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USA Swimming Officials Newsletter

January 22, 2013

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### Applications to officiate

Orlando Grand Prix — Click [here](#) to apply.  
Mesa Grand Prix — Click [here](#) to apply.

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### APPLY

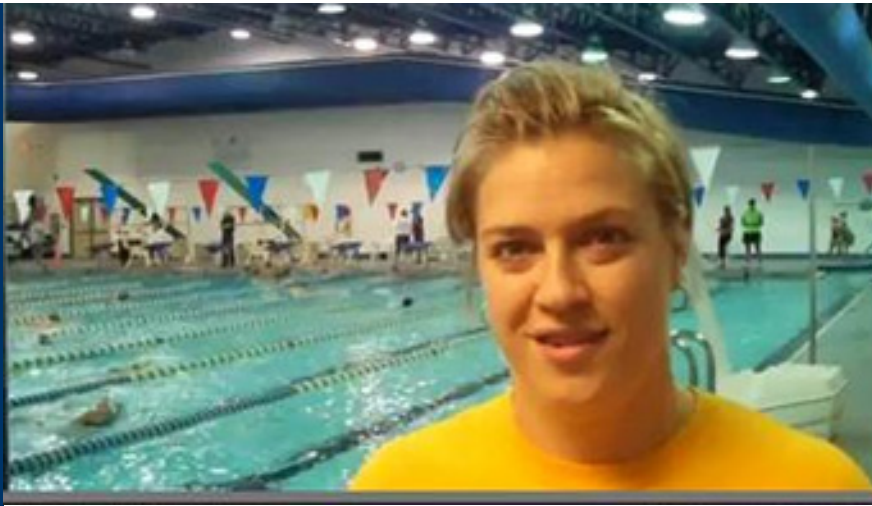
Applications to officiate at the Summer USA Swimming U.S. Open Championships or Speedo Junior National Championships will be posted the week of Jan 22. Click [here](#) to apply when posted.

Welcome to the new e-newsletter for USA Swimming Officials. The purpose of this newsletter is to provide a foundation that allows for direct on-going communication with each of you. We plan to have articles that cover the technical rules and interpretations, situations, application deadlines for upcoming meets, news from the officials committee, etc. If you have any feedback, comments, or suggestions for stories (or even want to submit an article), please e-mail us at [officials@usaswimming.org](mailto:officials@usaswimming.org).

I trust everyone had an exceptional holiday season and joyously rang in the New Year. Last year was another exciting time for USA Swimming. Based on the national team's performance in Istanbul, it appears that we are off to a great start heading toward Rio in 2016. This coming year we will have five national championship meets, as well as the Grand Prix and Sectional meets. There will be three national Championship meets this summer, World Championship Trials, US Open and Juniors. Applications for these meets should be posted soon. Please check your calendars and come join us for these important events.

Look forward to hearing from you.  
*Clark Hammond, National Officials Chair*

**A coach's perspective – YES! We need you at age Group meets.**



Click [here](#) to watch the video.

## ARE YOU USING CHIEF JUDGES AT YOUR LOCAL MEETS?

*By Steve Lottes, a Maryland Swimming official. Steve has worked as a chief judge and team lead at several national meets and at the 2008 and 2012 Olympic Trials.*

The evolving role of chief judges continues to enhance the professional manner that we serve our athletes and the coaches. If this is true, how can we effectively use chief judges at our local meets? Have you ever been the only deck referee at a local mini meet, trying to process fifty or more disqualifications in one session? Despite your best intentions to be completely calm and focused, the stress can be unbearable. Now reflect on the same session with two experienced chief judges, coordinated radio protocol, accurately written DQ slips, all swimmers notified of the disqualifications and quality mentorship of deck officials. Of course, this is contingent upon the number of officials who show up for the session. Sounds pretty good, but how does this happen?

If you decide that using a Chief Judge makes a lot of sense, the first step is training. Begin by inviting some of your more experienced officials and your referees to a chief judge clinic. Be well organized, prepare an agenda, develop an interactive presentation and provide your audience with a handout. Encourage open dialogue and respect for each official's opinions and perspectives. Describe how the role of the chief judge is integral to the smooth operation of the meet. Be prepared to answer some challenging questions. Remember, your ultimate goal is to decide how you will best use chief judges at your local meets.

If the meet referee decides to use chief judges, it is best that the chief

judge runs the briefing, completes the deck assignments, discusses the rules and jurisdiction, reviews radio protocol and how DQ slips are completed. The deck referee can provide support as needed on interpretation of the rules or deck protocol. While on deck, a chief judge must be very attentive. However, being too intense or too social are both ways that create problems. A chief judge can be very instrumental in helping a new official in becoming a highly qualified stroke and turn judge who enjoys the opportunity to be on deck and to serve as part of the team. There are many teachable moments throughout the entire session. If your corrective actions are not done in a supportive manner, the official will be more concerned about you. If you continually talk with the official about matters other than the session, opportunities will be lost for officials to ask critical questions about deck protocol or possible stroke violations.

Radio protocol is probably the most important skill that a chief judge needs to master. Effective communication between the deck referee and the chief judges is vital to a smooth running session. Radio protocol should be rehearsed during the briefing to inform the deck officials and then prior to the session between the chief judges and with the deck referee. When responding to an official who may have a possible disqualification, take your time. When you hurry, you will make mistakes and ultimately you will take more time to process the call. As you become more familiar with radio protocol and as you develop a routine, you will become much more efficient.

Chief judges can also make a significant difference through mentoring and the ability to establish a positive rapport with officials on and off the deck. As with any new job, you may have textbook knowledge, but you will lack the experiential knowledge that brings a meaning and purpose to why procedures and protocols are followed. An effective educator can communicate information and create an enthusiasm for learning. A highly qualified chief judge can help to establish a genuine purpose to officiating. When the chief judge demonstrates that officiating is not only rewarding but purposeful, then there is a greater chance that officials will want to come back for an even richer experience that builds character and contributes to our professionalism as officials.

For a complete training packet that includes an agenda, training items and a local chief judge evaluation, contact Steve Lottes at [desertexp@juno.com](mailto:desertexp@juno.com).