

ARKANSAS SWIMMING OFFICIALS HANDBOOK



August 2004

Purpose

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information related to officiating in Arkansas Swimming (ASI). It is not intended to replace USA Swimming Rules & Regulations or any USA Swimming officials training material. Additional information related to officiating can be found on the USA Swimming web site (www.usa-swimming.org) under Programs & Services and Officials.

Apprenticeship

Before an individual can receive an initial certification for any position, he/she must serve an apprenticeship under the supervision of officials who are certified for that position. At the end of the apprenticeship period, upon the recommendation of the meet referees under which the apprenticeship was served, the individual must take and receive a passing score on the appropriate USA Swimming written certification exam(s). The exam(s) for initial certification must be taken as an open book test with rule book citations required for each question.

Copies of written exams can be downloaded from the USA Swimming web site or obtained from the ASI Officials Chair. Completed exams should be sent to the ASI Officials Chair for grading. The Officials Chair will issue certification cards upon successful completion of the apprenticeship period and the appropriate written exams.

All apprentices must be non-athlete members of USA Swimming in good standing. Non-athlete registration forms are available on the ASI web site (www.arswim.org).

Apprentices may work toward certification only at sanctioned non-championship meets. They may not serve in an apprentice capacity at championship meets. Officiating at high school, YMCA, NCAA, and Masters meets does not apply toward certification, even if the meet has been approved for observed swims. Sessions worked at sanctioned meets in an LSC other than ASI may be counted toward the apprenticeship requirements with the approval of the ASI Officials Chair.

Certification

Certification of all swimming officials within the Arkansas LSC is through ASI. National certification by USA Swimming is not intended to be a substitute for LSC certification.

Certifications at all levels are for a period of at most two (2) calendar years, expiring at the end of the calendar year. To maintain certification during this period, an official must work at least three (3) sanctioned meets annually and attend at least one of the mini-clinics held each year at the Short and Long Course Age Group Championships unless excused by the ASI Officials Chair.

All officials serving in an ASI sanctioned meet must be non-athlete members of USA Swimming in good standing through the LSC in which they are certified.

In ASI, officials are unpaid volunteers except that in certain situations the meet referee may receive compensation from the host club up to the limits set forth in the ASI Handbook.

Mini-clinics

Mini-clinics are held each year at the Short and Long Course Age Group Championships. The clinic is usually held after prelims on Saturday at the pool facility. The length of the clinic depends on the agenda with one to two hours being typical length. Attendance is required for certified officials unless excused by the Officials Chair and is strongly encouraged for apprentices. Topics include rule changes and interpretations, problems encountered at meets and refresher information on various aspects of officiating.

Re-certification

Re-certification of individuals currently holding a valid certification is accomplished by taking and receiving a passing score on the appropriate USA Swimming written re-certification exam(s). The exam(s) may be taken as an open book test with rule book citations required for each question or as a closed book test. The individual has the choice of exam options. However, the open book test is the preferred option.

Copies of written exams can be downloaded from the USA Swimming web site or obtained from the ASI Officials Chair. Completed exams should be sent to the ASI Officials Chair for grading. The Officials Chair will issue certification cards upon successful completion of the written exam(s).

Stroke and Turn Judge

The position of stroke and turn judge shall also include certification as a timer, place judge and relay takeoff judge.

For initial certification, an individual must attend an ASI sanctioned clinic taught by an ASI certified referee. After attendance at a clinic, the individual must serve twelve (12) sessions as an apprentice under certified officials. Apprentices should work complete sessions for all age groups and skill levels and must include relay takeoff training. It is recommended that the apprentice's experience include training while walking the side of the pool as well as working strokes, turns and finishes from the end of the pool.

At the end of the apprenticeship period, upon the recommendations of the meet referees under whom the apprenticeship was served, the individual must take and pass the USA Swimming written stroke and turn test.

Apprenticeship and initial certification must be completed within one year (twelve months) of clinic attendance. Individuals must be at least 18 years old to be certified as a stroke and turn judge. USA Swimming non-athlete membership is not required to attend a clinic. However, non-athlete membership is required to apprentice on deck. Additional details are given in the section on Apprenticeships.

Requirements for maintaining certification and re-certification are described above.

Starter

A starter must be certified concurrently as a timer, place judge, relay takeoff judge, and stroke and turn judge.

For initial certification, an individual must serve ten (10) sessions as an apprentice under certified

officials. In lieu of a starters clinic, all apprentices must view the USA Swimming starter's video. Apprentices should work sessions for all age groups and skill levels and training should include at least one session which has distance events.

At the end of the apprenticeship period, upon the recommendations of the meet referees under whom the apprenticeship was served, the individual must take and pass the USA Swimming written starter test.

Apprenticeship and initial certification must be completed within one year. Individuals must be at least 19 years old to be certified as a starter. Additional details are given in the section on Apprenticeships.

Requirements for maintaining certification and re-certification are described above.

Referee

The position of "referee" shall include deck referee, administrative referee and meet referee. A referee must be certified concurrently as a timer, place judge, relay takeoff judge, stroke and turn judge, and starter.

Before beginning apprenticeship as a referee, an individual must have been certified as a starter for at least one year and must be at least 21 years old. The individual must work a minimum of ten (10) sessions as an apprentice under at least two (2) different certified referees in at least three (3) different meets and must include all age groups and skill levels. These sessions must include work as both a deck referee and an administrative referee.

At the end of the apprenticeship period, upon the recommendations of the meet referees under whom the apprenticeship was served, the individual must take and pass the USA Swimming written tests for referees, starters, stroke and turn judges, clerk of course, and timer.

Requirements for maintaining certification and re-certification are described above.

National Certification

National certification is through USA Swimming, not the local LSC, and is one of two types, National Certification and National Championship Certification. An official must be currently certified by their LSC and must have been certified at a particular level for at least one year to be eligible for national certification at that level.

National Certification is obtained by working at a regional or local championship meet which has been approved for such certification by the USA Swimming Officials Committee; i.e., the competition must meet established criteria that would make it similar to a national championship. Applicants for certification must attend an officials' briefing session at the meet and work at least three sessions.

National Championship Certification is obtained by working at a National Championship meet. Candidates must apply to the USA Swimming Officials Chair to work the meet. All officials must have National Certification for at least one year, must attend officials' meetings prior to each session of the meet and must work at least four sessions.

Reciprocity with Other LSCs

Certified officials from another LSC must make application to the ASI Officials Chair to transfer their certification to ASI. The application must include a description of the official's previous experience at each level of certification, the last certification date for each level, and written confirmation from the other LSC's Officials Chair. The ASI Officials Chair shall detail a program for certifications as outlined by ASI requirements based on the requesting official's experience level. An official who transfers must also arrange to transfer their USA Swimming non-athlete registration from their former LSC to ASI. Transfer forms are available on the ASI web site (www.arswim.org).

Certified officials from other LSCs may work at ASI sanctioned meets. The visiting official is responsible for presenting their credentials and informing the meet referee of their availability. Every effort shall be made to integrate visiting officials into the meet in an appropriate capacity.

Discipline and De-certification

USA Swimming has developed general guidelines for discipline and de-certification of officials. A complete statement of the guidelines is available on their web site; the main points are summarized here. The intention of the guidelines is to place professional matters within the jurisdiction of professionals; that is, the peers of the official. However, an official has the right to appeal any decision which imposes penalties on him/her to the LSC Board of Review in accordance with the USA Swimming Rules and Regulations and the LSC bylaws.

There are three general categories under which issues may arise. These are professional qualifications, professional misconduct and code of conduct.

Professional qualifications

This category relates to matters involving deficiencies in the professional qualifications of the official related to the technical aspects of officiating. Examples include lack of knowledge of the rules and improper interpretation of the rules. The primary responsibility lies with the Officials Chair where emphasis is on a remedial program for the official. De-certification should be a last resort and such a decision may be made only by the Officials Committee after a hearing.

Professional misconduct

This category relates to matters involving misconduct in the performance of professional duties which do not rise to the level of acts specifically covered by the Code of Conduct set forth in Article 304.4 of the USA Swimming Rules and Regulations. An example of such misconduct might be a referee who publicly berates a fellow official on deck. For matters in this category, the Officials Chair is responsible for conducting an investigation to collect all of the facts. Once the investigation has been completed, the entire case file is given to the Officials Committee which will conduct a hearing and determine any penalties. Penalties may range from a verbal or written warning to suspension or, as a last resort, de-certification of the official.

Code of Conduct

This category involves acts covered under the Code of Conduct set forth in Article 304.4 of the USA Swimming Rules and Regulations. An example might be a referee who falsely changes the time of his child to a better time to qualify him/her for an upcoming meet. The Officials Chair must determine if the matter falls under the LSC Board of Review or the National Board of Review and deliver the complaint to

the appropriate Board for processing under the established procedures of the LSC and USA Swimming.

ASI Officials Organization

All individuals holding ASI certification at any level are automatically members of the ASI Officials Organization.

The Officials Chair is appointed by the ASI General Chair and presides over the organization. The Officials Chair is a voting member of the ASI House of Delegates. In addition, the Chair has the following duties.

1. Maintain a roster of officials including their levels of certification, dates of certification, and participation in meets.
2. Schedule Stroke and Turn Clinics and provide the necessary supplies to the referee teaching the clinic. Preside over the mini-clinics at the Short and Long Course Age Group Championships.
3. Notify officials of pending expiration of their certification, grade certification exams and issue certification cards.
4. Approve officials transferring from other LSCs. Provide other LSC Officials Chairs with confirmation of ASI certification for officials transferring to other LSCs.
5. Upon request, assist meet directors in obtaining meet referees.
6. Communicate official rule and procedural changes to all certified officials.
7. With the assistance of the Officials Committee, oversee the use of the officials fund established from proof of time fines at the Age Group Championships for equipment, supplies, etc.
8. Supervise projects and programs as requested by ASI.

The Officials Committee is composed of at least five (5) certified officials, including the Officials Chair. Members are appointed by the ASI General Chair in consultation with the Officials Chair. At least three (3) members must be referees. The duties of the Committee include the following.

1. Assist the Officials Chair in determining how money from the officials fund should be used,
2. Select an official to represent ASI at the annual USA Swimming Officials Training Clinic,
3. Assist the Officials Chair with projects and programs as necessary.

The current Officials Chair is Terry Casalman.

3405 Kinross Drive
Fort Smith, AR 72908

e-mail: TLCthebigdog@aol.com
home phone: 479-646-6511

The current Officials Committee members are Jeff Bish, Rick Boren, Terry Casalman (Chair), Linda Dickerson, Ed Gbur, and John Reese.

Meet Procedures

This section is not intended to be a comprehensive set of instructions on how to run a meet, but rather to provide information on how certain things are often done at ASI meets.

Dress code

Standard dress for officials and apprentices is a plain white top (usually a polo shirt) and blue pants,

shorts or skirts.

Headset usage

Use of headsets is restricted to meet related conversation.

Coaches meeting

1. Introductions - be sure that you know everyone and they know each other
2. Review any facility rules or issues (e.g., closed deck, food on deck, shaving)
3. Go over meet procedures (e.g., relay forms, over the top starts, bull pen, starts for 25 yard events, swimmers who miss an event, questions about DQs)
4. Announcements (e.g., time lines, location of hospitality, awards and results pickup, meet evaluations)
5. Ask for questions
6. Thank them for coming to the meet

Officials meeting

1. Introductions - be sure that you know everyone and they know each other
2. Rule changes and/or points of emphasis
3. Unusual circumstances related to facility
4. Assignments, including apprentices
5. Jurisdiction
6. Announcements (e.g., location of hospitality, time lines, heat sheets, headsets)
7. Ask for questions
8. Thank them for helping

Timers meeting

1. Introductions - referee, starter, head timers
2. Check that anyone who has never timed before has received explicit instructions from the head timer
3. Purpose of timers
 - (a) pad and button discrepancy - essentially watches decide which is "correct"
 - (b) system failure - watches become basis of official times (Assure them it will happen at least once during the meet.)
4. Starts - start the watch from light, not sound.
Finishes - stop the watch when any part of swimmer touches the end of the pool. Use the button only at end of race.
5. Procedure to follow if their watch doesn't start or they miss the start.
6. Timers responsibility that swimmer is in correct lane. Ask swimmer their name; do not ask if they are "John Smith." Otherwise, do not talk to swimmer unless the swimmer starts the conversation.
7. Report late touches or missed pad to head timer.
8. Special circumstances (e.g., over the top starts, handing out swimmer "rewards")
9. Thank them for helping

Officials list & referee reports

ASI provides the meet referee with a form to record the officials who worked at the meet. This form, along with the referee's ASI meet evaluation form, must be submitted to ASI by the host club with the final meet results within two weeks of the meet.

The meet referee must send a copy of the officials list and referee's meet evaluation directly to the ASI Officials Chair and keep a copy for his/her own records. In addition, the meet referee should report any

problems at the meet and recommendations concerning apprentice officials to the Officials Chair.

Accident reports

When there is an accident involving anyone (including spectators) at a meet, the referee and the meet marshals share responsibility for dealing with the situation. At many pools the facility lifeguards handle injuries or medical care. If there are no lifeguards, the referee or meet marshal must insure that medical care is made available. The host club's Safety Chair is responsible for filling out and filing USA Swimming Report of Occurrence forms with USA Swimming, the insurance company, and the ASI Safety Chair. The meet referee must sign the report as activity supervisor and check that the form has been properly filled out. The current ASI Safety Chair is

Terri Cohen
8405 Leawood Blvd.
Little Rock, AR 72205

e-mail: sherman@aristotle.net
phone: 501-224-4269

Timing systems

With the exception of the Jones Center for Families in Springdale which has a Daktronics timing system, all other pool facilities in ASI use a Colorado timing system. The timing system which ASI owns is also a Colorado system.

The way in which the two systems work are similar. There are two known hardware related differences. First, the Daktronics system requires that all plugs must have the ground prong matched with the ground in the outlet. Failure to do so causes time delays and slower times to be recorded than actually occurred. Second, based on tests conducted on the Daktronics system at the Jones Center, the Daktronics pads do not consistently record light touches to the top of the pad and in the black borders around the edges of the face of the pad. Colorado pads appear to be slightly more sensitive to light touches.

More importantly, there are two major differences in how the systems deal with recognition of potential system malfunctions.

1. USA Swimming rules define a potential malfunction as a difference of 0.30 seconds between the pad and backup button times. Daktronics console printouts flag all differences of 0.30 seconds or more. However, Colorado console printouts do not flag differences unless they are greater than 0.44 seconds. So, strictly speaking, Colorado systems do not follow USA Swimming rules concerning system malfunctions as they relate to calculation of official times.
2. If there is a pad time but no backup button time for a particular lane, Daktronics flags this as a potential malfunction but Colorado does not. So, essentially, Colorado assumes the pad time is correct unless it has explicit evidence to the contrary but Daktronics does not assume the pad time is correct unless it can check that this is the case.

Time corrections using Hy-Tek

Hy-Tek Meet Manager now has the capability of doing time correction calculations. For lane malfunctions in which button times are available from the console and need to be adjusted, Meet Manager does the calculations correctly regardless of which timing system is used.

Meet Manager does not appear to have the capability of using watch times as part of the time correction calculations. However, it does allow for inputting of watch times if an automatic timing system is not

being used. In addition, in those rare instances when some lane malfunctions in a heat are corrected by adjusting the button while others in that heat involve watch times, Meet Manager may not do the calculations correctly. It does not appear that Meet Manager has the capability of doing time correction calculations properly in the case of heat malfunctions.

Even though Hy-Tek can now do some of the necessary time correction calculations, the referee is still responsible for making the decision of whether or not a correction is necessary and, if so, what type of correction should be made.

Forms

Various ASI officials have developed forms for relay take-off judging and for keeping track of swimmers in distance events. Samples of such forms are included at the end of this handbook. Other versions of these forms are available on the USA Swimming web site.

