



CLERK OF COURSE

INTRODUCTION

The Clerk of Course and Assistant Clerk of Course, provided by the visiting team, each play an important part in ensuring a well-run meet. They are responsible for assembling the swimmers in Clerk of Course designated area in accordance with the order of events; holding the swimmers ready on the deck, instructing the swimmers to wait behind or adjacent to the starting position until the Starter takes control of the race, and reporting to the Referee and Scorer the number of swimmers checked in but failing to report for each event. While the Clerk of Course cannot speed up a meet, failure to provide a smooth, timely flow of swimmers can surely slow it down.

PRE-SEASON

Meet with your Team Representative to ensure that you have the proper set-up for the Clerk of Course area where the swimmers are to assemble. This area should be large enough to accommodate the swimmers for at least four events. When the Clerk of Course area is not close to the starting area the Clerk of Course should also locate a "Ready Area" where the swimmers are to standby pending the completion of the race in progress. This area should allow for a clear view of the starting area, be located so as to avoid interference with other meet officials, and should be easily accessible to the starting line to avoid delays in swimmers reporting for the start.

PRE-MEET

Coordinate with the Meet Manager, home Team Representative, and Announcer regarding the calling up of events during the meet. The first two events should be called to report about ten minutes before the scheduled start of the meet.

Obtain a copy of the program (meet sheet) from the Meet Manager. Annotate scratches and substitutions as they are received by scratch sheets from the team reps and/or coaches. These may be received before or during the meet.

GENERAL

It is the responsibility of each swimmer to report to the Clerk of Course on time. If a swimmer is missing from an event that is being placed in order for the competition, the Clerk of Course shall notify the missing swimmer's coach. However, the Clerk of Course may not delay in sending an event forward to the starting area in order to await the arrival of a non-reporting swimmer. Swimmers who leave the holding area are responsible for returning in time for their heat.

The order of events specified in the official program may only be changed by authority of the Referee. "Seeding" is the assignment of a lane, and heat, to each swimmer or relay. Pre-seeding is done for all league scheduled dual team, Individual Championship and ALL-STAR meets. The names of each swimmer are shown in their respective events on a Meet Sheet (program) prepared by the two team representatives (team meets) or the meet committee. The Clerk of Course shall arrange the reporting swimmers (or their authorized substitutes) in the indicated lane order by event/heat and send each event/heat to the starting area at the appropriate time. No event shall be reseeded because of substitutions or additions. Deck seeding is not done during the course of an NVSL meet, however, it may be done for a developmental or "B" meet. [See "B" meet comments at the end of this handout.]

DUAL MEETS

Swimmers who leave the holding area are responsible for returning in time for their heat or event. Swimmers are to report to the Clerk of Course area only after their event is called. Swimmers reporting early should be instructed to clear the area in order to accommodate swimmers who precede them. Swimmers designated as "backstroke legs" that come to the Clerk of Course should be instructed to wait outside of the area. Consider designating an area nearby for them to wait in so that they will be available at race time. Coaches and parents are not allowed in the holding area, if there is a potential issue notify a Marshall or the Referee. Once swimmers have reported, they must remain in the assigned area unless excused by the Clerk of Course.

The Clerk of Course is to maintain quiet and order in the Ready Area so that swimmers can hear their names called and be placed in the proper event and lane. When the Ready Area is close to the Starter, the Clerk of Course shall remind swimmers to be quiet for the start once the Referee blows his/her whistle signaling the commencement of the next event.

The Clerk of Course shall arrange the swimmers in order of their lane assignments (and heats for Divisional Championships). Seating the swimmers on benches (one bench per event/heat) seems to work well. For 8 and unders a washable marker pen is helpful to mark the lane assignments since these swimmers will be at the opposite end of the pool from the timers.

The Clerk of Course shall send the next event to the Ready Area as soon as the preceding event has started. As each event is called and sent forward, to the Ready Area, the swimmers for the next event should move forward one row. Swimmers for the following event may then begin to fill in the vacated back rows. In long events (100 IM or relays) the Clerk of Course should release the next event when the swimmers in the water are on the last leg of their race. Do not have the swimmers climb OVER the rows.

The Clerk of Course shall instruct the swimmers to stay behind or adjacent to the starting position until the Starter takes control of the event. The Clerk of Course should maintain a constant, controlled flow of swimmers reporting to the starting area. The Assistant Clerk(s) of Course or a designated individual should take the events forward to the ready area. This person should make sure that the swimmers are in their assigned lanes, especially when dealing with younger age groups.

Relays

Be especially careful that younger swimmers are placed at the proper end of the pool for their stroke. Each team may enter only one official relay team in each relay event. Except for the mixed age freestyle relay, swimmers may compete in their own or higher age groups. Swimmers who compete in the mixed age freestyle relay may also swim in their own age group relay. By agreement of the Team Representatives and Referee, a team may also enter an unofficial relay team(s), provided these unofficial teams are not adjacent to the opposing team's lane and do not interfere with the conduct of the meet.

Scratch and Substitution rules are covered in the NVSL Handbook. Substitutions may be made in individual and relay events when necessary because of sickness, injury, or the absence of competitors. Coaches and Team Representatives are responsible for following these rules. If the Clerk of Course notices an obvious infraction, such as a swimmer trying to swim in a third individual event or swim in an event after having had a substitute swim, the matter should immediately be brought to the attention of the Meet Manager. Once the meet has started, no event will be delayed to permit substitutions.

DIVISION RELAY CARNIVALS

Each team enters one relay. Therefore, additional seating space in the Clerk of Course area can be helpful. Additional assistants to guide swimmers to the proper lane and end of the pool are usually needed. Other differences from a team meet are: the teams rotate lanes

after each event; swimmers may not swim up; there are both medley and free relays; and the time cards (the names of the swimmers will be on the cards) are brought to the Clerk of Course area by the swimmers who must then carry them to the timers.

DIVISION-INDIVIDUAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

These meets normally have two heats for each event. Thus, the Clerk of Course area needs to be somewhat larger than for a dual meet. In addition, there should be additional assistants in order to maintain a smooth flow and in order that the workers might have a chance to watch their children swim without disrupting the flow of the meet.

Each team is permitted a maximum of 10 substitutions. Once the seeding list is established substitutions will be made without regard to previously swum times. Any unoccupied lanes resulting from scratches will be open to swimmers ("bid-ins") from other teams, using the procedures outlined in NVSL Rule 6.d. No event will be reseeded because of substitutions, additions or bid-ins.

If scratches and/or no shows indicate that a heat will have only one swimmer, notify the Meet Manager (Division Coordinator) immediately.

INDIVIDUAL AND RELAY ALL-STARS

If a swimmer does not check in by the time the Clerk of Course is ready to send the heat to the starting area, that swimmer is scratched and the first alternate is designated to swim in the scratched swimmer's place. The Clerk of Course is to notify the timers and Referee of all scratched swimmers. Substitutes are placed in the lane of the swimmer(s) they are replacing.

CONCLUSION

The job of the Clerk of Course is pleasant work. It lets you get to know the swimmers, but it can also be tiring. The Clerk of Course should remain as relaxed as possible and be pleasant but firm and "on your toes." The result will be an efficient and satisfactory meet.

DEVELOPMENTAL MEETS

The NVSL does not provide procedures for developmental or "B" meets. Rather, these are somewhat informal and structured to meet the needs of the teams involved. There may be multiple heats of 6 and under freestyle and ages 13 through 18 may be in one heat. Because of this, the Clerk of Course and Assistant Clerks of Course play a crucial role in these meets. These meets are more complex and demanding than dual meets, and you can usually use additional help. Since there is not normally a meet sheet or program, you must consult with the Team Representative to determine what events will be swum, how swimmers are to be seeded or grouped into heats, and when heats may be combined. Where there is more than one heat per event, the Clerk of Course shall advise the Starter, Referee and Announcer of the number of heats to be swum and the number of swimmers in each heat. For example, "Event 6 has 7 heats, with heat 1 = 3 swimmers, heat 2 = 5 swimmers, and remaining heats all full" or "Event 4 = 5 heats, all full."

Generally, the Clerk of Course will mark heats on the time cards. When possible, seed swimmers of opposing teams in alternate lanes. For example, home team swimmers in lanes 1, 3, 5, and visitors in lanes 2, 4, 6. Be sure to fill all lanes before adding an additional heat.