



*Swim Your Passion
Passion, Connection, Legacy*

November 2015

Dear Officials,

Greetings! As meet director for the upcoming 2016 Western Zone Age Group Championships, I'd like to invite you to learn more about, save the dates and apply to work, the meet.

Executive Summary:

- Utah Swimming will host the 2016 Western Zone Age Group Championships.
- Dates: August 10-13, 2016
- Place: Kearns Oquirrh Park Fitness Center 5624 S. Cougar Ln (4800 W.) Kearns, UT 84118
- This is going to be a very fun and unique meet because of the "Olympic Connection" between Utah's Olympic legacy and the Rio Olympics occurring at the same time.
 - *Meet Vision Statement:* Create opportunities for each to discover something great within, and also among, through inspiring passionate performance, expanded connection and lasting legacy
- We believe all officials can benefit from working this meet. Your involvement is also crucial to its success.

Action Items:

- **Create Excitement:**
 - Visit meet website: utahzones2016.com and sign up to receive meet communication.
 - Use "Contact Us" button to leave your name, email address and type "Official" in the Comment Section to filter the email you'll receive.
 - Learn more about meet. (Explore meet website, read additional info below)
 - Participate in our social media campaign launching January 2016
 - Learn more about the national certification process. (www.usaswimming.org --click or search "National Certification")
 - Talk to other officials to find out more or share what you know.
- **Volunteer:** Plan to work all or part of the meet. Sign up on website utahzones2016.com and complete and turn in an application when they become available. (Because of the number of officials needed to work a meet of this size, applications are requested to aid in planning. However, walk-ins are also welcome.)
- **Donate:** Business, family, individual & company match financial and in-kind donations appreciated (Notify through meet website "Contact Us" function)
- **Encourage** others to volunteer, donate, qualify or attend!

Nationally Certified Officials:

- Invite and encourage other officials to work the zones meet.
- Invite and encourage other officials to take advantage of national certification opportunities throughout the year, and at the zones meet in August.
- Offer to answer questions about the National Certification process when interacting with officials and at Official's Briefings prior to meets. Be honest and encouraging.

Referees, Referee Trainees and Chief Judges:

- Use each Official's Briefing prior to meets this year to invite and encourage officials to:
 - Work the zones meet
 - Take advantage of national certification opportunities throughout the year, and at the zones meet in August.
 - Recognize any Nationally Certified officials in the group and encourage officials to ask any questions they may have.

Additional Information:

The Western Zone Age Group Championships is a four-day championship swim meet for approximately 700 athletes' ages 8-14 from 14 western states. Athletes compete on one of 17 "all-star" teams from their state or region. Athletes, coaches, officials, team support personnel, families of swimmers, spectators, meet volunteers, zone and national swimming leadership attend a variety of event activities. Because of the Olympic Connection: Utah's Olympic legacy and the Rio Olympics occurring at the same time as the meet, planners envision more than just another swim meet.

Three key themes Passion, Connectivity, and Legacy establish the foundation of the experience we hope, with your help, to create. First, host a fun, high-level competitive event where the passion athletes and volunteers alike have for the sport is expressed. Our meet motto is Swim Your Passion. Second, leverage the concept of "connectivity" in bringing a swimming community together to build new friendships and catch the Olympic Spirit. Third, leave a legacy by making this one of the most fun and memorable events in everyone's swimming career no matter how large or small a part they play.

This meet, and other "national level" meets are called: Officials Qualifying Meets, or OQM's. This means the meet is approved by USA-Swimming as an event where national level certifications can be obtained. Officials may apply to be observed. National level evaluators are available to observe, mentor and certify. The mission of the USA-Swimming National Certification program is as follows: To develop officials who are competent, current and consistent from the LSC level meet to the highest level in our sport through a progressive training program based on an accumulation of experience acquired by specific meet attendance, mentoring and constructive evaluation. More information is available on the [USA-Swimming website](#).

I have had a very positive experience developing as an official through the National Certification process and highly recommend it. Please know though, you do NOT need to be "nationally certified" to work this meet. An LSC certified swimming official is qualified. All officials who work the meet are requested to complete and turn in an application in order to aid in planning. However, walk-ins are also welcome. Applications and instructions will be available in the meet information and on the meet website, utahzones2016.com, in advance of the meet.

It takes many, many officials for a meet of this level to run well. There were 85 officials who worked this year's age group zone meet in Hawaii! Your help is very much needed. Please plan to work the meet whether or not you pursue national certification.

There is a meet website, utahzones2016.com, with more information, including discount lodging (coming soon.) Email updates may be received by signing up on the mailing list. Click the "Contact Us" button to leave contact information. Writing "Official" in the "Comment" field will filter what is sent. Others are also welcome and encouraged to sign up and may designate their role in that field as well.

Thank you for helping to build a solid foundation of officiating experience within the Western Zone. By taking advantage of educational and certification opportunities, our ability to give quality feedback to the swimmers increases. This can benefit their progress as competitive swimmers and people.

ALL: Please mark the meet dates on your calendar, apply to work the meet and consider applying for national certification.

I'd love to answer any questions you might have regarding the meet and look forward to seeing you on deck in August!

Cathy Vaughan

Meet Director

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