

**FLORIDA GOLD COAST SWIMMING OFFICIATING BEST PRACTICES IN THE ERA OF COVID: SUGGESTIONS FOR MEET REFEREES**

* Minimize number of officials on deck: Deck Ref; Starter; AO; 0-1 Stroke/Turn Judges for an intra-squad meet or a dual meet, 1-2 Stroke/Turn Judges for an invitational-style virtual meet. Extra officials may be used as relief teams but should remain off-deck and should practice social distancing when not working.
* Conduct pre-meet briefing by telephone or Zoom conference prior to the start of the meet.
* Officials should report directly to their assigned positions immediately before the start of the meet. Do not allow them to congregate in the starting area.
* Do not require officials to “sign in” when they arrive at the meet.
* Do not count on hospitality being available. Officials should bring their own water bottles.
* Do not share communal radios. Officials should bring their own radios to the meet.
* Officials should wear face coverings at all times while at the meet.
* Avoid using DQ slips or other unnecessary paper. DQ’s may be noted on the Stroke/Turn judge heatsheet and the Referee heatsheet should be used as the master DQ log.
* Consider announcing DQ’s over the PA or Start System rather than informing swimmers or coaches in-person.
* Communications between officials should be over the radio whenever possible.
* The Starter and Deck Referee should be separated by at least six feet.
* In general, there should only be one Starter. If more than one Starter is used, they must each have their own microphone and never share a microphone.
* Deck Referees should use electronic whistles.
* Consider having the heat that just finished their race swim down to the turn end and exit the pool from the turn end.
* Heat intervals will need to be increased by 30-50 seconds depending on the level of the swimmers.
* The AO/Computer Operator and the Timing Equipment operator should be separated by at least six feet and paper handling should be minimized to the extent possible.
* Officials should shelter in their privately owned vehicles in the event the deck must be evacuated for a weather event.