



# // MEET CONSIDERATIONS



**FROM:** Clark Hammond, Chair, Rules & Regulations and Kathleen Scandary, Chair, National Officials Committee

**RE:** Clarification on minimum number of officials required for meets, including dual and intra-squad, and virtual

## **PURPOSE**

Provide clarification on minimum number of officials and their duties at various meet types while adhering to the following rules; 102.10; 102.11; and 102.13. In particular, it is incumbent upon the Referee who has final authority over the conduct of the meet, to ensure that all swimmers shall have fair, equitable, and uniform conditions of judging (102.13.5).

After recently receiving inquiries regarding the absolute minimum number of officials to conduct a meet within the Rules, the following will outline the response for the individual meet structures.

**INTRA-SQUAD AND DUAL MEETS - minimum number is three (3); 1 Referee, 1 Starter, 1 AO or a stroke and turn judge if the referee is also certified as an AO.**

## **DUTIES**

The Referee and Starter begin each race from positions on the deck opposite each other. The Starter walks to the start end while the Referee walks to the turn end, all the while observing the swimmers in the water.

## **IMPEDANCES TO THIS MINIMUM STANDARD**

1. Pool designs that do not allow for walking the sides of the pool such as diving wells
2. Use of Referee and Starter as stroke and turn judges in this manner can be possible only for short course meets
3. Physical/safety risk to officials who must walk at a pace that allows them to be in position to effectively observe the strokes and turns of the competitors for each heat
4. Referee must also be trained as an AO in order to be used in this position which would also require the additional S&T official.
5. Number of lanes being observed should be no more than three (3) per turn judge in keeping with best practice (fair and equitable judging) guidelines.

**ALL OTHER MEETS – minimum number is four (4); 1 referee, 1 Starter, 1 AO, and one stroke and turn judge**

## **DUTIES**

The Rules limit the roles of the Referee and AO (102.10.3), unless there are insufficient qualified officials available due to unusual circumstances beyond the control of the host team. The Starter may act in the capacity of a stroke and turn judge for the start end. One stroke and turn judge may be positioned at the turn end of the pool.

## **IMPEDANCES TO THIS MINIMUM STANDARD**

1. These are 3-4-hour sessions for age-group meets which are quite different from dual or intra-squad meets.
2. Pool configurations must allow for the Starter to safely and promptly move into a position at the start end to provide fair and equitable judging.
3. Number of lanes being observed should be no more than three (3) per turn judge in keeping with best practice (fair and equitable judging) guidelines.
4. Should the Referee need to act in the capacity of AO, they must possess that certification as well.

**VIRTUAL MEETS** - minimum number is three (3); 1 Referee, 1 Starter, 1 AO or a stroke and turn judge if the referee is also certified as an AO. In the event where there are multiple teams, a single Lead AO/AR is necessary to merge results from all participating clubs before uploading into SWIMS database.

#### **DUTIES**

The Referee and Starter begin each race from positions on the deck opposite each other. The Starter walks to the start end while the Referee walks to the turn end, all the while observing the swimmers in the water. If there is an AO who has the qualifications and certification to merge data from more than one pool, then they may oversee the computer operator's work from each venue. Even when there is a lead AO/AR, each site must have its own AO who can manage the meet setup and entries and send verified results to the Lead AO.

#### **IMPEDANCES TO THIS MINIMUM STANDARD**

1. Pool designs that do not allow for walking the sides of the pool such as diving wells
2. Use of Referee and Starter as stroke and turn judges in this manner can be possible only for short course meets
3. Physical/safety risk to officials who must walk at a pace that allows them to be in position to effectively observe the strokes and turns of the competitors for each heat
4. Referee must also be trained as an AO in order to be used in this position which would then require the additional S&T official.
5. Number of lanes being observed should be no more than three (3) per turn judge in keeping with best practice (fair and equitable judging) guidelines.

***It should be obvious that these minimums are not best practices. In order to have reasonable coverage and to provide a fair venue for all competitors, you should have no fewer than four (4) stroke and turn officials, a referee, a starter and an AO for a short course meet in a six-lane pool.***

***It is the role of the LSC, clubs, coaches, and officials to recruit, train and retain a sufficient number of officials in order to effectively officiate meets sanctioned by USA Swimming. As long as there are minimum national standards, LSCs should be allowed to fit to their own needs.***