

Virginia Swimming Officials Spring Newsletter

Newsletter Date
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Championship Meets

There are several upcoming championship meets where you can learn a few new skills about officiating. Though, the rules are the same, the meet format may be different than what you experienced at your local club meets. If you can work one or all sessions, I highly recommend you gain this experience to hone your craft.

First up is Summer Awards. There will be three meets held in different parts of the Commonwealth all on the same weekend of July 12-14:

SE District will be held at Princess Anne YMCA in Virginia Beach

North District will be held at Jeff Rouse Swim and Sport Center in Stafford.

Southwest District will be held at Christiansburg Aquatic Center.

Following those meets, Virginia Swimming will be hosting LC Senior Championships at Liberty University Natatorium on July 18-21, LC Age Group Championships will be held at Christiansburg Aquatic Center July 25-28.

For the last two meets, there is an on-line application to sign-up and will be posted on VSI website. Click on meets, on the top banner you will see Age Group Champs and Senior Champs. Click on the applicable choice and look under the LC Championship info for "Application to Officiate" Click on that link and it will bring you to a Google form. Both of these meets will offer National Certifications and recertifications. Please see the section below describing the National Certification Program.

The Block- Wedges and Ledges

I hope you all read the National Officials Committee Newsletter, Kathleen Scandary who is the Chair wrote this article and I am reposting:

Besides the standard measurements of the starting platform (103.14), there is much to be said about what an athlete is permitted or required to do in order to have a legal start from this piece of equipment, should it be used at all.

The forward start from the block is performed with at least one foot at the front of the platform as the swimmer assumes the starting position. The non-slip surface may be covered with a single layer towel should it become slippery from wear, or if the temperature rises to a level that is uncomfortable or even unsafe for bare skin. Some blocks might have hand grips along the sides to assist in the launch. The wedge, or fin as it is sometimes called, has become common-place since the FINA decision allowing its addition to the block a decade ago. It is important to note

The Block—Wedges and Ledges (cont)

Backstroke ledges have provided swimmers the security of having a non-slip start. This may require some getting used to for the developmental swimmer as well as patience from the starter-deck referee team. There are retractable ledges and those that hang passively from the block. The apparatus must conform to specifications stated in the rulebook (103.15) and the athlete must have the toes of both feet in contact with the wall or the touchpad. You may be asked to place and remove the backstroke ledge at a meet, but the swimmer will make the adjustments for their optimum start.

Concussion Training

What is a Concussion? A concussion is an injury to the brain that may be caused by a blow, bump, or jolt to the head. Concussions may also happen after a fall or hit that jars the brain. A blow elsewhere on the body can cause a concussion even if an athlete does not hit his/her head directly.

Concussions can range from mild to severe AND an athlete does not have to be “knocked out” to suffer a concussion. In fact, less than 1 out of 10 concussions result in loss of consciousness. Concussion symptoms can develop right away or up to 48 hours after the injury. Ignoring any signs or symptoms of a concussion can put an athlete’s health at risk!

There are two free courses that you can take to learn more about concussions and their links are below:

[CDC Concussion Course](#)

[NFHS Concussion Course](#)

I recommend you take one of the free courses to learn more about concussions. Send copy of your course completion to businessoffice@virginiaswimming.org and Mary or Emily will enter that record into SWIMs database. Once that is done it will show up in your Deck Pass Account.

At some point in time, I think this will become an additional training course for officials so we might as well get ahead of the curve.

Advancing Certifications in the LSC

I am often asked, “How do I train for Chief Judge, Starter or Deck Referee or even a dry deck position?” The first step is to talk to your team chair and let them know of your interest. After discussions with the your Team Chair, the next step will be a discussion with your District Chair. Who are the District Chairs?

Southwest—George Zolovick (HOKI), Beth Arnold (GATR) and John Stanley (UN)

Central—Bob Rustin (PSDN)

North—Michael Sizemore (RAYS)

Southeast—Genny Kimbel (UN)

The District Chairs will set you up with the applicable training card. Depending on the position, they will set up a clinic date. Chief Judge, may be a on-deck clinic and for Starters, they usually set up off-deck clinics. As for the administrative positions, Timing Equipment Operator (CTS/DAK), Recorder (Meet Manager) or Administrative Official, those clinics are usually on-the-job training.

Obviously, there is a progression we like to follow that allows you to gain experience with these positions. For Chief Judge, normally Officials certified for a year can start the training, Starter usually follows after Chief Judge training. To become well-rounded, once you become certified as a Starter, I recommend to complete the Administrative certifications.

Deck Referee is by invitation from the Officials Chair, following the recommendations from the District Chairs. The process involves selecting Officials that have a great demeanor, responsible, work more than the minimum of sessions and have a drive to learn more about the sport and officiating.

If your goal is for someday to be a Referee, I highly recommend you follow the process noted above. We love to train officials in new positions and we welcome your enthusiasm!

SWIMPOSIUM Explained

Each year on the Saturday before the VSI September House of Delegates Meeting, we host a Swimposium. This year Swimposium is tentatively scheduled for 9/28/19 in Richmond. Essentially, this is a off-deck clinic for all interested officials where we are not wearing white over blues! The LSC Officials Committee sets up an agenda to discuss a variety of topics. In the past we discussed: recruiting Officials, Chief Judge, Navigating in OTS, Situations and resolutions, SWIMs database and Swim Meet Safety, to name a few.

It is a relaxed conference setting where you can meet Virginia Officials from all over.

All Virginia Swimming Deck Referees are required to attend this conference once every two years.

If there is a certain topic you would like us to discuss, shoot me an email and I will get it on the agenda. This year one topic that is on the agenda is to help team chairs and discuss their role with Officials who are in training. It is still early, and I am sure we will have a full agenda! Watch for the upcoming notice on Virginia Swimming website

Overview of the National Certification Program

National Certification Program is administered by the USA Swimming Officials Committee. Its primary goal is to expand the education of officials through mentoring, participation and evaluation as well recognizing those officials who have demonstrated their knowledge of swim officiating at each level and position.

The first step is to apply for a position at an Officials Qualifying Meet (OQM) Not all meets have this designation, however in Virginia, we submit our Short Course and Long Course Championship meets as OQM. For our meets, we normally have Virginia Officials as evaluators who will help you through the process.

There are some basic requirements for an evaluation and are listed on USA Swimming website under the National Certification and Evaluation icon on the Officials page.

If you meet the requirements and apply to an OQM meet, you will be assigned an evaluator. They will brief you on the how the evaluation will be conducted and

Overview of the National Certification Program (cont)

evaluator will send you an email when the evaluation has been completed in Official Tracking System (OTS). After that, you have to submit an advancement request in OTS using the tab Application for National Certification under your history. Under required to advance, there should be green OK's next to LSC Level Sessions Worked, LSC Level Meets Worked, National Qualifying Sessions Worked, Learning Activities and Teaching and Mentoring activities.

There are a couple of other categories such as National Championship Sessions and Meet worked, if you are just starting out at N2, you do not have to worry about those.

If all green, then scroll to the top and click on advance on the position you were evaluated and follow the prompts. It takes about 7-10 days to receive a reply from the USA Swimming Officials Committee.

I have been asked previously, how to get a mentoring or learning activity. Mentoring is easy. I am sure most of you have trained a new official. If so, enter that date and meet in OTS. In fact you should enter all of them under the activity history tab in OTS.

Learning activity would be for something like attending a clinic for CJ, Starter, National Certification Briefing and even Swimposium! Ask whoever is providing a clinic to ensure all attendees are credited for a learning activity.

Changes to Athlete Protection

The athlete protection training has been changed due to the new Safe Sport policy called MAAPP—Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy. MAAPP was formed from USA Swimming recommended practices for club policy. This is new, so expect some adaptations along the way. We will have a training session about MAAPP at Swimposium this September.

With MAAPP training, there are now three courses that must be completed in entirety, including a survey at the end of the course. They are:

- Sexual Misconduct Awareness Education
- Mandatory Reporting
- Emotional and Physical Misconduct

The frequency of completing the Athlete Protection Training has changed as well.

We must complete this training on an annual basis.

Another change, is that the training expires one year to-the-date you initially completed the training .

I've added a PDF called "Instructions for Taking the Athlete Protection Training" on VSI website under Member Resources/Officials/Information. On the bottom of that page you will find the PDF.

Additional Meets

Applications are still open for the Future Meets:

August 1-4 in Oregon, Ohio and North Carolina and Iowa. Applications can be found at: www.usaswimming.org/natlmeetapp.

Normally the level of these meets require an N2 certification.

Eastern Zone Long Course Age Group Championships August 7-10, Richmond, VA

<http://www.easternzoneswimming.org/meets.html>

Thanks for all you do for our Sport!

VSI LSC Official Committee

Southeast District Chair—Genny Kimbel (Gennykimbel@gmail.com)

Central District Chair—Bob Rustin (brustin55@gmail.com)

North District Chair—Michael Sizemore (MCSizemore@gmail.com)

Southwest District Chairs

North—Beth Arnold (arnoldeaa@gmail.com)

South—George Zolovick (gzolovick@gmail.com)

At-Large Representatives

Ralph Jones (Ralph.Jones@vdot.virginia.gov)

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