



## **Apprentice Official Mentoring Guidelines and Suggestions**

### **Chief Judge 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 Chief Judge apprentice session requires the mentor to hold at least an N2 certification as a Chief Judge or Deck Referee.

#### **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 apprentice learning experience is usually based on “shadowing” or following, an experienced official through pre-session activities, during a session and any post-session activities. However Chief Judge apprenticing is actually performing the duties of the position with coaching and advice from the mentor since the mentor doesn’t observe the pool for infractions or approve DQ’s. At the same time, the apprentice is to be encouraged to ask questions. If the answer isn’t known, don’t make it up. Either look up the rules and regulations or ask someone (either an experienced Chief Judge, Deck Referee or the Meet Referee). Remember – one of the principles of the program is to encourage consistency of approach and interpretations. Ensure that any open questions are resolved at the end of the session, or failing that, by following up with the Officials’ Committee.

Apprentice Chief Judges will become involved with the actual session management and overview of the stroke and turn officials. Ensure that you can monitor the apprentice performance and be ready to assist as needed. 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 start “bad habits” for the official. 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 events. 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:

- Prior to a session
  - Taking Attendance
  - Officials Assignments
  - Stroke Briefing
  - Protocol Briefing
  - Verifying the radios, distributing them and understanding the radio protocols (if used)
  - Distribution and management of session heat sheets, timers sheets, counting sheets and other required paperwork
  - Understanding of roles of the CJ team
- During a session
  - Observing the deck - officials positioning, potential calls, radio responses
  - Ensuring availability of counters, towels, etc. (if available)
  - Discussing potential infractions with an official
  - Radio protocol for potential infractions
  - Preparing DQ slips, No Show Slips
  - Notifying the swimmer
  - Relay takeoff Protocols
  - Managing relief and reserve officials
  - Releasing the officials
- After a session
  - Collection of paperwork and radios
  - Officials Tracking System – entering assignments

Obviously, there's a lot to cover and not many sessions available, so after the session, make sure you talk with the 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.