



Minnesota Swimming Tips for Recruiting Officials

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Recruiting new officials is one of the major responsibilities of the Club Officials' Coordinator. It is important to continually be recruiting to allow for opportunities for advancement (stroke and turn to starter, starter to deck referee, etc.), to avoid volunteer burnout, and to build a strong team of volunteers, which ultimately maximizes the chances of fair and fun swim meets for the athletes. Effective recruiting requires good communication skills, perseverance, and year-round effort. Below are some tips from current and past Minnesota Swimming Officials' Coordinators that other coordinators may find helpful:

1. **Start recruiting early in the swim season.** Many clubs host a parents meeting in the first few weeks of the season. Ask your team's head coach or administrator if you can take 10-15 minutes to explain to parents how to become an official and what you enjoy about officiating at this meeting.
2. **Recruit parents of younger swimmers (but do not limit yourself).** Officials with established younger swimmers are more likely to continue officiating for 5-10 years, making your investment in their training of long term benefit to the club and the LSC. However, do not limit yourself to just parents of younger athletes. Consider recruiting parents of older swimmers already engaged as volunteers, grandparents, and even recently retired swimmers.
3. **Use multiple means of communication.** Parents' meetings are a great start for recruiting, but other forms of communication are necessary for follow up. Consider including information about how to become an official and upcoming Stroke and Turn 101 and 201 clinics in your club's newsletter or on social media. Informal conversations and word of mouth are also effective recruiting tactics.
4. **Delegate.** You are not expected to know everything, and you are not expected to know all of the parents/guardians on your team. Who might be interested in officiating? Perhaps a newer official is the parent of a younger swimmer, and would be willing to help recruiting at Age Group practice. Perhaps an official on your team is a skilled graphic designer and would be willing to make a flyer recruiting new official.
5. **Make expectations clear.** While officiating is a great way to get on deck and to volunteer at your child's swim meets, it is not for everyone. Be sure to discuss the expectations for this position (number of shadow sessions, number of sessions required per year, job responsibilities) early on in the shadow process. A volunteer official who is unhappy or not performing their duties drags the rest of the team down.
6. **Recruit a diverse team of officials.** Like any on any team, diversity is imperative on the officiating team. Consider recruiting officials from many different professional, swimming, socioeconomic, and ethnic backgrounds.
7. **Ask your club to cover officials' non-athlete registration costs.** Many clubs cover fees associated with officials' USA Swimming membership and with the required non-athlete background check. If your club does not do this, ask if they would be willing to.
8. **Have fun!** Officiating should be fun! It's a great way to participate on your club, to meet other members of the swimming community from your club and other clubs, and to contribute to your child/children's sport.