



Officials Chair Report

Niagara LSC Fall 2019 House of Delegates Meeting

September 29th, 2019

Our Numbers

The number of certified Niagara LSC Officials is 287 down from the Spring of 2019 when we were at 295. For reference, 298 in spring 2018, 284 in spring 2017. We have 14 “new” people that are still in the process of becoming certified.

We still have about one third of the teams “better than target” a third in the middle with “some” but not as many as they should have based upon the athlete count. The remaining third with no Officials at all. The target minimum Official level should be 5%, so if your team has 100 athletes you should have 5 Officials at minimum.

Teams should strive to achieve that level of Officials or more. We have put many things in place to create clinics where needed with a simple request from any team that can find a space and a date that works for the clinic director(s) in your area.

We currently have 36 Officials that hold National Certification(s). 21 hold N2 or N3 Stroke and Turn certification. That means 25 hold an N2 or N3 at least one additional position. We have 8 Officials that hold N2 or N3 Certifications at 4 (ST, CJ, SR, DR, or AR) positions. We also have 2 Officials that hold N3 National Certifications at all 4 (ST, CJ, SR, DR) “wet side” positions.

We have lost a few Officials overall and lost some National Level folks; some due to expiring and some due to “retirement”. The trend away from working toward National Certification is a concern.

It does take time, desire and dedication to work towards and maintain the National Certification(s).

Thank you to all our N2 and N3 Officials for taking the time, the effort to overcome the nerves to better your skills and make the LSC a better place to be mentored.

Open Water

Niagara now has 6 Open Water Referees 3 Open Water Judges. We continue to struggle getting the appropriate opportunities and venues willing to properly host USA Swimming Sanctioned events. As of now we have no USA Swimming Open Water Meet planned for 2020 or beyond.

It is difficult to promote the pursuit of these Officials positions within the LSC when we do not have the opportunities for meets within the LSC. Open Water events can be fun, outside and don't take all day! (And it may get you a few fun boat rides) If you or your team would like to work toward hosting a USA Swimming Sanctioned meet, please reach out to Brooks Howard. These meets need extensive planning well in advance and require cooperation with a safety officer and Meet Referee AT LEAST 6 months or more in advance of the meet date.

Out and About

The following Niagara Officials stepped, or will be stepping, outside of the home court:

Fred Leff, Jean Lalomia, June Mundt, Khadija Moultais, Mike Burgess, Jim Stromski and Brooks Howard all worked National Level Meets in the past year. Thanks to all for supporting those meets and representing the LSC.

Bob Nicita attended the Referee learning conference in Chicago in May. Matt Sarkisian is attending the Referee Workshop next month. Jim Stromski, Leo Gibbons and Brooks Howard attended the Annual Aquatic Sports Convention in St. Louis for their roles as LSC Board Members. Brooks Howard attended the National Official's Chair meeting in June.

Official Certification and USA Membership

There seems to always be questions about the difference between Non-Athlete Membership and Officials Certification. Just a reminder that all the expiration dates are important and must be up to date!!

As a certified Official, you need to be aware of these so that your USA Swimming membership AND officiating certifications to make sure you do not lapse. What you need to know:

Official's Certifications expire on 12/31 of the year of your renewal.

Non-Athlete Membership's expire on 12/31 every year.

Background check (BGC) and Athlete Protection Training (APT) vary on an individual basis. (Note: the new BGC will expire on the actual anniversary not the end of that month)

All the dates are shown on the card that gets sent out of the OTS, and on the Deck Pass page of USA Swimming when you are logged in.

Re-Certification

A quick reminder that all re-Certification cycles are now 3 years, including AO. That means if you should look at your Deck Pass, and if your certification (NOT APT, BGC or Registration) expires on 12/31/2019 you need to find a clinic and retake the required exam(s) before the end of the year. All Clinics will be posted in Team App under the “Events” Tab.

If you and/or your team wishes to host a clinic, please reach out to Brooks Howard to coordinate. The basic need is a private room with a projection system or Large Video screen and access to WIFI or direct internet connection.

New Concussion Requirement

All Officials MUST complete the new Concussion requirement before the end of the year.

The Training through NFHS is free and takes about an hour. You can follow the link below. You will be required to create an account with an email address and password.

Once completed, save a copy of the certification for your records and email it to BOTH officials@niagaraswim.org and registrar@niagaraswim.org. Here is the link:

<https://nfhslearn.com/courses/61151/concussion-in-sports>

Requirements for Advancing to Starter and Referee

The requirements are based heavily weighted on experience rather than “time on the job”. We have addressed the longer time frame it took previously to become a Starter and then to Referee while maintaining the required need for experience and knowledge. The ability for those wanting to advance in half the time previously required should begin to show results this year as many newer officials are eligible.

If you are a newer Stroke and Turn, the year of learning flies by!! Check your away from home and your Team’s Referee sessions so you can check those boxes and move up to Starter!! Also make sure you are taking advantage of those prelim-finals meets to check off that box also!

Reminder: The first step in the process is to have your record in OTS verified by the Officials Chair!

Team App in the LSC

I am hopeful we have turned the corner on Team App use in the LSC. There are still some growing pains and miscommunications, but I do believe the bugs have mostly been worked out. Thanks to all that are out there promoting it and offering feedback so we can make it better.

Some reminders and tips:

Events are things like Clinics, Meetings, and anything else not a Meet

Meets can be viewed in chronological order by clicking the “all entries” at the top.

Meets that are “published” are added automatically. (no form needed)

Meets that are “closed” will not be added to Team App unless a request form (in the doc section) is received.

To RSVP just click the yes, maybe, or no button. (this CAN be changed if something changes)

You must belong to the Access Group the Meet in under to RSVP.

If you need to tell the Meet Referee something, DO NOT do it in the comment section, open a direct chat in the chat room to that person. Those replies can be seen by EVERYONE and lead to some folks not liking the App.

LSC Official’s Committee Changes and Openings

As we have been able to formalize our Committee somewhat in the past three years, there are a couple of things I strive to accomplish. One of which will be a requirement as we move forward, finding our replacements.

Under the new bylaws, if adopted, the Officials Chair will only be able to serve two consecutive terms. As many of you may realize the Officials Chair position requires several tasks and responsibilities.

Based upon this I think it is imperative that we, the existing committee members, to begin a process of evaluation of these tasks and dividing them differently over the next couple of years. I believe if we establish some processes with committee members taking ownership of some tasks, the Official’s Chair position should be less intimidating both to consider and to function.

We will need to add a couple of newer Officials to offer new perspective and to spread our responsibilities in the future. We are required to have Athlete participation, so if you know of an athlete that may be interested, or you may be interested in joining the committee, please reach out to me.

Thank you to the Committee:

The Committee provides great feedback from different places and perspectives. I do not want to be making decisions in a vacuum. The Group has been a wonderful resource to me, but more importantly, the Officials in the LSC.

Thanks to: Adam, Ann, Bob, Deborah, Fred, Jerry Jim, June, Katherine, Matty, Paul, Pete, Sharlene and Taylor for everything you do!

OTS Reminder:

1. If it isn't in the OTS, it didn't happen.
2. As always: Referees, or their designated person for meet session sign in PLEASE, check certification cards to validate expiration date before each session of a meet. There are still occurrences of Officials being on deck with expired certifications, background checks, or APTs.
3. I have created a form fill for those referee's that cannot "create a meet" that makes life easier for everyone. If you have not received an e-mail version which can be auto filled, send me a note.
4. If you are a newer Referee and would like to take the next step to be able to enter your own meets into OTS, please reach out to Brooks Howard to schedule individual training.