**Mentoring an Apprentice**

**The Goal of Mentoring:**

To teach officials to perform at a consistent, high level of swimming officiating.

**Before a Meet**

**1.** Prepare for each meet

**a)** Read the Meet Announcement

**b)** Know when to be arrive, and what to wear.

**c)** Review the applicable “Professional Official” document for your position as found on USA Swimming website under, “Member Resources”, “Officials”, “Education & Training”, “Education & Training Resources”. Or just use the Search feature for “Professional Official”.

**2.** Mentors should be on the same page as the Meet Referee. Discuss expectations prior to the start of the meet.

**During the Meet**

**1**. Teach the official using established criteria in the “Professional Official” document. Please avoid using your own standards.

**2**. You may need to teach that other meets use different protocols, and make them aware of how those other protocols might be used.

**3**. Always explain the reason –the logic --for any suggestion. (e.g. Benefit of the doubt goes to the swimmer.)

**4**. Try not to overload the official with suggestions. Focus on refining only one skill or concept at a time.

**5**. Be patient and avoid a rush to judgment. Allow time for counsel.

**6**. Be reassuring. Anxiety and insecurity prevent many officials from learning new skills. Mentors should encourage officials to believe any anxiety they feel is misplaced. They have the “right stuff;” the mentor is just helping guide their talent in a new and different direction.

**7**. Listening provides an opportunity to understand the official’s desires and concerns. Let the official finish communicating. Interruption is a sign that you aren’t listening. Repeat the main points in your own words for clarification. Ask questions if you don’t understand their main point.

**8**. Ask Empowering Questions, for instance, questions that facilitate thinking and helping the official discover their own answers. (hypothetical situations)

**9**. Use a blend of compassion, tact and diplomacy to both encourage and critique protégé officials.

**After the Meet**

**1**. Self-evaluate on what went well, and what could have been improved or done better.

**Final Thoughts**

**1**. The process of mentoring is primarily an educational one and is intended to be a positive experience that will allow officials to grow in knowledge, experience and enjoyment of swim officiating

**2**. Recognizing improvements by an official may be the best way to support and motivate the official to continue growth and improvement