

**Virginia Swimming Officials Committee**  
**Chair's Report**  
**30 September 2011**

1. **USA Swimming LSC Officials Chairs Conference.** I attended the conference in Kansas City in June. I talked with a lot of Chairs from other LSCs and got some good information. Bottom line: Virginia Swimming is in good shape when compared with the other LSCs. See report on our website.
2. **LSC LC Championship Meets.** Our LC champs meets were successful. Bob and Jim did great jobs! The meets were adequately, but not appropriately, staffed. Thanks to all who gave their time to help. We need to work on getting more of our Officials to the champs meets. Officials and Coaches are concerned about the increased number of calls at these two meets. The MRs and I have analyzed the DQ logs/slips and can't pinpoint a single reason that would explain the increase, but have identified several potential reasons, that when combined, might account for the spike. The District Chairs and I met with the Coaches in 3 Districts during September (4<sup>th</sup> is scheduled in October) and participate in a Coaches Forum at the Swimposium to establish the beginning of continued dialogue and discuss the issues. This year's Officials Component of the Swimposium will also focus on these issues.
3. **USA Swimming National Championship Meets.** Five of our Officials were selected to officiate at the National Championships: Kimberly Schlimgen, Pat Donohue, and I worked both Nationals and Juniors. Bob Rustin and John Warhol worked Juniors. Kimberly got her first Starter assignment at Juniors and did a great job! I was a Chief Judge at Juniors. We have 15 active Officials who have worked at one of our National Championships meets!
4. **USA Swimming Convention.** I participated in the Rules and Regulations Committee meetings, the Officials Committee meetings, the Open Water meetings, the Eastern Zone meetings, the Athlete Protection seminar, and the YMCA Reciprocity seminar. The major take-aways were:
  - a. National Certification Program – In 2011, we have had 126 OQMs resulting in 1600 applications for certification/recertification. 1500 Officials have at least 1 N2 certification. 769 Officials have at least 1 N3 certification (196 CJ, 190 SR, 84 DR, and 61 AR).
  - b. OTS – 49/59 LSCs are now using the LSC module. Enhancements are coming as soon as money and staff allow. There are 12,000+ registered Officials. We have 400+.
  - c. Women in Officiating TF – The TF has renamed itself Excellence in Officiating and will be focusing on the results of the survey they conducted earlier this year. The reason for the change is that the TF found no significant issues that affected just women.
  - d. Mentoring/Evaluating – Officials Committee is working on developing standards for evaluations and development of mentoring skills. They also want to try to standardize our national protocols.
  - e. Open Water – There are lots of rules changes regarding OW safety. Applications for Sanction are more detailed and require higher level approval, comprehensive Safety Plans are required, an Independent Safety Monitor is required, and water temperature/quality standards must be met. An OW Meet Referee's Guide is about to be published. Still no word on OW Officials certification.
  - f. Rules and Regs – Only a couple of technical rules changes were enacted; Referee may combine heats/events without having an empty lane between them with the concurrence of the affected coaches (eff immediately); Starter must stand within 5M of the start end; mid line rope in LC pool is no longer required; and MA must contain statement regarding use of audio/video recording devices in the venue (eff 1 Jan 2012).
  - g. Athletes' Comments – Swim-offs during Time Trials at National Championships without prior notice is not good for the TT participants. Athletes are appreciative of the Officials who work the meets, but they are concerned that they aren't seeing new faces - they wonder where the next generation of Officials is coming from.
  - h. Athlete Protection Training Course – The 2010 HoD adopted a requirement for Non-Athlete members to successfully complete an APTC. The course was developed by a respected child

protection company and went live on the USA Swimming website in mid-September. Bottom line: If you see something that doesn't feel right, say something!

- i. Burning Issues – This is the first year in 10 years that a new rule interpretation hasn't emerged from this meeting! Dan McAllen reiterated the interpretation of the 15M rule that came out at the LSC Officials Chairs Conference (once you surface, you must remain on the surface). He also reiterated the interpretation of the first pull in BR (purposeful movement to begin the pull, not just any movement). He explained again the sequence for observing the pullout (whole body, hands, kick, hands, head). MDs should be establishing and managing camera zones in the venue. MR/MDs should be training Marshals to do their jobs. Maintain a current email address in OTS by going to the account creation page and making sure the email you use to login is the right one. Remember to use your Starters as Place Judges (OOF) – one is required. If you use semi-automatic/manual timing, at least two are needed.
- j. NCAA instituted no-recall false starts this year!
- k. USA Swimming and the Y continue to work on Officials reciprocity. Main emphasis is on training/certification. Still trying to figure out how to handle the SRs and DRs.

5. **USA Swimming Officials Workshop.** Since names were due prior to the Committee meeting, I selected the 2 Referees to represent Virginia Swimming at the workshop. The Committee agreed with the selections: Dan Demers and John Squires.

6. **National Certifications.** Virginia Swimming has 83 Officials with current National Certifications:

	<b>S&amp;T Judge</b>	<b>Chief Judge</b>	<b>Starter</b>	<b>Deck Ref</b>	<b>Admin Ref</b>
<b>N2</b>	41	26	24	19	6
<b>N3</b>	42	5	5	4	3

We have 2 N3 National Evaluators (waiting approval of a 3<sup>rd</sup>) and 8 N2 National Evaluators.

7. **Committee Meeting Notes.** The Committee met on 18 September. Major take-aways were:
- a. **New Officials Orientation/Clinics.** District Chairs are setting up Clinics and we're posting the information on the website.
  - b. **Training.** District Chairs are the Master Trainers in their Districts. They are responsible for implementing and supervising the training program. I've reminded them to: make sure our Trainers are doing their jobs, not just checking off the blocks; make sure our Referees are doing their jobs – they are the quality control and should talk to each Trainee/Trainer pair at the end of the session to assess the training, provide guidance, and identify the next step; make sure our Team Chairs are doing their jobs – they need to help their Trainees through the process and are responsible for getting them completed.
  - c. **Meet Referees for Championship Meets.** We want to develop our Championship MRs through a progression of increased responsibility at our lower level champs meets and shadowing a MR at the LSC Champs meets. We've done some of this in the past few years, but we need to do better. We've identified candidates and I will be trying to get them through the progression. MR for the SC Senior Champs meet will be Jim Frye. MR for the SC Age Group Champs Meet will be Bob Rustin. We'll be doing the same thing for our Championship Admin Referees. ARs for the SC Champs Meets will be named soon. I will name the MRs for SC District/Region Champs meets by the end of October. We will name the LC MRs/ARs in our December meeting.
  - d. **Mentoring Program.** One of the critical issues we need to tackle is consistency, both in calls and in protocols/procedures. One method proven to work is mentoring, so we will be expanding the Mentoring Program. We have 10 N3 Officials who have regularly worked at the National Championships for several years – we need to use their experience. We'll be pairing them up to go to meets around the LSC (preferably out of their Districts) to work with the Officials through coordination with the MR. They will be available to conduct clinics/briefings, work with Officials on deck to improve their performance, review policies/procedures/protocols and provide guidance,

assist with situation resolution by offering suggestions, and identify Officials who are ready for advancement. I will get with the Mentors and work out the schedule for SC at the Swimposium.

- e. **Officials Qualifying Meets.** We have 4 OQMs a year (the LSC Champs meets). Some Officials have expressed a desire for more opportunities within the LSC. We will look at adding 2 meets in December (VSTP and SEVA) if I can get the appropriate MRs and National Evaluators lined up.
- f. **Radios.** Now that we are certifying and using Chief Judges more, we need to also be using radios. Our Officials are at a disadvantage when they work meets outside the LSC and at our LSC Champs meets because they are not practiced in the radio protocol. We need to purchase 5 sets of 8 radios/headsets for use in our local meets. The sets will be assigned to the DCs who will be responsible for maintaining them, getting them to their local meets, and ensuring their use.

*Action Item: BoD authorizes LSC Equipment Coordinator to purchase radios/headsets for use by Officials at our local meets.*

- g. **Referee Candidates.** Freddie Persinger and Georg Fuhs were approved to begin their Referee training. Michael Downs will be Freddie's Mentor and Bob Hood will be Georg's Mentor.
- h. **Swimposium.** I wanted to have a "training-focused" Swimposium this year, but we aren't really ready to do that. We will do the Train-the-Trainer seminars next year. We discussed the approach for this year and decided that a half-day program was better and we would focus on items that will help improve our consistency. Pat Lunsford will be here to conduct the Coaches Forum, so he will also discuss Philosophy of Officiating with us.
- i. **Other Governing Body Cooperation.** We established 4 LNO positions to the other Governing Bodies in Virginia. We want to reach out and partner with these organizations to provide leadership and to cooperate in training/certification with the goal of potentially expanding the pool of available Officials for our meets.
- j. **Officials-sponsored Swim Meet.** We want to explore the feasibility of hosting a LC meet to raise money to support attainment of our goals (in addition to budget lines). The meet would also serve as the opportunity to get together for a social event. We'll discuss a proposal in December.
- k. **Long-Range Plan.** The Committee is developing a 2012-2015 Quad Plan for Officials. We've laid out the end-state and identified goals. We're working on the objectives and will be developing the plan to support them. I've established 3 Task Forces to work on Recruiting/Retention, Training/Certification, and Documentation. The TFs will be assessing the status quo and making change recommendations for Committee consideration, as necessary.

Submitted By:

**Michael Downs**  
LSC Officials Chair