



Apprentice Official Mentoring Guidelines and Suggestions

Admin Official/Referee Apprentice

On deck mentoring of “apprentice” officials is an integral part of the development and certification of swimming officials within the Iowa LSC. Objectives of the certification program include providing the volunteer with the tools, knowledge and initial experience to enable them to confidently contribute to a consistent and fair environment on the pool deck for our athlete.

Mentor Requirements.

The basic requirement for an on-deck mentor is a minimum of 12 months on-deck experience as a certified official in the position being mentored. Additionally, the final Admin Official/Referee apprentice session requires the mentor to hold at least an N2 certification as either an AO or AR.

Mentoring Approach.

Before starting a mentoring session – ensure the apprentice has the relevant apprentice sheet that you can sight so

- (a) you know what the person has completed up till now, and
- (b) you can enter in post-session comments and report immediately after the session.

The approach with Admin apprentices is different to that for the Stroke and Turn official in that the apprentice will become involved with the actual management of the meet and management of the “dry side” of the pool. Ensure that you are monitoring the apprentice performance before, during and after the meet. Things that become second nature after practice and experience can be overwhelming to an apprentice and it’s one of the mentor’s responsibilities to ensure this doesn’t impact the swimmers nor start “bad habits” for the official. If during a session the apprentice Admin’s performance begins to consistently devolve, due to overwhelming paperwork, resolutions, etc., get them to step back and take a breather. The mentor is responsible for the conduct of both the apprentice and the performance of that position. Do not expect an Admin apprentice to work most events in a 3-hour session on his or her second or third apprentice session during a Prelim/Final. Experienced Admins can find that difficult. Conversely, don’t just step them down and tell them to take a break and then bring them back in for another event. Have them take a break and then have them observe some events. Another aspect to monitor is how often, and who is giving advice to the mentor. Invite comments from other experienced officials but ensure this is managed. Don’t have two or three people speaking into an apprentice’s ear during a session. Make sure you are involved in any discussion, so you know what is being said.



The following are the minimum behaviors and knowledge that must be covered during the apprentice sessions before the official can be considered for certification at the LSC level:

- Before the session:
 - Making announcements as needed
 - Taking Declared False Starts (DFSs) until the session begins if required
 - Assisting swimmers and coaches with any needs, including the declaring of a false start
 - Seeding, with accuracy
 - Accurately entering all Scratches and Computer Changes in the Meet Event Binder or Session Folder (whatever is the method used for the meet)
 - Printing an accurate program – keeping in mind “slowest to fastest” and “fastest to slowest” events, alternating events, genders or age groups, and changed event orders
 - Communicating with the Meet Referee to produce pre-scratch and post-scratch time lines
- During a session:
 - Turning over the handling of DFS’s to the Chief Judges and Deck Referees at the Start area for Prelim sessions
 - Listening for any Disqualifications, “Declared False Starts” or “No-Shows” and noting them
 - Notifying the Computer Operator of “no-shows”, DFS’s or potential DQ’s; finalizing them after signed slips are received
 - Taking Scratches for finals and assisting Coaches with Scratch Cards and Computer Change Forms
 - Documenting each DQ and DFS in the DQ Log or Meet Management Software
 - Notifying the coach of each “No-Show” swimmer of any penalty and the positive check-in requirements (form and deadlines) for future seeding in the meet; filling out a No-Show Penalty Form with all relevant details including the event, heat and lane of any “penalty” DQs; and advising the appropriate DRs (using the starting area CJ, if necessary)
 - Checking times for accuracy. Making timing adjustments, if needed
- After each event:
 - Checking that all DQs have been finalized (including swimmer or coach notification)
 - Immediately counting the number of No-Shows, DFS’s, Lane Changes and DQ’s recorded and reconciling with the Deck Referee’s summary so that the results may be finalized for announcement
 - Advising Deck Referees of any ties that may need to be resolved for finals. Following-up to confirm any ties for positions in finals have been resolved
 - Getting ready for the next event
 - Getting the results (interim results if “flighted seeding” is used) to the Announcer for broadcast of results, qualifiers and alternates, and the Scratch and “Intent to Scratch” closing time for the event.
 - Notifying coaches of swimmers who have moved up, due to scratches, including new 1st and 2nd Alternates
- After the Deadline for Scratching a Finals Event:
 - Checking for Final scratches. Following-up any “Intents to Scratch” that are waiting on later events.



- Seeding Finals after verifying all ties and scratches are finalized, taking into account “flighting” or other program issues
- Double-checking Finals Seeding
- Making sure all timelines and advertisements are in the Finals Program. Double-checking and have Meet Referee doublecheck timelines for breaks, changes, alternating or alternative (flighting) event or heat order, and any other special conditions
- Be Knowledgeable about the Timing Equipment and Meet Management Software
 - Working with your Timing Equipment Operator and keeping them informed about DFS’s, DQ’s and No-Shows
 - Produce forms, and know processes, that can help best manage the assignment and interact with the operators
 - Make sure the Computer Operator is not disturbed during times of stress or crisis

Obviously, there’s a lot to cover so this needs to be broken down over the sessions available. Since the apprentice should be familiar with the starting process, there is no restriction on the apprentice working events from the first session (the apprentice should work for a whole event – not a subset of heats). Ensure that the apprentice isn’t overwhelmed. After the first session, make sure to review the apprentice form and discuss with the apprentice any items they want to cover before coming on deck, determine ahead of the session what events the apprentice will work, determine where you will stand to observe the starts and make sure you, the Starter and the apprentice understand how potential false starts will be handled.

After the session, make sure you talk with your apprentice and provide some feedback. Start with positive comments always and, then, if necessary, discuss areas for improvement, practice and/or concern. Make sure you fill out the apprentice’s sheet so that there is a record of the apprentice session. Include any areas where you think the apprentice did well (there’s not much room but still try to do this), plus any areas where you feel the apprentice would benefit with practice, so the next mentor has an idea of where to start.

Finally, make suggestions to the Officials’ Committee on how to improve the program and thank you for helping make this a better experience for our athletes and volunteers.