Florida Swimming Officials Committee
May 12, 2015 Meeting
Minutes Prepared by Thomas N. Tiedt

Participants
Stephen Plapp – Chair
Mark Davis – Vice Chair
Jeff Breault – Area 1 Representative
Keith Powell – Area 1 Assistant Representative
Ellen Johnson – Area 2 Representative
Thomas N. Tiedt – Area 2 Assistant Representative
Kay Caldwell – Area 3 Representative
John Jansen – Area 3 Assistant Representative
Tom McCaleb – Area 4 Representative
Doug Garthwait – Area 4 Assistant Representative
Debbie Landis – Area 5 Representative
Judi Wojcik – Area 6 Representative
Joe Glennon – Area 6 Assistant Representative
Grace Easterling – Athlete Representative
Joshua Longfield – Athlete Representative
Clay Parnell – Coach
Helen Kelly – LSC Executive Director
Mark McCaw – LSC Treasurer
Jeff Smith – LSC General Chair
Duncan Sherrard – LSC Vice Chair

Other Attendees – Dave Nesper

The telephonic meeting was called to order by Stephen Plapp at 8:04.

AGENDA
Minutes
The minutes of the February 28, 2015 committee meeting were approved without objection.

Old Business
Officials Committee Budget
Mark McCaw reported efforts of the budget subcommittee. Mark McCaw and John Jansen have discussed, producing a report from John Jansen issued to Stephen Plapp and Mark Davis.

Mark McCaw stated that the LSC has an aggregate budget, which is presented to the Board at the annual meeting. The Officials Committee needs to submit a budget to
Mark McCaw, who will submit it for Board review. If anyone on the Board questions the proposed budget, the Officials Committee should have a representative to field the questions. Mark McCaw suggested that to get the proposed budget to him at least 30 days before the Board meeting.

Mark McCaw reported that the LSC charges for reimbursements to officials for USAS Championships against an Officials Committee budget but will not come out of the Officials Committee training budget. Today, Mark McCaw sent to Stephen Plapp, Mark Davis and John Jansen an exact break down of moneys spent towards the Officials Committee.

Jeff Smith noted that the LSC is honing in on LSC expenses and that the Board strongly approves Officials Committee budgeting. The Board simply needs Officials Committee input. Therefore, the Officials Committee should put together its budget request.

Jeff Smith refereed to the recent Board approval of a policy for officials’ reimbursement for national championships. It is up for Officials Committee review, potential amendment and approval.

Debbie Landis stated that reimbursements to assigned officials for LSC championships is not a lot of money and that she has never applied for it. (these reimbursements are outlined in the LSC Rules and Regulations page 18, and separate from reimbursements for national championships)

Stephen Plapp concluded that the matter is tabled for our next committee meeting.

**Officials Committee Newsletter**

Judi Wojcik issued the Officials Committee newsletter May 2 to the Committee for distribution by Area Representatives. Judi will be sending out another one later in May.

Judi Wojcik reported that the feedback is positive. Judi encourages Area Representatives to distribute a separate newsletter for their Areas since it is particularly useful to new Stroke & Turn officials.

Judi Wojcik noted that a survey of officials would be an interesting future project.

**FHSAA.**

An ongoing agenda item, Kay Caldwell has emailed FHSAA twice this past month. No response.
New Business

AO Recertification
Mark Davis reported USAS guidance to have AOs simply take a recertification test, or a clinic, or both. Mark Davis recommended FL do test only.
Stephen Plapp, who had received no input from AO clinicians in FL, agreed. Stephen Plapp suggested that next year (2016), we may have AO recertification clinics either as stand alone or with other officials’ recertification clinics, thus having all FL officials recertify in the same year.

New FL Vice Chair
Stephen Plapp introduced Sherrad Duncan as the new Vice Chair, which represents the Officials Committee to the Board and to General Chair Jeff Smith among other duties.

Area Reports
Area 1. See written report at end of minutes. Stephen Plapp announced that Keith Powell is the new Assistant Area 1 Representative, taking over from Roger Deary.
Area 2. See written report at end of minutes.
Area 3. Kay Caldwell will submit a written report tomorrow. Kay has reached out to a few retired officials to get them back into the fold. Kay had proposed to Judi before the meeting that the Officials Committee maintain a web site for officials to sign up for meets. Kay announced that John Jansen is the Assistant Area 3 Representative.
Area 4. Doug Garthwait will submit a written report tomorrow.
Area 5. Debbie Landis reported that 10 officials never recertified, most due to health or children no longer swimming; that there are 6 teams in Area 5; that she is reaching out to coaches; that during April there were ST/DR/MR/AO clinics; that Area 5 has 67 officials (4 unattached, 28 officials with one team, 1 team had 1 official). Two meets in May (Sarasota, Naples) will have clinics offered by Debby Landis.
Area 6. Judi Wojcik will submit a written report tomorrow. Judi Wojcik is reaching out to ST officials to come back whose children have left swimming. Area 6 will have 3 big meets the same weekend in June. Judy Wojcik reported that Joe Glennon is seen as very approachable by new officials.

Web Portal Training
Following up on our January 2015 discussion of the strokeandturn.com company developing its first service to provide web portal training for ST candidates, Mark Davis reported that he has heard back from a couple of people and that he has sent
login credentials to Area Representatives. Perhaps at our next meeting, we can receive additional comments, e.g., the program is satisfactory, is a clear demonstration of rules, or not. If strongly in favor, we will propose in the Officials Committee budget possibly 100 log-in credentials at $15-20 each, and then provide these credentials to apprentices who have bought into officiating.

Kay Caldwell shared the log-in credential with John Jansen and Thomas N. Tiedt. John endorsed the program. Thomas felt the program is focused on some but not all need-to-know stroke rules and does not cover critical elements in the clinic process, e.g., steps in becoming an official, the FL clinic packet, getting a USAS/OTS account, the written test, the background check, the safety video, and the processes and resources to accomplish these steps.

Clay Parnell inquired about the purpose of the program and cost. Mark Davis responded that we would not replace the clinic, we would purchase 1-year access for appropriate officials, the program is web based and thus available on smart phones and tablets.

John Jansen is preparing an Officials Committee budget line item for the program.

Jeff Smith noted that web training could be more consistent and could perhaps do away with the clinic altogether.

Admin Referee Certification

Stephen Plapp reported that many officials are expressing interest in this certification, disappointment by those now with the certification and those seeking it if the certification is dropped, in the past Meet Referees after a clinic and administrative test were certified as ARs, and, if we want this certification, then we need to prepare documentation for this certification.

Lively discussion followed, including a straw pole, non binding, requested by Stephen Plapp to get a sense of the committee’s views.

NO Votes: Area 1, Area 4
Not opposed Votes: Area 2, Area 3.

Stephen Plapp and Mark Davis do not feel there is a need for the AR certification. Stephen Plapp reported that the AR certification designation on LSC certification cards was a mistake since there is no documentation supporting this certification in our LSC.

This matter will be taken up at our next meeting. Stephen Plapp requests further input from the committee.

USA Swimming Registration Cards

Helen Kelly reported that currently, USA Swimming pays for the laminated brightly colored non-athlete registration cards, although Helen must order stock over the
next few days. USA Swimming wishes to end these cards for financial reasons since we can print them ourselves.

These cards indicate non-athlete members’ expiration dates for registration, background check and safety training, while our LSC certification cards do not.

Stephen Plapp concluded that we would do away with the non-athlete registration cards for officials.

**National Workshops for Officials**

Helen Kelly reported her conversation with Jim Holcomb, National Officials Chair, who noted that the program would be re-instated on a bi-annual basis. Helen Kelly reported that USA Swimming pays for the motel, while FL pays for the airfare to the venue.

**National Evaluators for National Certifications (N2, N3 national positions)**

Mark McCaw recommends the committee provide an outlook of national evaluator needs and budget for the October annual meeting.

**Next Officials Committee Meeting**

Stephen Plapp designated Saturday July 11, 2015 8:00 PM for our next meeting. It will be in person during the afternoon of the Summer Sectionals in Orlando. Stephen Plapp noted that we may need a telephonic meeting before the annual meeting in October to discuss 2015 officials awards and the committee budget to be submitted to Mark McCaw.

**Meeting Adjourned**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:19 PM

---

**Area 1 written report**

**Meets**

Bolles has hosted 2 meets, Episcopal 1, and the Loggerheads 1 over the last two months. Turnout for all was good. The Bolles May meet hosted over 465 swimmers resulting in long sessions despite the use of chase and wave starts. The officials who worked this meet are to be commended for handling the crowds and heat.

May and June will see all 3 clubs hosting meets and in addition MACG will be hosting the Sunshine State Games in Gainesville the first weekend in June. Bolles June
classic, one of the largest long course meets of the year with over 700 swimmers from all over the eastern United States will take place in late June.

**Clinics**

13 prospective officials attended Stroke & Turn Judge clinics held during the JAX 50 in April. In addition 2 officials attended a starter clinic and 3 attended a deck referee clinic.

Two of the five officials who attended clinics in January are now certified and are working meets. The other three are one or two sessions away. In addition 2 officials who attended clinics last year are close to concluding their apprenticeships.

**Noteworthy Items**

The Bolles JAX 50 meet was suspended during the Saturday championship session when a tornado struck approximately 3 miles away. The campus sustained damage when a tree fell across one of the roads leading from the pool to the exits. High winds sent canopies, chairs, tables, signs and clipboards airborne. TV cameras valued at $5000 were destroyed when the winds ripped away the canopies and knocked the cameras down. An evacuation plan was in place and all spectators, swimmers, and officials were safely removed from the pool area.

**Assistant Area 1 Representative**

Keith Powell has graciously agreed to serve as my assistant. He has also been appointed as a Certified Clinic Instructor.

**Area 2 written report**

The over capacity Winter Haven and Highlander meets that were run on the same weekend last month both had a large officials turn out and we are grateful for the officials help that both meets received from other areas, especially areas 3 and 5.

Since February’s meeting, we were able to get 10 officials current with their certifications and back on deck. That is in large part due to the fact that their own teams were hosting in the last month.

We have held clinics at Senior Champs in February, Area 2 Champs in March, the NTCA and the Winter Haven meets in April, and at the CFM pool during practice time at all certification levels. Our apprentice starters, deck refs, AO’s, and meet refs have been apprenticing regularly, but only 3 of the 14 stroke and turn apprentices that I am aware of, have been apprenticing. Those 3 should be completing their apprenticeship this coming weekend. We are working with the other people that attended the various stroke and turn clinics to see if we can find out why there is such a low follow through rate. The coaches are working with us to encourage their apprentices, as well.
There is another stroke and turn clinic planned for this Saturday at the CFM meet.

NTCA has asked for an admin clinic and they have been in contact with Melissa to set that up.

The area has two more full meets this coming weekend at CFM and PA. In June, the Sunshine State Games and TPA meet will be held the same weekend and there is crossover between areas 1 and 2 at both meets. Jeff and I have been encouraging both areas to help out at whichever meet they may be attending.

**Area 6 Written Report**

The motto of the area has been “Educate, Encourage, and Elevate” and it has caught on with more officials in leadership positions. We have several CCI’s (11 or more currently) who are able to give a clinic for ST- this helps for scheduling at the convenience of teams and their parents and gives us the ability to give an impromptu clinic during a meet when the parent’s desire is strongest. We have continued to use power point and other video segments to address the technical rules, protocol, and questions of potential officials and only send the link to the DVD that is available online. Good mentors on deck are still the key during apprenticeships- they are instrumental in producing good officials.

We have 5 pools in the area that can host long course meets with adequate space for a warm down/warm up pool and all are being utilized for one or more meets this summer. All currently scheduled meets have lead officials teams in place through September except A6 champs. Inquiries have been made for the A6 Champs meet on July 4th weekend but it has been difficult to secure a MR for the full meet. Seven MR’s to date have not been able to agree to the position due to the dates. Attendance has never been high at this meet, and it usually runs as a short course meet; it will probably be two smaller sessions- Fri evening and Sat morn. No Meet Announcement has been submitted for review.

Area 6 continues to recruit. Interestingly, we added a former official from 2-3 years ago who has taken steps to recertify and will be completed as certified within the next couple of weeks. A measure A6 has used for recruiting new officials is attending parent meetings or a team’s practice. Some team’s officials have inspired their parents to take the online timer test at a couple of these in hopes they will continue to the ST test eventually if there is no current interest in becoming an official. We found that most parents are curious about the rules and will seek information if there is minimal pressure and in a team atmosphere setting. And everyone can be a timer so we’re encouraging them to start there with testing, continue to ST if they would like, and also telling them the steps to become an official and where to find that information.

We have had two specific recruits begin this way over the last few months- one
recently completing his certification for ST judge and another still in apprenticeship. Coaches are a considerable factor in getting their parents involved. Two more teams in Area 6 are strongly considering hosting meets and renting pool space and have started the process to get their parents more involved in officiating so this method of ‘parent meetings/practices’ has helped them. Having several good CCI’s helps accommodate teams as well.

Several current officials are in apprenticeships for higher levels seeking the positions of SR, DR, and MR. We have 12 officials in the area who are certified as Admins- either as an MR who has taken the clinic and tests and is a AR or as a dry side only official.

Officials in the area have stepped up to field several Recreational leagues, city swim programs, and Special Olympic programs from April through Sept and many will work meets weekend after weekend and days in between to do all of them. About 25-30% of our officials are involved with these non-USA meets in some form of volunteerism, mostly officiating. High School Meets will follow after the rec season ends and SO championships finish August and Sept.

We continue to work with the A2 and FGC team’s Officials that travel to here for meets and vice versa. The camaraderie of these officials was seen at All Stars in Area 6 at end of March. It was a huge success with many officials coming out lending their talents from all over Florida.

Officials are looking forward to championship season in July and I anticipate several, by their recent requests, will seek national certifications and mentoring at one of the back to back to back championships.

Response to the LSC Newsletter has been great- (our area has had some sort of regular newsletter for the last 5 years, specific to the area, distributed about 3 to 4 times a year- prior to championships and change of seasons so the additional info was a bonus.)

Thanks to Joe Glennon, Gary Sedacca, Chris Wojcik, Joe Massimino, Dave and Sue Nesper, and Anne Grams who all took lead positions in meets this past short course season where Area 6 teams compete. And to Matt Stoneberg who has brought dryside talents to many meets. Special Thanks to Sue Talwar for coming in to fill in as MR at a highly attended meet with many officials seeking apprentice time including 2 meet referee candidates. Good to have Sue be an additional voice reinforcing great habits on deck.