

VSI Officiating Update

No. 3

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Senior Champs and Age Group Champs Officiating

Volunteers at all positions are currently being sought for both Senior Champs and Age Group Champs. Please contact Kevin Hogan to volunteer for Senior Champs or Cathy Rudolph to volunteer for Age Group Champs (contact information is at the end of the newsletter).

Senior Champs: March 11-13, University of Virginia

Age Group Champs: March 17-20, Radford University

Please do not assume that you are not needed. Administrative positions in particular are frequently difficult to fill, and additional volunteers will help to spread the work load. In addition, VSI is hosting the Speedo Championship meet the same weekend as Age Group Champs which means that there will be less officials to spread over both meets.

Dressing for Champs

Officials working at Senior Champs and/or Age Group Champs should be aware that the officials attire for the Finals sessions of VSI championship meets has changed. Effective this year, ALL officials will wear powder blue, short sleeve, oxford shirts, and navy blue pants (not shorts) or skirts.

This change is meant to reflect the current philosophies that all members of the officiating team should be dressed in a similar manner and that the dress for Finals should be more professional in nature so as to enhance the championship environment of the sessions.

Speedo Championship Officiating

Virginia Swimming is hosting the 2005 Spring Speedo Championship Series (Region 2), March 17-20, George Mason University, Fairfax.

Those wishing to volunteer for the meet should contact David Strider (Meet Director) at dvs7e@virginia.edu.

Congratulations to the following VSI officials who were selected for assigned positions:

Terry Randolph and Mary Turner – Assistant Administrative Referees

John Thompson – Assistant Chief Judge

Michael Downs and Janet Law – Starters

VSI Officials Selected to Work the World Championships/World University Games Trials

Michael Downs and John Thompson were selected to work at the World Championships/World University Games Trials to be held in Indianapolis, April 1-6. Congratulations!

Filling Out the DQ Slip

The Officials Committee has published a Recommended Practice "How to Fill Out the DQ Slip." The document has been posted on the Officials' section of the VSI website and has been emailed to all the Club Officials Chairs for distribution.

The intent of the standard is to ensure consistent usage of the DQ slip and to make sure that everyone is using the same conventions when filling it out. Please read the document, and if you are not already doing so already, begin following the standard.

Tip for Stroke & Turn Officials – The Rule Book as a Clipboard

The carbon-copy USA Swimming DQ slips are not known to be user friendly. They are prone to disintegrating when they become wet, and if the top slip in a stack is written on, the information will be transferred to the carbon copies of one or more of the underlying slips.

An easy way to prevent these problems is to use the full-sized USA Swimming rule book as a carrying case and clipboard. A small stack of slips can be kept inside the book where they are protected from splashes. When it comes time to write a DQ, a single slip can be removed from the book and placed on the cover, which now serves as a handy writing surface.

Unfair Starts and False Starts

A race is not recalled for a false start, but a race is recalled for an unfair start. What then distinguishes an unfair start from a false start?

An example that most everyone will recognize as an unfair start occurs when a camera flash goes off just prior to the start of a race. One or more swimmers may react to the flash and start prior to the starting signal being given. Under these circumstances, the field should be recalled and the race restarted.

Now imagine a start in a noisy, ten lane pool. The starting signal sounds, swimmers in lanes 1-6 immediately respond by starting, but swimmers in lanes 7-10 do not initially react, and if anything, appear to “follow” the other swimmers into the pool. This is a judgment call, but it would be reasonable to recall the race under these circumstances. Before putting the swimmers back up on the blocks, the Referee would be well advised to determine if the speaker on the lane 10 side of the pool is functioning.

In a final example, the Referee notices that the swimmer in Lane 2 is still moving into a set position when the Starter sounds the starting signal. In this case, the Referee initiates a recall by forcefully blowing his/her whistle, and the Starter reinforces the recall by sounding the recall signal on the starting system. This example emphasizes the fact that recalls need not be initiated by the Starter, and the Starter needs to be prepared to help recall a heat when the Referee initiates the recall.

If the Starter is using good starting procedures, recalls for unfair starts should be relatively rare occurrences. Both the Referee and Starter

should be aware of this procedure, however, and use it to protect swimmers who otherwise would have had an unfair start.

Judging Relay Take-Offs

When judging relay take-offs, it is important to observe the take-offs and incoming touches in the correct order.

The take-off judge should first focus on the feet of the outgoing swimmer. After observing the feet (toes) leave the block, the judge should then shift his/her eyes to the touch of the incoming swimmer. If the incoming swimmer has already touched the wall, it is a legal take-off. If the incoming swimmer has not yet touched the wall, it is an early take-off.

Judging the take-off in this manner gives the benefit of the doubt to the swimmer, whereas judging the take-off in the reverse order can lead to a disqualification when one is not warranted. If the take-off judge first observes the touch of the incoming swimmer and then shifts his/her eyes to the feet of the outgoing swimmer and observes them to be off the block, he/she might then incorrectly infer an early take-off. This will occur when the outgoing swimmer was still in contact with the block when the incoming swimmer touches the wall, but leaves the block prior to the judge shifting his/her eyes to the block.

Remember, take-off first, touch second.

Recorder Tip – How to Download Data After the CTS Has Been Turned Off

A prevalent belief is once the CTS is turned off, any race results that had not yet been imported into Meet Manager can no longer be retrieved. This is not, however, the case.

It is first useful to know how the CTS stores race results. Every time the CTS is turned on, it creates a new “meet” which is defined with the current date and time. Old meets are retained in the system, each with its unique date and time. Once the system memory becomes full,

meet results are overwritten on a first-in, first-out basis. Basically, this means that unless the data you need to retrieve has been overwritten, it is still there for the taking.

The Timer Interface (selected from “Interfaces” choice on the Meet Manager “Run” screen) automatically connects to the most current meet in the CTS. Once a working connection has been established with the CTS it is possible, however, to switch to an earlier meet by following these steps while in the “Run the Meet” menu of Meet Manager:

- Select “Interfaces”
- Select “Timer (CTS5/6)”
- Select “Select Meet in CTS 5/6”
- A “Select Meet” window will appear in which you can click on “Previous Meet” or “Next Meet” to find the meet of interest
- Once you’ve found the correct meet, click on “Close”
- You can now retrieve the race results from the meet of interest

This same procedure also works with the Daktronics Timing System with the caveat that the DTS only holds about 50 races compared to 500 from the CTS. Thus, if data needs to be retrieved from the DTS, it is better to do it sooner rather than later.

One potential point of confusion with this procedure is that if the CTS operator ran one or more “test” heats to check out the timing system and then turned the system on and off to start the session from race #1, this test will also be stored as a meet. With a little effort, it is possible to navigate back one or more meets to get the data that is needed.

A “best practice” when running the CTS is to turn the system off and on before the start of every session so that each session is stored as a separate meet. In the event that data needs to be recovered at a later point, this can help aid in identifying which meet to select. This is also a mandatory procedure when running a trials/finals meet as the CTS cannot store results for trials and finals with the same event number in the same CTS “meet”.

CTS Operator Tip – How to Quickly Switch Between “Pads as Prime” and “Buttons as Prime”

At some of our meets involving novice swimmers, the Referee may elect to use button times rather than pad times as the primary time for some of the swimmers (generally 8 and unders). The reasoning behind this is that young swimmers frequently contact the pad so lightly that it does not register a touch, thus necessitating a timing correction in that lane. It is not uncommon for this to occur in half or more of the lanes.

Switching from pads as prime to buttons as prime requires a simple change in the SETUPS menu as follows:

- Select “SETUPS”
- Select “Finish/Buttons”
- Select #3 “Two Buttons” Prime Finish or #4 “Three Buttons” Prime Finish (remember, rule 102.16.A(2) requires two or three buttons per lane when semi-automatic timing is being used as the primary finish)
- When buttons are selected as the prime finish, an additional choice, #0 “Button Finish Inputs” will appear
- If a two button prime finish is selected, pressing “0” will toggle the inputs from “Prime A” to “A B”
- Likewise, if a three button prime finish is selected, pressing “0” will toggle the inputs from “Prime A B”, to “A B C”
- By toggling the inputs to “A B” or “A B C”, the input from the pad is defeated, and there is no need to unplug the pad, or move a button to the prime position on the primary wiring harness
- At the conclusion of the event or events using buttons as the prime finish, return to the SETUPS menu and select #1 “Pad” to return to a pad prime finish

The decision to switch to a button prime finish should only be made by the Referee and when used, should be consistently used in all of the sessions at a meet.

Swimposium 2005 – September 24-25

Plans are in the works for our next Swimposium which will be held the weekend of September 24-25, in Richmond. In addition to an officials' component, a club development component and swimmers' component is also planned, and depending upon interest additional components (coaching, parents) may also be added. Details as they become available will be posted on the VSI website.

Mary Scott Garrett will again be organizing the Swimposium. Please contact Mary Scott (email below) if you would like to help with organizing this event or if you have a suggested topic.

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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