

VSI Officiating Update

No. #20

05 January 2010

A Belated Welcome to the 2009/2010 Short Course Season

Needless to say, the first newsletter of the season does not get points for being on time. Nonetheless, a hearty thank you to all our returning officials and to all our new trainees. It is only through your collective efforts that we can provide high quality officiating at our swim meets

Officials Tracking System (OTS)

If you're not already familiar with OTS, you soon will be. Historically, VSI has maintained the certification activity of its officials in an Access database. OTS has been developed by USA-S and has been specifically designed to support the certification and recertification of officials at both the LSC and national levels. Effective with the 2009/2010 short course season, the records of VSI officials are almost entirely being maintained within OTS.

The most visible change that you will see as an official is that we are no longer issuing certification cards on which you keep a record of your sessions worked. Certifications are now issued directly through OTS which generates a certification card which is e-mailed to the official. The card is also available under your profile on OTS.

OTS Accounts

To access your information in OTS you will need to create an account. You may have already done this when you initially took any on-line tests. [Instructions](#) for setting up the account can be found on the USA-S website. These instructions also contain a guided tour of how to use the information.

A caveat to OTS is that only USA-S non-athlete members can create an on-line account. If you are a dry deck official and are not a member of USA-S, you cannot create an account and we cannot use OTS to track you. This will be fixed in the long term as we will require that all officials be registered members starting with the 2011 membership year. In the short term we encourage everyone to register. For those who do not register, the Officials Committee is working on an intermediate solution.

We also have some officials who have registered, but did not check "Official" on the registration form. Although these individuals are in the system, they

can only be indirectly accessed and they cannot be included in any reports. We can fix this issue when it arises by notifying Louise Limerick who can update the registration status to include the category of official.

Certification Cards

As noted earlier, certification cards are generated within OTS and are e-mailed as an attachment to individual officials (a good reason to make sure that you have your current e-mail address within your account). A copy of the current card is also located within an individual's account. The card is the same size as the registration card and looks like this:

 Kevin Hogan VIRGINIA SWIMMING Southwest UN			
LSC	Level	Expires	Instr/Eval
Stroke & Turn	V1	12/31/2010	
Chief Judge	V1	12/31/2010	
Starter	V1	12/31/2010	
Referee/Deck Referee	V1	12/31/2010	
Administrative Referee	V1	12/31/2010	
Clerk of Course	V2	12/31/2010	
Timing Judge	V2	12/31/2010	

A similar card is generated that contains any national certifications.

Each official should print a copy of their card. It is highly recommended that the card then be laminated and punched so that it can be hung from your badge reel along with your officials badge. You will need this card at meets to verify your certification status.

Session Tracking

We will no longer be tracking the sessions that you work on individual record cards which means no more lost, washed, or eaten by my dog cards! All of your sessions worked will be entered into OTS at the conclusion of the meet. The Meet Referee or other designee will be responsible for this. If someone other than the Meet Referee will be entering the data then John Squires will need to be notified so that he can add a Meet Administrator to the meet. This individual might be a Chief Judge or the Club Officials Chair hosting the meet.

Our goal is to have the information entered into OTS within a week of the meet. We recommend that individual officials check 7-10 days following a

meet to see that their information has been entered and entered accurately. If not, please notify the Meet Referee. If the information isn't entered within about two weeks then please also notify the corresponding District Chair.

If you are working at a meet outside of our LSC (VSI) check to see if the information will be added to OTS. Many LSCs are now doing this including Potomac Valley and North Carolina. If the information won't be added to OTS, you can do so on your own. Remember, this is the only record that you will have so it is important to keep the information current.

Please do not enter any information on your own if it is going to be entered as part of the meet. It is unnecessary and only complicates the process.

Mentoring Activity

Our previous certification cards were also designed to track any mentoring activity. For example, if you walked with a S&T trainee, this information could be noted on the card. The purpose of tracking this activity is that mentoring activity is needed as part of national certification. Tracking the activity on the card provided you with a record which you could then transfer to your history in OTS.

Unfortunately, there is no simply way for mentoring activity to be added to the meet record at the same time that the session activity is being added. The only practical means of tracking this activity is for each individual official to enter their own mentoring activity as has been the case in the past. Even if you're not currently interested in national certification it is highly suggested that you enter this activity in case you need it in the future.

Additional Activity History

Swimposium attendance, clinic attendance, committee participation will all be tracked in OTS. If you participate in activities of this type, they will automatically be added for you.

Recertification

Recertification is done on an annual basis and officials must meet the requirements as set forth in the VSI Officials Handbook. Beginning with recertification for 2011, only sessions worked in the previous year will be counted (i.e. for 2011 only sessions worked in 2010 will count). This is a slight change from our present practice. Recertification should become a very simple process meeting the requirements as all of the relevant information will be in OTS. Remember, there will be no cards to turn in.

Recertification for 2010 is still largely dependent on officials returning their 2009 session cards. While many individuals have been recertified on the basis of what is in OTS, many officials do not have sufficient activity listed in OTS and will still need to send their cards to their District Officials Chair. At this point we have numerous officials who have not recertified as this information has not yet been provided to the chairs. Club Officials Chairs have been sent a current listing of those who have and who have not recertified.

Registration Is Not Certification and Certification Is Not Registration

Wet deck officials require both current certification and registration to work.

Dry deck officials require only certification to work, but registration is highly recommended (Please note that both will be required in 2011).

At this point the registration of many of our officials has expired as it was not renewed for 2010. In some cases this may reflect the club not sending in the registration (many clubs pay for the registration of their officials) while in other cases it appears that individual officials may not have followed through. In either case, if you are required to be a registered member you must register before you can work at a meet.

Name Badges

New name badges have not been forgotten, they've just been delayed. We've been trying to set-up a new system but getting it in place has progressed slower than anticipated. We'll hopefully have something soon.

Badge Reels

Many officials have already received a badge reel on which to hang their registration card and officials badge. Additional badge reels are on order and we'll get them out as quickly as we can to those who do not have one.

Championship Meets

The championship season is rapidly approaching. We have a large number of meets to support in a short period of time. Please consider helping as each individual effort can make a big difference. We'll have details out shortly.

Questions?

Do you have a question about officiating or a tip you'd like to share? Is there a rule that you'd like to have clarified? Is there something that you'd like to see the Officials Committee do? Do you have a suggestion for a future item in this newsletter?

If so, please send your questions/comments to Kevin Hogan (Chair, VSI Officials Committee, swim@embarqmail.com).

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