

VSI Officiating Update

No. #21

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Championship Meets

The short course championship season is well underway. Thank you to everyone who helped make last week's District Championships a success and thank you to everyone who is doing the same this weekend at our Regional Championship Meets.

With two meets under our belts there's still plenty to come within and outside our LSC. Here's what we have to look forward to:

Senior Championship University of Virginia AFC, Charlottesville March 4-7

This meet primarily involves swimmers aged 15 and above but is open to all swimmers who meet the qualifying times. The meet format is designed to acclimate swimmers, coaches, and officials to the protocols and expectations of national level meets. As such, this meet serves as an excellent opportunity for you to hone your skills as an official. One way of validating those skills is by participating in the national officials evaluation process. To volunteer, and to request evaluation, please fill out an application to officiate. *There is currently a large need for Stroke and Turn officials at this meet.*

Age Group Championship GMU Freedom Center, Manassas March 18-21

The AGC meet is for swimmers aged 14 and under who meet the qualifying times. Like Regional Champs, this is the first meet at which many swimmers and officials experience a prelim/finals meet format. Staffing this meet is a major challenge as the 11-14 year old swimmers swim prelims in two pools and this is followed by a separate session of timed finals for the 10 and under swimmers. Each day then concludes with finals for the 11-14 year olds. National officials evaluation will be available at the N2 level. To volunteer, and to request evaluation, please fill out an application to officiate. There is currently a need for volunteers at all positions.

Spring Speedo Champions Series (Region 2) Germantown, MD March 25-28

This sectional meet is great opportunity to see some really fast swimming as well as to work with a large number of very experienced officials. Working

outside our LSC can sometimes open our eyes to other ways of doing things or validate many of the things that you've learned at home. This meet also serves as a national officials qualifying meet and is also in need of officials. To volunteer, and to request evaluation, please fill out an application to officiate.

Eastern Zone Age Group Championship Webster, NY April 1-3

With the exception of many of the officials from the host LSC, it is probably safe to say that most of the officials working this meet are there because they have children in the meet. If that's the case for you, the host would love to have your help. Don't have a child swimming. Not to worry. You can still volunteer. And yes, there's still a need for this meet. To volunteer, and to request evaluation, please fill out an application to officiate.

Applications to Officiate

To find an application to officiate at any of the above meets just click [here](#).

Meet Event Shirts for Senior Champs and AGC

Officials participating in either Senior Champs or Age Group Champs can purchase a meet event shirt for these meets directly from Lands' End. Either white polos suitable for prelims or oxford blue dress shirts suitable for finals are available. Ordering information can be found [here](#).

National Certification Reminder

Common questions that occur after an official has been evaluated for advancement to the N2 or N3 level is "why am I not yet listed as N2?" or "why hasn't my certification level changed in OTS?". Almost always it is because the official has not applied for the new certification level.

Please remember that national certification is a multi-step process. One step is to receive a passing evaluation (1 required for N2 at any position; 1 required for N3 at Stroke and Turn; 2 required for N3 at any other position). Other steps include evidence of continuing education (both N2 and N3) and mentoring activity (N3). The final step is to complete and submit the application that is

available in OTS. Generally, you will hear back in about one week, either that your certification status has been updated or that there's a requirement yet to be met.

If you have any questions please contact Michael Downs or Kevin Hogan.

Women in Officiating

USA-S has recently formed a "Women in Officiating Task Force" to ask why women are under-represented on the deck. To assist the task force with its charge, each LSC was asked to provide statistics on the number of women that they have in officiating. Here are the numbers from Virginia Swimming:

Position	Female	Male	Total
ST	104 (26%)	193 (74%)	397
CJ	20 (28%)	51 (72%)	71
SR	23 (23%)	76 (77%)	99
DR	13 (23%)	44 (77%)	57
AR	6 (22%)	21 (78%)	27

(Please note that we were asked to provide data on wet-deck positions; data for the dry-deck positions hasn't been compiled yet)

A concern has sometimes been expressed that women are excluded from positions such as Chief Judge, Starter, and Referee. At first glance, the numbers above might be thought to support that position. After all, there are about three times as many men in these positions as women. Closer inspection shows, though, that the percentage of women in each of these positions is similar to that for Stroke and Turn which is the entry level position for all the other positions. With that in mind, it looks like women within Virginia Swimming are as likely to progress to other positions as are men within our LSC. The big difference between women and men is that many more men are initially certified at Stroke and Turn, and thus over time, there are more men available to progress to other positions.

When we talk about increasing the number of officials within our LSC we'd be well served to ask why men outnumber women three to one at the Stroke and Turn level. If we know the reasons behind this imbalance, there may be things we can readily do to encourage and support the entry of more women into officiating.

If you've got an idea on this topic please forward them to Kevin Hogan. These ideas will not only be considered by the VSI Officials Committee, but they will also be forwarded to the national task force.

Name Badges

We've recently finalized a vendor for the name badges that we provide officials. These badges are embossed with the "Virginia Official" logo and the official's name, and they feature a magnetic fastener. All newly certified officials are provided a name badge free of charge. If you haven't yet received your badge please let your Club Officials Chair know. Club Officials Chairs should in turn forward this information to the District Officials Chairs. Please include name, club, and mailing address.

If you've lost your previously provided name badge or if you'd like to "upgrade" to the latest design you can order them directly from [Hasty Awards Online Store](#) for \$5.95 including shipping.



Badge Reels

If you haven't already received a badge reel on which to hang your badge and credentials you should have one soon. They'll be distributed at upcoming meets.

Guiding Philosophy of Officiating

Developing a firm grasp and understanding of the rules is an important component of becoming a knowledgeable official. Equally important, however,

is having a thorough grounding in the philosophy of officiating.

- The benefit of the doubt always goes to the swimmer
- Don't infer – call what you see, not what you don't see
- Don't anticipate
- Ugly isn't (necessarily) illegal

Becoming a Better Official

An important part of becoming a better official is self-critiquing your performance. Ideally, this is done on a regular basis, but if it isn't, doing so at the beginning and end of each season provides you with an opportunity to ask such questions as "What can I do better?" and "How can I improve as an official?"

Joel Black, a former Chairperson the USA Swimming National Officials Committee and a member of North Carolina Swimming has authored a short paper entitled "[The Swimming Official – 10 Points of Self-Evaluation](#)". This is an oldie but goodie. Make it number two on your recommended reading list, right behind the rulebook!

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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