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Sierra Nevada Swimming Officials Newsletter

March 1, 2016



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High satisfaction; low pay.
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All name tags will now be purchased by you by going onto the Hasty Awards web site, that is written below, and then filling in the needed information, like your name, mailing address, where the name tag will be shipped, your credit card information and the "in hands" date. When the information is entered properly, you will submit your order. You will use a credit card and the name tag will be mailed to you when completed. Please allow two to three weeks for delivery.

Copy and paste the link below onto your browser:

<http://www.hastyawards.com/sports/swimming/nametags/nametag-sierra-nevada.html>

The name tags will be mailed to you, when they are completed by Hasty Awards.

All name tags now are made with the new Sierra Nevada Swimming Miner Pin.



The cost of one name tag is \$5.95, which includes shipping and handling.

If you want to phone directly and not use the Hasty Awards web site method to order you name tag, please dial (800) 448-7714 or (785) 242-5297

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OPEN WATER EVENT PREP - IT DOESN'T JUST HAPPEN OVERNIGHT

BY

Matt Wilson // USA Swimming Open Water Official

The event is over. It has gone well, as you would have expected. But it wasn't that easy, not by a long shot! Let's back up just a bit, or maybe a little more than a bit...

Preparation is the key.

For anyone that runs swimming events, you know that they don't just materialize from the mist. There is a considerable amount of planning, time and effort that goes into any meet. However, for an open water event, the preparation time is typically much longer than a pool event would be. Many inaugural open water events start planning six months or more in advance of the event, and established events often put their plans together almost immediately after that year's event concludes. Some of the biggest reasons for beginning this process so far prior to the event include securing the venue and coordinating water craft, lifeguards, and medical personnel. All of this information becomes part of the Safety Plan, which, while always important, has become even more so in the wake of Fran Crippen's passing in 2010.

The Safety Plan is the most important part of the total Open Water Meet Application. Unlike most Meet Announcements, an Open Water event cannot be sanctioned by the LSC without approval of the Safety Plan by USA Swimming. Some of the things that need to be considered when putting the Safety Plan together include:

- **Venue needs:** Will the athletes be swimming in a lake? River? Ocean? Pool? Is the competition course closed (not accessible by boat) or open? If it's open, who will be assisting in keeping unauthorized craft off of the course?

- **Pre-Race/Technical Meeting:** When and where will it be held? What will be covered? Are there any special topics that need to be addressed?
- **Race Day Conditions:** What are the expected weather conditions at the venue on the day of the event? Remember, an Open Water event cannot be started if the water is colder than 60.8° F (16° C), and if you're doing a 5K or longer, the water cannot be warmer than 85° F (29.45° C). And what is the air temperature expected to be? If the combined air and water temperature is less than 118° F (30° C) or greater than 177.4° F (63° C), then you won't be able to do your event even though your water temperature is acceptable!
- **Medical Personnel and Care:** Will you have a doctor on site? How many lifeguards/first responders will you have on the course? Will they be moving, or stationary? Is this number scalable based on the number of athletes that will be on the course? Will there be an ambulance on site, and if not, what is their response time to the venue?

As officials at swim events, we are told to be flexible, and to be able to react to audibles as they occur. For open water events, flexibility is paramount! What happens if you have weather issues? What happens if unexpected marine life is encountered on the course? What if you have to abandon the event before it is completed? Unfortunately, you often have to plan for the worst, and hope for the best. If you plan for any possible issues that may arise, then you will be able to also plan for contingencies so that going with the flow is a much easier process.

Ultimately, athlete safety is the most important responsibility that meet organizers and officials have to deal with at open water events. By proactively planning well in advance, you will give your event the best opportunity to succeed!

Sanctions, Approved and Observed Swims

This summary is intended to help clarify the key differences about the various types of swims generating “official” USA Swimming times and is designed for use by the LSC Sanction Chair. More detailed information is available in USA Swimming Rules and Regulations (Article 202) in which requirements and conditions for sanction, approved competitions and observed swims are defined. Please contact Gina Mensay, at USA Swimming HQ for additional information or clarification.

SANCTIONED EVENT

- Meet must be conducted under USA Swimming technical and administrative rules.
- All times achieved will be recognized by USA Swimming.
- All participants must be registered members of USA Swimming (including meet host, meet director, safety director, marshals, coaches, officials (excluding timers), athletes, and participating clubs).
- Full insurance coverage is in effect (excess medical and general liability) for all registered members of USA Swimming. General Liability coverage is in effect for the meet host and volunteers.

APPROVED COMPETITION

- Meet must be conducted under USA-Swimming technical rules, including time resolution.
- A request must be made to the LSC within its parameters for Approval.
- All times achieved will be recognized by USA Swimming, although only times of USA Swimming members are eligible for incorporation into the SWIMS database.
- There are no requirements for membership in USA Swimming

for participation in meet.

- Insurance: If hosted by a USA Swimming member club/organization, full insurance coverage is provided for all registered members of USA Swimming. General Liability coverage is provided for the hosting entity. If hosted by a non USA Swimming entity, full coverage is provided for the USA Swimming member coaches and athletes who are participating as a USA Swimming entity.

OBSERVED SWIM(S)

- Meet is conducted under other than USA Swimming technical rules (e.g., high school, NCAA, YMCA, IPC).
- A request must be made to the LSC within its parameters for Observation.
- Only those times from swim(s) observed and approved by USA Swimming appointed and certified officials acting as observers are recognized by USA Swimming. Only times of USA Swimming members are eligible for incorporation into the SWIMS database.
- There are no requirements for membership in USA Swimming for participation in meet.
- There is no medical or liability coverage for participants or host. Excess medical is provided to designated LSC NTV Observers only while observing swims on the LSC's behalf.

PROCEDURES FOR SUBMITTING PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

The USA Swimming Rules and Regulations may be altered, amended or repealed at the annual

meeting of the USA Swimming House of Delegates.

An amendment may be proposed only by an LSC, a duly constituted USA Swimming Committee, a member of the USA Swimming House of Delegates as identified in Article 507, the Board of Directors, the National Board of Review, or any Allied or Affiliate Member.

Any proposed amendment shall be submitted in such form as to show the entire section as it will read if adopted, with any changes in existing language single underlined if new and lined out (struck through) if deleted. It must be accompanied by a concise, but informative, rationale for the adoption and its proposed effective date. In addition, the name, address, telephone number and e-mail address of the proposer must be included (if the proposer is an entity, the same information of an authorized spokesman with authority to agree to changes in the submitted legislation).

Every proposed amendment must be submitted to the *Chair, Jay Thomas* <jayfthomas@gmail.com> and *Secretary, Mickey Smythe* <mickeysmythe@comcast.net> of the Rules & Regulations Committee no later than May 15 preceding the annual meeting of the USA Swimming House of Delegates. Any legislation submitted after that date will require a vote of 90% of the House of Delegates for adoption.

All proposed amendments will be made available on the USA Swimming website not less than 75 days prior to the annual meeting of the House of Delegates.

All amendments to Part One of the Rules and Regulations approved by the House of Delegates shall become effective on May 15 of the year following their adoption, unless otherwise specified at the time of adoption. All other approved amendments to the Rules and Regulations shall become effective on January 1 of the year following their adoption, unless otherwise specified at the time of adoption.

How FINA Makes Rule Changes (and what that means for USA Swimming Rules)

by

Carol Zaleski and Jim Sheehan

You may have seen the recent news item in *Swimming World* magazine where it was reported that FINA may be changing several of its technical swimming rules. FINA (Federation Internationale de Natation), the international governing body for aquatic sports, has authority and responsibility over Swimming, Diving, Water Polo, Synchronized Swimming, Open Water Swimming and Masters. These proposed changes include a rewrite of the backstroke turn rule to eliminate any mention of kicking and a revision to the breaststroke rules that would allow a single dolphin kick at the start and after each turn. USA Swimming normally adopts all changes to the FINA technical rules. While USA Swimming makes changes to its rule book at its annual House of Delegates meeting, FINA can only change its technical rules every four years. But before any proposed rule changes can be implemented, there is a process that must be followed. It all starts with a member Federation (i.e. country)

submitting a proposed rule change to the FINA Technical Swimming Committee. This committee has twelve members, each from a different federation. Chaired by Carol Zaleski of the United States, this group reviews and amends any rules submissions and then votes on the changes that it will recommend for approval. The proposed rule changes are then submitted to the FINA Bureau whose twenty-six members are the equivalent of a “board of directors” for FINA.

After the FINA Bureau has recommended for or against a rule change, it is then submitted to the FINA Technical Congress for their review and vote. The FINA Technical Congress consists of the 180+ federations that are members of FINA. This year, the Congress will be voting on the rule changes brought before them in July in Montreal, Canada in conjunction with the World Swimming Championships.

Once FINA has approved a change to the rules, the USA Swimming Rules & Regulations Committee will review the wording of the FINA changes. If appropriate, the committee will change the wording of the affected USA Swimming rules and make them part of the rule book as soon as practicable after the rule changes are approved by FINA.

The Referee and the Rules **by Anneliese Eggert**

A swimmer should be able to attend a meet anywhere in USA

Swimming and be assured that he or she will be judged fairly, equitably and with the same high standard of officiating. The person who has the most influence on the quality of officiating at a meet and how the rules are applied is the referee and that's why the combination of the referee and the rules is so important.

The USA Swimming rules are the same for all of us. They don't differ from one meet to another or from one region to another. But people differ, not only in their interpretation of the written rules but in the way they choose to apply or to NOT apply them.

Should the starter decide not to call a false start because it's only the first heat and they won't place anyway? Won't this swimmer's time be compared with that of swimmers in the second, third and subsequent heats, so shouldn't it be under the same conditions? And isn't the slowest swimmer entitled to the same officiating as the fastest?

Should the stroke & turn judge decide not to call an infraction because the swimmer really didn't get any advantage? Let me give you an example of that one. The most controversial call on the new backstroke turn is "flotation independent of the turn" ? right? How many times have you heard the argument "the swimmer gains no advantage from that so he shouldn't be disqualified?" Let me tell you the answer I gave to that question at a coaches' seminar:

The rules themselves, and I quote, "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." Most officials are NOT coaches. They are NOT experts in determining what makes one swimmer faster than another or what gives him an advantage. They are charged with applying the rules, as written, to all swimmers.

If we are experiencing inconsistency in application of the rules when they are exactly the same for everyone, imagine what it would be like if each stroke & turn could decide for himself what was "advantageous" or not!

If a rule seems unfair, get it changed! Rules are not static, they are dynamic. They change as new techniques are developed. Remember when they allowed no vertical motion in a breaststroke kick, or when the head couldn't go below the surface of the water at turns? Some of you may even remember when the butterfly was just a variation of the breaststroke. It wasn't legalized as a separate competitive stroke until the late 1950's!

Any member of USA Swimming can propose a rule change to be considered by the USA-S House of Delegates. Just remember when you propose a change that we have worked long and hard to bring the rules of FINA, USA-S and NCAA together! What we need to emphasize in each of our LSCs and at every meet we attend is that the rules should not be arbitrarily waived but must be applied fairly and consistently to all swimmers! So we need our other ingredient, the referee. USA Swimming Rule 102.13.1 says the referee "Shall have full authority over all officials and shall assign and instruct them; shall enforce all applicable rules and shall decide all questions relating to the

actual conduct of the meet, the final settlement of which is not otherwise assigned by said rules...."

Our rules give the referee a lot of authority and with that authority he can have a great impact on the consistency and the quality of officiating at a meet. He makes sure the rules are applied equitably and fairly, he sets the standard for officiating and greatly influences the atmosphere of the meet. Not only does he need a great deal of knowledge and experience to fulfill his duties but, as the highest ranking official, he (or she) needs the right attitude in order to run a meet successfully! One of the best quotes I've read was by Peter Drucker in Fortune Magazine: "Rank does not confer privilege or give power. It imposes responsibility."

Certainly that statement holds true for every referee. To put it simply, a swim meet reflects the "professionalism" of its referee, his knowledge, experience, preparation, leadership, his willingness to accept responsibility and his ability to make everyone work together as a team.

I figure a referee can either be a chicken or a duck. The referee who tries to do everything himself ends up looking like a chicken without a head and gets everyone else nervous and on edge in the process. Not an atmosphere conducive to good competition. The "duck type" on the other hand looks calm and confident on top, even though he may be paddling like mad underneath. His effort is a constructive one assigning, instructing and making sure everyone is doing their job well. The goal of every meet referee is to make himself obsolete, to get things running so smoothly that all he has to do is blow the whistle!

How do you do that? First, know the rules, all of them, the USA Swimming rules, your LSC rules and any special rules incorporated in your meet information sheet. Don't just learn the blue pages of the USA-S rules. The white pages (particularly Section 2) have a lot of rules that apply to swim meet administration. For instance, if your LSC does not have an adopted scratch rule, try using the scratch procedure for National Championships contained in Section 207.11.6.

Do you have pools in your LSC located at altitudes of 3,000 feet or more? Are they aware of the Altitude Time Adjustments shown in the Times Module Policy and Guidelines Manual?

What about the four-hour rule in Section 205.3.1 F? Does it apply to your meet? If it does, how are you going to handle it (fairly and equitably) if your meet is too long? You'd better spell out the conditions in your meet sheet!

Any special things that may become controversial should be covered in your meet sheet. Which is why I always suggest that you:

(1) select your meet referee well ahead of time, and (2) let him read your meet information *before* it's submitted for sanction. You'd be surprised how many problems you can *prevent* by that one step.

Once you know the rules, then what? Well, a referee is just like a swimmer. A swimmer can read about how to do the strokes in a book, but he's certainly not going to be very good until he actually gets in the water and works at it! So next, our referee should be experienced.

He should be familiar enough with swim meet procedures to be able to prevent problems from happening and to be able to fix whatever does go wrong. Today's referee needs more knowledge and experience than ever before.

Many of you have heard me describe the simplicity of swim meets when I first started officiating about 28 years ago. We had three dial watches on each lane (remember the old 30-second or 10-second watches?). That was the timing system! We had three balls ? blue, red and white. That was our judging and awards system! A blue ball was thrown in the lane of the swimmer who touched first, a red in the second place swimmer's lane, and a white in the third place lane. Then someone followed behind and handed the swimmer a matching color ribbon. Now that's a simple awards system, no middle man!

Compare that with the touchpads, scoreboards, push buttons, strobe lights and computers that are commonplace at most meets today and you'll also realize how much more complicated the job of the referee has become. Just remember that, in addition to familiarizing himself with all our modern swim meet gadgets, the referee must also stay "brushed up" on the basics and I do mean basics!

Let me tell you about an Officials Clinic and Novice Meet that Walt and I refereed the beginning of last year. During the clinic, we included sessions on manual deck-seeding of a meet, how to determine an official time from three watches, how to do "across-the-board" or, as some of you call it, "sweep judging," and how to use the ballot system to determine final placing when

there were discrepancies. Several people commented, "Oh, we'll never use that stuff. Our meet is computerized and we have automatic timing equipment!"

Well, of course you know what happened. The automatic timing equipment failed to arrive so we passed out three watches and assigned a couple of place judges. The computer, thank goodness, was up and running and we were about 5 minutes out from deck seeding the first events.

At this point, the only computer operator familiar with the program found out he was expected to enter the swimmers from individual cards, not consolidated entry forms. His comment was "I'm not doing a meet that way" and he walked out! We had a quick refresher on manual entry and seeding and the meet actually started on time! Even the ballot system proved to be a simple affair after a few basic procedures were installed and, at the end of the day, everyone agreed that swim meets can run smoothly without machines! So, as the referee, be aware of those old-fashioned basic procedures. You may be the only one around who knows them when everything goes wrong!

Another step before you actually referee a meet, know every other job on the deck! How can you instruct other officials and help them solve problems if you don't know what they are doing? Another local meet last year, deck-seeded, but we still ended up with empty lanes because the clerk of the course kept missing "non checked-in" swimmers on the check-in sheet! Having worked the position quite often, I could suggest some procedures that would prevent those errors and, sure enough, the problem disappeared.

But, let's assume you're a full-fledged certified, carded, knowledgeable and experienced referee. What would you do in preparation for your meet? We have often emphasized the referee's role in preparing for a swim meet and I don't mean washing your whites, sewing your patches on and polishing your whistle! I do mean the referee's coordination with the meet director, the need to become familiar with the conditions and restrictions of the pool, the need to make sure entries are being processed properly, etc. Those items are included in a sample "Referee's Reminder" list which has since been incorporated in your "Officiating Swimming" Handbook. By the way, I'd like you to add a couple of items to that checklist. Under "Facility", don't forget to check the water depth at the start end (or ends) and to make sure the blocks are the correct height for that depth. I won't spend anymore time now going over the other items in the checklist but I do want to emphasize that they are all important!

One of the most important is to make sure, before the meet, you are going to have enough officials. Swimmers are much more likely to be judged fairly when there is a full complement of officials on the deck rather than too few. Mistakes are more likely to happen when a turn judge is trying to watch 4 lanes turn at the same time and just catches a glimpse of something out of the corner of his eye. With too many lanes to watch, it's easy to miss the quick slip touch on the breast or fly and be convinced it was a one-hand touch. Remember our goal of consistency. If you really want to see a coach come unglued, see what happens when his swimmer is disqualified for something and the swimmer in the very next lane, who did the same thing, isn't!

I've known clubs with very few officials who have no trouble getting enough people for their meets because they work at the other clubs' meets and those officials feel obligated to return the favor. If it's a very large meet, you might even consider recruiting a second referee to help out on the deck when you're busy.

Which brings up another subject. I'm often asked about the differences between a meet referee, an administrative referee and a deck referee.

In your packet today, you have an "organizational chart" (to be published in the July issue of "Splash!") of a swim meet that uses all of them so, just briefly, let me describe what they do. The administrative referee oversees all of the "paperwork" procedures and problems at the meet, including the registration, entries, check-in and seeding, timing adjustments, results and preparation of finals sheets.

The deck referee handles the competition itself. All or a portion of the "on-deck" responsibilities. This is the most visible part of a referee's job and the only one most people are aware of. Both the administrative referee and deck referee are "assistant referees."

The meet referee is the head referee who oversees the total meet, coordinates all its various parts, and personally handles all of the out-of-the-ordinary problems that arise. One thing to keep in mind, even if you have the luxury of one or more referees to help you, there must be only one meet referee who has the final word on any decision and who bears the ultimate

responsibility for the meet, including the actions of the assistant referees and other officials!

Most of you are probably thinking you're lucky to get one referee for a meet so let's get on with the job from that viewpoint: You've performed all the items on your "pre-meet" check list, it's the day of the meet and you get to the pool at least an hour before the scheduled starting time. First, check the facility and equipment, those are the things it takes the longest to fix. The most common problem I've encountered lately is that they forgot to mark the lane lines at the 15-meter mark (49'2-1/2" from each end wall) in accordance with rule book section 103.15.2. Just a mark on the side of the pool is no longer sufficient. The lane line must be marked around the entire circumference of the float(s). Hopefully, your meet director remembered you told him to do that but if not, you'd better send somebody out for some bright colored tape immediately.

The other thing to watch for is blocks numbered in the wrong direction, i.e. right to left facing the course, not left to right as in many high school pools. Some of you may remember the true story I related last year when wrong numbering of the blocks created confusion between lanes 4 and 5. The starter and referee called a false start on the swimmer in lane 4. The referee (fairly new to the confusion of a very large meet), walked along the deck and told the swimmer behind the block *numbered* 4 that he was disqualified. An obvious error to those who saw the false start. Unfortunately, no one said anything until after the illegal swimmer had swum and the legal one had not! Now you've got a real problem. One that could have been prevented if, in preparation for the meet, the lanes had been

numbered correctly!

If you forget one little detail of preparation, Murphy's Law prevails. Whatever can go wrong, will!

Let's assume you've checked out your facility, the equipment operators are checking the timing system, the starter is checking the starting equipment, you've found no visible "safety hazards", the marshals are in place and warm-ups are going smoothly! Now is the time to meet with the rest of your "team" ? emphasis on "team!"

You all know you can't run a successful swim meet by yourself so now's the time to call on your leadership qualities and pull together your deck officials and "section leaders!" Make all of your other volunteer officials feel like a team member; instill a feeling that you are all there to support each other and work together to make this a successful meet for the swimmers. If you can pass on your attitude of "professionalism" to everyone else, you'll make your own job a lot easier and create a much better environment for the swimmers.

If you want to have this meet go smoothly, you've got to let people know what you expect of them and what they can expect from you! Tell them how you plan to do things and what they can do to help you and then don't forget to ask what you can do to make their job easier. A few examples:
Are you taking relay entries on the deck? Talk to your clerk of the course or computer entry people about setting a deadline for those entries and then make sure its announced periodically.
What procedures do you want followed for late entries or, in a

deck-seeded meet, what about swimmers that forget to check in? Make sure that your instructions are clear!!

At a recent meet, a friend of mine was clerk of the course. The meet was using continuous form cards generated by the computer. Since she was in a rush, she took a batch of cards to her husband and asked if he would "tear them" for her. You do know what happened, don't you? When she went back for them and asked where they were, he pointed to the garbage can where he had dutifully put them after he "tore them up!"

Are you using automatic or semi-automatic timing equipment? If you are, talk to your equipment operators regarding procedures to be followed if the primary system fails. Remember, the rule book says it is the referee's responsibility to determine if a malfunction has occurred. Make sure your timing judge knows the procedures for making a timing system adjustment if a malfunction does occur.

Talk to the desk people. What information will you provide to them on your copy of the heat sheet, program or whatever you call it in your area? Will you be taking "across-the-board" finishes? Will you be noting disqualifications? I always emphasize that if I have not signed a DQ slip, I want it brought back out to me for review.

It's always a good idea to tell your timing judge and timing equipment operators to let you know immediately if there is a pattern of inaccurate timing in any lane. At a meet last year (the same one with the clerk of course errors), we had a three-button semi-automatic timing system. One of the button pushers

in each lane also operated the back-up watch. Teams had been assigned to staff certain lanes so there was a continual rotation of new people into each lane. The second day of the meet, we suddenly noticed one lane where the watch time and one button was consistently nearly a full second faster than the others. We finally asked the head timer to investigate. It seemed the timer pushing the button and watch was brand new and thought that whenever the swimmer entered the area with the solid-colored red floats on the lane lines, you could stop your watch and push the button! Honest!! I guarantee all the stories I tell you are absolutely true! Well, needless to say we held a quick "retraining" session with that timer!

Those are just a few examples of why you want to maintain a constant rapport and communication with those overseeing various parts of the meet! When you meet with your team members, draw a clear line between the decisions you will expect them to make on their own and those that you want referred to you. In general, any matter within their jurisdiction that is clearly covered by the rules would be their decision, anything requiring judgments and decisions outside of their jurisdiction or that might set a precedent should be referred to you.

I can't emphasize enough the part about setting a precedent. Remember, the decisions you make on the first day of the meet establish a precedent for the rest of the meet. Swimmers are entitled to know that what you do for one swimmer you will, under the same circumstances, do for any other swimmer. Make those first decisions carefully! For the same reason, you will want your officials to keep you informed of the decisions they make so you can be sure the rules are being equitably and

consistently applied to all swimmers. This is also the best argument I can think of for having the same head referee for the entire meet if at all possible. If you find you do have to change referees between sessions or days of a meet, make sure that any precedents that are set are passed on from one to the other so decisions are made in a consistent manner. Remember, too, that the decisions you make may also affect more than just your meet. Haven't you ever had to turn down a swimmer's request, only to hear "but they let me do it last week!" The very thing we're trying to avoid, treating swimmers differently from meet to meet.

One of your most important meetings before the meet starts will be with the stroke & turn judges. Make sure they are up-to-date on all the rules and that they are interpreting them the same. If there is something you've been having trouble with in your area, like disqualifications for flotation on the backstroke turn, set some guidelines, some reference points for them to follow. You'd be amazed at how much a few well-chosen words at the beginning of the meet can help consistency.

Remind your stroke & turns to be especially sensitive when informing an 8 & under of a DQ. I had a complaint just last week from a coach regarding a stroke & turn who was extremely harsh when talking to the swimmers.

Remember, it is also the referee's responsibility to define the jurisdiction of the stroke & turns. If you're lucky enough to have one, you can turn this meeting over to your head stroke & turn or chief judge, but most of the time it will be your responsibility.

Before you actually start the meet, there is one more group that you want to make part of your team ? the coaches! Too often, there tends to be a "we vs. they" attitude between coaches and officials. There shouldn't be. We are all at a swim meet for the same reason. To see that the swimmers compete under the best and most equitable conditions we can provide! The best way to make them a part of your team is to have a coaches' meeting at the beginning of the meet and inform them of any conditions that will affect their swimmers What's the timeline for the meet? Will you post it? Is it just an estimate or will you make sure events don't start before the posted time? Which end of the pool will the 25-yard events start from? Will you call for swimmers that don't appear at the blocks? Will there be a lunch break?

Are there any changes in starting or DQ procedures? Remember that coaches don't like surprises!

Something else I've just started recently during the coaches meeting at "novice" and other beginning age-group meets. I've asked the coaches to acquaint themselves with the referee or referees who will be on deck and point them out to their swimmers. How many times have beginning swimmers become confused and not known who to turn to on the deck because their card wasn't there, they forgot what lane they were in, or someone else got on the blocks when they thought they were supposed to swim! I have asked them to please tell their swimmers, "If anything unusual happens, immediately tell the referee. He (or she) can tell you what lane you're in, make sure the right person is in the lane, or even hold up a heat until you

put on your suit (if you forgot it!) or change your suit if the one you had on suddenly ripped clear up the back!" We all know those things happen. How many of you have held up a meet to check pads, connections, etc., just to allow a swimmer time to correct or recuperate from some sudden catastrophe!

Another thing you may not have thought of. If you've defined some stroke guidelines for your stroke & turns, don't be afraid to also tell the coaches what you will be looking for.

I believe it is absolutely essential that coaches and officials communicate on stroke interpretations. After all, the coaches are the ones who teach the swimmers HOW to do the strokes. Officials, in turn, judge whether they are done legally. It seems only logical that coaches and officials should know each other's viewpoint. You can save a lot of protests that way and if you can establish a rapport with the coaches before the meet starts, you'll have taken a giant step toward making sure everything goes smoothly.

Okay, warm-ups are over and the pool has been cleared, you have met with everyone involved with running the meet and you're just five minutes from the starting time. Your timers are all in place? If you're like most of us and sometimes have trouble getting enough timers, this is a good time to play the national anthem anyway and run a time check that involves sounding the starting signal. That brings in the parents who have been hiding out in their cars until the last minute so you wouldn't ask them to time!

Now, we're ready and you proceed to put the first heat on the

blocks. How? I hope you also remembered to talk to your starter about the procedure you were going to use. The relationship between the starter and referee is one of the most important at a swim meet. It must be a true partnership with each acting as the "eyes and ears" for the other.

In traveling to different areas of the country, I have found to my surprise, that the procedure for putting the swimmers on the blocks and starting the race varies widely. For example, in some cases, the announcer asks the swimmers to step onto the blocks, in others the referee's whistle is used and, in still others, the referee asks them to step onto the blocks and then announces the distance and event before turning the swimmers over to the starter.

The USA Swimming rules do say that the *starter*, on receiving clearance from the referee, directs the swimmers to step onto the blocks. The rules also provide that the *starter*, again upon receiving a signal from the referee, assumes control of the swimmers and notifies them of the distance and event. Within those parameters, you can adopt any procedure that is comfortable.

My own preference is the method currently being used at National Championships: The referee checks to be sure the pool is clear and the swimmers in the next heat appear to be ready; the starter then verbally asks the swimmers to "step up." When the swimmers are on the blocks, both the referee and starter can check to be sure they are all there. Two sets of eyes are always better than one! If someone is missing, use whatever procedure you told the coaches you would use. At National

Championships, no such call is made but then those swimmers are a little more experienced than the 8 & under who is attending his first swim meet! After all the swimmers are ready, the referee blows the whistle and the starter begins his commands.

Remember the meet I had last year with the clerk of course errors and the brand new timer? Well, at that same meet, we were at this point when I suddenly realized that the computer operator had forgotten to "reseed" the event after having scratched the swimmers who weren't there! We were handed a very odd looking heat sheet that showed 6 swimmers in the first heat and 2 in the fastest heat! We did a quick reseed on the deck and only lost a couple of minutes! But, it sure proved that the referee also has to know the clerk of the course's job! Okay, we're ready to start the heat. This is the time to be especially alert! Watch the start and be sure that nothing distracts you. One of life's most embarrassing moments, and a real potential problem, is when the starter has given his commands and is ready to start. Someone taps you on the shoulder (probably the clerk of the course!) and you turn around momentarily, the starting signal goes off, everyone in the stands groans. There has been a flagrant false start, the starter can't call it without your concurrence and you didn't see it! Don't let that happen to you!

Watch and listen at and after the start! More problems seem to occur at the start of a race than at any other time. The most common interference *before* the start is from someone using a flash in the stands. The best time to make an announcement asking people not to use a flash at the start is before it causes a false start, not after. Every referee cringes when he has just

disqualified a swimmer for a false start and the announcer decides that this is the best time to make his announcement regarding camera flashes! Whether it had anything to do with the start or not, you can be sure you're going to have a coach down on the deck saying it did!

Same meet, next event (another true story). The clerk came running up to tell me that they had scratched a swimmer in error so you suddenly have a 7-swimmer heat in a 6-lane pool. If you're lucky, the clerk will also have mistakenly seeded in a swimmer who is not there so you can just substitute your 7th swimmer. But chances are you'll again have to do some shuffling, no problem ? right? You know how to seed so you calmly ask the swimmers in Lanes 1 and 6 to swim in newly created Heat 1A with your left-out swimmer and everybody's happy again.

But, don't you think it may be time to talk to the clerk of the course? Remember your leadership role.

This is not the time to yell, scream, rant and rave and generally read the clerk the "riot act." You may suddenly find yourself *without* a clerk of the course. This is the time, instead, to say "What can we do to keep these errors from happening again?" From your own experience, you'll probably be able to deduce why the mistakes were made and suggest some safeguards to prevent them.

Same meet, honest, but several events later. *Haven't you ever had one of those "nightmare" meets?* It is an 8 & under, 25 yard event. The off-duty starter is at the finish end, using the starting mike to alert the timers. He inadvertently activates the

recall signal when the heat has about 10 yards to go. Some of the swimmers sort of look up to see what happened, but you know how hard it is to stop 8 & unders, they all finish the race. Unfortunately, half of the lane timers, having heard the recall, don't push their buttons or stop their watches. Others do, now what?

I can guarantee that by this time, at least 4 irate coaches have descended on the referee, ready to do battle! Don't hesitate. In your very calmest voice, have the announcer ask that all swimmers that were in that heat, and their coaches, meet you off the deck in a corner of the pool. Hopefully, you have another referee who can take over getting the next heat in the water while you resolve the issue. When everyone has assembled, tell them which lanes have valid times and which do not and, since you don't actually know how much each swimmer was affected, give them all the same opportunity. They may reswim the heat or retain the time they had in the original heat (if they had one). Make it clear that IF they reswim the heat, only the reswim time will count.

This gives each swimmer, and his coach, the chance to confer and make their own decision and you will have resolved the problem before it resulted in a protest.

The swimmers are finally off to a fair start but don't think it's time to relax. Watch the pool! During a race always be aware of what's going on in and around the pool. Are your stroke & turn judges positioned correctly for the stroke being watched? Is anything unusual happening with one of the swimmers? (Have you ever come to the end of a race and realized you were

missing a swimmer? Usually, it's because they decided to quit and climb out at the other end, but you sure feel foolish if you haven't seen it.) Watch to make sure the timers are alert and coming up to the finish at the right time. In a distance race, I always keep track of all the swimmers at each turn, then if the timers don't realize the swimmer is finishing, I can have the starter alert them in time. We just did a Master's National meet last week and when you have swimmers ranging from 50 to 90 in a heat of 1650's, you know how important it is to know what lap each of them is on!

While watching the pool, remember that if you decide to call an infraction that you personally observe, you have to raise your hand too! Which brings us to a rather "ticklish" question? under what conditions would you, as the referee, call a stroke or turn infraction?

In answer to that question, I can only give you my philosophy: Assuming that the deck was uniformly covered by stroke & turn judges of equal competence, I, as the referee, would only call flagrant violations that were missed by the stroke or turn judge. The type that can be seen from anywhere around the pool in any lane, like the swimmer who starts freestyle in a butterfly or breaststroke event or the I.M.'er who does the strokes in the wrong order. The rule book tells us that "The referee shall insure that all swimmers shall have fair, equitable, and uniform conditions of judging" (102.13.5 Jurisdiction of Stroke and Turn Judges). If, as referee, I called EVERY infraction that I saw right under my nose in the lanes next to me, I would be subjecting those lanes to double the stroke & turn coverage that the other side of the pool had, certainly not a fair or

uniform condition of judging.

To maintain that "fair and uniform" judging, OBSERVE THE WAY YOUR DECK OFFICIALS ARE DOING THEIR JOB! Are they competent and conscientious? Could you wholeheartedly vouch for their actions and decisions, you may be asked to! If you could not, don't hesitate to tactfully and patiently offer constructive criticism and instruction. BUT, if the official is still not doing an adequate job, he must be replaced! If your only choice is between "bruising someone's ego" or allowing an incompetent official to remain on the deck, your decision must be based on what's best for the competitors.

Another ticklish question ? if you find one judge is writing all or nearly all of the disqualifications, watch the pool and find out why. If you think the calls being made are incorrect (maybe this judge wasn't at the backstroke briefing!), you must over-rule them and re-instruct or remove the official. BUT, as is more likely, if you find this is actually your most competent judge and the other judges are NOT calling some of the infractions they should be, you have a more difficult situation.

Do you have enough people to replace the other stroke & turns? Can you rearrange your assignments to put someone of equal ability on the other half of the pool to "balance the deck?" If you can't, you may have to replace that one really competent judge and have him or her work with each of the other judges in turn to raise their level of competence. "Balancing the deck" can be one of your most difficult problems as a referee, particularly if you are short of officials. Whatever your solution to this problem, if it provides "fair, equitable and uniform conditions of

judging," it will probably be right.

By the way, that brings me to another difference that I have found in various parts of the country. Some areas do not give the DQ slips to the referee before they go into the desk and other areas do not use DQ slips at all. Sections 102.13.3 and .4 do require that stroke or turn judges "shall report any violations to the referee on signed slips detailing the event, the heat number, the lane number and the infraction." If, as the referee, you do not see each disqualification, how are you going to know if your deck is balanced and if the stroke & turn judges are doing their job properly? (I once got a slip from what I thought was an experienced stroke & turn who disqualified a swimmer because he started out breaststroke in a freestyle event and then switched to freestyle!) For the swimmers' sakes, review all DQ's before confirming them.

Everything seems to be going fine. You're running a 10 & under event when suddenly, and this has probably happened to you too, a cute little 5-year old pops up at your elbow and says "somebody just swam in my lane!" Oops! Well, at least her coach must have told her who to talk to! You quickly have your announcer ask that the "swimmer who just swam in Heat 2, Lane 5, please report to the referee." The swimmer appears. This one is a 10-year old who was supposed to have swum in Heat 7 (unfortunately the clerk of course's 7 looked like a 2!). Do you subject the 5-year old to swimming in Heat 7 with the fastest 10-year olds? Do you disqualify the swimmer who swam in Heat 2 by mistake? I hope you know the answer to both of those questions is ? No! In the case of the 5-year old, you'll again pull the swimmers from Lanes 1 and 6 (or 1 and 8 in an 8-lane pool) in

Heat 3 and create a Heat 2A so she can swim with her peers. The 10-year old is not disqualified because rule book Section 102.17.2A says that it is the head lane timer's responsibility to determine "that the swimmer is in the correct lane, heat and event."

At this point, the announcer reminds the coaches that their relay cards are due in 15 minutes. Very often, this is when a coach comes up and says, "I only have three 11-12 boys, but I have a good 10-year old, he can 'swim up' in age in a relay, can't he?" The answer again is ? No. Rule book Section 205.2.4 (I told you to read Section 2) says, "Participants must swim in their respective age brackets." If the event had originally been scheduled as a 12 & under relay, the 10-year old would have been eligible.

Most of the time, if you've done all the things we've talked about, you won't have any protests or arguments. BUT, remember Murphy's Law chances are you will at some time have to handle a protest, verbal or written.

Protests will usually start with a coach charging down the deck vehemently protesting some disqualification or you could be faced with an emotional and often tearful appeal by a swimmer and parent against your decision or that of another official. Be careful!

Did you know that studies have shown that our opinion of a person is formed in the first 10 to 15 seconds and that opinion influences our subsequent actions or judgments! Keep an open mind. Just because the coach yelled at you, don't make a snap

judgment against him. Remember, you're the judge, not an adversary! Judges listen carefully to both sides of an argument, consider those arguments within the framework of any laws (or rules) that apply and only then do they reach a decision.

With the tearful swimmer, your first instinct is to react sympathetically and benevolently but your decision here too must be based on what happened and the rules that apply. No matter how outlandish the argument seems.

Let's talk a little bit about the referee's authority and responsibility for handling protests: The irate coach complaining about a disqualification is the most common type of protest. Section 102.23.1 in the USA-S rule book says: "Protests against the judgment decisions of starters, stroke, turn, place and relay take-off judges can only be considered by the referee and the referee's decision shall be final."

This is one reason I am not in favor of referees acting in the dual capacity of a stroke and turn judge at a meet. The referee's integrity as an appeals judge, not a participant, in stroke and turn judgment calls should be protected.

How about our coach who is protesting a stroke & turn call. How should that be handled? Off the deck with courtesy, patience and common sense. If the coach is really upset, allow him to calm down first. You can do this a couple of ways:

- (1) Let him talk, while you listen. Often this is all that is needed and you will find you can then discuss the matter calmly;
- (2) If that doesn't work, take him for a walk, still listening.

(Assuming you have that second referee around to keep the meet

going while you do this.);

(3) If that doesn't work either, after hearing his arguments, tell him you will be glad to look into it and report back to him. This gives the coach a "cooling-off" period, and at the same time allows you time to consider the protest and check out the facts. You'll notice that all three of those steps have one thing in common ? listening. Think about your own feelings in a similar situation you're never quite as mad at the person who turns you down if you know they have seriously considered your opinions. Extend the same courtesy to protesters at a swim meet. Now, let's get back to our protest. Do you have the authority to over-rule a judgment call? Yes. The referee always has the power to overrule an official on any infraction he personally observes (102.11.1).

If you didn't see the infraction, you should thoroughly investigate the disqualification and, only if a rule was incorrectly applied or it appears that a mistake was made, should you overrule it. How about videos? These days nearly every protest includes the statement "but I have a video that shows he didn't do it!" No video has any official standing at a USA Swimming meet!

One final admonition. Don't be trapped into upholding a decision only because your ego is on the line and you don't want to admit a mistake may have been made. You are not the most important person at a swim meet, neither are the coaches, the parents or the stroke & turn judges. The most important persons at a swim meet are the swimmers. ALL of them and decisions should always be made in the context of providing "fair and equitable conditions of competition" for them!

When you have made your decision regarding the protest, inform the coach. This is where your knowledge, experience and attitude all come together. Knowledge and experience give you the basis for making your judgment. Attitude allows you to render that judgment without making everybody angrier than they were to begin with!

Handling the protests and problems that arise at a swim meet can be a lonely process for the referee who has only his own knowledge and experience to rely on. If you have a really difficult problem or one where you need additional information, don't forget to use all of the resources you have at a meet. For instance, what if the weather conditions at the meet become really bad ? lightning, strong winds, or other conditions that could make it unsafe to continue. Section 102.7.4B of the rule book allows the referee, in his sole discretion, to suspend a meet until conditions warrant continuance. It also says "the referee may cancel the meet or event, or postpone it to a future date or time, with the approval of the meet committee". Did you know that there is no definition for the "meet committee" in the blue pages of the rule book? I think that's a very fortunate oversight. This way, the referee can decide who the "meet committee" should be for any particular problem; selecting those people with the most expertise in the matter to be considered. In the case of canceling or postponing a meet, you would probably want to include representatives of the host club and those coaches who have swimmers entered in the meet. When people are allowed to participate in a decision, they are much less likely to protest it.

How about eligibility rules and protests. At a local meet,

protests against the eligibility of a swimmer to compete would be handled under rule 102.23.2 under which that ambiguous "meet jury" decides whether the swimmer may compete under protest. National Championship rules provide for an Eligibility Jury (207.11.4) to whom protests may be submitted, accompanied by a \$50 fee. The fee is returned if the protest is upheld.

Protests arising from the competition itself are covered under Section 102.11.4B. These must be made within 30 minutes of the race and the rule says "if the protest is not resolved immediately, the protester shall at that time file a written protest with the chairman of the LSC, or his/her representative, having jurisdiction over the event." Now that rule doesn't tell you the best way to "resolve the protest immediately" so the referee, who can decide any issue not covered by the rules, can either handle the matter himself or borrow another committee from the National Championship rules, the Technical Jury.

This can be an invaluable tool, if there is no clear cut rule which applies to the protest. If you feel the problem requires more than one point of view and a consensus of opinions, convene a Technical Jury (207.11.5). Select at least one coach, one athlete and up to three other people (I personally prefer two coaches, one athlete, and two officials). Of course, be sure to pick people who have no stake in the matter and, if you can, people whom the protesting party respects. Let the jury consider all the circumstances and reach a decision. Usually the protester will accept the decision since you've given him a fair hearing and you've managed to resolve the protest immediately with no further need for appeal.

Well, you'll be happy to know we've come to the end of our swim meet all problems and protests have been resolved and you can

now breathe your sigh of relief. As you do, remember to thank all those members of your team who helped make your job easier and remember that any problems that you did have, and handled, added to your knowledge and experience. They have helped to make you a more competent and "professional" official. Truly competent officials don't let their ego get in the way of doing a good job; truly competent officials are committed to learning the rules thoroughly and applying them fairly and consistently to all swimmers. They are never afraid to acknowledge a mistake if one has been made and they always give the benefit of any doubt to the swimmer.

A true professional learns his job well, constantly increases his knowledge through continuing education, learns from his experiences, uses his knowledge and experience wisely, and takes pride in a job well done! Under that criteria, we as officials, are true professionals and if we always keep that in mind we will gain the respect of parents and coaches and, most important, our swimmers will benefit greatly!

SIERRA NEVADA SWIMMING LSC BOARD MEETING

Please plan to attend this LSC Board Meeting and get involved!

Meeting Date: Tuesday, March 29, 2016

Time: 7:00 PM

Quarterly Meeting: Fourth meeting of the 2016 Swimming Year

Hosted by: Sierra Nevada Swimming

Location: **Mike Shellito Indoor Pool**

10210 Fairway Drive
Roseville CA 95678

Google Directions:

<http://maps.google.com/maps?hl=en&rlz=&q=10210+Fairway+Drive+%09%09%09%09+Roseville+CA+%C2%A095678&um=1&ie=UTF-8&hq=&hnear=0x809b21eebffa01b:0x21418f190250e36a,10210+Fairway+Dr,+Roseville,+CA+95678&gl=us&daddr=10210%20Fairway%20Dr,%20Roseville,%20CA%2095678&sa=X&ei=MpxHUNWICJHSiAL-yoHYDw&ved=0CCIQwwUwAA>

Contact Information: Denna Culpepper <dennac@snswimming.org>

Remember: Silence is consent!!

**IF YOUR TEAM WOULD LIKE TO HOST A
STROKE AND TURN CLINIC FOR THE 2016
SWIMMING YEAR PLEASE CONTACT**

BILL ROSE AT:
<cbrose@omsoft.com>

The new 2016 swimming year started on September 1st, and Stroke and Turn Clinics have been offered at many places, throughout our LSC. There is an “Athlete Protection Training” online program and a Criminal Background Check, that will be required for all first time non-athlete volunteers, Officials and Coaches, before your 2016 USA Swimming membership becomes valid.

After the 2016 USA Swimming Convention, there were many of the yearly required clinics offered. At this time, many clubs are trying to figure when to offer just such a clinic for their Officials, who have not attended a clinic yet for this swimming year.

REMEMBER, when we host clinics in your neighborhood, attend this yearly required clinic. Don't wait for us to come back, we might not be able to come back a second time.

ALL Officials have to attend a yearly clinics!!

Future Administrative Official Clinics on the Calendar

There are ZERO 2016 Admin Official Clinics on the calendar.

Future Stroke and Turn Clinics on the Calendar

There are ZERO 2016 Stroke and Turn Clinics on the calendar.

The online test is an every other year requirement.

FOR THE **2016** USA SWIMMING YEAR,
THERE ARE **10 STROKE AND TURN JUDGES** WHO NEEDS TO
COMPLETE THE STROKE AND TURN/TIMER RE-
CERTIFICATION TEST!! IN ADDITION THERE IS
1 REFEREE WHO HAS TO COMPLETE THEIR REFEREE RE-
CERTIFICATION TESTS. THERE ARE ALSO **3 CERTIFIED**
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIALS WHO HAVE TO COMPLETE
THEIR RE-CERTIFICATION AO TEST

The 2015 Rulebook will be the only book used for ALL the online tests, until April 15, 2016!!

The 2015 Rulebook can be downloaded from the USA Swimming web site if you like, but in most cases you do not need the whole Rulebook for your test. The Rules and Regulations is one book that can be seen on the web site, in it's entirety, for free. The Rulebook can be found on the USA Swimming web site by going to the home page of the USA Swimming web site, then click on **About** (at the top) , then click on **Rules & Regulations** and finally click under **USA Swimming Rulebook**.

REMEMBER PAST CERTIFIED OFFICIALS

After you have attended your 2016 Swimming Clinic, you will receive a message from me reminding you about taking an online test if this is your year to take the re-certification test. This is one of the

requirements to complete in order to be certified to work the deck after January 1, 2016.

TAKE YOUR 2016 ONLINE TESTS NOW

Using the 2015 Rules and Regulations.

Officials: When taking your on-line tests, please...

TAKING THE ON-LINE SWIMMING TESTS

<http://www.usaswimming.org>

1. Once you are on the USA Swimming web site, look for “**Sign In**” at the top of the web page and then click on **Sign In**.
2. Fill in the information needed to become a member and then click on **Log In**. This step is only done the first time you sign-in on the USA Swimming web site.
3. When you return to the USA Swimming web page, click on **MEMBER RESOURCES** at the top of the web page.
4. Look for **Officials** in the middle of the web page, then click on **Testing & Certification**.
5. You will now get a page that has in the center of the page a statement which says, “**INSTRUCTIONS TO ‘SIGN IN’ TO TAKE THE OFFICIALS TESTS.**” You have two choices: to click on [this link](#) to create an account or to click [this link](#) to be automatically redirected to the Online Test Sign-in page. Look for the button, saying **START THE TEST** at the bottom of this screen. On my screen the blue changes to red.
6. Pick the test you want to take by selecting a test to start. Click on **Select A Test** and drag your mouse until the test you want is highlighted. In the center of the page, you will find “**Select A Test**.” Make sure your pick is the correct one, there are 32 tests to choose. In most cases, your test will either be a Certification test or a Re- Certification test. You will then click on the “**Start Test**” button, but it will go to your personal history page. Make any necessary changes and click “**Save Information & Proceed to Test**.” If no changes are necessary, then you will still click on the “**Save Information & Proceed to Test**” button at the bottom of the

page.

7. Now click on **Start Test** button.

You now have 2 choices: **Choice one** is to click on “**Print Blank Version of Test.**” You will print a version of the test, so you can study at your leisure and mark up your printed version of the test with the correct answers, which can be found in your current Rulebook. When you click on this choice, you will get a PDF copy of the test. You have to go one step further to print the test and that is to look for the small icon of a printer in the top left hand corner of the PDF document. **Choice two** is to click on “**Next.**” If you now click on “**Next,**” you will see the first question of your test. If you don't have time to finish the whole test, one question at a time, make sure you click on “**Save and Restart Later.**” The web site will remember which test you have chosen **only** if you have clicked on “**Save and Restart Later**”.

I have heard that if you answer just the first question before you click on “**Save and Restart Later**” and then **Logoff**, you will be assured of returning to this same test the next time you have more time to spend completing the test. The tests, in most cases, have the questions in the same order, but the answers will be randomized. In just a few of the tests, some of the questions are randomized also.

Looking at the first question, answer the multiple-choice answer. When completed with the first question, click on the “**Next**” button. If you have to stop for some reason and start later, click on the “**Save & Restart Later**” button.

8. Click **Logoff** at the top of the web page, if you want to take the test off line first.

9. Take the test off line at your leisure by using the printed version of your test.

10. When you are ready to fill-in the blanks, you will need to login on the USA Swimming web site where you will be on the USA Swimming [Home page](#), then you will click on [Member Resources](#), then go to [Officials](#), where you will click on [Testing & Certification](#) and now go to [Online Officials Test](#). You should see **CHOOSE A TEST TO START** at the bottom of the page. Click on this. This is your personal page listing the tests you have taken or signed up to take. What you are looking for is the **Prior Test List**. When you find the test that needs to be taken, click on “**Resume.**” You will notice the time and date when the test was saved. You will also see places to click, such as **Resume, Delete, Print Blank Test** or **Print Answer Sheet**. By clicking on **Resume**, you will be able to put your correct answers to the test that was saved and waiting for it's answers. When you resume your test at a later date, the system will take you to the first question. If you want to go to where you left off, type in the number of the question that you want to start with, in the little box and click on the “**Go**” button. It will take you directly to the first question in need of an answer. **You might want to check and make sure the answers are in the order that they are listed on your printed test. If you didn't save and restart later correctly, most of the time the questions will be in the same order, but the multiple choice answers might be**

randomized. Double check your choices.

Now you can continue to answer the questions in the same fashion.

11. **Please check and make sure you have answered all the answers correctly.**

When you get to the last question on the test, you can double check by clicking on the “**Previous**” button. If you click on the “**Save & Restart Later**” button, you may want to double check later.

12. When you have **double-checked** your answers, submit for grading by clicking on the “**End Test/Submit for Grading**” button. If you click on the “**End Test/Submit for Grading**” button, you will be finished with this test and receive a grade. Before your test will be graded, another window will show up on your computer screen, when it asks you if you are sure you want to end this test? Just click on **OK**. The LSC Officials Chair will receive the results at the same moment the test taker receives their score, which is seconds after the “**End Test/Submit for Grading**” button is clicked.

13. Remember: Haste makes waste or Measure twice and cut once. Once you have submitted your answers, it is too late for changes.

14. You will get immediate results as well as the LSC Officials' Chairperson. Now the screen that shows is your completed test results. You can review your results by clicking on “**Review Results**.” Your computer will download a PDF copy of the test. You will have to retrieve it where downloads are found on your computer. If you click on “**Return to Test Selection**” you will return to the location where all of the tests you have taken are kept. This is the window where you selected the test to start this test taking process. You can review the test that was just taken by clicking on “**View**” which can be found on the right of the screen, on the same line as this most recent taken test.

Remember, each time you take another test, you will have to answer all the same information that was asked of you the first time, when you selected a test and started that test.

15. Click **Logoff** at the top of the web page when you are finished.

COMMON MISTAKES

DID YOU CHECK TO MAKE SURE THAT YOU HAVE MARKED YOUR RESPONSES ON THE SAME TEST THAT YOU DOWNLOADED?

WERE THE MULTIPLE CHOICE ANSWERS IN THE SAME SPOT AS THE TEST YOU DOWNLOADED?

YOU CAN GO BACK AND CHECK ANY QUESTION BY CLICKING ON “GO” AFTER YOU INPUT THE NUMBER OF THE QUESTION YOU WANT TO CHECK.

MAKE SURE YOU HAVE DOUBLE CHECKED YOUR RESPONSES BEFORE YOU CLICK ON SUBMIT!!

IF YOUR TEAM WOULD LIKE TO HOST A STROKE AND TURN CLINIC FOR THE NEW YEAR, PLEASE CONTACT

BILL ROSE AT:
<cbrose@omsoft.com>

ALL Officials have to attend a yearly clinic!!

Besides attending a clinic, paying your non-athlete fees, completing or renewing your Criminal Background Check and completing your Athlete Protection Training, there is another requirement for some of you, if this is your year!!

That requirement is taking your on-line re-certification test.

The 2015 Rules and Regulations are now in effect for all on-line tests.

Now
that you are certified, you may work other USA Swimming, LSC's or Sierra Nevada Swimming meets in **March of 2016**

Meet Date: March 4-6, 2016

Type of Meet: Sierra Nevada 14 & under Junior Olympics

Hosted by: California Capital Aquatics

Location: Roseville Aquatic Center
Woodcreek High School
3051 Woodcreek Oaks Blvd.
Roseville, CA

Directions: Use the website below to look at the map of the area around Woodcreek High School. <http://maps.citysearch.com/location/1238713?>

Contact Information: Alex Ongaco at: <timbug_runtmc@yahoo.com>

Meet Date: March 19-20, 2016

Type of Meet: Pacific Swimming Zone-4 Short Course Age Group Open Meet

Hosted by: Northern Nevada Aquatics

Location: Fernley Swim Pool
300 Cottonwood Lane
Fernley NV 89408
(775) 575-2121.

Directions: Use the website below to look at a map of the area around **the Fernly Swimming Pool**

<https://www.google.com/maps/dir/'/Fernley+Swimming+Pool+Fernley,+NV/@39.5937466,-119.3173656,12z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m8!4m7!1m0!1m5!1m1!1s0x8098e7e933ab1341:0x724977dea2b25ae6!2m2!1d-119.2473256!2d39.5937676>

Contact Information: Meet Director: Marjorie Turner – 775-331-0123,
<naswimmeet@gmail.com>

Meet Date: March 19-21, 2016

Type of Meet: South Western Age Group Regionals (SCY Trials and Finals)

Hosted by: Clovis Swim Club

Location: CLOVIS NORTH AQUATICS COMPLEX
(CLOVIS NORTH HIGH SCHOOL)
2770 E International Ave.
Fresno, CA 93730

Directions: Use the website below to look at a map of the area around CLOVIS NORTH AQUATICS COMPLEX

<https://www.google.com/maps/dir/'/2770+E+International+Ave,+Fresno,+CA+93730/@36.8901155,-119.7388635,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m8!4m7!1m0!1m5!1m1!1s0x809443a831da5be9:0xb75adecc6bbb5685!2m2!1d-119.7366748!2d36.8901155>

Contact Information: Mark Bennett (559) 327-9247 <coachmark76@gmail.com>
Jim Patterson <jasdpatterson@comcast.net>
Mark Brown <mark.brown.15@gmail.com>

Meet Date: March 26, 2016

Type of Meet: First Chance Long Course C/B/A+ Meet

Hosted by: Bulldog Swim Club

Location: CSM Aquatic Center
1700 W. Hillsdale Blvd, Building #5,
San Mateo, CA 94402

Directions: From Hwy 280: take Hwy 92 east towards San Mateo, West Hillsdale Blvd. exit. Turn left at signal and proceed uphill through 2nd and 3rd sets of traffic lights. Turn right onto campus at College Heights Drive. From Hwy 101: take Hwy 92 west towards Half Moon Bay, West Hillsdale Blvd exit. Turn right and proceed up hill through 2nd and 3rd sets of traffic lights. Turn right onto campus at College Heights Drive. There is a drop off area at BLDG. #5 near the flagpoles

Google Directions: Use the website below to look at a map of the area around the CSM Aquatic Center.

<https://www.google.com/maps/dir/'/1700+W.+HILLSDALE+BLVD,+BUILDING+%235,+SAN+MATEO,+CA+94402/@37.5342444,-122.4052173,12z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m8!4m7!1m0!1m5!1m1!1s0x808f9e35c07d9d6d:0xd5ce>

[202f11dd8539!2m2!1d-122.3351773!2d37.5342651](https://www.google.com/maps/dir/'/4455+Black+Ave,+Pleasanton,+CA+94566/@37.6732815,-121.8778006,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m8!4m7!1m0!1m5!1m1!1s0x808fe90a49964107:0x9b23396b4c1270f!2m2!1d-122.3351773!2d37.5342651)

Contact Information: Meet Director: Jim Stretch –stretchj@smccd.edu

Meet Date: March 31 to April 3, 2016

Type of Meet: Speedo Short Course Far Western Championships

Hosted by: Pleasanton Seahawks

Location: Dolores Bengtson Aquatic Center
4455 Black Avenue
Pleasanton, CA 94588

Directions: From Northbound or Southbound Highway 680: Exit Stoneridge Drive and go East (away from hills). Go 1/2 mile and turn right on Hopyard Road. Go a few miles and turn left on Black Avenue. Pool about 1 1/2 miles down on left. From Eastbound or Westbound Highway 580: Exit Santa Rita and go South. Drive about 2 miles and turn right onto Black Avenue. Pool is on the right.

Google Directions: Use the website below to look at a map of the area around the Dolores Bengtson Aquatic Center,

<https://www.google.com/maps/dir/'/4455+Black+Ave,+Pleasanton,+CA+94566/@37.6732815,-121.8778006,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m8!4m7!1m0!1m5!1m1!1s0x808fe90a49964107:0x9b23396b4c1270f!2m2!1d-121.8756119!2d37.6732815>

Contact Information: Meet Director: Rani Mukkamala
<meetchief@pleasantonseahawks.org>

Officials: Ask your questions!!

- changed March 1, 2016 -

Often Asked Questions by USA Swimming Officials

I would like to get an application for N 2 Certification. I don't know what the next event that I am able to be evaluated at is. Please advise.

In our LSC, we only have two (2) Official Qualifying Meets (OQM) a year. They are the Summer Sanders Junior Plus Meet the first part of June (this year the meet is June 9-12, 2016)

and the Sierra Nevada LC Championships, now called the Bill Rose Classic (this year it is in Redding and falls on July 14-17, 2016). The Meet Announcements, Applications to Officiate and the Request for Evaluation are not available yet. Since you are on my mailing list, you will receive these documents when they are available. It is important that you apply to work and request an evaluation when they are available. It is also important that you work at least four sessions of the meet, so that the three sessions you will be evaluated, will be valid.

There are other LSC's that have Official Qualifying Meets, like Pacific Swimming. You might check the list of OQM's on the USA Swimming website.

[http://www.usaswimming.org/_Rainbow/Documents/344e60fa-79ac-413a-be60-9cf811b91d9c/Directory1%20\[Compatibility%20Mode\].pdf](http://www.usaswimming.org/_Rainbow/Documents/344e60fa-79ac-413a-be60-9cf811b91d9c/Directory1%20[Compatibility%20Mode].pdf)

I believe that Pacific Swimming's Far Western Meet at the end of March will be an Officials Qualifying Meet.

A procedural question. . . Am I able to complete some of the 6 training sessions prior to completing the online tests?

Yes, you may complete some of the 6 training sessions before you do your test, but doing the test will allow you to know what to look for in some cases.

One more question, what are the arrangements that need to be made in order to let the officials at the meet know I'd like to attend in advance (if any)?

Usually, when you want to attend a meet in our LSC to work your training sessions, you will just show up, sign-in, attend the pre-session briefing, be assigned a certified Official to work with during the session and then when the session is over, you will have the Meet Referee initial and date the SN Training Slip. If you want to attend a certain meet, I can let you know who the Meet Referee might be, so you can write a note in advance to let the Meet Referee know you are coming.

I never received my 2016 Non-Athlete Registration Card that I paid for at the January 9th Clinic in Davis. Do we need to download them from the USA Swimming website or do they get sent out in the mail? Is this mandatory to have on hand when officiating or is the Sierra Nevada Official Card sufficient enough?

As I mentioned at the clinic you attended on January 9th and other messages that I have sent out, Sierra Nevada Swimming will **NOT** be using the "green" USA Swimming Membership Card this year as verification that you are indeed an Official. All that card shows anyone who is looking at it is that the person is a member of USA Swimming for the current year, with the current expiration dates for the Criminal Background Check and the Athlete Protection Training. This card does not show if the USA Swimming non-athlete member is certified as an Official.

At all Sierra Nevada Swimming meets, the Meet Referee or his/her designee should look at your 2016 Certification Card, which was sent to you and should have been in your computer's

inbox on January 11, 2016.

For some of the LSC's, like Pacific Swimming, I have heard that they want to see the "green" 2016 USA Swimming Membership Card. If these LSC's would look at the current certification card, they would see that the expiration dates for non-athlete member's registration, Criminal Background Check and Athlete Protection Training appear, as well as the current S/T, Starter or Referee certifications (TR or CE).

It was expensive for us to send these Membership cards to the individual non-athlete member's homes, sometimes multiple times when their Criminal Background Check would expire during the year. Probably most important, it was not showing whether the non-member was indeed a certified Official. This is work for me, but at least I know that these cards are up to date every day, since I check for any additional completed requirements by the non-certified Official every morning.

So, to wrap this up, there are two cards, the "green" 2016 USA Swimming Membership Card and the 2016 Certification Card. You should have already received this Certification Card on January 11th. If not, you can locate and print this card yourself, by following these steps:

Sign-in onto the USA Swimming website and go to **Member Resources** then **Officials** then **Officials Tracking System** then **My Certification Card**. When I clicked on **My Certification Card**, I got a downloaded copy of my card on my computer, which I printed and had laminated.

You can also locate your "green" 2016 USA Swimming Membership Card by following the easy steps included on my message of January 18, 2016. I will forward that message to you again.

SWIMMING SITUATIONS
- changed March 1, 2016 -

1. A swimmer misses her heat because she states that the Timer told her that it was Heat #4 instead of her heat (Heat #5, the final heat of the event). The Coach files a written protest. What should the Referee do?

Recommended Resolution: If the Meet Referee determines that the Head Lane Timer did misinform the swimmer, she may choose to allow swimmer to swim in a later heat. However, the Head Lane Timer has the responsibility to see if the correct swimmer is present and in the correct lane when the heat is preparing to move to the starting blocks.

Applicable Rules: 102.11.1, 102.17.2A

2. The backstroke flags break and fall into the pool during the 200-meter backstroke event. The Stroke Judges on each side of the pool quickly pull the flags clear of the lanes before they physically interfere with any swimmer. The Coach of the second place finisher in the heat files a written protest, saying that his swimmer was at a disadvantage because he couldn't properly judge the distance to the end of the course. What should the Referee do?

Recommended Resolution: The protest should be upheld and all swimmers offered a re-swim.

Applicable Rules: 102.22.9, 102.11.1, 103.15

3. You are the Referee at an AA preliminary/finals championship meet. You and a group of Judges go to a local restaurant between preliminaries and finals. Two people order beer with their sandwiches. What do you do as the Referee?

Recommended Resolution: This is not covered by the rules but the "unwritten" code of professional officiating suggests that the Referee should ask that they not order the beers. If the officials have the beer, they should not be used at the finals session.

Applicable Rules: Common sense, courtesy and professionalism.

4. It is the last heat of the 13-14 boys 400 individual medley. During the backstroke leg of this event, the recall rope is accidentally dropped. Two swimmers make contact with the fallen rope before it is raised. The other swimmers in the heat are unaware of the problem and continue the race. What do you do and why?

Recommended Resolution: Generally, only the two swimmers who made contact with the rope would be allowed to re-swim the event because of interference. Still, the other swimmers, although not touched by the rope, may have been distracted by the commotion caused by its fall. If the Referee feels that all swimmers may have been affected, he could give the option of reswimming to the entire heat. Those who elect to re-swim the event would be awarded their new time (their original times would be superseded); those electing not to reswim would retain their original times.

Applicable Rules: 102.22.9, 102.11.1

5. Just before the call to the blocks of the 100 backstroke, a rival competitor goes to the Deck Referee and complains that the swimmer in the lane next to him is wearing "stick-um" on his feet. What should the Referee do?

Recommended Resolution: "Stick-um" is not currently an illegal aid under our rules. The Referee, however, has authority to ask the swimmer to wipe his/her feet if he feels the substance would aid the swimmers speed.

TAKING THE ON-LINE TESTS

- changed March 1, 2016 -

The examples this month appear on the 2016 REFEREE -Re-Certification test, which will now be answered with the 2015 Rulebook. Check out the new look for the way that the questions are listed. You will notice that there are no Part 2 questions.

1. A swimmer in the backstroke race assumes an illegal starting position by standing on the gutter of the pool with his back to the pool and his heels in the water. The Starter starts the race. Shall the swimmer be disqualified? **292.17**

A. Yes, the Referee shall disqualify the swimmer if he personally observed an illegal starting position.

B. No, the swimmer shall not be disqualified for an illegal starting position at the start if the race is permitted to proceed. Enforcement of the correct starting position is the responsibility of the Starter.

C. Yes, the Turn Judge shall disqualify the swimmer for having an illegal starting position before the start of the race and shall also raise one hand when this observation is seen.

D. Yes, the Starter shall disqualify the swimmer if the Head Lane Timer notifies the Starter that an illegal starting position was observed before the start of the race.

Hint: Please review reference 101.1.2E for the correct answer.

2. As the Starter gives the "Take your mark" command and the starting signal is given, the Referee is distracted and misses observing the start of the race. The Starter then approaches and reports a possible disqualification in Lane 4 for a false start. What protocol should the Referee follow? **1376.7**

A. Ask the Stroke & Turn Judge behind Lane 4 if he saw movement at the start and accept the call if he did.

B. Trust the Starter's judgment and confirm the disqualification, and not admit to missing the start.

C. The swimmer in Lane 4 shall not be disqualified for a false start, because the Referee

did not independently observe and confirm the Starter's observation that a violation occurred.

D. Ask the Chief Judge if she saw movement and accept the call if the Chief Judge had also marked Lane 4.

Hint: Please review reference 101.1.3B for the correct answer.

3. In the breaststroke: The Stroke and Turn Official observes a swimmer that moves their hands in a sculling or flipper movement at the end of the first arm stroke. What should the Official do? **428.10**

- A.** Signal a disqualification
- B.** Obtain dual confirmation of the disqualification from the Starter.
- C.** Obtain dual confirmation of the disqualification from the Referee.
- D.** Do nothing since the observation does not violate the stroke rules of the breaststroke in the USA Swimming Rulebook.

Hint: Please review reference 101.2.2 for the correct answer.

4. Which statement below is correct in regards to what the Referee shall NOT change as stated in the Meet Announcement? **636.13**

- A.** The Referee shall not add swimmers to a heat to the extent of altering the heats.
- B.** The Referee shall not alter the swimmers of a heat to the extent of consolidating heats.
- C.** The Referee shall not add swimmers to a heat to the extent of consolidating heats.
- D.** The Referee shall not change the order of events.

Hint: Please review reference 102.7.1 for the correct answer.

5. When may the Meet Referee waive the empty lane requirement for events that are combined by age, gender, distance, and/or stroke? **1497.5**

- A.** With the concurrence of the parents of the affected swimmers.
- B.** With the concurrence of the LSC Board of Directors.
- C.** With the concurrence of the other meet Officials.
- D.** With the concurrence of the Coaches of the affected swimmers.
- E.** With the concurrence of the National Officials Committee.

Hint: Please review reference 102.7.2 for the correct answer.

6. The swimmer in Lane 8 is observed wearing an armband during the 100 Breaststroke Event. The Stroke and Turn Judge disqualifies the swimmer for illegal swimwear. What should be the decision of the Referee? **1378.8**

- A. Do not accept the call and warn the swimmer to remove it for the rest of the meet.
- B. Do not accept the call, these armbands are allowed during competition.
- C. Do not accept the call because the armband is made out of the same textile material as the swimsuit.
- D. Accept the call. Armbands or leg bands shall not be regarded as parts of the swimsuit and are not allowed.

Hint: Please review reference 102.8.1A for the correct answer.

7. During a meet with age group competition, a 10-year old swimmer steps up on the Lane 4 block, in the 10 and Under 100 Freestyle. It is clear that he is wearing an additional brief under his knee-length swim suit. What should be the decision of the Referee? **1377.8**

- A. Let the race proceed. In age group competitions, it is permissible for an athlete to wear a single set of garments underneath his competition swimsuit for modesty and/or privacy reasons.
- B. Ask the Starter to please step down the swimmers and then go tell the swimmer in Lane 4 that he has been disqualified for Delay of Meet.
- C. Let the race proceed; and advise the swimmer at the end of the race that he has been disqualified for wearing two suits in competition.
- D. Not allow the swimmer in Lane 4 to swim until he removes the additional brief under his knee-length swimsuit.

Hint: Please review references 205.10.1 and 102.8.1B for the correct answer.

8. For all swimming meets or time trials except dual meets, how many Place Judges should the Referee assign? **485.11**

- A. The Referee should not assign Place Judges, but rely on the watch times.
- B. The Referee should assign one Place Judge, who may not simultaneously time and judge the order of finish.
- C. The Referee should assign one Place Judge, but two are preferred, who may not simultaneously time and judge the order of finish.

Hint: Please review reference 102.10.3 for the correct answer.

9. The swimmer in Lane 6 false started because she heard a noise just before the activation of the starting signal. Upon Referee and Starter investigation, it was found that a noisemaker was being used by spectators. What is the Referee's ruling? **946.17**

- A.** Because the swimmer did false start, she should be disqualified in fairness to all the other swimmers in the event.
- B.** With consultation of the Starter and other Officials and the questioning of the swimmer constituting an appropriate investigation of the incident, the swimmer received another chance to swim this event. The spectator was found and told by the Referee not to use this artificial noisemaker.
- C.** The swimmer was not stationary for the start and false started.

Hint: Please review references 102.11.1, 102.11.5 and 102.11.8 for the correct answer.

10. What happens to the placements and points when a relay team or individual swimmer finishes third but is disqualified? **510.10**

- A.** The third place rank is left open and no points are awarded for third place.
- B.** The third place rank is left open, but the points awarded for third place will be divided among all the subsequent finishers.
- C.** The subsequent places will move up accordingly and points shall be awarded to conform to the new places.
- D.** None of the above.

Hint: Please review references 102.22.12 and 102.25.6 for the correct answer.

1. The correct answer is “B” for the multiple choice answer.
2. The correct answer is “C” for the multiple choice answer.
3. The correct answer is “D” for the multiple choice answer.
4. The correct answer is “D” for the multiple choice answer.
5. The correct answer is “D” for the multiple choice answer.
6. The correct answer is “D” for the multiple choice answer.
7. The correct answer is “A” for the multiple choice answer.
8. The correct answer is “C” for the multiple choice answer.
9. The correct answer is “B” for the multiple choice answer.
10. The correct answer is “C” for the multiple choice answer.

If you have any questions that you would like to ask, just e-mail Bill Rose at: <cbrose@omsoft.com>