

VSI Officiating Update

No. #23

11 September 2010

Welcome and Thank You

Whether you're a returning official or a new trainee, welcome to the 2010/2011 short course swimming season. If you've been around swimming for any amount of time you've probably noticed that running a swim meet requires a large number of volunteers. This need is particularly visible when it comes to officiating.

Our charge as officials is to conduct competition in accordance with the "rules which are designed to provide fair and equitable conditions of competition." To do this, each of us needs to be well-versed in the rules, the interpretations of the rules, and philosophical underpinnings of the rules. By participating in initial and continuing education, each of us can grow as officials to meet this mandate.

Officials clinics are available to you at the start of the swim season and occasionally during the season. While you might typically think of these as being for new trainees only, there's no reason for you as an experienced official to not participate as a refresher. Stroke and turn briefings at meets serve as another venue at which you can review your knowledge of the rules. The upcoming Swimposium is yet another means by which you might consider expanding your education in officiating.

However you chose to participate, and in whatever capacity, thank you for being a part of the officiating team!

Officials Clinics

Officials clinics are being scheduled throughout the LSC. Please check the officials' section of the VSI website for details.

Officials Swimposium

Our (nearly) annual Officials Swimposium will be held Saturday, October 2, 2010 (8:00 am – 5:00 pm) at the Hilton Richmond Hotel & Spa/Short Pump in Richmond. Whether you are a new official or an experienced Referee,

there will something for you to learn. A preliminary agenda and registration form are posted on the VSI website. Registration is due by September 17 so don't delay!

Roles and Responsibilities of the Team Officials Chair

If you are a Team Officials Chair, we have a special offering for you during the Swimposium. From 1-2 pm there will be a session devoted to the roles and responsibilities of the Team Officials Chair. This session is designed to let you know how you should be working with your team to recruit new volunteers, retain existing officials, interact with your District Officials Chair, and to facilitate the staffing of meets hosted by your club and other clubs. There is no cost to attend this single session only. If you are attending the full Swimposium, this session will be offered as a break-out session so that you can attend it as well.

2011 USA-S/VSI Registration Required for All

In the past we did not require membership for Timing Equipment Operators, Timing Judges, Recorders, or Clerks of Course. Effective with the start of this season though, if you're a certified official in any capacity, or an individual training for any position, you'll need to be a non-athlete members of USA-S. With this change all of our officials and trainees will be in the Officials Tracking System (OTS) which will allow us to retire our old database and utilize only OTS.

When filling out the USA-S/VSI non-athlete registration form it is important that you check "Certified Official" box whether you're a certified official or a trainee. If you are a coach who also officiates, you should check the relevant coaches box and the "Certified Official" box. If "Certified Official" box isn't checked, you won't appear in OTS. Likewise, if you check the "Other" box rather than the "Certified Official" box, you will also not appear

in OTS. We can have this corrected after the fact, but it simplify the process if we minimize any needed corrections.

2011 USA-S/VSI Registration Cards Delayed

There is pending legislation that will be taken up at the upcoming USA-S convention that deals with requiring background checks for non-athlete members. Assuming that this legislation passes, and depending upon its effective date, it will likely require changes in the registration process for the 2011 registration year.

Until these issues are resolved, your 2011 registration card will not be issued so that if background checks are required, the checks can be done prior to your card being issued.

In the meantime, you can send in your registration and you'll be entered into the system. If background screening becomes a requirement for 2011, you'll then have to complete and pass that process when it becomes available. At that point you'll then receive your 2011 registration card.

To recap – Go ahead and submit your registration, you'll be entered into the system. If and when background screening becomes a requirement we'll let you know what needs to be done. You'll likely get your registration card later rather than earlier this year. It could even be delayed until sometime in 2011. After you send in your non-athlete member application you can verify your registration through OTS.

Officials' Uniform

You never get a second chance to make a first impression.

There is no arguing the fact that to be a trusted and respected official you must have a strong knowledge of the rules and the ability to apply them in a fair and consistent manner. Fairly or unfairly, your appearance can go a long way in determining how you are viewed as an official. The untucked shirt, wrinkled pants, and super short shorts or skirt don't automatically mean that you don't understand the rules, but they do serve as beacons that draw unnecessary attention to you and can create doubt as to the

seriousness with which you conduct yourself as an official. Rather than letting these types of things draw attention to you, resolve to dress in a *uniform* and professional manner so that you blend into, rather than stand apart from, the officiating team of which you are a part.

The start of the season is a good time to make sure that your uniform is in good order and to replace any items that convey less than a professional appearance. The following uniform information is taken from the VSI Officials Handbook.

Shirt: The shirt worn shall be plain white, with a collar, and long or short sleeve. Female officials may wear sleeveless collared shirts. Logos may appear on the shirt, however, the logo shall be restricted to the front of the shirt, and the sleeve area. The logos may not contain, or represent the following: alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, VSI member team names or logos, or suggestive/offensive messages. A Meet Shirt provided by USA Swimming, or Virginia Swimming is acceptable. The shirt shall be tucked in to the pants, shorts, or skirts, at all times while on deck.

Shorts/Pants/Skirts: These items shall be navy blue in color. Cutoffs of any type are not allowed. Jeans are not appropriate attire for officials on the deck.

Socks: Socks, if worn, should be plain white. Manufacturer's logos should be subdued.

Footwear: Athletic shoes are preferred. If they are worn, they should be as white as possible, with little or no color and avoiding to the extent possible bold and brightly colored logos and stripes. Sandals are also acceptable; however it is recommended that any sandals worn should have a heel strap to assist in keeping the sandal securely on the foot.

VSI Officials Handbook

You may be in the habit of reading the USA-S Rules & Regulations before every meet, but when was the last time you reviewed the VSI Officials Handbook? The handbook contains a wealth of information including certification and recertification requirements. The answers to many of the questions that come up throughout the year are located in the handbook.

While the handbook is quite comprehensive, you have occasional questions that it does not answer. When that's the case please contact your District Officials Chair or the LSC Officials Chair and we'll do our best to get you an answer as quickly as possible.

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, swim@embarqmail.com).

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