

USA Swimming 2005 Officials Training Workshop
Colorado Springs, CO
May 29-30, 2005

Attending from VSI: George E. Smith and Doug Sisco

“The Art of Officiating-From a Coach’s Perspective” (Pat Burch)

- 1) Think of a Swim Meet as a Three-Legged Stool
 - a) Swimmers
 - b) Officials
 - c) Coaches
- 2) Pre-meet Meeting Sets the Tone
 - a) Meet Referee needs to review with the coaches what he/she feels they need to know.
Examples:
 - i) Scratch procedures and swimmer check in
 - ii) Lane and heat information procedure (Clerk of Course)
 - iii) Disqualification slips or procedure to inform the swimmer and/or coach of DQ
 - iv) Review of new rule changes from last season
 - v) Review of any rule infraction that may be subjected to various interpretations
 - vi) Review how you want to handle any protest.
- 3) Education of Coaches
 - a) Do not assume that all coaches know all the rules and meet procedures.
 - b) Lower level meets have newer and less informed coaches.
 - c) Help guide coaches in wording of their written protest.
- 4) The Start
 - a) Use the first event or two to get the swimmers and officials working together.
 - b) Do not hold swimmers on the blocks.
 - c) Watch your starting rhythm.

“The Art of Officiating-From an Athlete’s Perspective” (Rowdy Gaines)

- 1) Attributes of a Good Official
 - a) Fairness
 - i) A good official should always be fair in the manner they interpret the rules and treat the swimmers.
 - b) Consistency
 - i) A good official should always be consistent in the application of the rules and the treatment of the swimmers.

- c) Respect
 - i) A good official should always respect each swimmer.
 - ii) A good official will receive respect when they respect the swimmers and treat them in a fair and consistent manner and approach their job in a professional manner.
- d) Authority
 - i) A good official should always be aware of the authority they have in their position and use it accordingly.
 - (1) Be aware of one's dress and demeanor.
 - ii) Authority is not to be abused.
- e) Integrity
 - i) A good official's integrity should be above reproach.
 - ii) Swimmers will respond accordingly when an official's integrity is not called into question.
- f) Accuracy
 - i) A good official must strive for complete accuracy in all calls.
 - ii) Remember, the benefit of doubt goes to the swimmer.
- g) Safety
 - i) A good official should always be cognizant of each swimmer's safety.
- h) Role Model
 - i) By striving to incorporate all of the traits above into each official's persona at each and every meet, a good official must recognize the fact that they act as a role model while on duty for each and every swimmer.

"Developing a Positive Attitude Regarding Athletes, Coaches and the Rules" (Larry Johnson)

- 1) The Triangle
 - a) Athletes are the **base** or foundation of the triangle.
 - i) They are what this sport is all about.
 - ii) Competition and competitive events must be athlete centered.
 - b) Coaches are **one side** of the triangle.
 - i) They help build the foundation more than anyone else since they work with the athletes each and every day.
 - c) Rules form the **second side** of the triangle.
 - i) They are the guidelines designed to help assure that the athletes can have fair and equitable competition.
 - d) Respect is the **center** of the triangle.
- 2) The Role of the Referee
 - a) Respect for the three is the first step toward having a positive attitude toward the three.
 - b) The Referee must respect the role of the others.
 - c) Respect is an attitude that the Referee must have to become the good Referee we all want to be and this will lead to a positive attitude that promotes the sport.

- 3) Qualities of a Good Referee
 - a) A thorough knowledge of the rules and reasons for them
 - b) Common sense
 - c) Be proactive.
 - d) Remain calm under fire.
 - e) Remain alert.
 - f) Keep your sense of humor.
 - g) Be consistent.
 - h) Fairness
 - i) Honesty
 - j) Integrity
 - k) Be a good role model and a good leader.
- 4) Practical Steps to Take to do a Good Job
 - a) Leave your ego at home.
 - b) Serve others.
 - c) Assign duties.
 - d) Be firm.
 - e) Praise in public and criticize in private.
- 5) Understanding the Flexibility of the Rules
 - a) A Referee must respect the rules as written.
 - b) A Referee should not be an on-deck rule maker.
 - c) A Referee must understand the flexibility in the rule book.
 - d) Most normal problems will take care of themselves through the established rules.
 - e) When unusual problems occur, the Referee must:
 - i) Remain calm
 - ii) Use common sense
 - iii) Handle in an effective manner

“The Role of the Referee” (Dan McAllen)

- 1) The role of a Referee is a leadership role.
 - a) Set the tone of professionalism and decorum.
 - b) Concentrate on the swimmers #1 and the coaches #2.
 - c) Keep fun in the meet.
 - d) Coaches Meeting
 - i) Time trials
 - ii) Session times
 - iii) Scratch times and procedures
 - iv) Swim offs
 - v) Check in procedures and location
 - vi) Meet jury
 - vii) Warm-ups

- viii) Be sure to obtain where each coach is staying, the telephone number and their cell phone number if available in the event they need to be contacted after they have left the pool.
- ix) Water temperature
 - (1) You may want to throw this in just to show the coaches that you are covering all of the bases and have left no stone unturned.

“De-Mystifying Various Aspects of Officiating” – “Starting”, “Chief Judge”, “Admin. Referee”

- 1) **“Starting”** (Joel Black)
 - a) The role of the starter is to give each swimmer a fair start.
 - b) Most important attributes of a starter
 - i) Patience
 - ii) Patience
 - iii) Patience
 - iv) Consistency
 - v) Voice Modulation
 - vi) Clarity
- 2) **“Chief Judge”** (Jamy Pfister)
 - a) Pre-Session Briefing
 - i) Official sign-in sheets
 - ii) Equipment and supplies
 - iii) Deck protocol instructions
 - iv) Jurisdiction instructions
 - v) Deck assignments
 - vi) Rotation schedule
 - vii) Stroke discussion
 - viii) Assignment of trainees
 - ix) Distribution of heat sheets
 - b) Deck assignments
 - i) CJ assigns officials
 - (1) Positions should take into consideration level of certification as well as experience.
 - c) Positioning
 - i) Based on level of meet and number of officials, one CJ should be assigned to each corner.
 - (1) Only two are needed during distance events.
 - d) Disqualifications
 - i) The CJ should observe an official's raised hand.
 - ii) When the CJ approaches the official, three questions should be answered by the official:
 - (1) What did you see?
 - (2) What rule applies?
 - (3) Was this within your jurisdiction?
 - iii) The decision to accept or reject a disqualification is the sole responsibility of the Deck Referee.

- e) Relief
 - i) If an official needs to be excused for any reason, the CJ has the responsibility to maintain equal coverage on the deck at all times.
 - f) Relays
 - i) The CJ is responsible for assigning responsibility for dual confirmation for early take-offs to various stroke and turn officials.
 - g) Evaluation
 - i) The CJ is responsible for assisting in the continual evaluation of the performance of the stroke and turn officials.
 - h) Post-Session Duties
 - i) Gather all equipment and reusable supplies and return them to the designated location for use at the next session.
 - ii) Report any problems or circumstances that should be taken into account before the next session.
 - i) Hot-Box
 - i) The corner of the pool next to the Referee and the Starter
 - ii) The CJ assigned to this location may perform additional duties normally handled by an Admin. Referee in their absence.
- 3) “Admin. Referee” (Bruce Stratton)
- a) Knowledge of procedures and rules
 - i) Meet information
 - ii) Governing policies and procedures
 - iii) Rulebook
 - iv) Consistent and uniform application of rules and procedures
 - b) Record keeping
 - i) Maintain forms, supplies and reports
 - (1) DQ slips
 - (2) Relay cards
 - (3) Scratch form
 - (4) No show form
 - (5) DQ log
 - (6) Scratch from finals form
 - (7) No-show penalty log
 - (8) Reports regarding age/eligibility, total/daily number of swims
 - (9) Psyche sheet
 - (10) Positive sign-in sheets
 - ii) Entries/Registration
 - (1) Verification of eligibility
 - (2) Proof of times, if necessary
 - iii) Results from Preliminary and Final Heats
 - c) Ability to make adjustments to times
 - d) Meet operations
 - i) Develop a post-scratch time line.
 - ii) Review and approve heat sheets prior to distribution.
 - iii) Be proactive.

- iv) Be prepared to deal with coaches' questions and concerns.
- v) Approve results for distribution to posting, announcing and archiving
- vi) Be sure the announcer is announcing the preliminary results and the time.
- vii) Scratches from Prelims/Finals – deadlines
- viii) Disqualifications
- ix) No Shows
- x) Insure scores are correct before announcement/publication.
- e) Knowledge of equipment
 - i) Familiarity with equipment being used and features of the system
- f) Interaction with other management
 - i) Meet Referee
 - (1) Pre-meet coordination with Meet Referee and Meet Director
 - (a) Scope of authority
 - (b) Special situations and concerns
 - (2) Be a sounding board for the Meet Referee.
 - ii) Clerk of Course
 - (1) Coordination and interaction as applicable
 - iii) Coaches
 - iv) Swimmers
 - v) System operators
- g) Be diplomatic.
- h) Train apprentice Admin. Referees
- i) Keep a calm demeanor during stress or crisis.
- j) Thank everyone who has helped the team.

“Why Attend a National, Sectional or Regional Meet Anyway?” (Joel Black)

- 1) Broaden one's level of experience
- 2) Expose one to new ideas and concepts
- 3) Sharpen one's skills
- 4) “Get us out of the same old rut”
- 5) Professional advancement
- 6) Promote an increased awareness of professionalism
- 7) Renew our “excitement” for the sport
- 8) Make new acquaintances and renew old friendships
- 9) *ENJOY REALLY GOOD HOSPITALITY!!!*

“What are the Various “Levels of Officiating”?” (Bob Griffiths)

- 1) There are three levels of National Certification for each of Stroke and Turn Judge, Chief Judge, Starter, Referee and Administrative Referee.
 - a) National 1 or **N1**
 - i) Administered by the LSC
 - (1) Official meets minimum standards.

- (2) Capable of reliably and competently performing in the position at LSC level meets with minimum supervision
 - ii) Advancement to higher National Levels requires a year of experience at the **N1** level.
 - b) National 2 or **N2**
 - i) Administered by the Officials Committee
 - (1) Official is experienced, competent and capable of working the position at Sectional, Zone, Grand Prix and other meets sanctioned for National Certification
 - (2) Re-certification at the **N2** level requires participation in LSC and the higher level meets.
 - c) National 3 or **N3**
 - i) Administered by the Officials Committee
 - (1) Official is experienced, competent and has all of the skills, experience and knowledge required to be considered for selection to work National Championship level meets
 - ii) Advancement to the positions of **N3 Starter** or **N3 Referee** will require specific additional evaluation and testing as put forth in the new guidelines.
- 2) The proposed program also requires a group of highly experienced, motivated senior officials – **National Mentors** – to train, encourage and evaluate officials and to identify those with exceptional aptitude or potential.
 - a) To be selected to, provide service in and eventually retire from, this group should be one of the highest honors any USA Swimming official should be afforded.

“Self Evaluation” (Joel Black)

- 1) 10 Points of Self Evaluation
 - a) Did I “Blow” any calls?
 - i) They will occur.
 - ii) Inexcusable to continue making the same mistakes
 - iii) Identify, learn from and avoid making them.
 - b) Were there any times when it was fortunate that I didn’t have to make a call?
 - i) Lapses in concentration
 - ii) Improper position
 - iii) Distractions
 - c) Did I do everything I could to ensure a just outcome?
 - i) Observation and enforcement must be just.
 - ii) We are in a position of trust.
 - iii) Judgments must be just and bring about a conclusion that reflects the relative performance by participants.
 - iv) We must not become part of the competition.
 - d) Were my call/decisions consistent?
 - i) Inconsistency drives coaches crazy!!!!!!!
 - e) Did I fail to maintain proper control at any time?
 - i) An important part of any official’s job is to control the behavior of the competition, athlete, coach and spectator.
 - ii) Arguments and unexpected disruptions often endanger orderliness and proper conclusion.
 - iii) Learn from such situations.

- f) When did I feel most vulnerable to outside influences?
 - i) Sometimes our confidence waxes and wanes.
 - ii) Identify those times in order to “bear down” and stay the course.
 - g) Were there any situations where I avoided or usurped responsibility for a ruling at the expense of another official?
 - i) Avoid any action that might reflect badly upon a fellow official.
 - ii) Do not allow a co-worker to take responsibility for a ruling you should have made.
 - iii) Do not overrule a co-worker unless it is done in the interest of the meet and not a personal motive.
 - h) Was there anything about my signals, gestures or style that evoked an unexpected or unwanted response?
 - i) Be aware of how we look to others.
 - ii) Do not let our work appear sloppy, inappropriate or incompetent.
 - iii) Being too relaxed may be read by others as disinterest; especially coaches.
 - iv) Proper attire and demeanor score points with coaches.
 - i) Did I uphold, defend or rationalize any improper rulings?
 - i) Call what you see and see what you call.
 - ii) When a mistake is made, own up and have it corrected ASAP.
 - iii) Accept responsibility for your mistakes and do not penalize participants by insisting its correctness.
 - j) Was there a particular aspect of my performance that I could work on at the next meet?
 - i) If you ever answer “NO”, you are deceiving yourself.
 - ii) The perfect meet has yet to be worked.
 - iii) Officials who are satisfied with all past performances are either lazy, disinterested or simply haven’t had their weaknesses exploited (they will eventually).
 - iv) Work under the assumption that you are only as good as your next call and make every effort to ensure a good one.
 - (1) That goes double for a good “No Call”.
- 2) 10 More Questions
- a) Did I.....
 - i) Arrive at the meet site on time?
 - ii) Dress smartly and appropriately?
 - iii) Conduct or participate in a beneficial pre-meet conference?
 - iv) Look confident without appearing overconfident?
 - v) Give the proper signals (whistles, raised hand, etc.) in an appropriate manner?
 - vi) Develop and maintain genuine teamwork with my partners?
 - vii) Maintain proper positioning?
 - viii) Place my hands on an athlete for any reason?
 - ix) Treat all participants with the appropriate amount of respect?
 - x) Make every effort to defuse potentially volatile situations?

“Traps and Pitfalls for the Referee” (Dan McAllen)

- 1) Do not be drawn into an argument or scene on deck by a coach, parent or other individual.

- a) Acknowledge their concern and ask them to “step into my office” which is anywhere off deck and in a more private area.
- 2) Do not allow your attention to be drawn away from the running of the meet by something that can be handled by another official.
 - a) Delegate.
- 3) Do not change a published procedure during the meet from that in the meet invitation or make a “knee-jerk” decision on a request.
 - a) You will have to live with the precedent you set.
 - b) “No good deed goes unpunished!”
- 4) Do not allow your ego to get in the way of your job.
- 5) Inattention to safety
- 6) Inconsistency
- 7) Unfairness
- 8) Disrespect
- 9) Lack of courage
 - a) As a Referee, there will often be times when tough decisions must be made and you must be willing to make those decisions.
- 10) The wrong role model
 - a) As a Referee, you must set the tone for all of the other officials, coaches and swimmers both in the way you present yourself and the way you handle yourself.