



# WYOMING SWIMMING'S OFFICIALS HANDBOOK



WYSI Officials Committee 2025

## Current 2024-2025 Officials Committee Members

Training & Mentoring: George Mathes - [mathes@trihydro.com](mailto:mathes@trihydro.com)

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Officials Chair: Dayna Gripp - [daygripp@mac.com](mailto:daygripp@mac.com)

### Officials Committee

Among the incredible family of WYSI's Officials, there is a small group of Referees that help to organize the business of officiating within Wyoming Swimming. Led by the LSC's Officials Chair, this collection of officials is, at times, assisted by fellow officials in their sub-committees. It truly takes every Official in Wyoming Swimming to make our LSC spectacular. Officials Committee members:

- Serve at the pleasure of the Officials Chair. You are chosen and retained according to their needs.
- Are available on and off deck. Always hold an attitude of being approachable.
- Keep a positive outlook in regards to the LSC. You may not always agree, but be encouraging and constructive in your input.
- Attend the quarterly meetings regularly.

Each position on the Committee has a specific job or duty. Current Positions:

Training & Mentoring: Developing and maintaining the protocols and process with which officials use to gain knowledge and advance in their skills. This Position is also responsible for certifying those in process of becoming an official or those advancing to a new position.

Rules & Regulations: Keeps the LSC current with change of rules, expectations and the function of officiating. Will work with the T&M subcommittee to roll out any changes or needed adjustments.

Communication & Secretary: Responsible for keeping a record of our meeting notes as well as sending information out in mass to the officiating body.

Gear and Swag: Designs and orders all polos, name tags, and helps to outfit officials attending Championship Meets. Also responsible to keeping the "store" current.

## Wyoming Swimming Officials Code of Conduct

All Officials are non-athlete members of USA Swimming are bound by the USA Swimming Code of Conduct (Article 304), and the Center for SafeSport Code. In addition, all officials must abide by the Wyoming Swimming Officials Code of Conduct. The following Code pertains to activities where officials representing Wyoming Swimming, within or outside the LSC, including practices, meets, camps, meetings, and clinics.

The primary role of the official is to ensure fair competition which is conducted in a positive, safe and healthy environment, and that actions of the competitors, coaches and other team personnel are in compliance with the rules. In fulfilling this task, the official must establish the best possible competitive climate for fair competition with the attention on the athletes, rather than on the official. The conduct of each official affects the public's perception of all officials.

### Expectations of Wyoming officials

1. Officials shall uphold the honor and dignity of the profession in all interactions with coaches, athletes, volunteers, colleagues, parents, spectators, and the public.
2. Officials shall master both the rules of swimming and the means to enforce the rules and shall exercise authority in an impartial and controlled manner.
3. Officials shall strive to ensure a safe and healthy environment for all members of Wyoming Swimming during all associated activities.
4. Officials shall consistently, accurately, and equitably apply the rules, regulations, and codes of conduct of USA Swimming, the Center for SafeSport, and Wyoming Swimming.
5. Officials shall hold and maintain the basic tenets of officiating which include integrity, neutrality, respect, sensitivity, professionalism, and discretion.
6. Officials shall be impartial and fair when judging swimming competitions.
7. Officials shall recognize that anything which may lead to a conflict-of-interest must be avoided.
8. Officials shall be punctual and professional in fulfilling all officiating commitments.
9. Officials shall not make false or misleading statements regarding their qualifications, certifications, experience, or training.
10. Officials shall dress neatly and appropriately and conduct professionally. Unless stated differently in the meet announcement:
  1. Prelim uniforms are a white polo, a black belt, black shorts/skirts/slacks, black shoes, and black socks.
  2. Finals and timed finals uniforms are a white polo, a black belt, black slacks, black shoes, and black socks.
11. Officials shall remain aware of the inherent risk of injury the competition poses to athletes. They shall inform event management of conditions or situations that appear unreasonably hazardous.
12. Officials shall maintain an ethical approach while participating in forums and all forms of social media.
13. Deviation from these expectations may result in any of the following disciplinary actions:
  1. Warning
  2. Reprimand
  3. Reassignment
  4. Re-education

5. Suspension
6. De-certification

## Disciplinary Action

The three general categories for which disciplinary action may be warranted are:

1. **Lack of Professional Knowledge or Application of the Rules**
2. **Violation of the WYSI Officials Code of Conduct**
3. **Violation of USA Swimming Code of Conduct or the Center for SafeSport**

Except for #3, the Wyoming Swimming Officials chair or their designee shall endeavor to resolve the matter informally. If an informal resolution is not reached, the formal complaint process and hearing by the Wyoming Swimming Officials Committee must take place before an official can be disciplined or decertified. In accordance with the established procedures of Wyoming Swimming, the general process is as follows:

- A written complaint is received by the Wyoming Swimming Officials Chair.
- The Wyoming Swimming Officials Committee investigates the complaint.
- If the committee finds that there is sufficient evidence of a violation, after fair notice, a hearing before the Wyoming Swimming Officials Committee will be scheduled in a timely manner. The official and any complainant will be given the opportunity to present their position to the Committee.
- After the hearing, the Wyoming Swimming Officials Committee will decide to either dismiss, discipline, de-certify or forward the matter to the National Board of Review (NBOR).
- If the decision is to de-certify or recommend referral to the NBOR, a written finding of fact and decision must be made. In the case of de-certification, this document must be sent to the person who is being de-certified to allow them to appeal to the NBOR.

## Wyoming Swimming Officials Mentorship

### Objective

The WYSI Officials Committee recognizes the critical importance of having well-trained officials who execute their craft with objective professionalism. Additionally, officials within the LSC must be guided by a servant leadership mentality, always looking out for the best interests of our athletes, coaches, and fellow officials. Our common objective is to support a wide variety of meets that are all focus on the three F's: Fun, Fast, and Fair.

### Purpose

Officials receive training and certification through the processes defined by the *USA Swimming Officials Certification Standards*. However, that should only be seen as the beginning of one's officiating journey. By embracing a culture of continuous improvement and mutual support, we provide even better service to athletes and coaches. Therefore, deliberately focusing on mentorship makes us all better.

## What is Mentorship

Mentorship, in the context of swimming officiating, is simply sharing what you know, providing constructive feedback, and improving through interaction. We all have unique experiences and perspectives that can benefit others. Some officials have had the opportunity to attend higher level meets and pursue national certification, which provides more exposure to a variety of experiences and best practices. Others may be gaining confidence on deck or working towards the next LSC position certification. Regardless, we all have something to learn from each other through engaging in an active mentorship process.

## Best Practices

These best practices are only meant as a guide, and to help everyone think about purposefully engaging in Officiating Mentorship.

- Mentorship is an active, not a passive, process. You must be willing to both provide and receive feedback during formal and informal interactions.
- Some of the best mentorship is self-reflection. Make sure to evaluate yourself after every meet, “what could I have done better?”
- As a mentor, try to catch people doing things right. We are all more receptive to positive as opposed to negative feedback.
- When providing constructive feedback, begin with a statement similar to, “Are you open to discussing...?” People have to be ready and in the right mindset to learn and grow.
- Think about the right moment for interactions. Is it a casual encouraging comment on deck or an in-depth discussion between sessions. Not every moment is the right moment for feedback.
- Remember to focus on the Why and not just the What. Everyone feels better about improving if there is a reason.
- Provide examples and vivid descriptions of past situations. We all learn experientially, and this helps to reinforce the Why. Remember, a picture, even a mental picture, is worth a thousand words.
- Kindness is key. We are all volunteers. No one “has to” do this.
- Officiating Swimming is a journey and not a destination. If we approach the path with a sense of humility, mutual respect, and a sincere desire to be our best, a culture of mentorship can flourish.

## Wyoming Swimming Officiating Best Practices

The following is a collection of thoughts and opinions that are the skeleton of the culture that defines WYSI Officiating in conjunction with the Professional Official series presented by USA Swimming. Officials can utilize these to provide the optimal environment for competition. It is by no means an exhaustive list and it is constantly evolving. Every meet is different, and as such, some of these suggestions may not be appropriate at times.

### Best Practices – All Officials

- **The ultimate** guiding force in all of our decisions must be athlete-centric. Swimmers have made sacrifices and dedicated countless hours to be ready for these moments; they deserve nothing less than our very best.
- Have grace! Look for opportunities to help swimmers.

- Be humble, leave your ego in the parking lot, be prepared to learn, and have the desire to be a better official at the end of the meet than you were at the beginning of the meet. Often times this means making mistakes, accepting them, owning them, and learning from them.
- Be prepared and willing to serve in whatever role you may be asked .
- Stay focused on your assigned role and be respectful of other roles and assignments (“stay in your lane”). Be mindful of the chain of command.
- You are not going to be on deck forever. From your first day on deck to your last, always look for ways to encourage and mentor up-and-coming officials. Just as you are looking to continually improve your skillset, be sure that along with improving your skillset is improvement in the standard and culture of officiating in WYSI
- Seek out mentoring from senior officials. Senior officials all have a different set of experiences and thus have differing viewpoints on the same topic. Take all of them in, evaluate them for yourself, and develop your own library from which to refer to.
- Mentors should only mentor when asked or if they see an official’s actions could improve the competitive environment. Don’t mentor to boast about your longevity or seniority, mentor to nurture and grow.
- Work together as a team. Look for opportunities to help others. Siloing yourself or using the phrase “not my job” has no place here.
- Smile, relax, and have fun. The way you present yourself permeates to others. If you are calm and relaxed, it will help the parents, coaches, and swimmers be calm and relaxed as well.
- Me plus three! Continually recruit others to be part of the officiating clan of WYSI.

## Best Practice – Stroke and Turn Officials

- You are an observer, not an inspector.
- Prior to stepping on deck, review the events you will be observing in your head. Visualize the whole stroke. Use the DQ slip to walk through the technical portions in your head.
- Remember that applying the proper protocols is an important part of your role. Be cognizant of your positioning and stature. Strive to be the hub of presenting a professional deck. This is the “polish” of an experienced stroke-and-turn judge.
- Don’t be afraid to raise your hand. If you are not sure of a call use this as an opportunity to discuss what you saw with the CJ or a more experienced official. You can always take the call back, don’t miss these crucial opportunities for learning.
- Keep it simple! The rules are clear and concise; don’t add more to them.
- Prior to each meet, read the rules in the rule book and visualize them as they apply to the stroke. Also, review the videos provided by USA Swimming.
- Periodically pick a few examples from the situations and resolutions document provided by USA Swimming and review them extensively. Don’t just passively read them, review them thoroughly and play the situation out in your head by putting yourself in all of the positions presented.

## Best Practices – Starters

- The starter is the only position that directly interacts with the swimmers. Treat every start like it is your last one and your most important one.
- Practice your craft. Continually practice saying “Take your marks” in the shower, in the truck, even in the middle of the desert.
- Practice your craft. Many of the situations you encounter can best be handled through muscle memory, meaning you will react naturally in a calm, cool manner because you have been there before.
- Practice your craft. To be the best starter make yourself available for every starting opportunity. Look for and make opportunities for yourself. Attend a meet outside your typical area, and work high school and middle school. Offer to start at practices.
- The starter giving the timer briefing should not be the first-up starter.
- During the timer briefing, the alternate starter should be:
  - Assuring that all timers are present. If they are not, communicate this to the DR and the announcer.
  - Make sure all clipboards, timer sheets, pencils, and watches are in place.
  - After checking with the timing system operator and DR, test the starter volume and timing system.
  - Don’t be complacent. Don’t be satisfied until all of the above are start-ready. Continually circle back and check-in. Communicate any deficiencies to the DR.
  - The above should be completed no later than 5 minutes before start time.
- Review the upcoming heat. Look for clues that can help you help the athletes. Who is nervous? Who is amped up? Who is not ready?
- Be patient and deliberate without delay in your starting sequence.
- You may provide assistance to the DR, but your ultimate responsibility is to the athletes and their start.
- Order of Finish (OOF) in non-championship events can be recorded with a scribe, or a scribe and caller. In championship events OOF should be recorded by an off-duty starter. In short distance events recording accurate results is difficult. Do your best, do not look at the scoreboard.
- Self-evaluate each start. You should be your own best critic.
- Ask other starters or DR’s to evaluate your starts. How and when you receive this feedback will depend on the events and your personal preference.
- Be open and ready for criticism. It is not personal, the position you are in is very difficult.
- At session’s end, have a quick debrief with the DR you worked with. Review any particular issues that may have occurred, things that went well and things that could be improved upon.
- Watch televised meets; TYR Championships, US Open, and National Championships. Focus in on the starter, watch the starter as they relate to the athletes, listen to the starter.

## Best Practices – Chief Judges

- You are not just the official who writes the DQ slip. Your primary job, regardless of meet type or size, is to be a mentor and leader of the stroke and turn judges. Look for and seize the opportunity to provide mentorship

- At a championship meet, you are the meet “concierge”. You are the workhorse. You are to know everything, be prepared for everything, take care of everything, and sleep after the last session is over.
- Be prepared to step in and assist without being asked. If the starters are having trouble with timers, be ready to assist them without being asked
- Set the tone and the example for everyone to follow
- Anticipate. For example in a 100 Breaststroke event of 13 year olds, what may be a call on the turn end during the last turn? If you are in the deck referee/starter area, watch the start. If you see something that you feel may be a false start pull out the DQ slip and get ready to write. If you see the starter write something down, start writing. If the starter approaches the deck referee, write faster. If the deck referee nods their head in confirmation present the slip to the starter.
- Work as a team. If your position is lane 1 turn end and the CJ on the start end lane 1 radios in that the stroke judge on lanes 1-4 has a potential DQ, be prepared to receive that stroke judge and take the call. Do not assume that since the other CJ radioed the call in that they will be the one writing up the call. If there are multiple calls on the start end and swimmers need to be notified, a CJ on the turn end needs to put themselves in position to notify the swimmer.
- Watch the stroke and turn judges. Are they nervous? Are they tuned in? Are they unsure of things? Watch how they raise their hand when making a call. Was it tentative or was it with confidence?
- Be fast, but thorough. Do not rush. Many times speed can be had by anticipating and being fully aware of your sequence of events that will need to be employed if a call is made.
- Have a keen sense of deck awareness and use every session on deck to develop that deck awareness

## Best Practices – Referees

- Don’t bring attention to yourself. Be calm, confident, and in control.
- Lead the troops. The wet end is yours and as such you will be expected to, and will, lead all of the other officials through the sequence of events. Lead through your actions and presence. Continually ask yourself, “Am I being the type of leader that I would want to follow?” Convey the attitude that you are in control by being prepared, alert and calm. If you ever reach the point where you have to verbally convey the above, take a step back and seriously review the situation as you are starting to lose, or have already lost, control of the situation.
- Communicate. Don’t expect others to read your mind. Don’t expect others to anticipate your needs. Don’t allow others to be left in limbo just because you are in charge.
- Delegate. There are others that want to help. Allow them to help. If you don’t feel comfortable delegating to a particular person, communicate to them why you feel this way and use the situation as an opportunity for mentoring.
- Anticipate. From the 1<sup>st</sup> day you read the meet announcement start looking ahead for opportunities to improve the meet and help the swimmers.



- Listen first, process second, speak third.
- Be open to suggestions, but take into account the needs of all swimmers when implementing one.
- Develop a rapport with coaches. DO NOT put a wall between you and them. Besides their parents, you and the coach are the swimmer's biggest fans and advocates.
  - Look for opportunities to get to know the coaches. What are their backgrounds, their likes, dislikes?
  - Look for commonalities. This is easy, it's the swimmer! Maybe discuss things going on in the swimming world, ways you can both help the LSC, ways to grow the sport, ways to increase parent participation. You both are respected leaders within this sport, grow a beneficial relationship by working together.
  - Ultimately, be respectful and honest. If you say you are going to do something, do it. If you can't do something, explain why.
- When assigning deck positions or overseeing such, be mindful of the bigger picture. For example, at a December meet, there may be a starter in attendance who has requested to start at winter championships. Be sure to give this person ample opportunity to start. Allow a stroke and turn official to be a Chief Judge and discuss the expectations that could be put upon them at a championship meet. If assigning positions at a championship meet, make experience level one of your factors in choosing your assigned positions. Ideally, there will be a mix of officials with officials with varied experience to allow for mentoring..
- Start the meet on time. This sets the tone for entire session, and if it's the first session, the entire meet. This process starts weeks ahead of time by communicating with the meet host all expectations. Tell the meet host what time you want them to announce for timers, to start the national anthem or pledge, and specifically, what time you will blow the first set of whistles.
  - Your whistles should be loud enough for all to hear, but not so loud that it is ear piercing
  - Your whistles should not be so sharp and shrill that it hurts others ears even at low volumes
  - Your short whistles should use a consistent cadence of 4-5 shorts with a distinct break in between each one. They should be somewhat "chirpy" but not to the extent of "tweety-chirpy"
  - Your short whistles should never be able to be mistaken for long whistles.
  - Your whistle sequences and volume should be consistent and anticipatory.
  - Remember, sound travels. How you think your whistles sound is the same as they sound in lane 8.
- Continually evaluate the whole pool. Which officials are tuned in? Are swimmers in the next heat ready? Are protocols being properly adhered to? Are any swimmers struggling?
  - Don't lose sight of the fact that you are overseeing a venue (of water) that is responsible for 4,000 drowning deaths per year. You are overseeing a venue in which an athlete pushes themselves to physical exertion in an environment that could lead to death. Don't forget this.
- Don't pack up and leave as soon as the last touch is made. Debrief with other officials and coaches; discuss the good and the bad of the meet in the events for which you are responsible. If you are the meet referee, meet with administration and make sure every

event is closed out and properly scored. Take a copy of the results file with you, or ask that one be emailed to you.

## Wyoming Swimming Officiating Links

- [Stroke Briefing](#)
- Certifications
  - [Stroke and Turn](#)
  - [Starter](#)
  - [Referee](#)
  - [Chief Judge](#)
  - [Administrative Official](#)
- Links for USA Swimming Documents
  - [The Professional Stroke & Turn](#)
  - [The Professional Starter](#)
  - [The Professional Chief Judge](#)
  - [The Professional Referee](#)
  - [The Professional Admin Official](#)
  - [The Professional Admin Referee](#)
  - [The Stroke Briefing](#)



### **Looking for a way to help your swimmer and your swim club?**

- Become a USA Swimming Official and watch the time at swim meets speed by while enjoying making friends with other parents and volunteers.
- Become an Official today and give the gift of time and talent to the sport of swimming and all of those who swim.

#### **Steps to Becoming an Official:**

- Step 1: Request the registration link from your club, and register as an official
- Step 2: Complete the [Foundations of Officiating](#)
- Step 3: [Stroke & Turn Certification Course](#) or the [Admin Certification Course](#).
- Step 3: Complete a [Background Check](#)
- Step 4: Complete [Athlete Protection Training](#)
- Step 5: Complete [Concussion Protocol Training](#) and send the certificate to [wyoSwimregister@gmail.com](mailto:wyoSwimregister@gmail.com)
- Step 6: Complete the on-deck sessions shadowing a certified official.

**Become a USA Swimming Official today! Scan the QR Code below.**



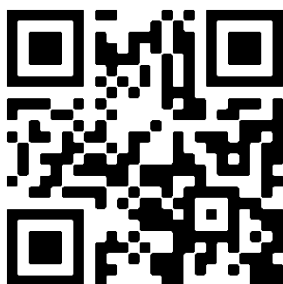
For questions and assistance, please reach out to WYSI Official's Certification Coordinator (George Mathes) at [mathes@trihydro.com](mailto:mathes@trihydro.com) or any WYSI Swimming Official

**Print this next page to use to put on the back of Timer Clipboards**

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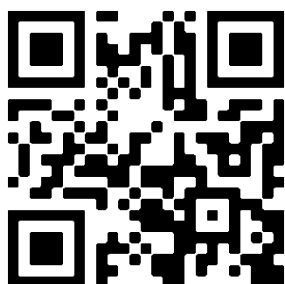
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