

# Stroke and Turn Officials Certification Clinic

- Certification Requirements
- Philosophy of Officiating
- The Rules
  - Video
  - Common Infractions
- Assignment and Jurisdiction of Officials
- Stoke & Turn Procedures
- Test

# Handouts and Forms

- Copy of certification requirements
- Copy of the USA Swimming Rules and Regulations
- Copy of the test and answer sheet
- Training cards
- Forms (DQ slip, relay take-off slip)
- Recommended stroke briefing
- Recommended jurisdiction
- Non-athlete registration form

# S&T Certification Requirements (Summary)

- Certified as a timer
- Attend training clinic
- Pass written test
- Must join USA Swimming/VSI and display membership card while on deck
- Complete six training sessions (not in white & blue) and predominantly at B/C meets
- Satisfactorily work an additional two sessions (with B/C swimmers) with an assigned trainer and make calls (in white & blue)

# Certification Cont'd

- Certified for one-year probationary period
- Upon satisfactory completion of the one year probationary period, re-certified for a one year period (ending in December)
- Must work a minimum of 8 sessions per year to re-certify and pass re-certification test

# Philosophy of Officiating

“All competitive swimming events held under USA Swimming sanction shall be conducted in accordance with the following rules which are designed to provide fair and equitable conditions of competition and promote uniformity in the sport so that no swimmer shall obtain unfair advantage over another.”

Preamble to the USA-S Technical Rules

# Fair and Equitable

- Judging should be consistent among different officials at a meet
- Judging should be consistent at different meets
- All of the rules are enforced, we don't individually choose to enforce some rules and ignore others

# Fair and Equitable Cont.d

- The rules are enforced across all age groups and levels of ability
- Officials should be neutral in their enforcement of the rules; don't favor one team over another, don't favor one swimmer over another

# Mental Traps

- Advantage vs. disadvantage
- The “twice theory”
- “We don’t disqualify 8 & unders”
- “Don’t ask me to judge my child”
- Don’t infer (Call what you see, not what you don’t see)



# Rules of Thumb

- The benefit of the doubt *ALWAYS* goes to the swimmer
  - No loss of yardage, foul shots, penalty box

Black

Grey

White



Illegal

Legal

Legal

# Rules of Thumb Cont'd

- Ugly ain't (necessarily) illegal
- Know the rules; review the rules before meets
- Experience, experience, experience

# Officiating Swimming Video

- Clear and consistent knowledge of the rules
- Clarify proper interpretation of the rules as they pertain to the most common disqualification calls made (in *italics* in following slides)
- Following slides give representative, but not comprehensive, examples of rules violations

# Butterfly Infractions

- Not at or past vertical towards the breast after the start and after each turn
- *Head not up at 15 meters*
- More than 1 underwater pull
- Non-simultaneous pull or arm recovery
  - Need not be symmetrical
- Arms not recovered over the surface of the water
  - The arm is anything above the wrist and below the shoulder
  - Looking for any part of the arm to break the water surface

# Butterfly Cont'd

- Upward or downward movements of the legs not simultaneous
- Legs or feet alternate in relationship to each other
  - Legs and feet do not have to be on the same level
- A scissors or breaststroke kicking movement
- Not on the breast during swim
- One hand or non-simultaneous touch at turns or finish

# Backstroke Infractions

- Not on the back throughout race
- *Head not up at 15 meters*
- *Non-continuous turning motion*
- Failing to touch the wall at the turn
- Shoulders not past vertical toward the back prior to leaving the wall
- Toes curling over the gutter after the starting signal (before the starting signal is the starter's responsibility)

# Backstroke Cont'd

- A poorly executed turn in which the swimmer turns too close to the wall and who's hand(s) contact the wall rather than continuing through the flipping motion is legal as long it was a continuous turn up to the point at which contact with the wall was made

# Backstroke Cont'd

Judging an underwater finish:

- If the swimmer completely submerges prior to the turn judge having to shift his/her attention to the touch at the wall, this would be a DQ
- Once the turn judge shifts their attention to watching the touch at the finish, it is then legal for the swimmer to be fully submerged



# Breaststroke Infractions

- Cycle must start with a pull, starting with a kick is illegal
- Hands brought beyond the hip line, except for the first stroke after the start and after each turn
- Head does not break the surface during each complete or incomplete cycle
- *Arms not pulling in the horizontal plane, including the first pull following each turn*
- Non-simultaneous pull
- Elbows not remaining in contact with the water during the recovery (forward) portion of the stroke except for the last stroke before the turns and finish (does not apply to the backwards pull)

# Breaststroke Cont'd

- One hand or non-simultaneous touch at turns or finish
- Not past vertical towards the breast from the beginning of the first arm pull after the start and after each turn
- Feet not turned outward during the propulsive phase of the kick
- Non-simultaneous kick
- A scissors, flutter, or *butterfly kick*

# Breaststroke Cont'd

- Looking for the butterfly kick in breaststroke
  - It is a legal kick if the feet are following the hips as the knees pull them forward
  - The position of the feet is key to judging the breaststroke kick
    - If the toes are pointed outward during the propulsive phase of the kick, it is a legal breaststroke kick
    - If the toes are pointed straight back or inwards, it is a butterfly kick

# Breaststroke Cont'd

- It is not unusual for a swimmer to have a significant undulating motion which may result in the feet breaking the surface of the water which may result in a “rooster tail” of spray as they begin the recovery phase of their kick. This is not illegal unless accompanied by a downward butterfly kick.
- It is not unusual for strong swimmers to push a wave of water under their bodies during the first pull which results in their legs rising up and down- this is also not illegal
- Remember, this can sometimes be a difficult call to make and the benefit of the doubt always goes to the swimmer

# Breaststroke Cont'd

- Rules and Regulations Committee Interpretations
  - Clarified that, in conformance with FINA's intent, the requirement for the elbows to remain under the water on the breaststroke applies only to the recovery (forward) portion of the arm stroke, not to the backwards pull.
  - Agreed that the breaststroke must start with an arm pull to comply with the cycle of "one arm stroke and one leg kick, in that order" as stated in the rule. A swimmer starting with a leg kick first would be disqualified.
  - Reiterated that, under the March 6, 1998 rule changes by FINA, the arms must be in the same horizontal plane during the first pull at the start and after each turn.

# Freestyle Infractions

- *Head not up at 15 meters*
- Walking on or pushing off the bottom
- Using the lane line or gutter for propulsion
- Failing to touch the wall at the turn

# IM Infractions

- Strokes not swum in proper order
- Violation of stroke and turn rules for each stroke
- The last  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the race must be swum as something other than butterfly, backstroke, or breaststroke

# IM Infractions Cont.d

- Violation of finish rules at the transition between strokes
  - Butterfly to backstroke flip turn is illegal only if you see the hands **not** touch (not the same as not seeing them touch)
  - *Backstroke to breaststroke cross-over turn is illegal only if their lead hand does not contact the wall before their shoulders go past vertical towards the breast as they make the turn*



# Medley Relay Infractions

- Strokes not swum in proper order
- Violation of stroke and turn rules for each stroke
- The last  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the race must be swum as something other than butterfly, backstroke, or breaststroke
- *Early take-off*

# Freestyle Relay Infractions

- Violation of freestyle stroke and turn rules
- *Early take-off*

# IM and MR Rules Interpretation

- The Rules and Regulations Committee adopted the following FINA Technical Committee interpretation regarding the freestyle leg of these events:
  - *When a swimmer has traveled a sufficient distance that the official can with certainty judge the competitor is swimming in the style of butterfly, breaststroke or backstroke, then a DQ is appropriate.*

# All Strokes

- The Rules and Regulations Committee adopted the following parameters regarding touching the bottom during a turn:
  - *Once a legal touch has been made, the swimmer may turn in any manner desired. Therefore, standing on the bottom after a legal touch has been made and prior to pushing off the wall should be considered part of the turn and no DQ should be called.*

# Additional Rules

- A swimmer must start and finish in the same lane
- Standing on the bottom during a freestyle race shall not disqualify a swimmer, but a swimmer must not leave the pool, or walk, or spring from the bottom. Standing on the bottom during any other stroke shall result in disqualification
- Obstructing another swimmer by swimming across or otherwise interfering shall disqualify the offender, subject to the discretion of the Referee

# Additional Rules Cont'd

- Any swimmer not entered in a race who enters the pool during ongoing competition shall be barred from their next individual event (excludes dipping goggles/splashing)
- Grasping lane dividers to assist forward motion is not permitted

# Referee

- Has full authority over all officials and shall assign and instruct them
- Shall enforce all applicable rules and shall decide all questions relating to the conduct of the meet
- 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
- 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

# Chief Judge

- Primarily used at championship meets
- Use allows Stroke & Turn officials to stay in place
- Will instruct and place Stroke & Turn officials as directed by the Referee



# Placement and Rotation of Officials

- Determined by referee or chief judge
- Dependent upon pool configuration
- Dependent upon the number of officials available
- Generally rotate clockwise after a defined number of events

# Jurisdiction of Officials

- Determined by Referee or Chief Judge
- End judges only
  - End to middle of pool
- End and side judges
  - End: End to flags
  - Side: Flag to flag
  - See handout for alternative jurisdiction

# Jurisdiction Cont'd

- Equal time should be spent observing each of the swimmers within your jurisdiction
- If one or more lanes are empty, an equal amount of time should be spent on the empty lane(s)
- Your full attention should be on the swimmers when they are within your jurisdiction

# Disqualifications

- Raise a hand overhead on observing a violation of the rules that occurs within your jurisdiction
- Keep your hand up long enough for the Referee/Chief Judge to see it
- If you raise your hand, you don't have to make a call; if you don't raise your hand, you can't make a call

# Disqualifications Cont'd

- If you're hesitant in raising your hand, the call was probably too close to make
- The benefit of the doubt goes to the swimmer
- After signaling a DQ, continue to observe all the swimmers in your jurisdiction

# Disqualification Reports

- Confirmed name of swimmer
- Event #, Heat #, Event name
- Violation
  - Note: Most, but not all, violations are listed on the DQ slips
- Your signature
- Referee's signature

# Disqualification Reports Cont'd

- The Referee or Chief Judge *must* approve the DQ
- Be prepared to answer three questions:
  - What was your jurisdiction?
  - What did you see?
    - Use proper terminology
  - Which rule was violated?

# Talking with the Swimmer

- We are moving away from talking with the swimmers, but if you are at a meet in which it is done, these are some general guidelines:
  - Inform the swimmer of the violation, don't coach
  - Don't touch the athlete
  - Age-group swimmers
    - Get down to eye level
    - Good, bad, good



# Disputes Over Calls By Coaches/Parents

- Some Referees will want all questions directed towards them
- Other Referees will allow simple inquires to Stroke and Turn officials
  - Anything other than a simple inquiry goes to the Referee

# Relay Takeoff Judging

- Dual confirmation is almost always used
- Referee or chief judge will assign positions
- When the toes of the outgoing swimmer leave the blocks, look down to see if the incoming swimmer has touched
- If you observe an early takeoff, mark accordingly the swimmer and lane number, do not raise your hand

# Relay Takeoff Judging Cont.d

- Compare your observations with those of the second takeoff official; only if both agree as to the same swimmer taking off early is it a DQ
- All relay takeoff slips should be turned in to the referee/chief judge as part of the official record

# Judging Swimmers with Physical Disabilities

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

# Remember!

- The swimmer always receives the benefit of the doubt
- Call what you see, not what you don't see

**Thank you!**