



Iowa Swimming Official's Newsletter October 2020

A Message from the Official's Chair

CHAIR COMMENTS

Hi everyone,

I hope you are all well and recovering from the derecho. I'm not sure when we will return to the old normal - so we adapt and continue to support our athletes as best we can. We've started to have sanctioned meets again from the beginning of this month - albeit a little smaller and with slightly different protocols compared to what we are used to. I asked the referees from the meets in August to provide a short writeup describing what they did and how the meet went. These are included with this newsletter.

We've been updating the Officials website with information as we receive it - please use that as a go-to reference when looking for information (likewise, let me know if there's information you would like to be available there). You will notice that there's a slightly different layout as Art Dinkin works to make the site easier to navigate. Meet sig-nups are being updated as they are received, and we have included all planning officials committee meetings on the calendar.

The (virtual) officials conference was well attended and we've uploaded the presentations, notes and session videos up to the officials website. If you weren't able to make a session, or want to revisit a session, please make use of the resource.

We had an Iowa Swimming officials meeting prior to the House of Delegates. The minutes for the meeting are also on the website. Unfortunately the recording didn't work so we couldn't get that up.

As you are probably aware, the US Open is being held next month at a number of sites - including Des Moines. There will be four sessions - all timed finals. An 18&Under virtual championship meet is planned for December - again the Wellmark YMCA is one of the planned sites. This meet will be an LSC meet so look for the signups on the Officials Website.

Finally, we are looking to hold some Officials Certification classes online over the next few weeks. We will send out information to the club contacts as they are being set up. This will be one of the agenda items for the Officials Committee meeting scheduled for the 21st of October (details on the website and as always, all are welcome to participate).

Cheers,

Phil Barnes

Thank you Athlete Reps!

The Officials Committee is fortunate to have Audrey Repko and Alex Stone volunteering as our Athlete Reps. We would like to officially thank them for their contributions and willingness to continue serving on the Officials Committee. Thank you for supporting the Official's. The relationship between the Officials and Athletes helps maintain an athlete centered culture. Athlete participation on the officials committee is thus vitally important and we appreciate your time and dedication to contributing and relaying information.

CERTIFICATION AND REGISTRATION

Just a quick reminder to all that there are two components to be a certified USA Swimming official:

1. Registration - this includes registration with USA Swimming and the Iowa LSC as a non-athlete member. Registration from June 1st expires December 31st, 2021. The LSC has waived its component of the registration fee for this year. The other items for registration are the level II background check - which must be completed every 2 years, the online MAAPP (Athlete Protection Training) course that must be completed and passed every year, and Concussion Protocol Training which must be completed once. Please review your membership information online to ensure your registration requirements are up to date.
2. Certification - this includes the LSC certification for the assigned positions (ST, CJ, SR, DR, AO, AR, etc.) which are valid for 2 years. National Certifications require that you remain current for the equivalent LSC position. You can retain your LSC certification by completing the online certification test. If you are currently an apprentice for one or more positions, the usual 12 month apprentice period has been extended to the end of 2021 to provide time to complete the apprentice requirements. The National Officials Committee has implemented a similar approach for expiring national certifications - extending the expiration dates. Please review your status online.

Officials Committee Meeting

The next Officials Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 21st at 830pm. Meeting documents and call in information will be available on the officials website. Be on the lookout for revised content and more user friendly look and feel

MEET REPORTS

VAC/USSD Dual Meet - August 1st.

VAC/USSD dual meet at Vinton on 8/1/20 went very well. We had a marshal at one gate as the only entrance to the pool. We put red tape on the deck and the parents/spectators were required to stay behind the tape, back from the pool. Only Coaches, Officials, Swimmers and Timers were allowed inside the tape. All were required to wear masks when entering. Dressing rooms were closed, but toilets were open. A Marshal was positioned near the entrance to the bathhouse and allowed only one female and one male in at a time. There were yellow tape marks behind the starting blocks on the right side, six feet apart for the swimmers to advance to the blocks and for relay swimmers to maintain social distancing. Timers stayed on the left side of the blocks. No problems were incurred. The entire meet and the season went well.

DSMY Intrasquad - August 1st.

We have a common goal – Let's provide opportunities for swimmers to compete. DSMY has been deliberate, proactive, structured, and careful with our "Return to Competition" plan. It started with a sanctioned Intrasquad meet on August 1st; the first day of LSC sanctioned meets and we are following up with duals & triangular meets every weekend in August. As an organization, the Greater Des Moines YMCA has developed COVID mitigation strategies to first re-open the facility and slowly add services and capacity as safety allows while following CDC, State of Iowa, and local guidelines.

Our swim team program has been included in the YMCA's approach from the beginning. The first step was to safely restructure practices which include health screenings, hand sanitation, masks, and plans for swimmers to safely enter and exit the facility. We had to create more, but smaller, practice groups to limit the number of swimmers in each lane and instituted new protocols to promote social distancing both on deck and in the pool. The experience we gained from practices was valuable in creating the Return to Competition plan which includes new procedures for swimmers, coaches, spectators, and officials. Our Aquatics Director, [Frankie Hansen, has even created an 18 minute video and posted it on our website which explains the new protocols to everyone involved.](#)

Officiating a meet with COVID mitigation in mind presented unique challenges. Rule 102.10.3 provides the minimum staffing requirements for a sanctioned meet. You must have 1 Referee, 1 Starter, 2 Stroke & Turn, and 1 Administrative Official. In order to minimize the number of people on deck, we decided to run our meets with minimum staffing. All of our meets have been 8 lanes, SCY, running the width of our 19 lane pool (without a bulkhead in place on the lane 8 side which prevents walking stroke on both sides of the competition pool). We decided to place the 4 wet-deck officials in the four corners:

- The Starter is at the start end of the pool – Lane 1,

- The Referee is at the start end of the pool – Lane 8,
- The Stroke & Turn officials are at the turn end of the pool – Lane 1 & Lane 8.

Each official has Stroke & Turn responsibilities with 4 lane, wall-to-wall, jurisdiction and wears a radio. The Starter & the Referee observe all 8 lanes at the start. If either observes movement prior to the start it is recorded on their heat sheet (as we have always done). If the starter observes movement, they make a radio call to the Referee “I have potential movement in Event XX Heat YY.” The Referee responds with either “I am unable to confirm movement” or “We need to confer at a later time.” After the start, ALL officials observe the race. If an infraction is observed, the official raises their hand and then acts as their own Chief Judge by using the radio to report a potential disqualification to the Referee. The procedure to vet an infraction is the same as it would be if a CJ was there, except that each official writes their own DQ slip for accepted calls. Even the Referee “calls in” their observations so the Admin Official is able to track DQ’s and assist in reconciling the results.

Our meets are planned with 90 second intervals. After the last swimmer finishes, the announcer asks the swimmers to take an “Easy 25” to the far end of the pool. All swimmers exit from the far end. While the swimmers are doing their 25, the next heat approaches the blocks. This provides social distancing between swimmers and provides officials time to handle tasks such as the Starter and Referee to compare potential movement notes and for DQ slips to be completed. Officials hold on to their DQ slips and turn them in at the end of the session, for the Referee to review, sign off, and submit to the Admin Official.

Another interesting change, again to provide social distance and eliminate crowding behind the blocks, was where we decided to put timers. Lane timers sit in the spectator viewing area, perpendicular to the starting blocks and distanced 6 feet apart and every other row, with a stopwatch and a button. We were pleasantly surprised to learn that the timers report they have a better view of the finish from the elevated position than they had from trying to deal with the crowds behind the blocks to observe the finish! We also provided the head timer with a radio so the Admin Official can ask for a watch time when there is a discrepancy between the pad time and the button time.

Overall, this system has worked very well! We are able to run legal meets and have been successful in fairly observing the swims. Our only area of concern is observing potential 15m mark violations. Without anyone on the “stroke” side of the pool, it is difficult to accurately assess the 15m mark. In this situation, the benefit of the doubt goes to the swimmer. We would not accept a 15m violation unless an official had a very clear view of an obvious infraction. When we feel we can safely add another person on deck, the Meet Ref or an additional Stroke & Turn official may observe the 15m mark from the Lane 1 side of the pool.

RCA Stars of Tomorrow - August 9th.

Things that went well:

- All officials (including the starter) wore radios and no DQ slips were written. The officials reported the infractions, noted the infractions in their heat sheets, the referee confirmed the infraction and the AO entered the infraction into meet manager. The officials' programs were retained with the meet records.
- The starter and referee stood on opposite sides of the pool. False starts were confirmed over the radio.
- Officials did not walk, they were all socially distant from spectators. Fortunately, the pool was clear with no glare. All lanes were sufficiently covered that all swims were observed to the best of our abilities.
- The next-up heat of swimmers were staged six-feet apart away from the blocks and paraded to their blocks after the previous heat finished and the referee sounded four short whistles. We used an electronic whistle.
- The swimmers adapted well to our protocols and respected the procedures.
- For backstroke starts, we had the swimmers leave the pool by swimming over to lane eight side and using the ladder to exit the pool. We paraded the kids in from the lane one side and then whistled them in the water once the swimmer were all behind their blocks.
- The timers were instructed to back-up six feet away from the pool after the swimmer in their lane finished,
- Our officials briefing was done by Zoom on Saturday night before the meet; we did not have a formal officials meeting before each session. All officials but one attended the Zoom meeting.
- We prepared a timer's video that was emailed to all timers a couple of days before the meet in lieu of a timer's briefing before each session. Timers were asked to report to their blocks once the pool was cleared after warm-ups. All clipboards, timer sheets and watches were placed behind each lane for when the timers reported.
- There was no coaches meeting. We prepared detailed notes and sent them to the coaches on Thursday before the meet. We asked the coaches to share the notes with the parents of the swimmers that attended the meet.
- Everyone was screened with COVID questionnaire and for temperatures before they entered the facility. There was only one way in and one way out of the facility.
- All swimmers were asked to come in their swimsuits and leave in their swimsuits; the lockers were not available for changing before or after the meet.

Things we learned:

- Timelines may need to be longer if there are no 50s in a session
- More patience is needed after parading the older swimmers to the block because they still like to do their pre-race routines once they get to the block. We used the four

short whistles to start the parade of heats to behind the blocks. We went right to the long whistle once all swimmers were behind their blocks.

Everyone I talked with during the meet was very appreciative of the procedures we followed to keep our swimmers, volunteers and parents safe.

Did you know that there are 201 officials volunteering in Iowa Swimming? Thank you for volunteering your time and talents!

Do you know where you can find this information and more?
