

# **The Referee - Protocol and Philosophy**

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## **Acknowledgment**

This is an outline of material on the Protocol and Philosophy of being a Referee. It was prepared by Ron Van Pool, Vice President for Program Operations of USA Swimming. Its presentation was at the USA Swimming Officials Clinic held at the Olympic Training Center, Colorado Springs, CO on May 15, 1999.

## **THE REFEREE - PRESENTATION OUTLINE**

### **\* BACKGROUND & OVERVIEW**

### **\* OBJECTIVES**

- Discuss the technical requirements/expectations of the referee
- Talk about the qualities and techniques of "good refereeing"

### **\* FORMAT**

- Talk extemporaneously
- Interact and discuss as we go

### **\* RULES**

Article 102 – Conduct and Officiating of All Swimming Competition

#### **\* 102.13 – Referee**

.1 – "Shall have full authority over all officials and shall assign and instruct them; shall enforce all applicable rules and shall decide all questions relating to the actual conduct of the meet, the final settlement of which is not otherwise assigned by said rules; can override any meet official on a point of rule interpretation, or on a judgment decision pertaining to an action which the Referee has personally observed; shall also disqualify a swimmer(s) for any violations of the rules that the Referee personally observes..."

#### **\* 102.11 – Protests**

.1 – "Protests against the judgment decisions of starters, stroke, turn, place and relay take-off judges can only be considered by the Referee and the Referee's decision shall be final.

#### **\* 102.8 – Change of Program and Postponement**

**\* MINIMUM STANDARDS**

- "Previous certification as Stroke and Turn for 2 years or as Stroke and Turn for 1 year and as Starter for 1 year."
- "Be familiar with the positions of Announcer, Clerk of Course, Starter, Stroke and Turn Judge, Chief Judge, Timer, Timing Judge and Meet Marshall."
- Must pass U.S.S. Officials' test (all sections) with a grade of at least 80%.

**\* QUALITIES OF A "GOOD" REFEREE**

- Calm
- Alert
- Delegator
- Knowledgeable
- Communicator
- Experienced
- Confident
- Team player
- Professional
- Proactive
- Interpersonally skilled
- Fair

**COMMENTS:**

- Really the same for all officials
- Not specified in the rules
- All the qualities are to better serve the customer – coaches, swimmers and other officials

**\* "THE ART OF REFEREEING"**

**- Levels of Meets**

- LSC
- Regional Championships
- Junior Championships
- International Championships
- LSC Championship
- Zone Championships
- National Championships

**COMMENTS:**

- Most of the procedures and problems are the same.
- All deserve full attention and total quality effort.

**Planning**

- Meet Announcement
- Meet Directors
- Check Lists

## **COMMENTS:**

- Pre-meet preparation is highly important.
- Day of meet is in most cases too late to change, only time to execute.
- Time lines are critical and result of planning.
- "Failing to prepare is preparing to fail."

## **Officials Preparation**

- Team concept
- Categories of officials
  - Timers
  - Starters
  - Deck Referees
  - Stroke & Turn
  - Chief Judges
  - Administrative Referee
- Officials meetings
  - Assign
  - Teach
  - Review
  - Instruct
  - Procedures

## **COMMENTS:**

- Selection of the key team members is important.
- Build a team and then delegate.
- Clearly state what you expect.
- Explain the rules but don't single out the "rule de jour".
- Clearly spell out jurisdiction.
- Balance the deck (physically as well as by ability/experience).
- Discuss unusual circumstances.

## **- Coaches Meeting**

- Introduce the other key officials.
- Review the conduct of the meet.
- Review facility and other issues.
- Entertain questions.

## **COMMENTS:**

- Don't chastise.
- Conduct a meeting at all levels of competition.
- Discuss unusual circumstances.
- BE VERY RELUCTANT/CAREFUL IN CHANGING MEET FORMAT/PROCEDURES.
- Anticipate issues prior to the meeting and deal with them before the meeting.
- Listen to questions and comments.

### **- "Walk the Deck"**

## **COMMENTS:**

- Walk the deck before the meet starts and during the meet.
- Talk to the coaches and swimmers (as appropriate).
- Know who the key coaches are.
- Sense where there are problems.
- Ask opinions.
- Build respect and "team".

### **- Monitor Officials**

- Appearance - Alert
- Positioning - "Ambitious" / "Gray Area"

## **COMMENTS:**

- Officials must be professional.
- Handle the over-zealous official.

### **- Conflict**

- Calm - Firm
- Listen - "Due diligence"
- Cooling off period" - Take conflict off deck

### **- Infractions**

- 3 questions (Position, What observed, What rule applies)
- Write up
- Notify
- Review

## **COMMENTS:**

- Should also ask what the person's jurisdiction was?
- Write up should include necessary description but don't over do.
- Swimmer or coach should be notified in clear and concise terms.
- Review or answer coaches' questions.

## **- "Tend to your business"**

### **COMMENTS:**

- Delegate
- Do not insert yourself into areas where you are not needed

## **- Ask for others opinions**

### **COMMENTS:**

- It is not a sign of weakness or lack of knowledge to ask for someone's opinion.
- Be selective but your sources can be other officials, meet directors and coaches.
- Builds team.
- Builds confidence of newer or less senior officials