**2015 USA Swimming Official’s Workshop**

**October 23-25**

**Dallas, Texas**

Attended by Beth Jones and George Zolovick

**Dan McAllen-Swimming Governance and Rules Interpretations:**

Governing Body defined as any rule making or governing board (examples include FINA, NCAA, USA swimming or High School Swimming.) FINA responsible for all swimming rules in the world except the US. FINA passes rules every 4 years while USA Swimming adopts rules on yearly basis. FINA has control of all technical rules. YMCA adopts USA Swimming rules. After short discussion on actual governing body, rest of time based on rule interpretations and how to solve deck problems before they occur.

1. IM rule – FINA states rule has not changed. Was always only ¼ of IM could be backstroke, breaststroke or butterfly. This means if feet leave the wall with swimmer on back during freestyle (individual or relay) they are completing more than ¼ of race in the form of backstroke. Three clarifying examples included swimmer could complete butterfly kicks off the wall but was considered butterfly once arm pulls initiated, breast stroke out of cycle still consider breast stroke thus illegal and flipping from front to back to adjust goggles during freestyle portion of race is considered a DQ. They reiterated though coaches and official may not like, it is still the governing rule and should be enforced.
2. Deck changing – changing in part or in whole while wearing one suit while facilities available for appropriate changing is illegal. This includes slipping off top of one piece performance suit to place on alternate bikini top after a race.
3. Jolyn swim suits with ties are not legal for competition.
4. Not permissible to wear more than two caps in competition at one time.
5. Rule changes cannot be proposed by an individual only by LSC, committee of USA swimming, Board of Directors etc. That committee would have to initiate procedures to change rule.
6. If see a swimmer wearing 2 suits or other rule violation, do not interrupt the swimmer before the race. Address it after the swimmer has swum and if not for modesty sake, DQ can be made at that time.
7. Official USA review cameras are only cameras that can be used for a call. Coaches and parent cell phones should not be used for interpretation of call.
8. May 1st 2016 will signal the end of time adjustments. Complete heat failures may be adjusted but otherwise best time from any source should be established. (pads, buttons, watches, order of finish). The Admin referee will have to use best judgement.
9. Any bullying now addressed at local level not zone level. This should be interpreted as LSC or club origin of violating swimmer.
10. When interpreting rule use them to benefit of fair swim and to benefit athlete. Example given was using delay of meet if swimmer behind the blocks instead of no show if penalty of missing next swim an option.
11. Kinesio tape not allowed. Even doctor’s note does not void this ruling.
12. No compression bands that support tendons or joints allowed. Jewelry and watches and non-compression band okay.
13. Legs are allowed to cross on butterfly if one kick is longer than the other. The alternating kick call comes when propulsion coming from opposite sides of the foot at the same time.
14. Meet jury should always be odd number and never contain the meet or deck referee as their call is usually the contested call. Use athlete, coach and official.
15. During a coach official confrontation listen to coach. After they vent their frustration make suggestions why call was made the way it was. Never argue with the coach as it does not lead to resolution of situation.
16. If completing a recall, consider pulling the heat to the side and tell them to let you know when they are ready to swim. Swimmers tend to tell officials they are ready when asked even if they are not.
17. Swimmers in wrong heat or lane is not a violation. Lead timer for the lane is responsible for correct placement.
18. Referees should not be making calls unless blatantly obvious to venue. The purpose of a balanced deck of well-trained individuals is skewed by the injection of one person into a particular quadrant. (Examples would include not finishing race or interfering with another swimmer)
19. Swim-offs can be left to the discretion of swimmers and coaches to determine as opposed to having a hard and fast time limit to complete. Let them hash out what is best for them and then complete taking into account announcing qualification for other swimmer in finals.
20. Alternates are allowed to swim in any heat that is not a non-scoring heat. (Example can swim in either C and D heat if A and B are only scored heats.)

**Bob Griffiths – Chief Judge**

Chief Judge – Assistant to Meet Referee. Should brief Officials on rules and meet protocol, sets the deck and track meet attendance and assignments. Assistant to Deck referee by organizing breaks, reliefs and reserve official as well as making sure equipment in appropriate place. Used to process DQ slips in organized, timely and correct fashion. Chief Judge does not sign off on DQ only Deck ref. They do not make calls unless they step into stroke and turn judge position while DQ slip processed. Chief Judges can be used as mentor for over and under calling of DQs but should be completed off deck in debriefing type of situation as opposed to while in position. Should know radio protocol when applicable. Chief Judge position can help meet run smoother and faster by spreading workload of deck management. Most importantly they should relay information of adjudication of call to Deck Ref. They should gently discuss with stroke and turn official why call may be withdrawn but does not actually refuse the DQ slip (again Deck referee call only.) Chief Judge should only recommend non acceptance of call in extreme situation and call is still a DQ until Deck Referee makes final ruling. If there is a team of Chief Judges; switch up their tasks and locations. Chief Judges should keep track of their area of responsibility but can be used to cross cover other areas if another individual overwhelmed. Chief Judges should thank all officials in their area before dismissal from session. When underwater replay cameras are being used, chief judges notifying deck ref of lane and position in a quick fashion allows queuing of correct camera to uphold call allowing call to be adjudicated before race completed.

**Jamie Cahn – Deck Referee**

Deck Referee – Understand deck is staffed with a number of people all trained in their appropriate positions. A referee facilitates getting all the jobs completed but is not responsible to complete. Stroke and turn judges make calls. Chief Judges are the communication link at meet. Starter allows for smooth run of session and watch the deck refs back. Announcer facilitates communication with swimmers and coaches especially with finals processing. The Meet Referee is the CEO and establishing protocols and procedures. Meet Referee serves as next level after Deck Referee for coaches.

Coordinate with Meet Ref on fly overs, clearing pool and chase starts, standard whistle protocols, manage starting area, make sure all precedents from previous sessions followed and manage environmental characteristic of meet venue.

Works with starter including positions on deck, who approached for false starts, timing of whistles, keeping order of finish, checking next heat for open lanes vs missing swimmers. Watch for issues on pool deck that may lead to problems.

Be aware of scratch procedures, no shows and declared false stars, procedures for processing DQ slip including how swimmer notified.

Once arm extended, race turned over to Starter. You do not have to wait for swimmers to be ready as starter can control this function. Deck Referee can always take control of heat back from starter but verbally communicate as they may not see arm fall. Heat is not closed until start of race and not dictated by arm raise from Deck Referee releasing heat to Starter.

Make sure no shows processed as meet announcement states. Do not enforce something not accurate for that meet.

During the race, Deck Referee should be watching pool as the Chief Judges are watching the officials. Don’t hang out with starter. Keep dry deck informed of no shows, lane changes and DQ’s. Do not get lost in paperwork and lose track of pool. While watching pool may see infraction which helps with adjudication of call.

Alternate swimmers can be placed in any non-scoring heat.

Try to stick to time line as swimmer are basing their preparation on time line. If something is predictably throwing off timeline may need to use alternate referees, starters and judges to fill in positions or adjust timeline and let coaches know.

Keep track of DQ log to see if individual stroke and turn official over calling an infraction. Will not catch first couple of calls but as meet goes on can notice problem and remedy.

Starter initiates false start protocol and Deck Referee should not be initiating. If there is a pattern of missed calls, approach starter after session for mentoring.

The call should include correct jurisdiction, what did official see and what rule was broken. The deck ref should be able to “see” the infraction from the description even if not observed. The Deck Referee should note infraction of heat sheet. Make sure to check take off slips before upholding prefilled DQ slip on early take-off.

In order to keep officiating equitable, Deck Ref should only make call for egregious calls not basic calls which should be noticed by Stroke and Turn Official.

Work with coaches on best time to complete swim offs. Can be determined by creative methods such as coin toss or finish of leg of race. As long as swimmers agree before completed, decided plan can be used. (Example; same swimmers in 50 free and 200 free relay needed for both swim offs. Put 50 free swimmers in leg one of relay swim off and winner of first 50 wins that final so both races don’t have to be completed allowing more rest for swimmers)

Prepare for meet before meet. Read rule book and meet announcement. Know which races you will be responsible for and be prepared for those events. Remember as an off duty Referee you may be called to fill in for alternate races as needed.

**Bill Rose - Administrative Official/Referee**

Must have formal training, pass Administrative Official Test and serve 2 sessions under mentor with at least one year of certification as Administrative Official. Must complete background check and Athlete Protection Training. Must work 4 sessions per year in any dry deck position with at least one session as Administrative Official.

Administrative Official is responsible for accurate processing of entries and scratches, seeding of prelims, semi- finals and finals and determination and recording of official times (includes receiving and reviewing times from primary and secondary timing systems, obtaining times recorded by timers as needed, notifying referee when primary timing system cannot be used and recording DQs, determination of official results and posting and publishing results and scores.

Administrative Official while not optimal can fill another dry deck position but cannot also fill a wet deck position including Meet Referee or Deck Referee.

Part of Administrative Referee is training in wet deck positions because if something happens to Meet Referee they are the preferred person to fill in that position.

Reviewed National Certification requirement which are in flux at this time and not included in this report.

**Jim Holcomb – Meet Referee**

Meet Referee has authority over all official present at the meet. Most of job takes place before meet. The more preparation before the meet the less to complete at meet. Meet referee should be visible but not obtrusive. Consider visual, legal, psychological, emotional, physical, tactical and strategic aspects. Talk to coaches, swimmers and spectators.

Meet with Meet Director in planning stage of event, assist host official with recruiting deck positions, conduct official coaches meeting, supervise officials team, make final decisions of interpretations of rules and ensure safety. Make sure to review draft Meet Invitation.

Coaches Meeting – introduce key officials, facility layout, venue rules, meet invitation changes, time lines, warm-up procedures, heat sheets, relay cards, scratches, positive check-in procedures, start procedures (parading and which side of pool different starts occur), finals procedures, time trials, protest/complaints/meet juries, results, meet evaluation forms, who to go to for information and hospitality. Always hold coaches meeting before each meet.

Meet with Team Lead for Officials meeting. Final assignments, protocol, jurisdiction, DQ processing, radio protocol, timing adjustments, rules discussion, previous problems, unusual circumstances, announcements, uniform and apprenticeship.

Supervise warm-ups, walk the deck, work with Admin and Deck Referee, communicate with wet deck officials and dry deck officials.

Let everyone handle their positions. Meet referee does not resolve situations unless for safety or if cannot be resolved by Deck Referees and Chief Judges.

Appoint meet jury prior to start of meet.

Be careful of setting precedent with early decisions, don’t be afraid to ask questions or correct mistakes, teach and provide constructive criticism, say thank you to everyone and conduct self-evaluation at completion of each session.

**Melissa Hellervik – Starter**

Tips for becoming a good starter:

1. Have dedicated heat sheet. Look for empty lanes and caps for assigned lanes. Get declared false starts prior to race.
2. Starter gets preference of position but deck ref gets positioning second. Usually easier for deck ref to be away from blocks so can move toward main pool area after start. Arm of deck ref can be to side or forward if starter prefers to be moved forward.
3. Wait for all feet to be in position after long whistle, then look for bodies to be still (goggle and cap adjustments) then initiate in loud falling pitch tone “Take your mark”.
4. Watch until heads up before replacing microphone and marking heat sheet.
5. In event of possible false start tell Deck Ref lane number and show sheet. Deck ref shows their sheet and starter confirms.
6. Leave starting position until beginning of next race and start preparation for next heat after leaving starting position.
7. Use “stand please” not “relax” to pause starting process.
8. If swimmers not steady for start, stand the swimmers. Jerkiness usually caused by swimmer not being ready before Take Your Mark command.
9. On backstroke if toes wrapped above wall address “lane x’s toes please”.
10. On little kids do not rush start and let them get set. They eventually will settle.
11. If wrong heat circled on false start then not a true false start. Consider circle to open heat at start of race and line to close heat when race over as opposed to just placing line through heat after start. This allows you to not lose place in meet and inadvertently circle wrong swimmer.
12. Consider doing hand signals for deaf swimmers for previous couple heats to make sure signals correct before actual heat. Also may need to ask coach if entire event should have hand signals so as not to single out disabled swimmer.
13. If one heat requires two “stand please” commands, then have swimmers step down and collect themselves. If same swimmer causes it twice deck ref should consider discussing with swimmer and telling if occurs again then will be declared delay of meet call.
14. Do not add additional words to commands as they throw off what swimmer is expecting to hear and may be distracting.
15. On back stroke do not hold in set position to avoid shoulder fatigue. (After second long whistle do not say take your mark until feet placed and all goggles adjusted.)
16. If you step swimmer down, deck ref should reblow whistle to step swimmers back up.

**Mentoring**

General discussion about mentoring for LSC, N2 and N3 levels. Resource documents from USA swimming discussed as well as the fact that money for certifying officials can be obtained through the LSC level as well as the National level.

Thoughts included PIE philosophy standing for Positive Instruction and Encouragement. Always treat learning as a positive experience for the trainee or official to grow as opposed to a confrontational situation. As Deck or Meet Referee try to walk around deck and talk one on one with stroke and turn officials. Many do not ever get any feedback while actually in position after certification. As more advanced officials, we can introduce tips learned from higher level meets to make officiating more standardized throughout the country. While there are many local rule interpretations, having a more unified stance on rules is fairer to the swimmers in the long run as they will not encounter difficulty as they visit other LSCs or higher level meets. Consider having a swimmer speak at your officials training and recruitment sessions to show new recruits that it is not an adversarial relationship. Consider a “discuss with the referee session” at the completion of a meet to answer parent and swimmer’s questions about interpretations of the rules as many parents never get feedback on why the rules were developed. This may entice parents to search out opportunities to become more involved. Consider setting up a daycare provider for the younger kid sessions at a meet to help parents of multiple children become involved in swimming while their older children are at a younger age and require monitoring.

Fun was had by all and well organized meet. Great opportunity to organize information we have all heard at different points of the training process but never organized into straight forward single day discussion. Much easier to process when presented together. Also great to have people in each wet and dry deck position for extended period of time present troubleshooting strategies they have used for similar problems. Recommend experience to anyone offered.