



Meet Referee Planning: The Coaches Meeting

As a Meet Referee, one of your responsibilities is meeting with the attending coaches and answering their questions. During the meeting, the referee communicates any new or odd situations affecting the meet, and sets expectations on just about anything coupled to the meet. The meet referee is the authority for the meet and the Coaches Meeting is a chance to lead by example, by showing trust in the coaches and gaining their trust as well.

This guideline is to help the Meet Referee plan the Coaches Meeting at a swim meets. The guideline will not cover every possible topic because there's no crystal ball, and every meet is unique in some way. This guideline is a tool to help the meet referee develop the agenda for this important meeting.

The decision on when to hold the Coaches Meeting(s) is dependent on the meet itself and is at the discretion of the Meet Referee. The coach meeting is commonly held in one of the following ways:

- Before the first session of a meet
- Before the second session of a meet if the first session is held on Friday evening with limited attendance
- Before each session of a meet (during meets where there are many of changes from session to session)
- E-mail. If e-mail is used, the virtual meeting should be sent to the attending coaches at least three days before the meet. The meet referee must then follow-up with each team during the warm-up of the first or second session to confirm that there are no questions or concerns. The follow-up is an important activity because the Coaches Meeting is meant to be an active participation component of the meet preparation process. Passive communications (just sending an e-mail and assuming everything is good) is not active participation.

Elements and topics to consider for the Coaches Meeting may include the following:

- Send an invitation to the attending teams at least three days before the meet with the time and location of the Coaches Meeting. In the invitation, remind coaches that attending the Coaches Meeting is beneficial to them and their swimmers. Many topics are discussed and voted on at the coaches meeting. If a coach doesn't attend, they have no grounds to complain.
- Communicate how many coaches meetings will be held
- Remind the meeting attendees to communicate the information from the coaches to other coaches on their team
- The start time of all sessions and time trials
- Timeline (The durations for all sessions plus the heat interval)
- Recent events
 - Timeline concerns/changes
 - Planned breaks
 - Warm-up changes
 - Computer mishaps
 - The list is endless!
- Standard Procedures
 - Three point entry
 - CSI Warm-up Procedures
 - Lane assignments
 - Location of the posted results
- Athlete Safety & Protection – An active responsibility bestowed on all USA Swimming members
 - Coaches are expected to help ensure their team's parents understand the athlete protection elements and help to enforce them
 - No image recording devices in the Locker room
 - No photography behind the block
 - No deck changing in/out of swimsuits
 - Team photographers must check-in with the Meet Referee and be introduced to the Meet Director
 - Valid and visible credentials – no expired background check or APT dates
 - Be smart and use common sense
- The continuous warm-up lane:
 - Entry & Exit from the <specific> side of the pool only
 - Swimming only....no playing and no socializing. Swim and get out.
 - Please remind your bigger swimmers to be take care of the little kids in the warm-up lanes so they don't get hurt and if your little kids are in the warm up lanes, remind them to be careful of the big kids
- Deck Entry Procedure - location of the Clerk of Course
- Positive Check-in
 - Which events



Meet Referee Planning: The Coaches Meeting



- Location of the Clerk of Course
- Closure time (for each session)
- Penalty for not checking in (i.e. seeded as an NT or not seeded)
- Scratch Procedure (national scratch rules or meet specific rules)
- Entry procedure when making a qualifying time during a last chance meet
- Whistles: How will whistles be done and how much leeway will be given (a very important topic for developmental meets)
- Starts:
 - Fly-over starts (yes/no)
 - Where the 25yd and 50m events will start
- Procedure for missing a heat (what should a swimmer do)
- DQ's:
 - How will DQ's be recorded, processed, and communicated (to the swimmer and to the coaches)
 - Single or multiple DQ's per slip
 - If there are questions about a DQ, just ask...if there's disagree a formal protest can be filed
 - Protest Procedure (and location of protest forms)
- Combined Events (remind coaches to help swimmers know those situations so they don't miss a splash)
- Empty Events (remind coaches to help swimmers know those situations so they don't miss a splash)
- Swim off procedures
- Pool dependent scenarios
 - The gutter and potential problems for toes on the backstroke
 - 100 yd. relay events with in the water starts because of a shallow pool
 - Hot tub (open/closed)
 - A funny block in lane _____
 - Safety precautions because of an odd shaped pool
 - Closed areas of the pool
 - Food on deck
 - Seating
 - Other
- Unusual procedures
 - Award presentations – time | location | staging area for marching
 - Outdoor meet: who the lightning authority/monitor is
 - 2 swimmers to a lane for distance events
 - Event and heat announcements (if applicable)
 - Anything specific to the pool or meet
- Describe any special meetings if planned....convene applicable jury if necessary
- Officials:
 - Plan for how the officials will be placed on the deck
 - The officials assigned jurisdiction
 - Backup plan if a less than optimal number of officials volunteer
 - Complaints about an official to the meet referee
- Medical attention or emergencies:
 - Lifeguards are on duty (if applicable)
 - Ice is available if needed (give the location)
 - Hospital Location (or where the directions are posted)
 - Location of the First-aid kit
- Showing attention into the smallest detail helps the coaches see that the Meet Referee is focused on everything about the meet. If there are small details you want to communicate, then so it. An example of a small detail is the current water temperature
- Questions from the coaches?