

**RECRUITING,
RETENTION, and
RECIPROCITY of
USA SWIMMING OFFICIALS
LSC Officials Chairs Workshop
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Chicago, IL**

Introduction

- **SHARE** various methods of recruiting and retaining officials
- what IS working in your LSC
 - Recruitment
 - Retention
 - Reciprocity

Topics of Discussion

- PROMOTING
- RECRUITING
- RETENTION
- RECIPROCITY

WHAT WORKS FOR YOU?

PROMOTING

- **PROMOTING Officials** maybe done in many different ways. Let's discuss several ways to recruit officials.
 - **FIRST** develop your Local Swim Committees
 - **Philosophy of Officiating. This should be** the same as that of the National Official Committee, thus promoting **continuity** of officiating throughout the United States.
 - **DEVELOP** a short term and long term program for **Recruiting, Developing, Promoting, and Retaining** your officials

RECRUITING

**The most effective way to recruit:
...use a personal approach**

❖ **PERSONAL APPROACH**

- **HAVE** your officials go out and recruit club members on a one on one basis.
- **PARENTS who are** persistently questioning calls: Recruit them to join you.
- **ASSIGN** mentors to new officials.

RECRUITING

Recruiting by citing the benefits...

❖ **RECRUITING PARENTS: Some ways to convince them to officiate:**

- **DO** it with your swimmers.
- **DO** it for your swimmers.
- **DO** it for and with your club.
- **IT'S BETTER** than sitting in stand/snack bar,
- **OFFICIATING** starts at the Age Group Swim Program and has the opportunity to see the world through swimming!
- **BENEFITS** of being an official would give them a better understanding of the rules to which swimmers must conform.
- **FRIENDSHIPS** are made and kept for a lifetime throughout the country.

RECRUITING

Recruit by getting the word out at the local clubs...

❖ INFORMATION MEETINGS

- **INVITE** interested parents to attend an informational meeting during USA Swimming, College, High School, or Recreation meets.
- **GIVE** officiating overview at the parents' meetings at the club
- **DISTRIBUTE** the pamphlet "Parents Guide to Officiating" to parents
- **ENCOURAGE** the teams to reward their officials by paying the official's USA Swimming registration
- **ESTABLISH** a liaison between the teams and the Officials Committee

RECRUITING

Recruit by getting the word out during the meets...

❖ INFORMATION MEETINGS/BOOTHS

- **STAFF** an officials information booth in you local age group meets or recreation swim meets.
- **DISTRIBUTE** the pamphlet "Parents Guide to Officiating" to parents at the meets.
- **CONDUCT** clinics before your meet sessions or in-between split sessions
- **USE** the meets to call your scheduled clinics to everyone's attention.
 - Announce during timer's briefing
 - Announce at coaches meeting
 - Have announcer make the announcements
 - Include dates of upcoming officials clinics in meet programs
 - Make copies of officials clinics flyers available at check-in desk

RECRUITING

Recruit during other LSC events...

❖ INFORMATION MEETINGS/BOOTHS

- **CLINICS and SWIM CAMPS** for swimmers are conducted through out the year. Invite parents to stay for discussion on becoming an official. Invite parents as guests to all your clinics. This is the low-pressure model.
- **ORGANIZE SWIMPOSIUMS** in your LSC. Setup an information booth and invite parents.

RECRUITING

Get your officials involved in recruiting...

❖ OFFICIALS

- **YOU** are the best recruiting tools.
- **YOU** recruit by example:
 - Being professional at all times
 - Welcome all new interested parents
 - Being friendly
 - Being knowledgeable
 - Showing your enjoyment of being an official
 - Promoting officialdom at all time

RECRUITING

Get the coaches involved in recruiting...

❖ Coaches

- They are key persons in recruiting officials
- They are central to the lives of both the swimmer and the swimmer's parents
- Invite coaches to participate in officials clinics
 - allows them to know what new officials have been told
 - allows them to be able to tell parents what to expect

RECRUITING

Minimum officials requirement may work - be careful with the enforcement policy...

- ❖ Some LSC's require minimum numbers of officials at a meet from teams based on the number of participants in the meet.
 - This does emphasize the responsibility of all teams to participate in officiating for all the swimmers.
 - Make sure that you pay attention to the quality of all such officials as they may resent being drafted into service.
 - **CAUTION**: If the swimmer is otherwise eligible to swim in a meet, then any rule that does not apply to the swimmer individually that prohibits the swimmer from competing in the meet is a violation of the rules of USA Swimming

RECRUITING

More tips on recruiting...

- ❖ Copy the Technical Rules (2 pages!) and give it to parents. It is less intimidating!
- ❖ Recruit masters swimmers and former swimmers
 - give back to the sport of swimming
- ❖ No limits except common sense and monetary constraints!?

RETENTION

Why is Retention so Important?

- ❖ **Your new officials are the best recruiting tools**
 - They bring in their friends
 - They can relate better to their peers
 - They provide great support to new recruits
- ❖ **It took a major investment to train an official**
 - It makes sense to invest in the retention effort

An unhappy official who quits can have a negative impact on recruitment

RETENTION

Retaining new recruits...

- ❖ **We were able to get people to try their hand at officiating... but very few stay**
 - They attended clinics
 - They shadowed another official on deck
 - They quit after working a couple of sessions

**TO FIND OUT WHY...
TRY EXIT INTERVIEW**

RETENTION

Leadership Quality and Recruitment/Retention...

- ❖ **A recent study (interviewing over 10,000 “high value” employees) of why employees quit indicated:**
 - **Manager’s quality** is the single most important factor in career decision
 - Employees will “trade away” any other factors - including compensation - to work for the best managers in the company

**PEOPLE DO NOT LEAVE THEIR COMPANY –
THEY LEAVE THEIR BOSS!!**

DID YOUR OFFICIALS LEAVE BECAUSE OF LEADERSHIP PROBLEMS?

RETENTION

An important retention key-building relationship..

- ❖ **The first law of building a relationship is spending time with the person**
 - Get to know your people - your fellow officials
 - Let them know how you feel about them
 - Let them know that they are making a difference
- ❖ **People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care**
- ❖ **Re-Recruiting**
 - Pay as much attention to those you have recruited years ago as those you are recruiting now

RETENTION

Another retention key - effective communication...

- ❖ **The single biggest hurdle to effective communication is the assumption that it has been taking place**
 - Not everybody has email or internet connection
 - Some people may have missed your last clinic
- ❖ **People tend to support or defend that which they help create or decide**
 - Ask: "What do you think..."
- ❖ **Keys to giving feedback:**
 - Make sure it is specific, sincere, and timely
 - With negative feedback, separate the person from the act - Condemn the act, reinforce the person - dignity must be kept intact

RETENTION

Retention Guidelines...

- Treat **ALL** officials equal and with respect
- Be sensitive to their needs and other responsibilities
- Be flexible and accommodating
- Be patient and allow time for an official to develop
- Provide opportunities for your officials to advance
- Pay attention to the workload of your officials
- Initiate and maintain good communication
- Seek feedback periodically
- Breakdown barriers - work the line sometimes
- Consider holding social functions for officials
 - Holiday parties; coaches/officials socials
 - Pay attention to hospitality and meeting the needs of officials during meets and clinics
- Use incentives such as service award pins, etc.

RETENTION

Retention Strategies...

- Overcome the tendencies toward “cliques” and work on making all your officials feel welcome
- Continuous Training opportunities
- Praise a good job
 - Thank you cards
- Follow through with problems
 - Call them and talk it through
- Create mentoring relationships that are personal as well professional
- Recertification is an opportunity for professional and social renewal in building community among your officials

RETENTION

Remember...

- You cannot motivate someone else – you can only motivate yourself – you can, however, create an environment to enhance self-motivation
- The LSC Officials Committee should establish policies with officials retention in mind
- The referee, starters, and chief judges must assume the responsibilities of retaining officials every time they work on a meet

RECIPROCITY

Basic Foundation of the Policy on Reciprocity...

- **Reciprocity is based on the existing national policies on Minimum Standards for Certification**

RECIPROCITY

Policy Proposal...

- Officials certified in LSC who conform to the Minimum Standards for Certification will have their certified status recognized by the LSC they move to or visit.
- Reciprocity requires that each LSC develop a reasonable policy for integrating them into the pool of working officials in the LSC.
 - This includes both transferring officials and officials visiting the LSC.

RECIPROCITY

Policy Clarification...

- The intent is to ease the process for the officials when they transfer to or visit other LSCs.
- Every effort shall be made to integrate visiting officials into the meet in an officiating capacity.
 - The official is responsible for presenting their credentials and informing the meet referee of their availability.

