



## Oregon Swimming, Inc.

### Referee Clinic Outline

OBJECTIVE: To review the basic principles and requirements for the position of Meet Referee.

#### I. CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

- A. Experience
- B. Training
- C. Testing

#### II. PRE-MEET ORGANIZATION (Advance Planning)

- A. Liaison with meet hosts
  1. Review meet info prior to submission for sanction.
    - a. Review schedule of events and entry limit.
    - b. Time out the meet. (4 hours for 12 & Under (Invitational and Open), 8 hour day limit for Championships)
  2. Contact Meet Director (Must be USA Swimming member)
    - a. Review physical layout
    - b. Discuss potential problem areas
    - c. Establish times for meetings. (Officials and Coaches)
    - d. Review marshalling requirements, assignments, briefing.
    - e. Review safety requirements, warm-up procedure and schedule.
- B. Pre-Meet Preparation
  1. Review availability of Officials.
  2. Recruit key Officials.
  3. Review USA Swimming Rules and Regulations and other pertinent documents.

#### III. PRE-MEET ORGANIZATION (Day before or morning of 1<sup>st</sup> day)

- A. Obtain heat sheets
  1. Review for seeding errors.
  2. Establish time line, if not done by management.
  3. Allow for breaks where practical.
  4. Consider alternatives to keep meet within 4/8 hr. limit.
- B. Facilities
  1. Pool
    - a. Water level and temperature.
    - b. Chemical balance.
    - c. Lighting.
    - d. Depth at starting end.
  2. Competition Equipment
    - a. Safety requirements
      - (1) Warm up schedule posted.
      - (2) Signs on blocks.
      - (3) Hazards in pool area.
    - b. Starting blocks - safe, secure, anchored, proper height.
    - c. Recall rope.

- d. Backstroke flags.
  - e. Starting and recall devices.
  - f. P. A. system.
  - g. Timing devices.
  - h. Backup provisions in case of failure.
- C. Meet Management
- 1. Safety considerations
    - a. Marshalls assigned and on duty.
    - b. Announcer assisting with warm ups.
  - 2. Routing procedures for entry cards (if used).
  - 3. Scoring procedure.
  - 4. Results posting procedure and location.
  - 5. Officials and/or Coaches hospitality.
  - 6. Chief timer and announcer assignments.
  - 7. Specific deck restrictions. (Food, personnel, etc.)
  - 8. Awards procedure if applicable.
- D. Officials Meeting
- 1. Time (30-45 minutes before start of meet).
  - 2. Provide for sign-up prior to meeting.
  - 3. Review personnel and assign chief officials.
  - 4. During meeting.
    - a. Introduce chief officials and guest officials.
    - b. Verify qualifications and USA Swimming membership.
    - c. Discuss assignments, including trainees.
    - d. Review rules, procedures, potential problem areas.
    - e. Announce location of rest/hospitality areas.
    - f. Distribute meet evaluation forms.
    - g. Review procedures for any adaptive swimmers.
    - h. Allow time for questions from officials.
  - 5. Officials report to chief judges for assignments and info.
    - a. Head Timer
      - (1) Lane assignments.
      - (2) Familiarity with watches and buttons.
      - (3) Recording requirements.
      - (4) Strobe, horn, or gun start?
      - (5) When to clear watches.
      - (6) What to do if problem occurs.
      - (7) Relief procedure.
    - b. Head Starter
      - (1) Coordinate procedures with announcer.
      - (2) Establish tempo.
      - (3) Observe and evaluate performances.
      - (4) Coordinate/assign starter rotation.
    - c. Chief Stroke and Turn Judge
      - (1) DQ procedure and routing of slips.
      - (2) Rotation and relief procedure.

- (3) Discuss potential problem areas.
- (4) Jurisdiction.
- d. Assistant Referees
  - (1) Specific areas of responsibility.
  - (2) Operating procedures.
  - (3) Relief schedule if applicable.
  - (4) Authority.
- E. Coaches Meeting - Hold 15 minutes prior to competition. (Meet Director & Asst. Refs present?)
  - 1. Verify USA Swimming membership.
  - 2. Check-in procedures if applicable.
  - 3. DQ policy.
    - a. No-show or late to blocks.
    - b. Rules infractions.
  - 4. Scratch procedure if applicable.
  - 5. Swimmer conduct.
  - 6. Deck behavior for swimmers and coaches.
  - 7. Results and awards procedures.
  - 8. Special rules or conditions for this meet.
  - 9. Review seeding or schedule errors if any.
  - 10. Type of relay take-off judging in effect. (single or dual)
  - 11. Any adaptive swimmers?
  - 12. Distribute meet evaluation forms.

#### IV. DURING THE MEET

- A. Pre-meet ceremony (National Anthem, welcome, etc.)
- B. Start on time
- C. Circulate and review
  - 1. Starters
    - a. Tempo
    - b. Form
    - c. Position
  - 2. Judges
    - a. Position
    - b. Mobility
    - c. Accuracy
  - 3. Timers
    - a. Position
    - b. Accuracy
    - c. Availability of relief
  - 4. Constructive criticism
  - 5. Thanks for volunteering
- D. Disqualifications
  - 1. Starting
    - a. False starts
    - b. Delay of Meet

- (1) Late to blocks when starter begins instructions.
- (2) Failure to respond to instructions.
- 2. Stroke and Turn
  - a. Hand raised
  - b. Position correct
  - c. Jurisdiction
  - d. Interpretation correct
  - e. Confirmation
- 3. Relay Take-off
  - a. Dual confirmation.
- 4. Protests
  - a. Only coach or swimmer may protest.
  - b. Handling parental inquiries.
  - c. Review circumstances and rules.
  - d. The decision making process.
- 5. IT'S YOUR DECISION, REFEREE (see attached letter)
- 6. Additional Considerations
  - a. Set correct environment with coaches and officials.
  - b. Pro-active vs. reactive approach to management.
  - c. Keep options open. Don't make decisions until sure.
  - d. Set demanding standards as to competitive environment.
  - e. Listen to swimmers problems.
  - f. Don't surprise coaches or swimmers.
  - g. Circulate, talk with coaches, officials, and swimmers.

V. POST MEET

- A. Officials
  - 1. Assess and critique performance. (Good and bad)
  - 2. Evaluate and recommend potential changes in procedures.
- B. Meet Operations
  - 1. Discuss strengths, weaknesses with meet director.
  - 2. Review reports required by Oregon Swimming.
  - 3. Fill out record applications if applicable.
  - 4. Collect, summarize, and discuss evaluation forms.
- C. Open meet in OTS and enter all officials' session count

**VI. CONCLUSION** - Education, Experience, Planning, Review, Follow-through, Cooperation, and Evaluation. These elements can make your Referee's assignment the easiest of any deck position. Realistically, you must be prepared to confront a wide variety of situations, all of which can be resolved by following procedures outlined above and in other reference material available to you. Your primary responsibility is to assure uniform, consistent, fair and equitable conditions of competition, while at the same time ensuring that you and your fellow officials remain as inconspicuous as practical.

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## Oregon Swimming, Inc.

### It's Your Decision Referee

Sooner or later, as a swimming referee, you are going to have to make decisions that may or may not be popular, controversial, or without precedent. This goes with the position of Referee, and, like it or not, you have to make a decision. This is why the Meet Referee should be selected for his/her experience and ability to make decisions affecting the competition. This paper is to provide some guidelines and hints that will help you to make good, sound decisions, based on the Technical Rules for Swimming and on **COMMON SENSE**.

Decisions for the Referee fall into three major categories: Rule Interpretation, Review of Judgment call, and Coaches' Consensus.

Rule interpretation decisions are considered easy because the rule book is there to help make the decision. The first task is to assemble all the facts pertinent to the situation, such as: the level of competition, the season (Long or Short Course), facilities, etc. Next, read **ALL** sections of the rules pertaining to the problem at hand. This includes any cross-references mentioned. **NO MATTER HOW FAMILIAR YOU ARE WITH THE RULE BOOK READ IT AGAIN!** Then consult any guide sheet published by the Association or National Officials Chair. Also check for any special interpretations that may have been sent from the National Rules Committee. The final step in any decision-making process is to find a quiet, undisturbed area to consider the decision in detail. It is important that the final review of all decisions be made without distraction

In the review of a judgment call by one of the judges, you may wish to question the judge making the call to ascertain what the judge saw and why the call was made. A judgment call can only be changed if the Referee personally saw the infraction, or non-infraction, or if there was a misinterpretation of the rules. Remember, overriding the call of a judge should be considered with the utmost care because it involves the questioning of the judgment of a person who was there at the time and interpreted the events from their perspective.

The coaches' consensus is a very tough way to make a decision and should be used with extreme care. This method is needed when changes are to be made in the conditions and structure of the competition. Because of this, the coaches should be consulted as to their estimation of the effect of the proposed changes on their swimmers. First and foremost, you must limit the coaches involved in the decision to those, and only those, whose swimmers are directly or indirectly affected by the decision. There are two reasons for this limitation. First, with a smaller group, you are more likely to gain consensus. Secondly, coaches not directly involved can sometimes cloud the issue at hand and do not contribute to the quick resolution of the problem. Second, if possible, you should have one or more solutions to the problem that are acceptable to you. This gives direction to the discussion and may lead to the quick resolution of the problem. Be sure to have considered both the positive and negative effects of your suggestions and state them at the time you present these suggestions. Remember, **THE DECISION IS STILL YOURS**, no matter what the consensus may be. If you need the approval of the coaches or swimmers, make a list of those involved and talk to each person individually and record their "vote." The results of the vote should not be made public. A show of hands can lead to problem that is best avoided. Once a decision has been made, you must allow for written protests and

objections. You must also allow time for these protests to be considered. This is required by the rules. As with any decision affecting the competition, you must consider the effects of the competition.

One final comment: The Referee must be aware of what is happening at the moment as well as anticipating problems that may arise. By anticipating problems, the Referee can be ready with well considered solutions in plenty of time to head off many of the problems that may occur. This is one more reason to select an experienced and capable Referee.

These guidelines are just that, guidelines. Each situation is generally unique, but as the experience of the Referee increases, they will be able to draw on that experience in making the hard decisions that will inevitably be required of them. **REMEMBER, YOUR FIRST RESPONSIBILITY IS TO INSURE FAIR AND EQUITABLE COMPETITION.**

In conclusion, it is appropriate to quote from the USA Swimming Rules and Regulations: (emphasis, mine.)

“All competitive events held under USA Swimming sanction shall be conducted in accordance with the following rules, which are designed to protect the swimmer, provide fair and equitable conditions of competition, and promote uniformity in the sport so that no swimmer shall obtain an unfair advantage over another.”

In my opinion, the above quote should be the yardstick by which all decisions concerning competition should be measured.

D. Parker, 1980

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