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USA Swimming Officials Newsletter

May 20, 2013

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APPLY NOW

Hope you can join us at these upcoming meets. Applications to officiate are now posted. Click on the link below to apply:

[U.S. Open Championships](#) – July 30 - Aug. 3, 2013

[Speedo Junior Nationals](#) – Aug. 5 - 9, 2013

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Welcome to the Officials Newsletter. The purpose of this newsletter is to provide a foundation that allows for direct ongoing communication with each of you. Articles will 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 email us at officials@usaswimming.org.

Last month, I asked you to acknowledge, along with me, the LSC Officials Chairs who seek to balance their daily lives with overseeing officials and officiating in their LSC. This month, I want to acknowledge you, the front-line official, who makes it possible for our athletes and coaches to seek to achieve their goals and dreams. As I was thinking about this note, I thought the term “dedication” best described us. One definition is “self-sacrificing devotion.” How appropriate. We devote ourselves to years of training and time on deck for the love of the sport and the benefit of our athletes. So this month, I want to thank all of you who have spent time on deck this past year so our athletes can achieve their dreams. What you do this weekend may enable one of our athletes to make a time that gives them an opportunity to represent their country in the Olympics. How great is that? Thanks to all of you.

Look forward to hearing from you.

Clark Hammond, National Officials Chair

The Senior Official

By Mark Maloney, Colorado Swimming

Who is a “senior official”? Is it your local N3 referee who worked at Olympic Trials, the meet referee from small town USA, or is it the stroke and turn official who’s been judging swimmers for 15 years? The simple answer is that all of these people are “senior officials” and they all have different perspectives, skills, and wisdom to offer.

Typically the national official has often had the opportunity to work at several national, Grand Prix, sectional and zone meets. They know national protocols and have the knowledge to help organize and run a championship swim meets. They also have a strong mastery of the rules and current interpretations. When working at local meets, the national official can be a great resource to mentor and train officials and become a sounding board for odd situations that might occur at a meet.

Most of us typically interact with the senior official who’s one of the local meet referee’s, maybe it’s our local official’s representative, or perhaps the trainer from our first Stroke and Turn Clinic. These officials are also the same people who mentored us at local meets when we were training to become an official. We’re most comfortable with these senior officials and they’re the people that we ask the infamous “stupid question” that we’re afraid to ask anyone else. These officials are the backbone of the officiating ranks and a valuable asset to all swim meet participants.

The unsung hero is the senior official who’s been around forever, keeps a low profile, and steadily volunteers year-in and year-out at small local swim meets. These officials have a mastery of the rules; they’ve seen everything imaginable when it come to stoke variations, and they know little Johnny in lane one because they know his mother and judged her swims fifteen years prior. When it comes to mentoring, these senior officials help you learn the family side of swim meets and the thrill of victory when Johnny finally completes the 50 butterfly without a DQ.

Overall, each flavor of “senior official” has something to offer and they all possess different skills and wisdom we can learn from. No flavor of senior official is better than the other and they’re all leaders within the officiating community. If you’re just starting out, at some point you’ll be viewed as someone’s favorite mentor, as the person most trusted by officials and coaches alike, or as the best person to lead the officiating crew during a state championship meet. It’s interesting to watch the parent who started out by occasionally officiating during their child’s swim meets become a respected and active pillar within the swimming community.

All officials are special people because they selfishly give themselves to the sport of swimming and to the dreams of young athletes. The “senior officials” help us get started and they help us to become the

next generation of senior officials who'll teach those who follow us in the future.

Who's your favorite senior official or mentor? Are you viewed as someone's favorite senior official or mentor?

Officiating – An Athlete's Perspective

By Corey Stein (Corey is one of two athlete representatives on the National Officials Committee)

The first encounter I had with USA Swimming officials was at a meet in March of 2009. I had been swimming for nearly four months and this was my second meet. I had to swim the 400 IM, a race which seemed very long at the time (and often still does). I got up to the blocks, dove in, and was disqualified in the very first length of butterfly for non-simultaneous arms. I remember I did take the DQ fairly well, even though I swam the race for seemingly nothing but experience. I still couldn't help feeling that the officials could have cut me a little slack, could have been a little less strict.

Now, four years and many meets later, I have a very different view of officials. I realize now why I was disqualified and why that is a necessary thing in swimming. I appreciate how anytime I'm DQ'd, the official notifies me and gives me a reason why. I understand the importance of officiating in my sport.

Now, when I swim a race, I can rest easy knowing that it will be judged fairly and equally. In my experience, the vast majority of officials have been men and women of integrity, which is one less thing to worry about when swimming a race. Knowing that everybody is being judged by the same rules and standards, no matter the level of skill or speed, is comforting. When I watch officials do a great job of moderating a meet, I am glad to be a swimmer, part of a sport where maintaining regulations is such an important aspect, and a sport where those maintaining the regulations are well trained and love their jobs.

I just ask that officials keep up their good work and make sure to stay fair and stick to the rules. There are a lot of new swimmers, like I used to be, who need that example of honesty in their activities and lives in general. Officials can have a big impact on age-groupers, whether by explaining a DQ or just always standing by the side of the pool like watchful guardians. When swimmers see that people in charge stand by the regulations and follow them, doing their duty correctly, they will apply that example to their lives, and that is a very big deal.

I'm very excited to be on the National Official's Committee and to have the opportunity to help serve the great community of officials

nationwide.

--Corey Stein

Congratulations George Geanon – the May 2013 Maxwell Award Winner

In May of 2007, George Geanon was the main author of the following mission statement:

“It is the mission of the WI LSC Officials Committee to ensure safe, fair and equitable conditions for competitive swimming throughout the WI LSC. The Committee is responsible for the recruitment, training and retention of officials, in accordance with the rules and regulations of USA Swimming. We seek to inspire excellence, consistency, and professionalism among the officials of the WI LSC.”



This mission statement epitomizes how George has provided tremendous leadership to the sport of swimming, both as an official, and as Chair of the Wisconsin Swimming Officials Committee from 2007 to 2011. Over his 13-plus years of distinguished service as an official, George has continuously sought to improve his skills and abilities to apply them directly to enhance our sport. But equally as important, he has applied himself tirelessly in fostering overall excellence in officiating through mentoring that is both nurturing and effective, as well as cultivating abilities in individuals who otherwise might not have taken that first, or next, step in officiating.

George's enthusiasm for the sport of swimming and officiating is contagious, and he continues to look for new and better ways to contribute every day. With George's leadership, Wisconsin Swimming was one of the very first LSCs to establish a Safe Sport Coordinator, which of course George eagerly volunteered to take on. It is not an exaggeration to say that George is both respected and loved by nearly all who come to know him.

From the Inbox

Responses by Dan McAllen

Often officials send their technical questions to the Rules &

Regulations Committee for clarification. And since we often get repeats of the same question, we thought it might be good to share them with you. If you have a question you would like answered, please forward it to officials@usaswimming.org.

QUESTION:

May a swimmer who is wearing an orthotic device, such as a splint or cast, participate in sanctioned USA Swimming competition?

ANSWER:

Yes, assuming it is approved by the Referee. Nothing in the rules prohibits a swimmer from competing in an orthotic device. Rule 102.8.1E does proscribe the use of a device which enhances speed or buoyancy, so it would be up to the Referee to determine whether the device worn falls within the proscription. Since most orthotics add weight and limit movement of an appendage it would be a rare for an orthotic to give a swimmer an advantage. Orthotics do present some special problems, however. Precautions may need to be taken in a crowded warm-up to protect the wearer and other swimmers from injury. Similarly, an in-water start rather than a block start may be necessary to protect the orthotic wearer. Assuming any additional requirements that the orthotic presents can be addressed, and it does not give the swimmer an advantage, the athlete wearing an orthotic should be permitted to compete.

QUESTION:

In a preliminary/finals meet format with 2 heats of each event swimming in finals, following the completion of the ladies 15 & Over 200 freestyle the names of the top 16 swimmers and 2 alternates were read by the announcer with the time and the usual "you have 30 minutes to scratch or to announce your intention to defer your decision". Sally's name was read as the second alternate. During the 30 minute scratch period two swimmers scratched from finals. Sally was never informed of the scratches, and the finals heat sheet was printed and showed Sally in lane 8 of the consolation final. That evening, when the consolation heat of the ladies 15 & Over 200 freestyle was called to the blocks Sally was a "no show". When Sally appeared at the meet the following day she was informed by the Referee that the meet announcement clearly stated that the National Championship scratch rule was in effect for the competition, and that she was out of the remaining two days of the competition for failure to appear for the consolation final the previous evening pursuant to the provisions of rule 207.11.6D(1). Correct Ruling?

ANSWER:

NO. When preliminary results were announced, Sally was the second alternate, and by definition a non-qualifier. Once she was scratched into the consolation final she should have been notified of that fact by the Administrative Referee or designee, afforded the opportunity to

accept that spot or scratch, and given 30 minutes to make her decision just like all the qualifiers were given 30 minutes to make their decision. Unless she was contacted and accepted the opportunity to swim and then failed to appear, she should not have been penalized. Indeed, the adage "once an alternate always an alternate" is applicable here. Rule 207.11.6D(2).