Guidance/rules for DSSL Stroke & Turn Judges

*Revised April 2017*

**A. Philosophy**

1. Thank you for volunteering. DSSL cannot exist without competent officials.

Officiating is very rewarding and educational.

2. Your primary job is to ensure all swimmers have a fair and equitable opportunity to

swim their best. You are there to observe the swimmers, not look for disqualifications.

However, if you observe a violation, you must document and turn in the DQ.

3. You must take your job seriously; understand the rules and how they are applied. **An**

**annual certification is required, consisting of attendance at a clinic for your**

**position, unless specifically waived by the Head of Officials**. More experienced

officials in the League are available and willing to help you with any questions or rule

interpretations.

4. Call only what you see; not what you don’t see. If you are not sure, do not make the

call; the benefit of the doubt always goes to the swimmer. Be confident and consistent in your calls. Do not be concerned that you might be DQ’ing your best friend’s child; it is

your obligation if you see a violation. The coaches and swimmers know that DQ’s are

not to be taken personally.

5. Have fun and make the meet enjoyable for the swimmers and spectators. Remember, you’re there for the kids. If you cannot work comfortably with others or are difficult to get along with, you don’t belong here.

**B. Prior to Meet**

1. Review technical rules the night before or when convenient prior to the meet.

Remember USS rules apply.

2. Attire is a white shirt and dark blue shorts (or long pants); look professional.

3. Arrive at least 30 minutes prior to the beginning of the meet. Report to the Meet

Director/Referee and identify yourself as a Stroke & Turn judge.

4. Attend the pre-meet officials meeting with the Meet Director/Referee and other

officials. At this meeting, the Meet Director/Referee will review the technical rules,

assign pairings (you will be paired with a judge from the other team), positioning and

jurisdiction, discuss developmental heats, if applicable, and issue any special instructions regarding the conduct of the meet.

5. Be present at your assigned position 5 minutes prior to the beginning of the meet.

**C. During the Meet**

1. Know your assigned jurisdiction and focus your attention only on that area. You

cannot make a call outside of your jurisdiction. Jurisdiction and positioning are up to the

Meet Director/Referee, and may vary from pool to pool.

2. Give swimmers in your jurisdiction your undivided attention. Be consistent in your

officiating. Avoid any distractions such as casual conversations with spectators, coaches, phones etc.

3. Always be aware of the appropriate heat of the swimmers in the water. This is

extremely important in order to avoid disqualification of the wrong swimmer. Use a

checklist if needed and repeatedly confirm the heat number with your partner as well as

via the voice commands of the starter.

4. Spend an equivalent amount of time judging each lane in your jurisdiction,

INCLUDING LANES WITH NO SWIMMERS. This will avoid undue overscrutiny of

swimmers in incomplete heats.

5. All disqualifications in DSSL are subject to **dual confirmation** with your judging

partner. Both officials must agree on the infraction or no call will be made. Discussion of

each infraction is strongly encouraged. The swimmer is always given the benefit of the

doubt. A “no call” is far better than an inappropriate disqualification.

6. Don’t call what you can’t or don’t see. For example, in the simultaneous 2-hand touch

turn/finish rule for breaststroke and butterfly events, don’t assume that a one-hand touch has occurred if only one hand touches above the waterline. You must see the position of both hands.

7. If both you and your partner agree on an infraction, one of you must immediately

signal a disqualification by raising a hand overhead. Hold it high for a count of five

8. By the completion of the heat, you must fill out a DQ slip. Particular attention should be paid to the identification of the swimmer by virtue of event, heat, and lane. If you know the name and/or team of the swimmer, put that as well. Make sure the proper infraction(s) is noted on the slip. In the event of multiple infractions, make sure each is indicated. Be aware an incomplete or improperly filled out DQ slip will likely be

rejected. In most instances this will be your only communication with the swimmer via

the coach. Since a principal reason for stroke and turn judging is to provide the swimmer with constructive evaluation of illegal stroke technique in order to make the appropriate corrections for future competitions, make sure each infraction is marked. Additional narrative comments on heat sheets at champs are encouraged as a means of providing further clarification. Do not worry that a coach will be upset over a DQ; the dual confirmation is insurance that the call is likely correct. Most coaches will welcome DQ’s as a means to reinforce what he’s been telling a swimmer to do properly. You are

not the bad guy.

9. Once completed, a DQ slip should be signed by both of you. This signed slip is

verification that a consensus DQ has been made. If at any time during the process of

reporting a DQ, one of you changes your mind and the consensus is lost, the DQ slip

should be destroyed and no call is made.

10. A completed and signed DQ slip should be held aloft by one of you until it can be

handed over to the designated “runner” who will take it to the scorer’s table.

11. At the completion of the 15-18 year old boys’ breaststroke, the stroke and turn pair

exchange pool positions with the other judging pair.

12. Do not engage in conversation with any swimmer, parent, or coach over judging or

calls. Let the meet director handle any problems. If the meet director asks you to do

something different, do not take it personally, and heed his/her instruction.

13. Freestyle relay take-offs and turns are also judged by dual confirmation. Although

final placement of judges is at the discretion of the Meet Director/Referee, each judging

pair is usually assigned to either the start or turn end of the pool. Each judge is separated from their partner, one observing from low to high numbered lanes and the other from high to low. Each judge watches takeoffs in all lanes. In observing for early take-off, you should watch the feet of the swimmer on the block first; when the feet lose contact with the block, immediately look for the touch of the incoming swimmer. If the

incoming swimmer has not yet made contact with the wall, an early take-off is observed(in Summer Swim League, if the swimmer leaving the blocks early returns to touch the wall, he shall not be charge with an early take-off). Note the lane, team, and swimmer number (e.g, swimmer number 3 on the relay). If you observe an early takeoff, **do not** **raise your hand**. Instead, after completion of the relay, the two judges compare notes to see if there is a consensus as to the swimmer and the lane; no conversation need occur. If you both agree on one or more early takeoffs, a hand signal is given at that time to indicate a disqualification. You must both agree on the lane and which swimmer or there is no disqualification. Remember that although each team may enter several relay teams, only the designated “A” relay team is competing for points. Attempt to judge all relay teams, making sure to have the best vantage point for observing the “A” relay. With the exception of the first relay swimmer, who must remain stationary at the start, the other relay swimmers may be in motion but must have at least one foot on the edge of the deck prior to starting (i.e., no running, walking, etc., starts).

Developmental Heats

Swimmers in 6-and-under freestyle may be placed in “developmental” heats in which no stroke-and-turn disqualifications will be issued. These swimmers will still earn “heat” ribbons and their times will be recorded regardless of stroke infractions, but they will not contribute points to the scoring of the meet nor will their times be used to qualify for the Championship Meet. No “developmental” heats will be swum at the Championship Meet. At the discretion of the Meet Director/coaches/parent reps, these “developmental” heats may either consist of separate heats which will be swim after each of the regular heats in these events or “developmental” swimmers may be mixed in with regular swimmers in regular heats. In the case of separate “developmental” heats which will be announced by the Starter, the stroke and turn officials are not required to fill out DQ slips, but are requested to note “clean” swims by any developmental swimmer. The suggestion is to mark a DQ slip with the words “DEVELOPMENTAL” and “CLEAN SWIM”, note the heat and lane number, and turn the slip into the scorers’ table as usual. Once again, do not submit any disqualifications for these heats. If regular and developmental swimmers are entered in the same heats, you are not expected to know which are the “developmental” swimmers, and therefore, please judge the heat as you would a regular heat. The scorer’s table will sort out which swimmers are developmental.