

VSI Officiating Update

No. 4

10 April 2005

Championship Volunteer Thank you!

Four B/C Champs, three A/BB Champs, one Age Group Champs, one Senior Champs, one Speedo Sectional Champs, and one Eastern Zone Age Group Champs. It all adds up to hundreds of volunteers and untold hours of commitment. Each of you that worked one of these meets, or any other meet this past short course season, has made a significant contribution to our sport. Thank you!

Who's Call Is It ? (Or Who's Call Isn't It?)

A backstroke heat is started with one swimmer having his toes curled over the gutter prior to the start. The position of the toes prior to the start is not noticed by either the Starter or the Referee prior to the start. Following the start, a Stroke & Turn official raises his hand and then recommends that the swimmer be disqualified for having his toes curled over the gutter. Upon having had the infraction described to him, the Referee realizes that he and the Starter missed the position of the toes at the Start. How should this situation be resolved?

Ideally, this situation should have been noticed by the Starter and/or Referee prior to the start, and the swimmer directed to correct the position of the feet. Less ideally, had the foot position been noticed just as the starting signal was sounded, either the Starter or the Referee could have initiated a recall of the heat as this swimmer would likely have gained an advantage at the start. In the described situation, because the toes were curled over the gutter prior to the start, there is no stroke violation and thus the call should be overturned.

In this situation, there is no disqualification as the toes were already curled over the gutter prior to the start. For specific rule references, see the USA Swimming Situation Resolutions for Starter and Deck Referee.

Officiating Skills – Self Evaluation

For many, the end of the Championship season means no more officiating until the short course season starts anew in the Fall. For others, it signals a brief respite before the start of the long course season. No matter which category you fit in, it's a perfect time to reflect back on the past season and to evaluate your performance.

Joel Black, Officials Chair for North Carolina Swimming, and Co-Chair of the USA Swimming Officials Committee, has authored a short paper entitled "*The Swimming Official – 10 Points of Self-Evaluation.*" The complete paper can be found on the Officials Section of the VSI website. The paper is a must read for anyone wishing to improve as an official. The paper expands on the following ten questions:

1. Did I blow any calls?
2. Were there any times when it was fortunate that I didn't have to make a call?
3. Did I do everything I could to ensure a just outcome?
4. Were my calls/decisions consistent?
5. Did I fail to maintain proper control at any time?
6. When did I feel most vulnerable to outside influences?
7. Were there any situations where I avoided or usurped responsibility for a ruling at the expense of another official?
8. Was there anything about my signals, gestures or style that evoked an unexpected or unwanted response?
9. Did I uphold, defend or rationalize any improper rulings?
10. Was there a particular aspect of my performance that I could work on at the next meet?

Providing honest answers to these questions will help you to grow as an official. None of us

has worked the perfect meet, but by determining where our weakness lie, we lay the foundation for improving our officiating skills.

Officials Committee Meeting

The Officials Committee will meet the morning of April 24, 2005, prior to the VSI HOD and BOD meetings (Koger Center, Richmond, VA). If there are issues that you could like discussed at the meeting, please bring them to the attention of a member of the committee.

Swimposium – Save the Date

The 2005 Officials Swimposium will be held September 24-25 in Richmond. Please send any suggestions for topics to Mary Scott Garrett (contact info below).

Referees' Clinics

Plans are currently being made to hold two to three Referees' Clinics this fall. Details including dates, times, and locations will be announced as soon as they are available. Suggestions for topics are welcome and should be sent to Kevin Hogan (contact info below).

Questions?

Do you have a question about officiating or a tip you'd like to share? Is there a rule that you'd like to have clarified? Is there something that you'd like to see the Officials Committee do? Do you have a suggestion for a future item in this newsletter?

If so, please send your questions/comments to Kevin Hogan (Chair, VSI Officials Committee, kevinhogan56@earthlink.net).

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