

IOWA SWIMMING, INC.

Meet Referee Handbook



THE REFEREE

The Referee must be a leader whose natural inclination is to serve. To serve others means to understand and be aware of the athletes, officials, coaches, parents and others in the sport. The Referee leads by example in showing respect, honesty, fairness, integrity and responsible behavior that characterize authentic sportsmanship.

The Referee is committed to:

- ensuring the integrity of the sport and the profession of officiating;
- conducting him/herself with dignity and good humor, while ensuring fair and equitable conditions for the competition;
- remaining impartial, while sustaining positive relationships and building trust in the swim community;
- maintaining a current understanding of the rules and their application;
- fostering the growth in expertise for all officials through teaching, providing workshops and working with officials on the deck. The Referee is the primary leader and educator for both new and experienced officials.

MEET REFEREE

The Meet Referee is assigned the responsibility for the operation of a sanctioned swim meet ensuring the meet is run in accordance with the rules and philosophies of USA Swimming. These ideals can be summarized with this statement from page 1 of the Technical Rules:

"All competitive swimming events held under USA Swimming sanction shall be conducted in accordance with the following rules that are designed to provide fair and equitable conditions of competition and promote uniformity in the sport so that no swimmer shall obtain unfair advantage over another."

It is the role of the Meet Referee to ensure that the above goal is attained.

By making the commitment to be the Meet referee, you agree to administer, coordinate, and adjudicate the meet. These tasks are a significant responsibility. This Handbook is intended to help the Meet Referee be pro-active before, during and after the meet - instead of re-active, because you did not anticipate or prepare for the meet.

The Meet Referee must be knowledgeable of:

- Timing procedures, equipment and the specific rules that apply to each type of equipment used;

- Across-the-board judging procedures;
- Check-in and seeding procedures;
- Starting procedures, rules and application;
- Recording and balloting procedures; and
- Stroke and Turn Judging, stroke rules, jurisdiction, application and enforcement.

The Meet Referee must have mastered the application and use of the starting, and stroke and turn rules, along with their fair enforcement and appropriate judging. The Meet Referee is responsible for the effective functioning of the meet and will monitor and assist, as necessary, all officials in performing their functions to ensure the participants are provided with a quality competitive swimming environment. The Meet Referee must have learned, acquired and possess: sound swimming leadership, positive swimming attitude and effective administrative skills.

REFEREEING GUIDELINES

The Meet Referee has the most influence on the consistency and the quality of officiating. The Meet Referee makes sure the rules are applied equitably and fairly. The Meet Referee sets the standard for officiating and greatly influences the atmosphere of the meet. The nervous, unprepared, excitable Meet Referee can make other officials, coaches and swimmers feel that the meet is not under control. A calm, confident and competent Meet Referee imparts the feeling to those around them, and the whole meet reflects a secure, relaxed atmosphere where swimmers can compete to their full potential.

As a Starter and a Deck Referee you were part of the team running the meet and had an opportunity to understand much of what it is to be a Meet Referee.

- As the Meet Referee, you need to think of yourself as the "manager" of the meet. You need to always be doing both your direct duties and observing and managing the other officials on the deck. A good Meet Referee is using every moment of their time to observe everything that is happening in the pool and on the deck. Is anything or anyone in the pool that could interfere with the swimmers? Are the timers doing their job? Are the officials in position and observant? Have any DQ's been called?
- Always have your copy of the USA Swimming Rule book, Iowa Swimming Policies and Procedures and a copy of the Meet Announcement. These items are to be used and followed without exception and referred to as needed.
- The rules are designed to provide a fair and equitable condition for all competitors. It is necessary that you enforce and interpret all applicable

rules with total impartiality. A standard of ethics and demeanor dictates that you should assume a protective rather than a punitive attitude towards rule enforcement.

- Rules and their interpretations are established by the USA Swimming Rules & Regulations Committee. That allows swimmers to compete under the same conditions, no matter where in USA Swimming they do compete.

OFFICIAL TIME

No matter what the type or size of meet, there is one thing that all swimmers have in common ... they want to know **"what was my time?"** The rules state (102.24.1D) that "It is the meet director's responsibility to provide the proper timing systems so that swimmers can expect to achieve official times that will satisfy the requirements of 102.24.1C."

In other words, **it is incumbent upon the Meet Referee, working with meet management and, if assigned, the Administrative Referee to ensure that every swimmer has an "official time" for every swim they complete legally and to make certain the time is accurate and correct** within the rules of section 102.24.

You must understand the rules of the timing section and absolutely must understand the process for determining an official time in the case of a possible system malfunction.

As stated by the USA Swimming Officials Committee:

"When automatic or semi-automatic officiating equipment is used and an apparent malfunction occurs it shall be the Meet Referee's responsibility to make an immediate investigation to determine whether the swimmer finished in accordance with the rules and/or if there was an actual equipment malfunction"

- Some of the items you need to understand from the rules are the 3 types of timing systems; Automatic, Semi-Automatic, and Manual (102.24.2). You need to know what primary, secondary and tertiary systems is (102.24.3). You should know what the responsibilities of the Chief Timer and the lane timers are (102.17). The Timing Equipment Operator is the person operating the equipment console and you must ensure that they know to notify you or the Deck Referee of any system problems as outlined in 102.17.4.
- It is critical that you coordinate with the Administrative Referee or Administrative Official, because rule 102.16.3E states he or she shall "be responsible to the Referee for ... Determination and recording of official time." (102.14 and 102.15)
- It is imperative that you be clear with the Administrative Referee or Official as to what "under the direction of the Referee" means and whether you are delegating to that person the responsibility to determine the official time for every swim under your direction. What does that mean? It means that you may delegate to the Administrative Referee or Official the responsibility to

determine, under the rules, what the official time of each swimmer is... and at the same time to tell them under what circumstances you want to be consulted in that process. Do you want to be consulted every time there is a possible timing system malfunction as defined in 102.24? Do you want to be consulted only when the possible malfunction cannot be easily overcome? Are you going to let them determine the official time in all situations and only ask you if a coach questions a time? In every situation, you should require good documentation backup, watch times and an order of finish to be used for the heat lane in question. These are questions and situations you need to know and be able to answer before the meet starts and communicate the 'rules of the road' to the Administrative Referee or Official before the meet starts so everyone is clear on the procedures.

- Make sure the timing system operator knows to notify you or the Administrative Referee if there is a possible swim-off in prelim/finals meets.
- Before you become a Meet Referee, you must have a full and clear understanding of the rules for determination of an official time and how to implement them. What do you do if a pad fails? What if the backup fails as well? And if there is no watch time for that lane either? And, what if there is no order of finish, or only a partial? What if multiple lanes have timing problems? Be sure you can answer these questions by the end of your apprenticeship.

BEFORE THE MEET

When you are asked to be the Meet Referee, you should be involved in the process of preparing the Meet Announcement. While it is up to Meet Director to determine, within the rules, how a meet is to be run in terms of the items on the Meet Announcement, it is your job to run the meet. It is a good idea to review the Meet Announcement to ensure it is written in such a way that the meet will not be difficult to administer. If a host team does not want you involved in that process, you should decline the invitation to be Meet Referee. Once the meet information has been finalized you should obtain a copy from Meet Director or from the ISI Website.

- Give Meet Management your e-mail address, phone numbers, fax numbers, etc. so they can get in touch with you when needed.
- Determine what the host club is doing to solicit officials for the meet. Tell them you want the list of officials who will work the meet well in advance of the meet. It is your responsibility to verify the certifications and credentials of the meet officials. The Meet Referee is responsible for the volunteers that officiate

the meet and uncertified officials may cause the times achieved in the meet to be invalid times for USA Swimming purposes.

- Several days before the meet starts, have the Meet Director or the entry clerk send you the backup from the HyTek Meet Manager program (if you have a copy of the program available) or a copy of the Heat Sheets, psych sheets and the time line to review. It is important to check over the heat sheets and timelines before they are published. If you spot a problem before the meet starts, it is much easier to come to a resolution than it is during the meet.
- Determine your lead officials as early as possible along with the number of Referee/Starter teams you will be using. Your lead officials include the Deck Referees, Administrative Referee/Official, Starters and Chief Judges.
- Before the meet, make sure you have prepared for the running of the meet. Many Meet Referees create a "Meet Book". What is in each person's book varies; however, most include the Meet Announcement, the list of teams entered for the meet, a section for the heat sheets for each session, copies of the planned timelines for each session, Officials Sign-In forms, assignment forms, counting forms for distance events, coaches and officials briefing notes, forms for DQ logs, No Show logs, DQ Reports, early take off slips, deck entry forms and **an officiating protocol plan**. Being prepared and well organized is a must.

Make sure you have the supplies you might need during the meet such as: three-hole punch, tape, stapler and staples, post-it notes, staple remover, highlighters, pens, paper clips, rubber bands, scissors, and straight edge.

FIRST DAY OF THE MEET

Always dress in the proper uniform that is professional and presentable so you set a good example and portray a professional image.

Arrive at the meet well in advance of the start of the first session. Check in with the Meet Director. Keep in mind that as of this time you are now **in charge and the one to take care of any problems** until the meet is over.

Discuss with the Meet Director any questions or problems that may have been posed to them that you need to handle. Make decisions on each problem and have the Meet Director notify any applicable coach, swimmer or host club staff. Entry problems shall be resolved by the Proof of Entry Form and the Reconciliation Report.

Be sure the starting area for the Deck Referees and Starters are properly set up in manner that will facilitate their responsibilities (e.g. protected from traffic, small table, etc.).

Make sure that someone (scorer or clerk of course) will be posting any check in or scratch sheets and that they will be out in time. Remind the Meet Director to have a process to check that all coaches on deck are currently certified. On the odd chance that one is not certified, his/her swimmers must be supervised by another coach for that session or the entire meet.

Identify and talk to the Meet Marshal about monitoring the warm-up area and rest rooms before and during the meet. Make them aware of what and where you want them to monitor in the pool and around the deck area. Any problems they cannot handle, they are to call on you to solve.

Determine for future reference: Where and with whom are the Proof of Entries? Where is the Award table? Where is and who will be the announcer? Where will the results be posted?

Check to be sure block and turn end of pool are restricted for swimmers, officials and timers only. Cordon off the side of pool to give access to officials from end to end. It is sometimes necessary to place signs on the roping to identify the restricted areas. Camera Zones can never be behind the blocks or starting areas at any facility. Work with the Meet Director to identify areas for still and video photography.

Check with the Automatic Timing Machine Operator to determine if the system is ready to go. Do we need pads on both ends for 50 meter or splits?

Always do a 'walk around' to check the equipment and the pool area. Look at things such as the backstroke flags (correct distance from ends, tight enough, high enough above the water?), are the 15 meter lane lines well marked, are the starting blocks solid or do some need tightening, are they numbered right to left correctly, are they numbered clearly so the swimmers can tell what lane is what number? Are there enough chairs for the timers and the officials? Does the pool's circulation system need to be turned off for the meet? Are the lane lines tight? Is the warm up area set up correctly and lanes that will be unused properly closed off?

Find out who will be the Head Timer for each session. Then talk to that person and alert them to get their timers together for the Starter's Instructions at least 20 minutes before the start of each session. Does the Meet Director have runners lined up to take Automatic Machine slips to the scoring room, awards room, post results, collect DQ slips, etc.?

Have an official sign-in form available and ask all officials to sign in when they arrive. Study it to arrive at the assignment of your team. Remember the officials on deck in each spot will determine the quality of the meet for which you will be held responsible.

If there are going to be deck entries in this meet, have the form ready and have someone assigned to deal with accepting the deck entries and assigning heats and lanes within the time frames and rules allowed on the Meet Announcement.

In order for you to be available to solve problems and answer meet questions, it is best that you do not work as an on-deck official (e.g. Deck Referee). Assign competent officials for the deck positions and then you can "make yourself obsolete". Being obsolete means giving instructions so clear that folks will not have to come to you for every little thing, only with the unusual situations.

Have an officials meeting before each session. This should be a minimum of 30 minutes before the start of each session, 45 minutes to an hour would be better if you can. Make sure that you make all the officials feel welcomed and know that you appreciate their help. Introduce new folks or everyone and give a special welcome to apprentices, and welcome them to the group.

In coordination with or without a Chief Judge, present to the group your general instructions for the meet and answer any rule questions or provide any interpretations of rules. Make assignments of deck officials. Check for a current USA Swimming membership card, explain areas of jurisdiction, method for handling of DQ slips and any special instructions you feel are necessary for the meet. Use the officials meeting as an opportunity for education; all officials should feel like they learned something from your briefings at each meet.

It is best, if possible, to have two or three deck referees and two or three starters. Make them aware of the pace you wish for the meet- slow/fast - when next heat is to be called up, etc. It is important that your Deck Referees know the details outlined in the Meet Announcement to ensure they abide by them. The matching of a Deck Referee and Starter is very important because they must be able to work together and be compatible. It is a partnership with each acting as the "eyes and ears" for the other.

Remind Deck Referees that you do not want them setting a precedent. Remember the decisions made the first day of the meet establish a precedent for the rest of the meet. Consistency in your meet will lead to consistency in other meets. Strive for it.

Have the Starters give instructions to the Timers at least 20 minutes before the start of the meet. Let the Starters know if there is anything you want emphasized.

A Head Stroke and Turn Official or a Chief Judge should be assigned, if possible, to monitor and check accuracy of DQ calls, to be sure the swimmer and/or coach is notified and the DQ slip is delivered to Deck Referee to sign off on DQ's. If possible someone should be assigned to maintain a log of all DQ's.

Assign Stroke and Turn Judges in a manner you feel they have their best strength and knowledge. Also, use officials to balance the deck equally. Not all officials are equal in ability, attentiveness or experience.

At this time, if you have any apprentice officials, assign them an experienced mentor who you feel are the best at giving instructions and attention. This also

applies to apprentice Starters and Referees. The quality of their mentors will determine the quality of their instruction and the quality of their ability to be good officials for you at a later meet.

If possible, have one or more relief officials assigned to each course. Relief officials should not 'offer' relief...their job is to relieve...so as they make their rounds they would say "you are now relieved, please return in xx minutes". A rested official does a better job of concentrating.

If you are holding a coaches meeting before a session, have it announced so the coaches are aware of the plan.

Have the announcer give a five minute warning and then clear the pool 10 minutes before the start or in accord with the meet information letter warm up schedule. This time is needed to get the officials and timers in place and to recheck the timing equipment. The host club may use this time for any greetings and the National Anthem.

A coaches meeting is a must for all meets. It is an opportunity to explain briefly any item that you feel that the coaches need to be aware of. It is best to assume that the coaches have not read the Meet Announcement. Explain topics such as the relay card system to be used, swimmers must be "Ready To Swim at the Starting Platform" when called, alternates must be at the starting area and ready to swim when called, any facility restrictions, estimated time of finish for each session, approximate afternoon start time, etc. Let them know what the penalties are for 'no shows', if any. If used, where the scratch table is and the scratch deadlines. Any problems should be brought to you. There should be no surprises in the meet after the coaches meeting. The meeting should establish a good rapport with the coaches.

A good Meet Referee will delegate, and a good Administrative Referee will solve many problems before they become issues.

MEET HAS STARTED

Once the meet has started, concentrate on your key officials - Deck Referee and Starter to be sure they are pacing the heats as requested. Check the position of the Chief Judge to be sure they can view any and all DQ calls. Be sure the timers are alert fulfilling their role and are seated for the start. A lax timer or timers can be problematic. Good timers have a soothing effect for all.

Have each Deck Referee and Starter use the same Heat Sheet for each session and it is passed on to the next team, in case a question comes up about a particular swimmer. Have the Deck Referee and the Starter note the start and end time for the session and the start time for each event, that they note all no shows, DQ's and the order of finish for each heat.

When possible, assign order of finish duties to "off duty" Starters to free up the duty Deck Referee and Starter so they can concentrate on the swimmers and the next heat.

Weather can be a problem at a meet. In some cases it is the facility director or lifeguards will make a "stop meet call", but in all cases you can stop the meet at your discretion in case of dangerous weather. Check with the Meet Director, so you will know your options if "lightning" or heavy rain does happen.

