

Chief Judge (Or Not?)

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Chief judges at a meet used to be a luxury. Now they are a staple. Over the years, the referee's role has been increased from running the meet to overseeing warm-ups, handling television and/or newsmen, arbitrating and interpreting for foreign coaches, mediating between coaches and coaches, coaches and parents, coaches and swimmers or all of the above. The chief judge's job is to free the referee from an overbearing load. Some of the jobs a chief judge may perform include:

- 1.) Placing officials
- 2.) Instructing on demeanor
- 3.) Instructing on roles
- 4.) Running officials meeting
- 5.) Making sure all equipment to be used by officials is on hand, such as:

guns	pencils	disqualification slips
bells	clipboards	chairs
horns	heat sheets	refreshments

It is also the chief judge's job to make sure that the deck is clear of debris, including cups, loose paper, etc.

It is always the chief judge's job to make everyone feel welcome and needed. Smile. Be tactful.

The chief judge should remember that he is not a referee. He does not pocket disqualification slips. He does not approve or disapprove a call. He only reports to the referee.

It is the chief judge's duty to watch the officials and not the competition. He should see a hand raised immediately and proceed to the official and ask the three classic questions: 1.) What did you see? 2.) Were you in the proper position (did you have the jurisdiction)? and 3.) What rule applies?

The chief judge should be aware of the rules being used - high school, college, U.S. Swimming, FINA~, not to mention summer league, which can be really different. The chief judge must be able to spot a rule not in effect. The chief judge should **always** read the rules before a meet.

The chief judge should stay out of the way and should not chat with the starter or referee. He should never cluster. He should be close enough to help but not butt in or take over.

Many meets utilize head phone sets to communicate. When a hand is raised, the chief judge should announce that there is a possible disqualification and the location. He should then go to the official and ask the three questions. He can then announce the disqualification to

the referee. The swimmer is detained or told, the disqualification slip is completed (if used) and delivered to the referee. The referee will ask the chief judge the same questions asked of the official making the call. The disqualification is then accepted. A judgment call is not

overruled although referees do sometimes overrule disqualifications if the official is not positive or did not have jurisdiction.

Officials should be reminded to immediately raise their hand for a disqualification. If they have to think about it for any length of time, it is probably not a valid call. However, officials should not hesitate to make a call. Swimmers at **all** levels make mistakes.

The chief judge should know his officials. National meets have a local chief judge to help the national chief judge. If possible, officials should perform several different jobs. At certain meets, the very best (experienced and dependable) officials should be on the center lanes and working as stroke judges. Officials should be balanced. One end of the pool should not be neglected to put eight officials on the other end. One official per two lanes is ideal for an LSC meet. Most LSC's do not have that luxury so they do the best they can. Oftentimes, referees and starters double up.

Many local swimming committees have to go with three officials - starter, referee and one stroke and turn with volunteer timers. There is no chief judge in that situation as one is not needed.

Large meets such as USS Senior Nationals, Junior Nationals, Far Westerns, Easterns, Zones and the Texas Age Group Championships may have an overabundance of officials. These meets may have one to three chief judges.

The chief judge should always consult with the referee to make sure he understands his responsibilities. Some referees prefer that the chief judge run the officials meeting. Other referees want to run the meeting themselves. At national meets, the referee and starters help

by taking a turn running a session so that everyone knows all officials. All officials should attend the meetings.

The chief judge should always have a pleasant look on his face. He should smile. This makes everyone more comfortable. If the chief judge has a problem with an official, he should talk with him about it privately and in a positive manner.

