

To: ISI Board of Directors

From: Amanda Schleede, Officials Chair

Sept 8, 2020

Since my last report:

1. The Officials Committee held an "Officials Town Hall" on Monday, August 17, 2020 to review the new officials deck protocols for meets. The Zoom meeting was well attended and many questions were answered. The town hall was specific to Meet/Deck Referee's and then new protocols with COVID considerations, although all officials were encouraged to attend so they were aware of the changes. Many suggestions on how to handle the COVID restrictions were reviewed. It was HIGHLY stressed to "not be that official who goes rogue."
2. The Officials Committee has reminded all officials that they must complete the COVID waiver sent by ISI/USA Swimming BEFORE being on deck. There are still a few officials who are having difficulties accessing.
3. The fall officials clinics are on the website. We plan to do 4 Stroke & Turn, 4 Admin, 3 Starter and 2 Referee virtual clinics this fall. We also plan to run a "train the trainer" program for other officials to assist in the virtual training. Given the current COVID restrictions, it has been communicated that training for new and advancing officials will be very limited on deck given our max of 50/25 (depending on county) limits.
4. The Officials Committee is looking to get two new student athlete representatives.
5. The Officials Committee has sent suggested protocols to all officials with regard to the new 12 & Under tech suit rules that went into effect on September 1, 2020. The following is the email sent (Sept 3, 2020):

Illinois Officials,

The **12 & Under Tech Suit Rule** went into effect on September 1<sup>st</sup>. As we begin to ramp-up meets, I wanted to provide some structure/guidance around handling swimmer notification. To be clear, the notification of a swimmer with an illegal suit is the responsibility of the Meet/Deck Referee, but it's important that all officials are aware of the procedures and how to handle on deck (please read all of this email). As a reminder, we need to keep Safe Sport at the top of our minds when dealing with illegal suit issues!

**ALL OFFICIALS, PLEASE NOTE:** The Meet/Deck Referee (likely the same person in our current COVID environment) has 'point' in communicating the possible infraction/confirmed infraction to the Coach. All other on-deck officials should notify the Meet/Deck Referee of the possible infraction and he/she will handle the notification to the Coach. **We will not be notifying kids directly of an infraction – that will be the Coaches job!**

**Referees:**

1. This is akin to a Code of Conduct violation (like deck changing) and should you notice or suspect an illegal suit, then you should first approach the Coach.
2. If it is found to be illegal then the Coach should handle the first communication to the athlete.
3. If you see a swimmer with an illegal suit on behind the blocks, and no time exists to talk to a Coach, let the athlete swim. You can then disqualify the athlete and talk to the Coach about it. If you are wrong, then you can simply overturn the DQ, if you are right then it can stand. Much easier than re-swimming an athlete later, and talking to an athlete behind the blocks and finding you are wrong messes with them (also, do we really want a 12 year old or younger crying behind the blocks?). Remember – swimmers/athletes are there to enjoy the experience and we want to keep the meet moving!
4. If you find out after a swim is done that a suit is illegal, then you should enter a DQ and talk to the coach.

5. Please, **DO NOT** start inspect suits. It is really “on the line” of safe sport issues. This is why I feel better working through a Coach. It’s also likely that we will have Coaches approaching officials regarding suits – please send all inquiries directly to the Meet/Deck Referee.
6. I encourage all Meet/Deck Referee’s to have the list of suits readily available for reference. This may be printing them out and having in your rule book or having access on your cell phone that you can reference **OFF DECK** and away from swimmers (Safe Sport – remember?).
7. If there is a dispute about a suit, every effort should be made to **NOT** inspect while the athlete/child is wearing it. The Coach should obtain the suit and bring to the Meet/Deck Referee for review. The suit inspection should be done on deck (Safe Sport!).
  - a. In the new COVID world, we may need to handle this a bit differently as kids are coming dressed in their suits, so they won’t be able to change out of an illegal suit or take it off to show the coach or referee.
  - b. If this is the case, I would **HIGHLY** suggest that the coach be involved and that you have a witness of the swimmers same gender (could be the Coach) when you inspect the suit on the swimmer (again on deck with same gender as swimmer – let’s be smart – it shouldn’t be a male deck referee and male Coach inspecting a swimmers suit in the back hallway off deck! Safe Sport people!).
  - c. Also make sure that you ask the swimmers permission to inspect their suit when the same gender witness is present and before you start inspecting.
  - d. Meet/Deck Referees should make every effort for the child to have a parent bring them a new suit (if able). If unable, let the athlete swim (again, there to enjoy the sport), but DQ based on the illegal suit.

***The real key here is getting coaches to over communicate to the kids and parents.***

**Here are some other thoughts when considering the new 12 & under suit restrictions:**

- This is not going to be prevalent, at least now, so don’t go looking. Remember that lots of 12 & under boys wear legal jammers all the time. We will likely see infractions at the championship level meets (in the future).
- Deck officials must report to the Meet/Deck Referee who handles notification with the Coach.
- Be proactive and make every attempt to “fix” before hand, if noticed and confirmed.
- If you’re holding a Coaches meeting via Zoom or you’re able to add to the meet communication with timelines and procedures, make sure to remind Coaches and parents of the September 1<sup>st</sup> regulations for 12 & under’s.
- During your Officials meeting – make sure to review the notification procedures.
- Overall, let the kid swim and DQ after.
- If observing a suit and/or FINA label, have a witness and a person of same gender as athlete present and **BE ON DECK** not in a back hallway.
- As a Meet/Deck Referee, I suggest that you familiarize yourself with the manufacturer websites to get a feel for the tech suit look. The tech suit look is sleeker, provides more compression and in general, swimmers look “stuffed in” vs. other legal suits.
- Overall, The Meet/Deck Referee should do the best they can without a lot of pressure or concern.

If you have any additional questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me. We are not the suit police!

Thanks

Amanda

**ACTION ITEM:**

None at this time.