisdiction**

The stroke judge should make sure that the swimmer does not go completely submerged, pull on the lane lines, and/or push off of the bottom of the pool during the swim.

a) **Rules**

Turns *“Upon completion of each length the swimmer must touch the wall.”*

Finish *“The swimmer shall have finished the race when any part of his person touches the wall after completing the prescribed distance.”*

b) **Swim Mechanics**

The swimmers may turn in any manner they want as long as they touch the wall at the end of each length of the race. The touch at the finish may be made with any part of the body (including the forehead). Some part of the body must touch the wall at the end of each length of the race and a swimmer can go back and “save themselves” if they miss the touch during a turn. The DQ for missing the wall is not “officially” called until the swimmer touches the opposite end of the pool from the wall that they missed. The call should be made when it happens—the call always can be taken back when the swimmer returns to save themselves.

c) **Positioning and Jurisdiction**

The turn judge should stand over the lane(s) or at the corners of the pool to observe the touch at the turns and finish.

E. Individual Medley

1. Start

a) **Rules**



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The rules governing the start of the Individual Medley are the same as the butterfly start.

b) Swim Mechanics

The swim mechanics for the start are the same as outlined for the butterfly.

c) Positioning and Jurisdiction

The positioning and jurisdiction are the same as outlined for the butterfly.

2. Swim/Turns/Finish

a) Rules

“The swimmer shall swim the prescribed distance in the following order: the first one-fourth, butterfly; the second one-fourth, backstroke; the third one-fourth, breaststroke; and the last one-fourth, freestyle. “

“Stroke-The stroke for each one-fourth of the designated distance shall follow the prescribed rules for that stroke.”

Turns-Intermediate turns within each stroke shall conform to the turn rules for that stroke. The turns when changing from one stroke to another shall conform to the finish rules for the stroke just completed, and shall be as follows:

Butterfly to backstroke-The swimmer must touch as described in (Butterfly rules). Once a legal touch has been made, the swimmer may turn in any manner, but the shoulders must be at or past the vertical toward the back when the swimmer leaves the wall.

Backstroke to breaststroke-The swimmer must touch the wall while on the back. Once a legal touch has been made, the swimmer may turn in any manner but the shoulders must be at or past the vertical toward the breast when the swimmer leaves the wall and the prescribed breaststroke form must be attained prior to the first arm stroke.

Breaststroke to freestyle-The swimmer must touch as described in (Breaststroke rules). Once a legal touch has been made, the swimmer may turn in any manner.

Finish-The swimmer shall have finished the race when any part of his/her person touches the wall after the prescribed distance.”

b) Swim Mechanics

USA Swimming and FINA have interpreted the judging of the freestyle leg by saying that “the swimmer shall have swum a sufficient distance to allow the Judge (Turn or Stroke) to determine that he/she has swum ‘in the style’ of one of the previous three (3) strokes” before a DQ is called for the stroke infraction. That now precludes a DQ for the swimmer that briefly uses the butterfly kick off of the wall and then transitions into a normal freestyle as well as the swimmer who is momentarily on their back as they leave the wall for the freestyle leg and is rolling over to begin the normal freestyle.

Be aware of the “cross-over” transition from the backstroke to the breaststroke. Many elite swimmers use this technique of bringing their lead arm directly over their heads and making the touch just before their shoulders get past vertical towards the breast as they make the turn. If you are watching several lanes or are not paying strict attention to the turn, you might only see the swimmer doing the turn and be tempted to DQ them for not finishing the backstroke leg on their backs. Remember, **“only call what you see. not what you don’t see.”** Only call



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the DQ if you're positive that the swimmer did not touch the wall before going past the vertical towards the breast. Similarly, be aware of the "swipe" touch at the finish of the breaststroke leg before the transition to the freestyle.

c) Positioning and Jurisdiction

The position for observing each leg of the individual medley and associated jurisdictions are the same as outlined for each stroke.

F. Medley Relay

1. Start

a) Rules

The rules governing the start of the medley relay are the same as the backstroke start.

b) Swim Mechanics

The swim mechanics for the start are the same as for the backstroke as outlined above.

c) Positioning and Jurisdiction

The positioning and jurisdiction for the start is the same as for the backstroke as outlined above.

2. Swim/Turns/Finish

a) Rules

"Four swimmers on each team, each to swim one-fourth of the prescribed distance continuously in the following order: first backstroke; second, breaststroke; third, butterfly; fourth, freestyle. Rules pertaining to each stroke used shall govern where applicable: At the end of each leg, the finish rule for each stroke applies in each case."

b) Swim Mechanics

As in the IM, freestyle is defined as any stroke other than the previous three. Once again, the USA Swimming and FINA interpretations on the judging of the freestyle leg preclude a DQ for the swimmer that momentarily uses the butterfly kick off of the wall during the freestyle turn and then transitions into a normal freestyle as well as the swimmer who is momentarily on their back as they leave the wall for the freestyle turn and is rolling over to begin the normal freestyle.

c) Positioning and Jurisdiction

The stroke and turn judges should be in the same positions as outlined for each stroke and assume the same jurisdictions as well. One (1) relay take-off judge should be at each side of the pool (usually the off-duty starter and/or an off-duty deck referee) and the other relay take-off judges are positioned by their assigned lanes.

The key to relay take-offs is to watch the feet of the next swimmer on the blocks. Look to see where they are before they take off-- are they already at the front of the blocks or are they at the back ready to do a "step up" take off? When the feet of the swimmer on the blocks leaves the starting platform, look down to the pool level to see if the incoming swimmer has touched



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the wall yet — “toenails to fingernails.” If the exchange is good, circle the outgoing swimmer's number on your relay take-off slip (What, you don't have one? Then mark it on a piece of paper!); if the exchange is bad, put an “X” through the number of the swimmer that took off early. Remember, most relay take-offs are judged with “double confirmation” from two (2) different vantage points (usually next to the blocks and from the side of the pool), so do not raise your hand for an early takeoff DQ -- it still has to be confirmed by another takeoff judge. If, however, there are not enough officials for dual confirmation (particularly true in the Medley Relay where you need Stroke & Turn Judges as well as Relay Take-off Judges), then a single Relay Take-off Judge may be used and the DQ for Early Take-off must be signaled by raising the hand.

G. Freestyle Relay

1: Start

a) **Rules**

The rules governing the start of the freestyle relay are the same as the freestyle start.

b) **Swim Mechanics**

The swim mechanics for the freestyle relay are the same as outlined for freestyle above.

c) **Positioning and Jurisdiction**

The observation techniques for the freestyle relay are the same as outlined for freestyle above.

2. Swim/Turns/Finish

a) **Rules**

“Four swimmers on each team, each to swim one-fourth of the prescribed distance using any desired stroke(s). Freestyle finish rules apply.”

There are no rules except touch the wall at each turn and the finish (the same as for the individual freestyle). Each relay swimmer shall swim a fourth of the distance and no swimmer may swim more than one (1) leg of the race.

b) **Swim Mechanics**

The swim mechanics for the freestyle relay are the same as outlined for freestyle above.

c) **Positioning and Jurisdiction**

The positioning and jurisdiction for the freestyle relay are the same as outlined for freestyle above. However, the turn judge only needs to watch the intermediate turns since the relay take-off judge will (hopefully) see the touch at the end of each leg of the race during the relay exchange.

The relay take-off positioning and jurisdictions are the same as outlined above in the Medley Relay section.



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The USA Swimming Rules and Regulations Committee is emphasizing that "The key to a proper interpretation of the backstroke rule is the phrase 'continuous turning action,' i.e., a uniform, unbroken motion with no pauses. After the upper shoulder rotates beyond the vertical toward the breast, a continuous single arm pull or a continuous simultaneous double arm pull may be used to initiate the turn. There shall be no kick, arm pull, or flotation that is independent of the turn. The position of the head is not relevant."

To assist judges in evaluating the submerging portion of the rule, each of the lane lines **must** be marked at the 15-meter (16.4 yard) distances from each end. Stroke judges should be positioned to ensure that the swimmer's head breaks the water surface prior to the 15-meter marks and some part of the body remains surfaced until the swimmer executes the next turn.

V. A Philosophy of Stroke/Turn/Relay Take-off Officiating: Mental Traps

It is not very difficult to acquire the technical knowledge required to judge the strokes and turns or finishes. A judge will gain that knowledge and become proficient with practice. The challenge, however, is to apply that knowledge **professionally**. Whether we recognize it or not, all of us, as human beings, are influenced by a wide variety of factors when we try to make judgments. We have this marvelous thing called a brain, which allows us to apply "reason" whenever we make judgments. Yet, when using this capacity, we have to be careful not to apply human reason in such a way that it causes us to make poor or "sloppy" judgments. Over the years, various examples of this, often stemming from well intentioned but misguided rationale, have surfaced. Some examples of the "mental traps" that have surfaced in stroke and turn officiating over the years are:

1. Advantage vs. disadvantage (as a basis for making a judgment)?

The question of whether swimmer advantage / disadvantage should influence the official judgment of stroke, turn and finish violations has been the subject of much debate. Some authorities have used the term, "unfair advantage," in decisions relating to specific situations. Unfortunately, this has also caused considerable apprehension and/or misinterpretation about the intent of this phrase. There is no intent that this concept be applied broadly to all situations, thus justifying inaction by officials in not calling violations such as missed turns, touches, etc., because "no advantage was gained." This type of negative interpretation only leads to "sloppy" officiating and, unfortunately, gives an official an excuse for inadequate performance. Obviously, "unfair advantage" may be used to explain one reason why an action is an infraction. Still, a violation of the rules should be noted and the competitor disqualified whether an advantage is gained or not. Therefore, caution should be exercised in any application of this rationale, to preclude its use as a "crutch" for poor officiating.



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2. The "Twice Theory."

Some judges feel they should wait until an infraction happens more than once before they call it. They rationalize this position in all sorts of ways (e.g., "That clears up any doubt." "That confirms that it wasn't a simple mistake by the swimmer." etc.) Frankly, all of these, again, are crutches and excuses for uncertain and poor officiating. There is no basis for waiting to see an infraction happen twice and, in fact, it often won't. The official must simply be certain of what he saw and make the call as soon as it is observed. If there is any doubt about the violation, then don't make the call! (Remember, the swimmer gets the benefit of any doubt.) But, by the same token, don't then concentrate on that one swimmer to see if he commits the suspected infraction again. Continue to give all the competitors uniform coverage in observing their performance.

3. "We don't disqualify 8 & Unders" (the age group may change to 10 & Unders).

People who take this position often rationalize it by saying they don't want to cause "mental trauma" to a youngster. They usually go on to say they have no problems "socking it to a 13 & Older." While this may sound good, it is grounded in some clearly erroneous and extraneous beliefs. First, it views the judge's role as punitive. That's completely wrong. Rather, a disqualification should be viewed as a) "protecting the other athletes" in the competition, and b) "educating" the athlete who commits the infraction so he/she won't do it again. Secondly, it assumes that everyone in the identified age group is a "beginner" while those in the older age groups are "experienced" and, therefore, should be held to a stricter standard. Yet, this is also often erroneous. Athletes enter the sport at various ages and some 8 & Unders (having competed for a year or more) are far more "experienced" than some teenagers who are just entering the sport. In any event, experience is irrelevant. Finally, the idea that disqualifying an 8 & Under will "traumatize the child's psyche" is ludicrous. It clearly ignores the fact that youngsters are constantly being corrected during their early, formative years; that's how they learn.

4. "Don't ask me to judge my child."

Advocates of this usually fall into one of two categories. First, "I don't want anyone to think my child got by with some infraction because I was judging." Second, "I don't want to have to explain to my child why he/she was disqualified." Yet, this goes to the central element of being a "professional" judge. The Referee must know that the judge treats everyone in the field the same - "fairly and equitably." - all the time. The Referee must be confident that a judge will identify an infraction regardless of the effect upon his child, his team (club), his LSC. This is probably the ultimate test of the judge's impartiality, and referees should not let judges "off the hook" on this basis. To the judge, this is the time when he must separate himself from his parental role and accept the responsibility of being a USA Swimming judge.

5. Don't Infer (Extrapolate)

Succinctly put, this simply means: you can only call what you see, NOT what you deduct. You must actually see the swimmer miss the wall with his right hand on the turn, not assume he missed it because, by the time you looked, he was touching the wall with his left hand and was already turning. You must actually see the breaststroker take the second arm pull and be past the widest part of that second stroke before his head surfaces, not assume that it took two pulls to get that far out in the pool when you saw his head surface. Another way of putting this: don't look for reasons to disqualify. If



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you see the infraction and it is clear, report it, but if you are uncertain, remember that the benefit of any doubt must go to the athlete.

Conduct:

1. No outward manifestations during a race regarding illegality of competitor except raised hand.
2. Do not cheer, coach or swap disqualifications; control your emotions.
3. Do not fraternize with swimmers, coaches or spectators; disregard club affiliation and personal relationships.
4. Do not concentrate on frequent violators to the exclusion of others.
5. Give undivided attention -- start to finish.
6. If uncertain of role, consult with the Referee.

VI. JUDGING SWIMMERS WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

1. Judge, in accordance with USA Swimming rules, any part of the body that is used.
2. Do not judge a part of the body that cannot be used.
3. Base your judgment on actual rule, not the swimmer's technique.

VII. CONCLUSION

Officiating can be an enjoyable experience. It is not designed to win popularity contests; however, the self satisfaction of having participated and having done a good job is very rewarding. Unfortunately, "sloppy" and uninformed officials rarely recognize their inadequacies, but fellow officials, coaches and swimmers do. Consequently, all officials must continually reassess their own performances. This can best be done by regularly reviewing the rules and training material and by attending retraining sessions.

The new or inexperienced official often asks, "How long will it take me to become a good Stroke and Turn Judge?" Obviously, it depends upon the individual but, rest assured, it won't happen overnight or without effort. Knowing the rules and attending training sessions are very important, but experience gained by working at meets is the only real teacher. Only experience can build the confidence the Stroke and Turn Judge requires before his or her performance becomes "automatic." Even then, it is essential that the judge continuously review the rules and regularly attend retraining sessions.



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CHAPTER 6 - CLERK OF COURSE

The Clerk of Course role and functions vary broadly between LSC's, depending on the nature of the meet and the practices utilized within that LSC. In many situations, this role and function may be shared by a number of individuals. In some instances, the Clerk of Course's role may consist only of collecting, organizing and delivering the swimmers to the start in the appropriate heat and lane

The Clerk of Course (hereinafter referred to as the Clerk) is responsible for all of the paper work at the meet before the swimmers swim. This includes check-in, seeding, preparation and distribution of cards or lane timing record forms. Also included are the preparation, posting and distribution of heat sheets for deck seeded events to all appropriate officials and spectators. The extent of this will depend on many factors. Meet operations will vary considerably between LSC's and also between meets held within any LSC. Perhaps the most important consideration for any meet is whether the meet is entirely pre -seeded, or is partially or completely deck-seeded. Other key factors include whether the meet is being run manually or using a computer(s) and the nature of the computer program in use. Whether or not pre-meet scratch procedures or meetings are used within the LSC will also be a consideration. It is assumed that the collection and compilation of swimmers' entries will have been done well before the meet and is not the responsibility of the Clerk. The Clerk has responsibility for check-in of swimmers and such seeding operations as are appropriate for the meet. If a computer program is being used to run the meet, the Clerk will work closely with the computer operator. An experienced and knowledgeable computer operator is invaluable in providing rapid, efficient and accurate seeding operations.

The Clerk should personally oversee the seeding operations and should appoint appropriate personnel for the necessary task. The Clerk should ensure that the personnel are well trained and understand the procedures and that the necessary forms and materials are available in advance. The Clerk should consult the Referee concerning preferred procedures for late check-ins, no-shows, entry problems, etc.

If a meet is entirely pre -seeded and the seeding is done by computer, there is no need for a check-in operation and the Clerk needs only to see that the paper work for recording lane times is available and distributed to the timers. This probably will have been prepared in advance by the entries person(s).

If the meet is partially or completely deck seeded, then the Clerk will have to deal with check-in and seeding operations. Procedures for doing this may vary considerably according to the practices in use in the LSC's and whether a computer program is used to run the meet, but generalized guidelines are provided below

Check-in procedures, scratch rules and penalties for violating these rules vary between LSC's and efforts should be made to assure that swimmers and coaches are familiar with them.

CHECK-IN

The purpose of the check-in procedure is to determine which swimmers will be competing in an event, so that the entries can be seeded in the most efficient manner with the minimum number of heats.

Advance preparations for the check-in process should include the necessary supplies, paper work, tables and chairs as needed. Signs and/or chalkboards for information and posting of deadlines should be available or prepared in advance. An appropriate location should be selected to avoid crowding and interference with the meet.

Alphabetical listings by sex and age groups of swimmers entered in the meet, with a notation of which events each swimmer has entered may be used. Alternatively, psych sheets for individual events may be



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used. Use of computer program for entries makes the preparation of these sheets more accurate and easier. Check -in sheets and a list of any entry problems should be obtained from the entries person(s) prior to the start of the meet. Whatever the process, an accurate procedure of check-in is necessary to ensure, that the correct swimmers are properly recorded on each sheet. This must clearly record whether the swimmer has checked in to swim or has scratched from the event. No marks should be made on the check-in sheet other than those designated for a check-in or scratch. Swimmers who have been marked as an entry problem should not be checked in until the problem is resolved.

Check-in Guidelines

- Each swimmer should check themselves in. A swimmer should not check in another swimmer. Coaches may check-in their swimmers but should be cautioned that the swimmer is responsible. If allowed to do so, they must accept the responsibility for doing so. Coaches should be asked to initial the "check in" when this is done.
- Be Neat! This is essential to avoid errors when deciding which swimmers are to be scratched
- When only a single event per swimmer at a session requires check-in, the check-in is usually done on a psych sheet. Place a check mark by each swimmer's name as they check in. Draw a line through the swimmers name if they choose to scratch. Do NOT mark through the ID # of the swimmer.
- When there are multiple events requiring check-in within a session, swimmers may (and are encouraged to do so) check-in for all events in that session at one time. If a swimmer does check-in for multiple events they may change their choice up until the closing time for each individual event. If a swimmer checks-in and wants to scratch later, it should be noted who requested the scratch and the change should be initialed.
- When a swimmer checks-in to swim an event, circle the event number after the swimmer's name. If a swimmer wishes to scratch an event, cross-out the event number. Do NOT make marks on the swimmer ID # as this will be needed to scratch swimmers from an event. Be careful to insure that the marks are placed on the correct line after the swimmers name. If two last names are the same, be sure the marks are placed after the correct swimmer.
- Anticipate the closing time for specific events and have appropriate announcements made. If possible, seek out the Coach of those swimmers who have not checked-in as closing time approaches.
- Do NOT leave the Check-in sheet unattended. Do NOT allow swimmers or others to make unobserved changes on the sheet.
- The Clerk should inform the check-in people when an event is closed and no additional swimmers may check in. Event closure should be announced and the time noted on the check-in sheet.
- Generally, when deck seeding, an event is closed approximately 30 minutes before an event is to start. Usually a time line is available prior to the start of the meet. This time line is helpful, but is not precise. The Clerk must carefully track the progress of the meet ensuring that an event is not closed too soon or too late, resulting in confusion or delay of the meet.



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- In some LSC's, swimmers who have not checked-in (positive check-in) for a deck seeded event will not be seeded into that event but may still be allowed to swim in that event by reporting to the Referee prior to the start of that event. They will be allowed to swim in the slowest heat.
- When an event has been closed, a list of swimmers to be scratched should be prepared on a form prepared prior to the meet. For each **event**, list the name and ID # of each swimmer who has (a) indicated their desire to scratch the event, and (b) those that have not checked-in for the event. Double-check the list (preferably by a second person). Count the scratches and the positive check-ins and make sure that the total equals the number of swimmers on the entry list for that event.
- Take the list of scratches promptly to those responsible for seeding the event.

SEEDING EVENTS

Seeding is the assignment of a heat and lane to each swimmer according to their submitted entry time. There are two ways to seed a meet: 1) prior to the meet (pre-seeding), or 2) during the meet (deck seeding).

Pre seeding is done before the meet and heat and lane assignments are printed in the meet program. No check-in is required at the meet. If entries are done with a computer program, lane time recording forms can be prepared before the meet. If cards are used for manual entries the cards will be distributed on the day of the meet.

Deck seeding is done during the meet. Swimmers who have entered an event check-in to swim that event. Only those who check-in are given a heat and lane assignment.

If the meet is being run by computer, the seeding is done by the computer operator, who uses the scratch list provided by the people responsible for check-in. The operator will enter the scratches into the computer and produce the seeding. While entering the scratches the operator should carefully compare the names of the swimmers shown as scratches on the computer screen with those on the scratch list. Once the seeding for the event is completed, a sufficient number of heat sheets are prepared to distribute and post so that swimmers, coaches, officials and spectators are informed of the seeding.

If a computer is not used and entry cards are used to run the meet, seeding must be done manually with the cards. Cards for swimmers who have scratched should be removed from the pack and the remaining cards seeded manually. The seeding procedures are described in the U. S. Swimming rule book, Article 102. There are important differences in the seeding of a timed final meet and a meet with preliminary and final heats.

Relay events must also be seeded. A time should be established for the coaches to pick up and return their relay cards. The deadline should be announced several times during the early part of the day and again when the deadline is near. The coach is required to write the full names and the ages (and also the meet ID numbers if a computer is used to run the meet) for all eligible relay swimmers on the card before returning it to the Clerk for seeding. Alternate swimmers may be listed on the cards. Coaches may change the swimmers or the swimming order until the team is called to the blocks. The swimmer's order of swimming must be declared immediately prior to the start of their relay heat, and no changes are permitted after that. The cards are collected earlier only for the purpose of seeding the event. The seeding procedure is the same as for individual events.



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The minimum personnel recommended is two people to seed the girls' cards and two people to seed the boys' cards for meets up to 2000 entries. As the number of entries increases, more people will be needed. At least two runners are necessary to distribute the paper work to the announcer and the referee. The entry cards must be sorted by event and time, using the heat sheets. The cards will be provided by the Meet Director or entry chairman.

The seeding area should have pencils, erasers, red pens, scratch pads, blank cards, the schedule of events the referee's time line and the necessary number of tables and chairs. The area should be conveniently located where the workers are free from disturbance. There is an advantage to locating the seeding group near the Results desk.

CARD DISTRIBUTION

If cards are used to seed the meet, the cards must be distributed to the swimmers after seeding. In a pre-seeded meet the cards may be distributed to the swimmers or given directly to the lane timers. The card distribution center must be clearly marked. If the younger swimmers are to wait in the card distribution area, a covered location large enough for adequate seating must be provided. If the cards are only going to be handed out, the size of the distribution area is not important, but the location should be convenient for the swimmers.

The cards should not be distributed too early before the event. The lane recorders may become confused with cards from several events.

Any unclaimed seeding cards should be delivered to the referee. Occasionally a late swimmer will arrive in time to swim. The Referee can then easily send a card to the lane recorder. The referee also needs these cards to prepare the "no-show" slips.

For 50 -meter and 25-yard events that start and finish at opposite ends of the pool, copies of the heat sheets with heat and lane assignments should be posted at the end of the pool where the swimmers will start. This procedure will reduce the chances of a swimmer being in the wrong lane. One swimmer out of place in these shorter events can result in confusion at the desk.



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CHAPTER 7 - MARSHAL

Marshals are an important element in the conduct of a safe and efficient meet. They should be involved not only in supervision and control of the warm-up sessions, but also in several other aspects of the meet. This includes maintaining crowd control, deck access, proper competitor and spectator decorum and safe, courteous behavior in other areas of the venue such as locker rooms. USA Swimming rules require marshals to be registered members of the organization. They should be responsible individuals who can communicate instructions to swimmers, coaches and spectators without creating an adversarial atmosphere. The exercise of polite, but firm, authority by Marshals will go a long way towards assuring a pleasant, safe and efficient meet.

Marshals should operate under the supervision of the Meet Director, Meet Referee, Meet Safety Director or Head Marshal, depending on the practices and policies of the LSC. They should be instructed and assigned by the appropriate person(s) having that assigned responsibility for that meet.

Since each LSC may have its own needs and policies, the marshals should become familiar with the standard practices and rules in use in their LSC.

To indicate their authority, the marshals should be provided with an easily identifiable uniform clearly visible to all in the venue. Bright colored vests, arm bands, uniform shirts or some other brightly colored means of identification may be used.

Duties

- Marshals should arrive at the venue well in advance of the start of the warm-up session(s) and obtain their assignments and instructions from the responsible authority.
- If assigned to a position to oversee warm-ups, they should be in position before that session starts. They should remain in that position until relieved or reassigned. If a separate pool or diving well is available for warm-up/warm-down, marshals assigned to monitor that facility should remain in the appropriate positions continuously during the competition. Marshals assigned to monitor warm-ups should not also be given the responsibility for other duties such as crowd and access control.
- If assigned as a deck or locker room marshal they should make periodic and timely rounds of their area to deal with unsafe or unsportsmanlike behavior or situations. At least one of the marshals shall be female to cover the women's locker rooms.
- Marshals should identify and report anyone who refuses to follow their instructions to the Meet Director and/or the Meet Referee for further action. At larger meets, a referee may be assigned to be available on deck during warm-ups to handle such problems.
- Marshals shall have full authority to warn or order to cease and desist and, with the concurrence of the Meet Referee, to remove or have removed from the swimming venue anyone behaving in an unsafe manner or using profane or abusive language. This action may also be applied to anyone using tobacco products in the venue or whose actions are disrupting the orderly conduct of the meet.



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CHAPTER 7 - MARSHAL

Warm-up Procedures

General and controlled warm-up procedures are required by United States Swimming and must be in effect at each and every USA Swimming swim meet. The details of meeting these requirements may vary somewhat in different LSC's or according to the nature of the meet. Suggested general procedures are:

- Marshals must be posted at each end of the warm-up pool(s) and should be thoroughly instructed as to the warm-up procedures established by their LSC and the meet host.
- Typically, a general warm-up period will be scheduled first, with or without specific lane assignments for teams or age groups. During this period, the outside lanes (e.g. lanes 1 & 8 in eight lane pools, lanes 1 & 6 in 6 lane pools) may be allocated for pace or kick lanes. The use of paddles, kickboards or pull buoys is usually prohibited. Signs, cones or other devices should be placed on all of the blocks to prevent diving or racing starts. A specific period may be provided at the end of the session for sprint lanes. If the size of the meet dictates split warm-up sessions, opportunities for sprint lanes may be provided for in a period at the end of each individual session for the swimmers in that session or in a final, controlled sprint session for all swimmers following the general sessions.
- During the general warm-up period(s) swimmers may not dive into the pool but **must enter feet first, in a cautious manner**. They may not practice backstroke starts during the warm-up period. **All entries must be from the starting end of the pool**.
- If sprint lanes are permitted at any time during the general warm-up, it is recommended that inside lanes (e.g., lanes 2 and 7 or 2 and 5) be used.
- Sprint lanes (one-way) must be controlled by marshals. Swimmers may start from the blocks or the deck and must exit at the far end of the pool. Swimmers should not be permitted on the blocks when a swimmer is in the water for a backstroke start.
- LSC's should determine what penalty, if any, will be imposed on swimmers who violate warm-up safety procedures. Marshals observing such violations should bring the offenders to the Meet Referee for enforcement. Removal from part or all of the remaining warm-up period may be considered as a penalty.

***NOTE (Optional)** It is suggested that LSC's consider development of a corps of marshals trained and certified by the LSC and appropriately uniformed to staff meets held in the LSC. Perhaps such a program could be developed along lines similar to the Officials program. Such training and certification procedures could provide an esprit de corps that would stimulate volunteers and provide them with recognition which would help to reduce staffing problems.*



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CHAPTER 8 - ANNOUNCER

The announcer plays an important role in meet management and control. Under the direction of the Meet Referee and the Meet Director, the announcer controls the tempo of the meet. Under ideal conditions, the announcer should be an experienced individual familiar with the needs and philosophy of meet operations in their LSC. To be effective, the announcer should be constantly alert and able to adapt quickly to meet conditions. The spectators, coaches and swimmers should be kept informed and their interest maintained throughout the meet. This can best be accomplished with **timely** announcements, information and enthusiastic descriptions of the races, where appropriate.

Sometimes there is a tendency to over announce. A few pertinent announcements are much more effective than too many. The announcer should be familiar with existing records and be prepared to call timely attention to swimmers who are likely to set new records or who have done so in events recently swum. This will add to the spectators' interest and afford proper recognition to the swimmer(s) involved. In summary, the announcer does much more than just call the next heat and announce the results. The announcer plays an important role in maintaining the meet time line.

Duties

- Check with the Referee and the Meet Director for time schedules (warm-up schedules, meet start time, etc.) and instructions for the desired timing and format of announcements. If possible, this should be done on a day prior to the meet, or at least, prior to the start of the warm-up period.
- Arrive early at the meet.
- Ensure that all of the equipment is in working order (microphone, speakers, volume adjusted properly, etc.).
- Assist the meet management and officials in the opening of warm-ups, assignment of warm-up lanes and reminders of safety procedures. If there are multiple sessions during the warm-ups assist in clearing the pool and starting the next session and keep track of the time schedules for doing this.
- If the National Anthem is to be played at the start of competition, make arrangements for this to be done promptly at the appropriate time.
- If a Clerk of Course is being used to assemble the swimmers prior to their heats find out when the swimmers are to be called for their events.
- Announce the Event at the beginning of each event and the Heat number before each heat. These announcements of events and heats should be made after the Referee blows the long whistle.
- Determine from the Referee, whether individual swimmers and lanes are to be announced and, if so, whether this is to be done between heats or while the previous heat is in the water. This may vary between Preliminaries and Finals.
- Provide commentary during the competition as appropriate, including records set, notable swimmers present, etc.
- Provide other information as required. Concession information, awards procedures/location, volunteer check-ins and other announcements as requested by officials or meet management



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- Announce results, finals qualifiers, swim-offs, time trials, scratch and check-in deadlines. These announcements should be made so that they do not conflict with the start of another race. **Stop talking if the Referee blows the whistle.**
- For preliminary sessions, finalists should be announced as soon as they are determined. The time of the announcement should be noted to ensure compliance with the scratch rules.
- Announce deadlines for relay card pick-ups and when and where they are to be turned in.
- Request Biography forms for final, if applicable, and check to ensure proper pronunciation of finalists' names.
- Remind everyone of the time for start of warm-ups and competition for the next session.
- If finals are swum, coordinate the parade of finalists with the appropriate management and introduce the finalists at the blocks using biographies, if applicable.
- Provide appropriate information regarding awards. If appropriate announce team, individual and high point awards. Coordinate as needed with awards personnel if an awards ceremony is held.
- Close by recognizing the contribution of key personnel, officials, volunteers, etc. Thank everyone for coming and wish them a safe trip home.

Guidelines

- The Announcer should speak clearly, talk slowly and pronounce names correctly. Look over the heat sheets to determine if you know how to pronounce the names of swimmers and clubs properly. If necessary, coaches, officials, and parents can be consulted to learn the correct pronunciation.
- For large or complicated meets, it may be desirable to have an assistant or relief announcer who can help to coordinate and manage some of the responsibilities of the announcer.
- If there are separate announcers for meets which have two adjacent pools operating simultaneously, these announcers must coordinate announcements and be aware of the status of the races in both pools so as not to interfere.
- For most meets, the time line is an important management tool. The announcer has the responsibility to assist the referee in maintaining the required flow of the meet by staying as close as practical to the published time line. The announcer should adjust as required in order to help accomplish this goal. If there is a lull or delay in the activity, use this opportunity to acknowledge sponsors, read results, advertise the concessions, etc.
- The announcer should be prepared to help in case of emergencies. If evacuation of the facility should become necessary, the announcer should be prepared to give calm, precise instructions and should be familiar with the location of exits. If appropriate, an early announcement should ask those present to identify the exits nearest them.



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The Announcer's job is to keep everyone informed of the meet's progress in a pleasing and timely manner. It is an important and difficult job, but vital to the operation of a good swimming meet.



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Other than winning the race or scoring points for their team, the most important part of a swimmer's race is knowing with confidence how long he took to swim that event, i.e. his Official Time. Although there is usually only one first place winner in a race, each swimmer who participates legally achieves an Official Time. The swimmer's time could meet the qualification standards for future competition, set a local or national record, or it could simply be that swimmer's Personal Best. Regardless, our responsibility as officials is to provide each swimmer with an accurate and valid Official Time.

The rules of USA Swimming specify that, "No swimmer shall be required to re-swim a race due to equipment failure which results in unrecorded or inaccurate time or place."

When touchpads (fully automatic timing equipment) are used, the time recorded by that equipment normally determines both the Official Time and the Order of Finish. The use of automatic timing equipment provides more accurate time and placement information than can be obtained from manual techniques (buttons or stopwatches.) Nevertheless (because of the potential for failure) and always to verify proper operation, **all times from electronic timing equipment** (whether touchpads or buttons) **must both be verified and backed-up by another timing system. The backup must always include at least one stopwatch.** When just buttons or watches are used, the timers usually provide the basis for the Official Time. In all cases they provide information needed to determine the Official Time. **The accurate timing and recording of each swimmer's performance are essential.**

This chapter explains the types of timing equipment used, the responsibilities of the various positions involved in determining an Official Time, and the process used to determine each swimmer's Official Time.

DESCRIPTION OF TIMING SYSTEMS

- (1) **Manual timing** requires the use of hand-held, battery powered, digital read-out **stopwatches**. Digital wristwatches or dial watches are not permitted. Lane timers perform the "start" and "stop" actions.
- (2) **Semi -Automatic timing** is activated by an electronic pulse from a starting device or transducer. Finishes are recorded by **buttons** pushed by timers at the swimmer's finish touch.
- (3) **Automatic timing** is activated by an electronic pulse from a starting device or transducer. Finishes are recorded by the swimmer's contact with the **touchpad**.

EXPLANATION OF TIMING SYSTEM DESIGNATIONS

- (1) **Primary timing system:** The timing system (touchpads, buttons or watches) from which the swimmer's Official Time will be determined unless that equipment has malfunctioned. When watches or buttons are used as the primary timing system, at least two watches or buttons must be used. Three watches or buttons per lane are highly preferable.
- (2) **Secondary timing system:** A system used to **verify the proper operation** of the **primary** timing system or to provide **backup** times in the event that the primary timing system malfunctions. Automatic and semi-automatic electronic equipment must always be backed up.
- (3) **Tertiary timing system.** Unless the primary timing system consists of manual watches or the secondary system includes at least one manual watch per lane, a tertiary system of at least one watch per lane must be provided.



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Both secondary and tertiary timing systems provide verification and backup times for the primary timing system.

TIMING OFFICIALS

Because of its critical importance, many people are involved in determining the Official Time for each swimmer. The following is a brief description of each person's duties.

- (1) **Lane Timer** -- A lane timer starts and stops a watch and/or presses a button on a lane. By doing so, they provide a time from each timing system they use. A Lane Timer may be asked to operate a watch and button simultaneously, but they may not operate two watches or two buttons at the same time.
- (2) **Head Lane Timer** -- In addition to performing the duties of a Lane Timer, the Head Lane Timer also records the manual watch times from that lane, verifies that the proper swimmers are competing in that lane, and reports if a swimmer delays in touching or misses the touchpad at the finish.
- (3) **Chief Timer** -- This person is responsible for all the Lane Timers and Head Lane Timers. In addition to assuring the Lane Timers are properly briefed prior to each session, the Chief Timer supervises the timers during the session, collects recorded times from the Head Lane Timers, and starts additional watch(es) to be used as a substitute in the event a Lane Timer's watch fails.
- (4) **Timing Equipment Operator** -- When automatic (pads) or semi-automatic (buttons) timing equipment is being used, he is responsible for operating the timing console.
- (5) **Timing Judge** -- Receives times produced by the automatic or semi-automatic timing systems (when used) and the manual (watch) times from each lane. **He uses that information to determine the Official Time for each swimmer.** The Timing Judge also receives any signed disqualifications from the Referee. Provides the Recorder (this duty is frequently performed by the computer operator) with information regarding Official Times, disqualifications, or reported/observed absences (*i. e.* empty lanes) for each swimmer scheduled to compete. The Administrative Referee may perform the duties of Timing Judge. A more detailed listing of each position's responsibilities is given in the following sections.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR LANE TIMERS

1. The Chief Timer will assign each timer to a specific lane and designate one timer per lane as the Head Lane Timer.
2. Remember that timing is one of the most important positions at the meet. Your input is always needed to determine a swimmer's Official Time.
3. You may operate a button and/or a watch, but may never operate two buttons or two watches at the same time.
4. Become familiar with the watch you will be using at the meet. In particular, know which button starts, stops and clears (resets) the watch. Start and stop the watch with the same finger.
5. The Head Lane Timer should check each swimmers name, preferably by asking for the swimmer's name. For relays, the team and the order in which the swimmers compete should be checked.



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6. Do not engage in conversation with swimmers prior to their race unless they initiate the conversation.
7. Prior to the race you should be sitting or standing (if no chairs are provided) far enough back so you will not distract the starter or competing swimmers.)
8. At the start, focus on the starting device (strobe light or gun flash) and start your watch on that signal, rather than the sound. When an automatic or semi-automatic timing system is being used, buttons are **not** pushed at the start.
9. Once each heat has started, check to be sure your watch is running. If it is not or you think you started it late, signal the Chief Timer by raising your hand with the watch showing.
10. For distance events (16 lengths or longer) the Head Lane Timer records split times each time the swimmer turns at your end of the pool. These split times may be taken either from the scoreboard (if available) or from glancing at the watch without stopping it.
11. Be at the edge of the pool at the finish. You must be looking down over the forward edge to see an underwater touch. Expect to get wet. Stop your watch when any part of the swimmer's body touches the wall. You are not concerned with whether the finish was legal.
12. Always push the same button at the finish.
13. Times should always be recorded to the hundredths of a second (two decimal places), and in the same order for each heat. If there is no one in the lane, record "No Swimmer" as N/S.
14. Stay focused on your duties, particularly during the start and finish. Do not cheer for particular swimmers and do not get so interested in watching a race in another lane that you do not get an accurate time for the lane you are timing.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE CHIEF TIMER

A Prior to Meet:

- a) Assure sufficient timers are being recruited. At least two timers per lane are needed (and three are highly recommended or the times may not be acceptable for all purposes).
- b) Check that there are sufficient watches and that they are operating properly. Backup watches are also needed.
- c) Assure the preparation of Lane Timer materials and supplies, such as: clipboards, programs (when available), and pencils (#2). Make sure that if the swimmers are not bringing timing cards to their lane, that forms for recording the watch times are available.
- d) For dual meets, determine which teams will be in the even and which in the odd lanes. This may affect the assignment of timers.

B Prior to the first event.

- a) Coordinate with the Referee or Starter regarding whether they wish to participate in the timer's briefing. In some LSC's, this responsibility is given to the Starter.



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- b) Confirm that sufficient timers are available, that each lane has an equal number of timers, etc. Make sure an individual is serving as the Head Lane Timer in each lane. If enough volunteers are available, appoint Assistant Chief Timer(s) to help you.
- c) Assure the "Timers Briefing" is conducted covering (as appropriate) the points discussed under the Instructions for Lane Timers. The Lane Timers should be assembled and the briefing started early enough that attendance can be confirmed, the briefing conducted, questions answered, and a timing check completed prior to scheduled starting time for the first heat.
- d) Conduct a timing check with the timers standing by their lanes. The Chief Timer should ask the Starter to conduct a time check before the start of the meet. Usually all timers start their watches at the flash of the strobe or, if used, the signal smoke or flash of a pistol. They stop their watch when the stop signal is given, which is usually after at least 30 seconds has elapsed. The watch times are then compared. This serves to confirm that the watches are operating properly and the Lane Timers are familiar with their watch. If a watch has a time that differs by more the 0.20 seconds, it should be reported to the Chief Timer.
- e) Determine if the Timing Equipment Operator wants the timer's assistance for a final confirmation that the buttons and pads are operating properly. You may wish to request such a check if you have Lane Timers who are not familiar with using a button.

C During the meet

- a) Observe whether the Lane Timers are watching the strobe light or gun at the start, looking over the edge at the finish, not clearing their watches prematurely, etc. Assure that the Head Lane Timers are recording the times properly, listing the times as instructed, writing numbers clearly and recording times in a consistent order. If any are not performing efficiently, reinstruct them or replace them.
- b) Identify timers who may not be doing a good job, note those lanes where the timers are working well together and the times are matching well. Then, let them know that they are doing a good job. A little praise and encouragement pays great benefits. An experienced Chief Timer should know after a short period (3 to 5 heats/events), the capabilities of each group of timers.
- c) Make sure your lanes remain staffed. Volunteer timers do sometimes leave without giving notice. Be prepared to move people between lanes to maintain consistent coverage. Keep the Referee informed regarding your staffing situation so that heats are not started if there are insufficient timing personnel in place.
- d) Particularly when watches are the primary timing system, frequently check various lane times for accuracy and the spread of times. It is particularly important to do this for the first few heats of a session to confirm everybody understands their responsibility. You can use the split hand on your watch to check for accuracy by depressing it when the winner finishes and then stopping the main watch when the last swimmer in the heat finishes. All times recorded should be between your two times. When buttons are being used, work with the Timing Judge, who by his review of timing information can help identify where there may be problems.
- e) After each heat or event (depending on how times are being recorded), collect the time information for all lanes and deliver them to the Timing Judge

D After the meet

- a) Make sure times from the last heat/event are collected,
- b) Collect and account for all watches and clipboards.



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- c) Note any problems and inform the Meet Director or other responsible official of any inoperable watches.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR TIMING EQUIPMENT OPERATOR

The Timing Equipment Operator is responsible for the automatic or semi-automatic timing equipment, including the electronic starting system and scoreboard (if used.) Because different timing systems are used at various swim meets, discussion of how to use a particular timing system cannot be included. However, many points are common to all systems and can be discussed here.

1. All electronic equipment should be placed whenever possible so that the equipment operator has an unobstructed view of the finish end of the pool. This permits the operator to observe the finish and listen to audio signals from the equipment to confirm that the system has properly recorded the touches when they occur.
2. The timing equipment operator should verify that the various components are properly operating prior to each session. This includes making sure that the starting system properly activates (starts) the timing system, the pads and buttons are connected, pad touches and button pushes are being recorded by the timing system, the timing system is properly configured for the type of pool being used, which side of the pool the equipment is on, number of lanes in use, type of timing equipment being used, etc.
3. The operator should also confirm that the scoreboard is connected and working, output can be printed, and that it can be received by the computer used to record the official meet results.
4. Automatic and semi-automatic times are to be recorded to the nearest hundredth of a second. If possible do not allow the automatic timing system printout to show the time to the thousandth. Identical times to the hundredth are considered ties and swim-offs may be required.
5. Care must be taken to make sure that all intermediate turns are recorded by the system. If not, the system must be adjusted so that it is properly armed prior to the finish.
6. Similarly during relay races, the system must be carefully monitored to make sure first three swimmers have exited the pool promptly enough to not reactivate the touchpad. If not, the system must be adjusted so it is properly armed prior to the finish.
7. If the primary timing device fails to start automatically on the starting signal, it should be started as soon as possible by the automatic equipment operator. Good results can be obtained by using all the watch times to calculate the delay in starting the timing system and adjusting the times accordingly.
8. If operator error or power failure causes machine failure during the race, an attempt to start the machine late should be made. The only requirement is that the touchpads be armed prior to the time the first swimmer finishes.



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INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE TIMING JUDGE

The duty of the Timing Judge is to determine the Official Time for each swimmer. All other personnel (Lane Timers, Head Lane Timers, Chief Timer, and Automatic Equipment Operator) provide input to this determination. **Only the Timing Judge or the Referee can make the formal determination.**

Therefore, the Timing Judge should have available all times produced by all timing systems being used as well as any supplemental information that may be useful to determining the Official Time. This includes reports of possible problems from the Head Lane Timers, Chief Timer, Timing Equipment Operator, reported order of finish information from the Referee and/or Starter, etc.

Once the Official Time is determined, it is provided to the Recorder. (The Recorder may do this manually or by accepting/editing times received by a computer from the Timing System.)

The Timing Judge also assures all disqualifications approved by the Referee are recorded so that those swimmers do not receive an Official Time. He may also be asked to keep a record of swimmers scheduled to compete, who do not do so (*i. e.*, "No Shows" or "N/S") and/or a log of swimmers who were disqualified and the reason.

The Timing Judge shall confirm that whenever buttons or watches are used as the primary timing system that the Official Time has been correctly determined in accordance with the USA Swimming rulebook. When buttons are the primary system, watch times should be checked for consistency with the button times.

When Automatic (pad) Timing is the primary timing system, the pad times should always be compared with the button or watch times to verify that the pad times are valid. If the backup times vary from the pad time by .29 seconds or less, the pad time must be used as the Official Time. When such a verification cannot be obtained (*i.e.*, there is a difference of .30 seconds or more), the Timing Judge should review other available information in order to make an informed recommendation to the Referee. This information can include consistent backup times supporting a different time, reports that the swimmer missed the pad, touched the pad too lightly, the reliability of the pad in other heats, and/or a recorded order of finish.

When the Timing Judge concludes that he cannot recommend use of the time produced by the Primary Timing System as the Official Time, he must obtain the Referee's concurrence. In doing so, he should explain his rationale for rejecting the primary time and his basis for determining the Official Time. The Referee may provide guidelines to the Timing Judge regarding circumstances when an adjustment may be made without seeking individual approval. When integrating times from different timing systems (*i.e.* secondary and tertiary system times with the primary system times) the back-up times shall be adjusted as specified in the USA Swimming Rules.

For at least the first few heats of each session and any time any modification is made to the starting and/or timing system, the watch times should also be compared with the times from the primary system to confirm the proper installation of the timing equipment. Consistently observed differences between timing systems (after considering whether the timing system being used adjusts button times for a human reaction delay) may provide a strong indication the timing system has been improperly installed.



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If this should be observed, the Referee should be immediately notified and no additional heats swum until the source of the problem is identified and resolved. Times from heats already swum may have to be adjusted before they can become Official Times.

If the Timing Judge observes a pattern of inconsistent or missing information from a particular Lane Timer, the Chief Timer should be notified so corrective steps can be taken. If serious enough, notify the Referee.

This chapter has addressed the equipment, personnel assignments, responsibilities and processes used to determine an official time. The guidance provided in this chapter should be used in conjunction with the USA Swimming Rules and Regulations to assure that valid times are secured.

