

Report for the NJ Swimming House of Delegates - September 28, 2019

There is not much to report at this time, but here are a few things that might be of interest to you.

Rules Changes:

As you might guess, one of the hot topics of discussion among the officials at the convention this year was the swim suit flap in Alaska high school swimming. For those of you who didn't hear about it, a female referee disqualified a female swimmer because her swim suit didn't meet the NFHS coverage requirements (NFHS Rule 3.3.3). The matter quickly went viral on the internet. The call was subsequently overturned by the Alaska Athletic Association on the grounds that the official spoke directly to the swimmer and not to the coach, as is the required protocol.

NFHS rules are more detailed on this subject than our rules (Rule 102.8.1, especially point D), but that doesn't mean we won't have the same issue from time to time. We have instructed our officials that they should not be looking for violations, but if they see a violation, they are to report it to the referee. The referees have been instructed to discuss the issue with the coach, looking to the coach to handle this often-delicate issue. Disqualifications will be made only where the coach is unwilling or unable to resolve the issue.

Otherwise, there were very few rules changes, interpretations or issues this year.

There was clarification to Rule 102.8.1E explicitly banning the use of therapeutic elastic tape (e.g., kinesio tape).

Also, there were changes made to the language in Rule 102.24.1A(d) to prevent swimmers from using times from an illegally composed relay.

In addition, Rule 202.8.4 was amended to require observers to be on the deck and to allow them to stand anywhere on the deck so as to be in position to observe the strokes where the rules differ.

In response to questions, the Rules Committee Chair again reiterated that the 15-meter mark must be indicated on the deck or pool walls, that the deck markings take precedence over the floats and that the rule must be observed and enforced to the best of our ability, given the configuration of the facility.

Much of the rules changes involved aligning USA-S rules with those of the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Program (MAAPP) issued by the US Center for Safe Sport and with the new governance program.

Training Classes

The NJS trainers have so far scheduled three stroke & turn clinics, a chief judge's clinic and the statewide referee's clinic (in conjunction with the YMCA). More will be added as needed over the next two months or so. Clinics for new referees and starters will be scheduled in the spring, as usual.

The YMCA Trainers have scheduled seventeen clinics for this fall; eight Level I clinics, seven Level II clinics and two Admin Official clinics, as well as a statewide referees meeting (in conjunction with NJ Swimming).

As noted above, we are again holding a joint USA-S /YMCA referee's meeting which will also serve as a clinic for recertifying referees.

The clinics will run through the late November, so no official or prospective official has an excuse for not attending a clinic.

Keep in mind that a majority of our officials are jointly certified USA-S/YMCA officials who meet their clinic requirements by attending a YMCA clinic.

National Officials Activities

Judy Sharkey and I attended the USA-S convention last month and my comments on significant matters discussed there are addressed above.

Seven of our more senior officials attended higher level national meets this past year for which we partially paid their expenses pursuant to our reimbursement policy. Several other senior officials also attended such meets but did not request reimbursement.

Club Officials Coordinators

The YMCA has an officials' coordinator for each team whose main purposes are to pass on important information for officials and to help recruit and retain officials. This program has been in place for many years now, quite successfully, particularly when rules changes come about, when clinics are scheduled, etc. We would like to do the same with all of our USA-S clubs for the same purposes. We would again ask that each coach designate someone to fill that role, even if you don't have any officials right now, and let me know who that person is and their e-mail address. We will then set up an address file to be used when we need to reach officials in the LSC.