



Ohio Swimming Inc. Mentoring Deck Referees – Session by Session Guide

General guideline for Referee Mentoring

The following information should be used as the general guidelines for mentoring new Deck Referees in Ohio Swimming:

- Always remember that refereeing is an art more than a science. We have learned from experience and interactions with other referees.
- The Referee is the last line of defense for the swimmers, all possible steps needs to be taken to be fair in our final decision.
- When we work with an Apprentice, they may have worked with Referees who did things differently. Be patient and always explain when asking them to do something new.
- Help the Apprentice become comfortable in his/her new role. Compliment observations, demeanor, etc. as appropriate and make certain that questions and concerns are voiced.
- Ask your Apprentice about clinic and other on-deck training experiences. Review what training session this is. What were the positive takeaways from the last session? What were the development needs? What would they like to focus on? What do you as the Mentor want to achieve?
- Review procedures and protocols given at the Officials meeting, privately by the Meet Referee or in discussions with other members of the Starter/Referee team.
- Emphasize fairness and equality of treatment. Stress the importance of consistency and respect for the Athletes and Coaches. Remind the Apprentice to apply common sense and to keep a sense of humor.
- Be patient! We learn by doing. Have a goal or two for each session and focus on that.

DR training methodology of skills by session

| Session | Skills | Training approach |
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| 1 | Work on whistle protocol for forward and back starts. | DR Mentor demonstrates, alternating events with Apprentice. If numerous DQ's are expected, DR-M and DR-AP split functions, with one blowing whistles, and one reviewing DQ slips. |
| | Discuss/demonstrate what to do between short and long whistle, and when to extend the arm for the starter. | |
| | Develop a routine after each start (Forward & Backstroke start), looking at swimmers though heads up, then check officials and then to ensure timing system is running. | |
| | Develop the habit of making notes on the heat sheet, including no shows, potential DQs, false start and timing malfunction. | |
| | Monitor swimmers and officials as the event unfolds, including officials' positions, attention, swimmer readiness and safety considerations, always looking at the pool. | |



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| | Discuss how to interact with Starter, before the session (location) and during the meet. Develop a notation for false starts and explain how the process takes place; wait for the Starter to initialize the call. | |
| | Review the importance of arriving early and pre-session preparation when working as Deck Referee. | |
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| 2 | Review/ discuss skills learned in the first session and provide additional explanation if needed. | DR Mentor demonstrates, alternating events with Apprentice |
| | Discuss the importance of the Stroke Briefing. Conduct the Stroke Briefing and answer questions (Mentor should provide support). Note: Apprentice may read the Stroke Briefing, if needed. | |
| | Review content and correctness of all DQ slips and highlight the importance of making appropriate notations on the heat sheet. Review typical mistakes and remedies. | |
| | Demonstrate how to work with the Admin table to handle deck entries, missed heats, change forms. | |
| | Develop a sense of timeline vs. proper pace; never sacrifice safety of the athletes or validity of the timing system. | |
| | Review the interaction with Starter and the false start protocol. | |
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| 3 | Review/ discuss skills learned in previous sessions and provide additional explanation, if needed. | DR Mentor demonstrates, alternating events with Apprentice |
| | Work with the Mentor or the Meet Referee to prepare Deck assignments for the session. | |
| | After a call, discuss how to interview the official involved to clarify the details of the infraction and the call, without “leading the witness”. | |
| | Demonstrate how to provide the Coach with the explanation of a call and the final decision to uphold or overturn the call. Discuss how to handle irate Coaches and defuse conflicts. | |
| | Review radio protocol and practice during the meet (if possible). Develop an understanding of what can be discussed over the radio and when. Discuss importance of privacy during Official interviews and what can happen if discussions are heard out of context. | |



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| | Review/discuss the DR - CJ interaction and practice (if possible). Discuss what type of questions can be asked to clarify a call. | |
| | Discuss the importance of setting precedents in a session (or meet). When do we have discretion and when we are controlled by the meet information (decision making & meet information). Discuss how to handle, empanel and conduct meet committees. Discuss importance of documenting precedents in meet pass down sheets. | |
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| 4 | Review/ discuss skills learned in previous sessions and provide additional explanation if needed. | |
| | Conduct the stroke briefing and answer questions, discuss protocols and jurisdiction. | |
| | Work the session on the Admin table to gain an understanding of the “dry side” of the meet. | Apprentice observes AO/AR during the session |
| | Observe and learn about the Meet Manager program and the timing system. | |
| | Develop an understanding of the time adjustment process, and how it's done manually, as well as in the computer. Discuss single lane failure, and heat failure and how to resolve. | |
| | On the wet side, review what has been learned until this point. Talk about interesting situations encountered during your (the Mentor's) Deck Referee experience. | |
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| 5 | This session should prepare the Apprentice for the final evaluation and should be a time to reinforce what has been learned. | |
| | Prepare the Deck assignments of officials for the session and review protocols and jurisdiction. | |
| | The Mentor will evaluate skills learned and make suggestion to reinforce/correct any minor issues noted. | |
| | The Apprentice will review and approve all DQ slips and the Mentor will review before it goes to the Admin table. | |
| | The Apprentice will interview officials when needed and will inform the Coaches of the final decision | |
| | The Apprentice will arrange any swim offs (if pertinent); this will only take place in preliminary/final events. | |
| | Discuss what a Coach can and cannot protest (judgement calls cannot be challenged; only official's deck positioning and mis-interpretation of a rule can be). | |
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| 6 | This final session will be the evaluation of skills learned, keeping in mind that the Apprentice will still need to be encouraged to continue to work and improve. We are looking for the overall comprehension of the position but understand that more experience is needed. | |
| | The Apprentice could do the deck assignments and jurisdiction. | |
| | The Apprentice will deliver the Stroke Briefing and answer any questions. | |
| | The Apprentice will review and approve or overturn all disqualifications, verifying the slips are accurate. | |
| | The Apprentice will interview Officials and notify Coaches of the DQ. | |
| | The Apprentice will arrange swim offs (if pertinent) | |
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| Other important issues | Additional discussion/training points that should be discussed throughout the process. | |
| | Review the rule book before each meet. | |
| | Read Meet information ahead of time. | |
| | Review the Rule interpretation / situations. | |
| | Discuss the guidelines for officiating swimmers with disabilities (need handout for reference) | |
| | Discuss the event closeout sheet and when it's used. | |
| | Discuss the radio protocol. | |
| | Discuss Prelim/Finals meets and the procedure for alternates. | |
| | Discuss Flyover starts, 2 courses, chase starts. | |
| | Explain the importance of the Pass down sheet. | |