

2009 USSA OFFICIALS TRAINING WORKSHOP

SAN ANTONIO, TX

OCTOBER 8-10, 2009

Virginia Attendees

Janet Sheffer

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## **AGENDA**

### **Friday**

7:00am – 8:00am	Registration
8:00am – 8:20am	Welcome and Introductions
8:20am – 9:00am	FINA Rule Changes from FINA Congress in Rome, Italy – Carol Zaleski
9:00am – 9:45am	USA Swimming Rule Changes from 2009 Convention and recent interpretations – Bruce Stratton
10:00am – 10:45am	Situations breakout session I
10:45am – 11:30am	Reports from breakout sessions
1:00pm – 1:45pm	Chief Judge – Paul Jones and Bob Griffiths
1:45pm – 2:15pm	Breakout - Using Chief Judges at local meets
2:15pm – 2:45pm	Reports from breakout session and discussion
3:00pm – 3:15pm	Intro to Open Water
3:15pm – 4:15pm	Starter – Jeannine Dennis and Pat Lunsford
4:15pm – ???	Hot Topics and Burning Issues – Part I

### **Saturday**

8:00am – 8:45am	Swim Officiating – coach and athlete perspectives
8:45am – 9:45am	Meet Referee – Dan McAllen
10:00am – 10:45am	Deck Referee – Jim Sheehan
10:45am – 11:45am	Situations - session II
1:00pm – 1:45pm	Administrative Referee – Joel Black & Lucy Duncan
1:45pm – 2:15pm	Open Discussion – How does your LSC handle the “dry side”
2:15pm – 3:00pm	Managing a Major Meet – Harold Cliff/Carol Zaleski
3:15pm – 3:45pm	Swimsuit Inspections – Carol Zaleski/Harold Cliff
3:45pm – 4:15pm	Officiating Progression – From LSC to National to International – How does it work?
4:15pm – ???	Hot Topics and Burning Issues – Part II

## FRIDAY

### FINA Rule Changes from FINA Congress in Rome, Italy –Carol Zaleski

After we were introduced to all of the speakers, Carol Zaleski discussed the FINA rules changes at Congress this past Rome, specifically the breaststroke. The rule was rewritten to clarify it, not change the way we officiate. The US presented the amendment and it was passed.

There was talk if the records broken during this time would be removed from the books. Since it would be difficult to determine what suit was worn and since it was technically against the rules at that time; the records would probably stand with possibly an asterisk beside them to designate that suits, for which are now illegal, were being used.

She also noted that many countries seem to have their athletes' transition to officials.

### USA Swimming Rule Changes from 2009 Convention and recent interpretations – Bruce Stratton

Bruce discussed the process of US Swimming adopting FINA rules; and while this wasn't required, it was a long standing practice. He then talked about how US swimming makes rule changes. Submissions were due by May 15 and would be posted by July for a vote by the committee. In order for a rule to be changed it must have passed with a majority vote.

He went on to discuss the suit rule that went into effect October 1<sup>st</sup>. Swimsuits for men may not extend above the navel or below the knee and for women, may not cover the neck or extend past the shoulders or below the knee. In a nut shell any suit with a polyurethane panel(s) is illegal; so you don't see zippers, rubber panels and it covers(or doesn't cover) the appropriate body parts the suit should be OK. There is a good chance FINA will publish their approved suit by January 1<sup>st</sup>. He went on to discuss that sport bras, briefs and other modesty suits can be worn in Age Group meets. They are discussing the use of nose clips and if they should be continued to be allowed.

The next topic was interpretations of rules. The first was breaststroke and the arm pull and when during the pull is the kick allowed. Bruce clarified that after any outward or downward motion of the arms that there was nothing preventing a swimmer from pausing their arm stroke during or after the pull. We discussed backstroke and how to officiate the finish. If the swimmer is completely submerged prior to the official moving their eyes to watch the shoulders and touch at the finish then they are in violation of the rule. There is no intending to finish to be considered. Butterfly recovery during the stroke should take place over the surface of the water but you don't have to see air under the arms. He used the analogy of a sailboat and how it rides over top the surface while a submarine rides under the

surface. Also he stated that during butterfly once your pull brings you to the surface you must remain on the surface until the turn or finish.

Scratch procedures were brought up; and Bruce stated that there was no penalty for not scratching unless there was a specific penalty in the meet invitation or the invitation reference using USA swimming rules. It was asked, during positive check, if a swimmer doesn't sign in he/she is still allowed to swim; they will have to swim in the first available lane and the event will not be reseated, unless the invitation states otherwise. He also cleared how to handle an alternate no show during finals. If the alternate swimmer is moved into the finals they must swim unless they scratch at the appropriate time. However if a swimmer goes into the finals as an alternate they can not be penalized for not showing up if their name is called.

## Situations breakout session and Reports from breakout sessions

We then broke out into groups to discuss predetermined situations with people from other LSC's. There were nine groups with about 10 people discussing five topics. After going over each situation, we then reported to the entire workshop our results. The issues that really seem to spark the most interest evolved around starting and over officiating. There were many situations regarding starting and seeing a swimmer flinch before the start but not moving forward, so does not gain an advantage. The consensus from the workshop was if the flinch was not a starting action then there should be no DQ since the rule does state stationary not motionless. Another discussed situation was how to handle an over officiating official. One LSC brought to then attention of the workshop that in one of there meets they had one official write 49 DQ's more then twice the amount of the rest of the officials combined. We came to the conclusion that you can't throw out the DQ's because they were accepted in the appropriate manner. You could however have an Chief Judge/Off Referee observe the official and see why they are making so many calls, they very well be legitimate calls but if there are questions regarding there understanding as to how a call is to be made properly; use this time for mentoring not criticizing.

## Chief Judge – Paul Jones and Bob Griffiths

### Breakout - Using Chief Judges at local meets

### Reports from breakout session and discussion

Not all LSC's use Chief Judges. The questions was posed when should a Chief Judge be used; and answer was whenever possible. The Chief Judge is the right hand man to the Referee. They do the briefing before each session, assign the positions on deck, make sure everybody has the proper paper work (heat sheets, take off slips etc.). They basically run the deck to allow the Referee to keep his attention on the water. When we went into our break out groups to discuss how we use Chief Judges in our LSC's many people were amazed that Virginia actually has a training process to become a Chief Judge. Almost every other LSC appoints the most experienced or willing strokes and turns judge or off duty referee to be CJ. It was also noted the Chief Judge should be an intreduit part of the Leadership team prior to meets.

## Intro to Open Water

The discussion on open water swimming centered on the opportunities that are present to Athletes, Coaches and Officials. The low cost of holding events and the amount of fun during the meets.

## Starter –Pat Lunsford

There are a clear set of guidelines for becoming a good starter- practice, practice and more practice. Starting is an art some are good at and some aren't. Skills develop over time- knowing what to say when to say it and what to look for; lots happen in a few seconds. Longevity is not enough to be a good starter to improve practice your craft, attend clinics, be mentored, and get feedback and evaluations. When you make mistakes, and you will, admit them, learn from them and move on. It is your responsibility to ensure a fair start. In order to do this you must remember patience is a virtue and expect the unexpected. Be ware of friendships or knowing the swimmers to well. Swimmers must be stationery before start not motionless. A tall building is stationery but has movement. A twitch of the arm with no intent to start is fine. Be a teacher and help others. Keep up with changing philosophies and be professional. Most importantly work each session/heat as if it were your last. Tips on relaxing were staying focus; after each start return your attention to the swimmers behind the block; stay in your zone. Try small mints between your check and gum, this helps keep your mouth wet.

## Hot Topics and Burning Issues

The hot topic was recruiting and retaining officials. US Swimming sent a survey out to the officials that did renew the membership asking why this was. The number one answer was their child quit swimming. The number two reason was the official felt excluded instead of inclusive. One way of changing this is by inviting officials to train for other positions, get them involved in other aspects of the meet, make them feel like they belong, and offer your officials avenues to grow instead roadblocks.

Recruitment was discussed at length. One team switched their training from testing then observing to having their trainees come and watch their required number of meets/sessions then take the test. Some teams have the coaches solicit people that are involved and seem to have an interest in the rules. During timer briefing invite those parents to train for officiating; you have a captive audience and you may as well use it. Do clinics for your club as well as others if possible.

## Saturday

### Swim Officiating – coach and athlete perspectives-George Block

It was George's opinion, and opinion he developed by having over 30 years of coaching experience and talking with other coach's, that the environment around a meet is the most import thing to be concerned about when hosting a meet. Certain meets, certain facilities and certain officials just put on great events because of the environment. It must be a welcoming environment like welcoming a guest into your home. It needs to be organized and there needs to be clarity as to what's going on; this

stems from organization. Safety is important as no coach wants to worry about anything other than their swimmers. The meet needs to move along at good pace but not feel rushed.

Most coaches want officials to help them teach their swimmers the love of the sport thru good fundamentals and getting the strokes right. Almost every coach would rather you make calls early in order to help them from happening later.

Jim Sheehan made a very interesting point in that the best officials, like teachers are the best students of the sport. Most parents say they got involved in officiating because of the kids but that is a cliché. They are in because of their love for the sport; because of the values, health, discipline, goal setting, team work and life long friendships. George commented that only the genetic mutants go on to the Olympics but every child that swims has their only Olympics at their own level. Dan McAllen discussed the fact that many LSC's "Ride their best horses to death", and that you need to take care of yourself with diet and exercise. George ended the session with reminding everybody that the relationship with coaches boils down to the old saying "When respect is given—respect is returned."

## Meet Referee – Dan McAllen

General Philosophy behind Leadership

- 1>Develop the game plan
- 2>Form a leadership team or field officers

Have well formed plans make sure they are clear and understood then most importantly  
Get out of the way

Keep your priorities straight

- 1>First last and foremost –Athletes
- 2>Coaches- Keep them happy
- 3>Not on the list are parents
- 4>Preparation- remember the 5 P's—Prior Preparation Prevents Poor Performance

Develop Strong Leadership Team

Chief Judges, Starters and Administrative Referee

During your Pre-meet Coaches meeting make sure you discuss:

- 1>Starting Times
- 2>Time Trials
- 3>Unusual Procedures
- 4>Where to start 50's
- 5>Swim off procedures
- 6>Let them know what the water temp is

Another good idea is to have a meet jury set up prior to the meet.

Remember to do the following during the meet:

- 1>Be a teacher- bring other officials along and spot officials ready to advance.
- 2>Be professional
- 3>Remain calm cool and collected
- 4>Lead quietly, you are the star of the show  
Don't develop a God complex. There are people on your deck every bit as good as you and experienced as you- use those people and their talents
- 5>Be proactive not reactive- anticipate the unexpected thing
- 6>Be flexible and make changes. If you do something and its not working to be proud to fix it.
- 7>Be patient- all great battle plans change the very moment the first shot is fired
- 8>Live by your precedents- use common sense because your sins will follow you.

When dealing with fellow officials-

- 1>Be respectful, courteous and polite  
-explain to them why their call was overturned and use this as a training situation
- 2>The most important person is the Strokes and Turns official. They are where the rubber meets the road. They are the one person(s) that affects the swimmer. The swimmers don't care about the paper pushers or the guy holding his arm out by the starter.

Last but not least---walk your deck.

## **Video Replay – Carol Zaleski**

We were given the opportunity to watch a number of video replays taken during international competition. Video replay has been accepted by FINA for validation of deck calls. 26 cameras are strategically placed in the pool for observation. When utilized, one person is watching the replays and gives instant feed back to accept or reject a disqualification call made on deck. The video replay is not current used or expected to be used to make calls that are not made by officials. It was interesting to note, however, that one of the more common infractions seen is the addition of a butterfly kick at the turns and finish of the breast stroke as typically the Turn official is watching for the touch. It is expected that some of the footage from the instant replays will be used for future training video. The group suggested that it would be good to include video from the perspective of the S&T judges.

## **Deck Referee – Jim Sheehan**

The Deck Referee is responsible for a fair environment in which the swimmers will be competing. To accomplish that, the deck is staffed with a number of people. The Deck Referee must be a facilitator in helping the staff get their jobs done correctly and at the same time allow them the freedom to do those

jobs. While the Deck Referee needs to know all the jobs of the others on deck, it is not his/her job to do them all. He/she will have enough to do.

#### The Team

- \*Strokes and Turns Judges-your staff working the line.
- \*Chief Judges-The manager- your eyes and ears of the deck
- \*Starters-Keeping the session moving smoothly and watch your back.
- \*Announcer-Facilitate communications with coaches and swimmers.
- \*Meet Referee-CEO that establishes guidelines for protocols/procedures.

#### The Procedures

- \*The pool is yours while you're the deck referee
- \*Work with your Starter
  - Relative to positions on the deck
  - Who approaches who for a false start
  - Keeping order of finish
  - Checking upcoming heats for empty lanes
  - Watch for issues/situations that could cause a problem
- \*What are the scratch procedures.
- \*What are the procedures for "no-shoes"
- \*What are the procedures for DQ's
  - Who is writing the slip?
  - Who tells the swimmer/coach
- \*Radio Protocols
- \*During the Race
  - Focus on the pool the chief judges are watching the officials
  - Don't hang out with the starter
  - Observe the race, you might see the infraction as well
  - Keep the "table" informed of DQ's, no show's, lane changes.
- \*Avoid distractions if all al possible
- \*Keep track of your time line
- \*Handling the DQ
  - False starts- work out protocol with starter before session.
  - Check any DQ slip with your heat sheet, reject if clerically incorrect and have official rewrite slip. Make sure there is enough information to have a visual visual of the infraction.
- \*Working with Coaches
  - Coaches are not the enemy- they are looking out for the best interests of their swimmers.
  - Keep the communications lines open.
  - We are here to support the efforts of the swimmers to excel in a fair and impartial environment.
- \*The Rules



- Prepare for the meet

  - Read the rule book regularly so that you can keep those aspects of the rules that don't come up very often fresh in your mind

- Read the meet announcement to understand the procedures being used at this meet

- \*Additional Resources

  - The Referee and the Rules by Annelises Eggert

  - The Coach and the Official by Don Hart

  - Situations and Resolutions

  - Training Resources

  - Articles and Presentations

## Administrative Referee – Joel Black

- Review the "Training Manual for Admin Referee" from USA website

- Obtain and learn the Meet Information/Packet

- Review preference/instructions from the Meet Referee

- Particular areas for pre-meet thought/discussion:

  - Eligibility, Registration, Proof of Times

  - Meet Entries

  - Clerk of Course

  - Timing Equipment Operator and Timing Judge

  - Computer Operator

  - Heat Sheets

- Get your Admin "file box" ready:

  - USA Rule Book

  - 3 ring binder

  - Dividers – with event numbers/names

  - Highlighters (preferably 3 different colors)

  - Stapler and staples

  - Paper clips

  - Pencils

  - Pens

  - Stamps – for during the meet

  - 3 hole punch

- Assemble Meet Forms – can be found on USA website

  - Scratch Cards

  - Relay Cards

  - Disqualification Slips

  - Disqualification Log

  - Intention to Scratch Form

  - No Show Slips

  - Name and Time Correction Forms

#### Positive Check In

- Prepare notebook with dividers for psych sheet by event, team list and swimmer list.

3 P's of the Administrative Referee- Proactive Proactive and Proactive.

### Managing a Major Meet – Harold Cliff/Carol Zaleski

#### Swimsuit Inspections – Carol Zaleski

We were running behind the time line and the rest of the workshop covered Carol talking about how to check out suits to determine if they are legal. If it doesn't have any rubberized panels it should be fine, remember to observe the suit if you believe there is an infraction and avoid any physical contact.

Carol showed us underwater video taken from one of the national meets. She discussed how the process was being used.

- Not used to disqualify a swimmer, but could be used to overturn a call
- Logging missed calls and inform the officials what were missed

Harold Cliff talked about the -08 Olympic Trial venue and the process of setting up the facility, and the things you needed to take into consideration.

- Separating the Officials from the flow of the meet(getting the swimmers in and out of the pool) while allowing them to move around the pool deck.
- Setting up the lighting, stage for awards

After this Jim Sheehan thanked everyone for attending and wished us all safe travels home.