

The “Professional” Stroke & Turn Official should:

1. **Read and be familiar with the “GUIDE TO OFFICIATING SWIMMING”** (the Stroke & Turn chapter in particular!) and “Lead/Lag Coverage for Stroke Judges” on the USA Swimming website
2. **Know the Rules** and the official interpretations
3. **Read and understand** the information in the Meet Announcement prior to the meet or session beginning
4. **Attend the Officials Briefing to:**
 - Sign-in on the assignment sheet
 - Review the technical rules
 - Listen to and review protocols for the meet
 - Listen to and review jurisdiction for the meet
 - Be given an assignment by the Meet Referee or the Chief Judge team
 - Cover relief rotation
 - Discuss any other specific instructions or duties for the meet
 - Meet team members, including the Chief Judge for your assigned location
5. **Develop your own “mental check list”** of things to do before, during and after the duty session

For example:

- **Before the session:**
 - Know when and where the stroke briefing will take place
 - Locate where officials should sign-in
 - Be prompt to the meeting and dress appropriately and professionally
 - Be attentive during the stroke briefing
 - Have a positive attitude regardless of the assignment
 - Turn off (or if absolutely necessary – mute) cell phone. If you will need access to your cell phone for a compelling reason during the meet, let the Meet Referee and Chief Judge know before the meet so that plans can be made.
 - Be ready and in position 5-10 minutes before the session starts or as requested by either the Meet Referee or Team Lead Chief Judge
- **Before each event:**
 - Visualize the stroke
 - Run through the rule requirements of a legal stroke and any transitions
 - Recall the best and recommended ways to observe the stroke and turns. Always use “benefit of doubt” observation protocol
 - Maintain your heat sheet out of sight (other than as required)
- **Before each race:**
 - Remain out of the visual line of sight of the timers and strobe at the start
 - Stand on the long whistle, next to the chair (if provided) for breaststroke and butterfly starts
 - Wrap around the end to observe backstroke starts if necessary and assigned
 - Stand in the correct location, 15m mark, flags, etc. if walking stroke
- **After the start:**
 - Walk briskly to the edge of the pool for breaststroke and butterfly if working the start end as a Turn Judge
 - Observe swimmers until they depart your jurisdiction (usually heads up)
 - Determine if all heads broke the surface prior to or at the controlling 15m mark, if walking stroke
 - Walk wall-to-wall, if possible, or as instructed
 - Give equal observation to all lanes in your jurisdiction, even the empty ones
 - Raise hand promptly to signal a possible disqualification, if an infraction is observed
 - Keep the hand raised until it is acknowledged by a Chief Judge or Referee
 - Do not discuss the infraction with another official or any other individual, including a coach, before reporting it to the designated official. (Don’t discuss it afterwards unless asked to by the Deck Referee)
 - Immediately communicate the lane number to the Chief Judge or Deck Referee (if a Turn Judge covering more than one lane or a Stroke Judge)
 - Visualize the infraction before communicating it to the Chief Judge or Deck Referee
 - Use rule book or DQ slip language to communicate the infraction
 - Answer the three questions with: 1) What I observed, 2) My jurisdiction, and 3) The rule violated

- Watch all lanes while reporting the disqualification, unless relieved by a reserve judge
- During relay exchanges, observe the toes departing from the platform and then look for the touching fingers
- Do not raise a hand for an early relay take-off when dual confirmation is being used
- Circle the lane and swimmer number on the take-off slip for a good exchange, and X for an early take-off
- Retract a call if there is any doubt, by simply stating, “No call”
- Check to make sure a disqualification slip has been written and documented properly before signing the slip

REMEMBER - BENEFIT OF DOUBT GOES TO THE SWIMMER – ALWAYS!!!

• After each event:

- Reset to the correct position for the next stroke or event
- Transition between heats for relief; not during a race
- When being relieved note clock time and return promptly, as directed in the pre-session briefing
- Take a break OFF DECK or in the designated officials’ break area. Do not congregate with other officials on deck

6. If assigned to invigilate controlled warm-up:

- Coordinate with the assigned partner to observe the pool and politely enforce compliance with warm-up rules
- Open pace lanes at the designated time and racing start lanes as requested (open additional sprint lanes if demand warrants). Coordinate with the Announcer and Marshalls
- Review deck set-up in general – Notify Meet Referee of deficiencies or safety issues

Other Important Stuff:

- Consider your “body language” when “on duty” and at all other times when you are accessible. Always assume you are “on camera!”
- Be alert, attentive, focused, calm, professional and approachable
- Always be “friendly” and helpful to coaches, swimmers, and other officials; even if they are not
- Avoid coaching, cheering or fraternizing with coaches or swimmers
- Questions should be directed to the appropriate official. Do not engage in discussions regarding a disqualification
- Take discussions and emotional issues off-deck
- Do not abuse your credentials. If you are not working the meet you are a spectator, and should act as such
- Maintain a sense of humor

And that’s just the tip of the iceberg!

Remember; Professional Stroke & Turn Officials:

- Make sure the **BENEFIT OF DOUBT GOES TO THE SWIMMER - ALWAYS**
- Adapt to meet conditions and needs and help out wherever requested
- Apply and use COMMON SENSE generously
- Don’t read more into the rules than is written
- Observe the swims but do not scrutinize
- Exhibit confidence, are competent, and are never imperious
- Dress professionally and neatly in the designated uniform
- Are willing to learn, and frequently work as a Stroke and Turn Judge
- Never take advantage of credentials to gain deck access when not working in an official capacity
- Self-evaluate after all shifts, sessions and meets and ask, “What can I do better?”
- Enjoy the volunteer work, and opportunity to work with coaches, officials, and most importantly, swimmers of all levels

Checklist for Stroke and Turn Judge Advancement Evaluations

(Refer to the National Certification Advancement Summary¹)

Attachment A

There are three basic criteria categories for each level of evaluation - Knowledge and application of: 1) the rules and regulations, 2) National Championship protocols, procedures and guidelines, and 3) USA Swimming's team philosophy of Officiating.

N2 Stroke and Turn Judge (ST) - Prerequisites² for requesting an Evaluation:

- LSC-certified ST for one year
- At least 8 sessions working as a certified ST

N2 Stroke and Turn Judge - Performance Requirements for an Advancing Evaluation

- Arrives on-time, prepared with necessary personal equipment, and properly and professionally attired
- Knowledgeable of all stroke rules, timer rules and clerk of course rules
- Acts as a mentor for new officials, as requested
- Is familiar with the jurisdiction for each stroke and turn position and is aware of the jurisdiction for each event to be judged
- Is comfortable making calls as appropriate and also realizes when a call is not appropriate
- Can clearly articulate an infraction to the Deck Referee or Chief Judge, as appropriate, both with the reference in the rule book as well as what was seen
- Doesn't discuss disqualifications in front of others
- Accepts assignments as given and conforms to the "relief" cycle for the meet

N3 Stroke and Turn Judge Evaluation – Prerequisites² for requesting an evaluation:

- Active N2 Stroke and Turn Judge in the LSC at all levels of meets (even if certified in other positions)
- At least 8 sessions as a Stroke and Turn Judge since N2 certification
- At least one year as an active N2 Stroke and Turn Judge and working meets outside the home LSC (both suggested)

N3 Stroke and Turn Judge Evaluation - Performance Requirements for Certification

- Arrives on-time, prepared with necessary personal equipment, and properly and professionally attired
- Is knowledgeable of all N2 requirements as well as:
- Understands "National Deck" protocols including the role of each of the three chairs that may be found on a National Deck (left – lane timer and Relay Take-off Judge, center – head lane timer and distance length counter and bell ringer, right – Turn Judge and timer) and the use of Reserve Judges and relief teams. Is also aware of not only the judging role but also the role as a timer and recorder
- Is aware of "FINA protocol" for indicating and reporting an infraction
- Acts as a trainer for new officials, as requested
- Is familiar with the jurisdiction for each Stroke and Turn position on the National pool deck and be aware of what constitutes jurisdiction for each event to be judged
- Is very comfortable calling infraction as appropriate, as well as realizing when a call is not appropriate
- Can clearly articulate an infraction to the Chief Judge and, as appropriate, the Deck Referee both with the reference in the rule book as well as what was observed

¹ There are other requirements that need to be met before an application for National Certification can be submitted and approved.

² Do not ask to be evaluated before the prerequisites have been satisfied.