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Vision for Officiating Committee

I've asked several of my predecessors in the officials' committee chair position what were the first questions they were asked. They all revealed they were asked the same first questions I've been asked. Namely, "what is your vision for the officials committee and officiating in general?"

In my "paying job" I'm a college professor so education and evaluation are natural choices for me as the role of the officials committee. Now, I really can't claim those as my particular vision as all the officials' committee chairs as far back as I can remember would have answered the same. My goal, which is shared by all the members of the committee, is to continue the work in these areas that has already been done. As Bernard of Chartres pointed out in the 12th century, we see more and farther than our predecessors, not because we have keener vision or greater height, but because we are lifted up and borne aloft on their gigantic stature.

Several items in education and evaluation will be coming up in the very near future. The stroke and turn training video has been redone and updated. It will be distributed both on the web and on USB drives to the LSC officials chairs. These videos should be coming online by the time you read this note. In addition, the committee is refining the mentoring and evaluation process. Again, you should see those improvements in the very near future.

But, on the other hand, it really isn't about my vision for officiating, it's about your vision. What things can the national committee do to improve your lives as swimming officials? It is important that you let us know what is working for you and what is not working for you. As I said last issue, I look forward to working with the national committee and with all of you to better our sport. Next time you see me on deck, stop me and say hello.

Jim Holcomb, *Chair*
National Officials Committee
USA Swimming

The Creating of the Present Day Online Test

By Bill H. Rose
National Officials Committee, Online Testing Sub-Committee
USA Swimming

Way back in 1998, when I was a new Officials Chair in my LSC, I would get one master copy of all the Official's Tests that were in use at that time. They would be sent to all of the LSC Official Chairs in big envelopes, so that we could do as we wanted. I would always go through each question on every test, to make sure that the i's were dotted and the t's were crossed.

At that time, there were many true and false questions, to go along with other questions that didn't have question marks at the end of the question. The questions and answers didn't always match the current Rulebook.

There was no machine to grade the tests. I made an answer key, so the grading would be easier for me, but some people would enlarge or reduce the answer key before they entered their answers and you can guess what happened then.

The technical references were not listed with each of the original test questions. There were no choices and there was no statement, saying that the Test Taker had to find the correct technical reference to prove that the multiple-choice was correct.

After many years of proofreading the tests before printing them for all of my LSC certified Officials, I got the call to join the Online Test Team.

There were originally four Editors who were assigned to the questions that matched positions around the pool deck. After a few years, the YMCA was interested in using our testing system, but wanted the results sent to them, so we added another Editor to help with this branch of the testing system.

Each year, about a month before the testing site would be shut down, the Editors would find the questions that were missed more than 25% of the time and make suggestions for improvement, so the passing rate could improve.

In the beginning, we wanted all questions to end with question marks. We didn't want any more true/false questions. We wanted all the answers to come directly from the Rulebook. We really didn't want situation questions, which would be hard to answer from a technical reference not found in the Rulebook. We wanted certain words to be capitalized consistently throughout each of the tests.

Once the Senior Editors approved all of the old questions' edits, we would recommend to the Editor that they could make these changes when the testing site went inactive. Once the recommended changes were made, the questions would be proofread one more time.

We would write new test questions each year from the new rules added to the Rulebook. Before we could add them to our list of master questions, these questions would be sent to the Rules and Regulations Chair for approval.

Over the years, we have made more new questions and added

more tests. We now have enough questions to randomly choose different questions for each Test Taker. The Open Water leadership wanted to have some questions dealing with Open Water, so we wrote questions and had them approved. A few years later, the original Open Water questions were made into two tests, the Open Water Judge and the Open Water Referee.

Three years ago, the National Officials Committee recommended that taking the Administrative Referee test, the Clerk of Course test, the Timer test and the Timing Judge test in becoming an Administrative Official was too much to ask, so we condensed questions from these four tests into one test.

We now have an Editor dealing with Open Water questions, an Editor dealing with Administrative Referee and Administrative Official questions, an Editor dealing with Starter and disability questions, and Editor dealing with Stroke and Turn and Timer questions, an Editor dealing with Timing Judge and Clerk of Course questions and an Editor working only with the YMCA.

For the 2015 testing year, the Test Team was asked to do a major shift from the way we have presented the test questions in the past. The National Officials Committee suggested that we do away with Part 2 of the online tests. This was the technical reference part of the tests.

When I first joined the Test Team, Paul Jones would send me Test Taker's concerns almost weekly. Each year our product got better and better and the passing rate improved. We still have a few questions that might have slipped through our yearly review, but for the most part, each question is reviewed if it is missed more than 25% of the time.

We hope that the tests we have prepared for you are outstanding teaching aids in your education in becoming the best Official you can be for our swimmers.

The Maxwell Excellence Award

Every two months *Swimming World* magazine and Maxwell Medals recognizes an official for their outstanding contributions to local swimming. Each LSC or other governing body can submit a candidate that is deserving of recognition and the winning official is selected by a sub-committee of the National Officials Committee to be recognized in *Swimming World* magazine every two months. July's recognition goes to Bill Houk with Ohio Swimming.

Thomas William (Bill) Houk exemplifies excellence in officiating, from local summer leagues to the national deck. He is a shining example of an official who is involved for the benefit of the athletes and promoting the sport.

Bill's children have long retired from swimming, yet he continues to officiate and train local officials. He is instrumental in hosting an

OQM each December that attracts officials from other LSCs, as well as exposing local officials to national protocols.

The following is an incomplete list of the organizations Bill donates his time and expertise to: summer leagues, OHSAA, YMCA, USA, CSOA, USMS, college club, and IPC.

No meet is small or insignificant to Bill. He treats every session as an opportunity to serve and mentor, most often taking a supporting role as he freely shares his knowledge and experience with others. He is a tireless advocate for new officials, especially women.

In service to the sport Bill has held many positions, ranging from summer league to the LSC level. Bill is currently the Administrative Vice-Chairman as well as the Officials Chairman of the Cincinnati Commission for OH Swimming.

For over 20 years Bill has been active in Paralympic Swimming, and was instrumental in bringing a disability meet to Cincinnati. Bill creates material for officials at his own expense that help decipher disability heat sheets and apply IPC rules correctly