

In This Issue

1. National Certification Program Update
2. Are National Certifications for Me?
3. Maxwell Award Winner
4. Officials Selected for Olympic Trials

MAXWELL EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Please continue to send in your Maxwell Excellence Awards Nominations. The form can be found in the recognition section of the Officials page on USASwimming.org.

[Click here to submit your nomination.](#)

APPLY NOW

Officials are still needed for the summer championship meets – especially the Futures Meet in Atlanta. Please [click here to apply](#). Winter meet applications will be posted after Olympic Trials.

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NATIONAL OFFICIAL CERTIFICATION PROGRAM UPDATE - JUNE 2016

The current National Certification Program is now more than 11 years old! And like anything that's been around for awhile, a review was due. The National Officials Committee decided to revamp the explanation documents and to modify the program just a little. The revised documents have been posted on the website, so please keep a look out for them. The main changes in the program are:

- **Before REQUESTING an N2 evaluation in a position**, an official must have worked at least 16 sessions* in the position since full LSC certification in that position. N2 ST certification is now required before an N2 evaluation can be requested for all other positions. (N2 AO will be an exception, when it is available.)
- Application for N2 Certification can be made once a "recommend for advancement" evaluation is recorded in OTS and all other requirements are met. There are exceptions for CJ and Administrative Referee – Please see the new documents.
- **Before requesting an N3 evaluation in any position**, a candidate must have worked at least 8 sessions* in that position since N2 certification in that position. Also, N3 ST certification is required before requesting an initial N3 evaluation for CJ, DR, SR and AR.
- For positions requiring an initial and a final N3 evaluation, 8 sessions* must be worked in the position before the next, or another, evaluation may be requested. **"Another evaluation" may be requested if the previous evaluation suggested more experience was needed.**
- In the near future, the requirement of a year since N2 certification in a position before N3 certification can be applied for, will be eliminated. Until the necessary programming changes are made, a filter will prevent applications until one year has elapsed.

Remember: there are other things, in addition to successful N3 final evaluations, that must be accomplished before an N3 certification application will be considered "complete". These include:

- LSC participation
- Participating in teaching and mentoring, and learning activities and,
- For CJ, Starter, Deck Referee and Admin Referee,

working at an “in pool” USA Swimming National Championship level meet (National Championships, Junior National Championships, US Open, some FINA meets in the USA, and Arena Pro Series) as a deck official.

- Only Arena Pro Series Meets that take place in, or after November 2015 satisfy this requirement. (Arena Pro Series/Grand Prix meets, prior to November 2015, do not meet the requirement!)

Along with these revisions the “Professional Official” documents have been revised to reflect the National Certification program modifications. The Professional Administrative Referee document was also edited to accommodate the recent changes in the way official times are determined.

- Sessions worked, certification dates and prior evaluation dates will be determined by what is recorded in OTS! All LSCs are using OTS to track meets and sessions worked, and LSC certifications. If your records are not up to date contact your LSC Officials Chair.

ARE NATIONAL CERTIFICATIONS FOR ME?

By Thomas Tiedt, USA Swimming Official

Several years ago, I was sitting in one of my first officials’ briefings as a new official and marveled at how fluently the lead official was recapping the rules in such a simple and easy-to-understand manner. It was the first time I’d heard the rules presented thoroughly and without commentary from an official who was always smiling and completely enjoying his time at the meet. The next day he presented a protocol and jurisdiction briefing with such logic that I immediately understood why we were asked to stand, walk and observe with unassuming precision. I decided I wanted to be just like this official, so I asked how he learned all these skills.

He explained that about 10 years earlier he had decided to pursue national certification as a deck official as a way of improving his own skills and knowledge of swimming. Along the way he encountered many veteran officials who frequented national championship meets and they imparted some of their wisdom to him and others who showed an interest. For him these veterans dispelled the folklore and mythology about rules and officiating that were often cast in a negative and very punitive light during local meets and hospitality discussions. He said one thing that really resonated with me – “If I’m not having fun and learning something at these meets, that’s when I will hang it up.” I decided I’d give national certification a shot and submit to an evaluation.

The nominal purpose of the national certification program is to prepare and certify LSC officials for service at national championships meets.

LSC officials first apply and then are paired with national

evaluators at officials qualifying meets (OQM) according to the position certification sought (Stroke & Turn, Chief Judge, Starter, Deck Referee and Administrative Referee; there is no national certification for Meet Referee). LSC Championships and Sectional meets are the typical venues where national evaluations occur, though they also occur at National Championships and Pro Series events.

Candidates are monitored for 3-4 sessions at the OQM, during which the national evaluator offers feedback. With promoting recommendation from the national evaluator the LSC official applies for national certification through their officials' online tracking system (OTS) account. If additional requirements, such as requisite educational and teaching activities, are met the LSC official is granted N2 or N3 national certification (N2 is the first level of national certification; N3 is the next level, which generally requires evaluations from two different evaluators). The LSC certification card is then updated with the new certification(s) and emailed to the official. There is also the opportunity to evaluate the evaluator, one way to help improve the program.

The national certification process extends the various skills exercised at LSC meets with refinements focusing each officials 'department' (ST, CJ, SR, DR, AR) and streamlining the interactions between these departments. Communications, paper flow and deck protocols are customized and clarified, particularly for national-level meets.

We also want to look as prepared and 'professional' as the athletes. Thus, our duties are effectively choreographed in honor of the athletes, to best serve the athletes and, yes, for the TV cameras, which have their uncanny way of capturing for the audience either competence or confusion.

Notably, there is a more important and immediate benefit of national certification – the cultivating experience of the evaluation process itself.

During a national evaluation and its advanced mentoring from the national evaluator the skills and perspectives of the official being evaluated are significantly elevated...kind of like a graduate school for their development.

National evaluators have significant experience to share regarding rules interpretations, jurisdictions, procedures and national-deck protocols. They are able observers and communicators. Through quality one-on-one time we benefit immensely from many hours of their review and in-depth recommendations for improvement, exposure difficult to accomplish otherwise. We get a direct connection with the state of our art and the decisions and policies of the National Officials and Rules & Regulations Committees. We become better officials and even become mentors ourselves for those who have yet to benefit from the invigorating experience.

Even if we never plan on serving at a national-deck meet (although the experiences at these meets are fantastic, so join the fun), the diverse beneficial consequences for us individually and collectively make national evaluations treasures. They address all

of our questions and challenge our growth. They broaden our horizons and help us serve the athletes optimally.

I've learned so much in a relaxed atmosphere, and have truly enjoyed getting to know so many wise and talented officials. If you have the opportunity for some graduate work on officiating, I have only one recommendation for you. Go for it!

MAXWELL AWARD WINNER:

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 Mike Hoffer with North Carolina Swimming.

Mike served as NCS Official's Chair from 2008-2012. During that period Mike was responsible for a number of improvements including establishing an active official's committee, utilizing the OTS LSC certification and developing procedures for obtaining various certifications.

In addition, Mike established a Coach's/Official's meeting which has become a standard part of the NCS HOD where coaches and officials discuss any issues. This has taken the LSC from a confrontational to a harmonious relationship between the coaches and officials.

Mike continues to devote a great deal of time as an official after his kids have completed their swimming careers.

OFFICIALS SELECTED FOR OLYMPIC TRIALS

As you know, the Olympic Trials are only a few short weeks away! As such, we thought it would be nice to list all those who will put in many long hours, pay for their own round-trip transportation and lodging, and may even use their vacation time so that they can officiate at the Olympic Trials.

The next time you see any of the officials listed below, please take a moment to thank them for volunteering to help our swimmers!

Position	First Name	Last Name	LSC
MR	David	Coddington	PN
AAR	Mary	Swalley	CA

AR	Gloria	Schuldt	NT
CJ	Jacquelyn	Allender	OR
CJ	James	Cahn	MD
CJ	Sandra	Drake	HI
CJ	Robert	Griffiths	FL
CJ	Suzanne	Heath	NC
CJ	Kathleen	Scandary	CO
CJ-H	Clark	Hammond	SE
DR	Robert	Broyles	IE
DR	John	Dowling	NT
DR	Lucy	Duncan	IN
DR	James	Holcomb	BD
DR	Amy	Hoppenrath	MV
DR	John	Thomas	FG
SR	Julie	Allen	GA
SR	Jeffery	Raker	OH
SR	Denice	Wepasnick	PV
SR-L	Cecil	Gordon	MA
ST	Debra	Baldwin	SI
ST	Elizabeth	Coe	MD
ST	Dana	Covington	SN
ST	Kimberly	Downs	VA
ST	Michael	Downs	VA
ST	Claude	Duncan	IN
ST	Jon	Fox	NC
ST	John	Gagliardo	PN
ST	Kenneth	Galica	NE
ST	Valerie	Gibson	NJ
ST	Jeffrey	Gudman	OR
ST	John	Hiester	IN
ST	Melissa	Hellervik-Bing	FL
ST	Donald	Hougarly	IE
ST	Timothy	Husson	PV
ST	Jason	Johnson	NT
ST	Traci	Johnson	NT
ST	Peter	LaGow	MD
ST	Anne	Lawley	OH
ST	Paul	Maker	NE

ST	Patricia	Martin	NC
ST	Mark	McCaw	FL
ST	David	Meagher	OH
ST	John	Neill	PV
ST	Anthony	Rongione	PV
ST	William	Rose	SN
ST	Robert	Scandary	CO
ST	Wayne	Shulby	NC
ST	Michael	Smythe	IN
ST	Jayne	Spitt;er	IL
ST	Robert	Steffner	NT
ST	Susan	Talwar	FL
ST	Michael	Urbanowicz	CO
ST	Johannes	Van Nimwegen	PV
ST	Ronnie	Van Pool	PN
ST	Lisa	Vetterlein	PN
ST	Francine	Werner	IN
ST	Teresa	White	PN
ST	John	Wilson	GA
ST	John	Witzel	MN
ST	Adam	Zeichner	FG
ST	Ronals	Zolno	ST

Watch "The Last Gold" at a Theater Near You
