



Referee Certification Clinic

Referee Clinic Sept 2019

OSI Officiating Philosophy

Fair and equitable conditions of competition are maintained and uniformity in the sport is promoted so that no swimmer has an unfair advantage over another

What does *that* mean?

- One set of rules applies to all swimmers, regardless of age or skill level.* The rules determine what is or isn't allowed.
- Ugly swims can be legal
- We observe swims, we do not inspect.
 - Do not infer or extrapolate from observations.
- Show impartiality and professionalism on deck.
- ***Swimmers always get the benefit of the doubt!***

* Swimmers with disabilities are accommodated.

Agenda

- Referee is process + (mostly) performance art
- Roles
- Meet Planning Team and Issues
 - Levels of meets
- Pre-Session
- Live! It's a meet!
- Planning
- Reference Material
- Training Opportunities

Process: Referee Rules

- Article 102 – Conduct and Officiating of All Swimming Competition
 - * 102.13 – Referee
 - .1 – “Shall have full authority over all officials and shall assign and instruct them; shall enforce all applicable rules and shall decide all questions relating to the actual conduct of the meet, the final settlement of which is not otherwise assigned by said rules; can override any meet official on a point of rule interpretation, or on a judgment decision pertaining to an action which the Referee has personally observed; shall also disqualify a swimmer(s) for any violations of the rules that the Referee personally observes
 - * 102.11 – Protests
 - .1 – “Protests against the judgment decisions of starters, stroke, turn, place and relay take-off judges can only be considered by the Referee and *the Referee’s decision shall be final.*”
 - * 102.8 – Change of Program and Postponement

Process: Rules Modifications(!)

- Referee has “the authority to modify the rules for the swimmer with a disability.” (105.1.1)
- Determine “if the requested modifications are appropriate and can be met.” (105.1.2B)
- Changes may include (but not limited to): Starting position, lane reassignment, personal assistant.
 - Not allowed: Aids to buoyancy and speed.

BOTTOM LINE: Review disability rules before every meet, ask coaches if any swimmers may need accommodation. Modify to let swimmers swim!

Art: A “Good” Referee is...

- C-a-l-m-m-m
- Aware
- Delegates
- Knowledgeable
- Communicates
- Experienced
- Encourages others
- Friendly
- Confident
- Team Player
- Professional
- Proactive
- Welcomes input & questions

Above all: Fair!

Three Refereeing Roles

- 1. Meet Referee**
 1. Top official at the meet, Team Leader
 2. Overall responsibility for the conduct of the meet
- 2. Admin Referee**
 1. Works with, supervises and directs the ‘dry-deck’: ET, Scratches, Deck Seeding, etc.
- 3. Deck Referee**
 1. Supervises and directs the ‘wet-deck’: Starter, CJs, S&T, Timers.
 2. Runs the session as assigned by Meet Ref.

All three: Ensure fair and equitable competition!

Meet Planning (Meet Ref)

- Meet Ref Selected by Meet Host
- Work *with* Meet Director to draft Meet Information
 - Meet Info is the ‘local rulebook’ of the Meet: Facility details, entry process, schedule, etc.
 - Decisions made live at a meet must conform with the Meet Information unless coaches approve!
 - Pro-Tips: *Wiggle-words and phrases are your friends.* Reserve absolutes for what’s absolutely necessary.
 - “Administrative break may be added at MR discretion.”
 - Don’t just cut-and-paste last year’s version. *Think.*

Meet Planning (Meet Ref)

- Deck-seeded events (usually 400+ distance): If host will allow, order well after start of a session.
 - *Eliminate a stressor on you, Meet Director team and paperwork delays. Set workable entry deadlines!*
- Work with the Meet Director to determine a timeline appropriate to the level of meet and when it occurs.
- The timeline is a reasonable plan, not holy writ. Once a meet is underway, it *will* change based on equipment, weather, swimmer preparedness to race and unexpected events. Expect unexpected!

Meet Planning (Meet Ref)

“The Four-Hour Rule”: Rule 205.3.1F “was adopted...to ensure that swimming would be competitive with other youth sports, namely baseball and soccer, insofar as time commitment for both athletes and parents was concerned. Clearly, it was not in the best interest of our sport for developmental athletes to be at a pool all day or for the entire weekend to the exclusion of other family interests, particularly when other athletic activities could be completed in a far more reasonable time.
(from official USA Swimming Rules Interpretation, emphasis added)

Meet Planning (Meet Ref)

- Practical application of the Four-Hour Rule:
 - Guideline for all sessions, not just 12U. Older swimmers shouldn't be stuck at the pool all day, either.
 - Work with the Meet Director and Host with a bias toward more, shorter sessions rather than a couple of very long ones.
 - When reviewing entries, do not accept unrealistic heat intervals, e.g. 10 secs for 12U.
 - Longer intervals early in the season, younger swimmers.

Meet Planning (Meet Ref)

- Recruit and assign officials for the meet
 - *Not* just a championships step.
 - You will be far less stressed if you have actively recruited an assistant Ref/Deck Ref, Starter(s), CJs and a few key S&Ts rather than leaving the deck to “whoever shows up” pot luck.
 - Mix “old hands” and “newbies,” avoid clique creation
 - Conduct Officials/Coaches Meetings
 - When chief judges are planned the officials meetings are typically delegated to them
- Supervise Officials Team

Meet Planning (Meet Ref)

- ***Chief Judges aren't just for championships!***
- ***Whenever possible***, insert into the team, even with “small” crews. Recruit, or decide day-of based on attendance. (But protect S&T breaks/rotations!)
- Use to validate calls – right info, ask the 3 questions, even as a spot-check when it's ‘busy.’
- Myths:
 - We can't have chief judges without radios.
 - Have to be at all four corners or none at all.
 - Can't have just one.

Setting the Deck Staff (delegate to DR or CJ!)

- Priority always should be welfare of S&Ts (breaks, sun/shade) and observation of highest-action areas.
 - Sufficient breaks to actually get to hospitality, manage time on warm decks – pay attention to facility layout.
- When thin, get creative:
 - Use 3- (or 2- !) person DR/SR teams. If *really* short, one can double as S&T at edge lane.
 - Where's the most action? Turns and finishes. It's OK to have more officials at Start/Finish than Turn if short.
 - Last positions to add: Stroke (LC), 15M, 4th DR/SR.

Administrative Referee

- Generally a Championship format function.
- Assist Meet Referee and Meet Director in pre-meet planning – pre-Meet becomes a *three*-person team!
- At the Meet:
 - Supervises the Console Operator, Timing Judge, Recorder, and Clerk of Course
 - Make decisions regarding fair application of: Entries Procedures, Check-in Procedures, Scratch /No-show Procedures
- Review Seeding and Heat Sheet Preparation
- Approve Timing Adjustments
- Process DQs (after Deck Ref approval)
- Review Results Preparation/Publication
- Coordinate Swim-Offs
- Review Relay Seeding and Results
- Coordinate Time Trials (or a Time Trials Ref will be appointed)

Deck Referee

- Supervise Starters and Stroke & Turn Judges
 - To/from breaks “walk the deck” and do “welfare checks” on S&Ts: Need water? Need a break? Have slips to write? Be willing to step in for a min or two!
- Control the flow of the meet
 - The timeline is not holy writ: *Do not rush swimmers to starts* just because *your* timeline is “behind.” Create good starts.
 - Swimmers will respond to your whistle pace.
- Review/Approve DQs
 - Inquire to the extent practicable (with staffing) about calls. At *minimum*, spot-check: “What did you observe?”
 - First line of question/appeal from coaches.

Deck Referee

- Coach questions:
 - “She/he *never* does that.”
 - “I was watching, and he/she didn’t do that!”
 - “Oh, come on! Really?! (big sigh)”

Best Deck Ref catch-all answers:
 “I’m happy to inquire. Is there something in particular you’d like me to ask?”
 Coaches more often: “Yep, I saw it. Maybe he/she will listen to me now.”

Deck Referee

- Swimmer: Appears at Start, glumly looking down at the deck.
 - Friendly, smiling Deck Ref: "May I help you?"
- Swimmer: "I (sniff, tears) missed my event!!!"
 - LSC Deck Ref: "Don't worry, we'll do our best to get you a swim."
 - Find any reasonable way to fit the swim in: Later no-show, same-distance opening, etc.
 - Remember: What you do for one swimmer must apply to all.
 - Championships: Almost always, no-show rule per Meet Info.

Deck Referee

Situations:

- DR raises arm, turning heat over to the Starter. Is the heat closed to a swimmer late to arrive on the block?
 - No! Raised arm is not related to heat closure. DR judgment whether swimmer had time to get to block. Traffic interfere?
- Swimmer enters the water prior to the Start. Is it a "Delay of Meet" or False Start DQ?
 - Generally*, yes.
- Swimmer A jumps in the water prior to the Start. Swimmer B follows. Is swimmer B also DQ'd?
 - Yes. It is Swimmer B's responsibility to await the Start signal.

* See USA Swimming Rules Interpretations

Deck Referee

A Few More Situations:

- Swimmer's leg (or arm) twitched just prior to the Start. Is this a False Start? No. *We observe, not examine.*
- A swimmer leaves the set position prior to the Start, and tries to catch him/herself. Seeing this, the Starter says "Stand Please" command. The swimmer falls into the water. Is this a False Start? Yes.
- Upon hearing "Take your mark," swimmer attempts set position but loses balance and falls into the water. Is this a False Start? No. The swimmer never set.

DQ SLIPS

- Name, Heat & Lane should be checked at each step!
- Do not reject calls for incorrect slips. Get slips rewritten.
- Steps of review: CJ, then Deck Ref, then ET, then AO, and then Meet Ref. Check, check and re-check!
 - Don't let DQ slips take on a life of their own. The layers exist to protect the swimmers' times.

When You Arrive

- Check in with Meet Director, Clerk of Course, resolve any pending questions/issues.
- Check in with Facility Staff. Start/Finish times, emergency protocols, possible external issues (e.g. weather). What are the water & air temps?
- Inspect Venue: Where are First Aid kits, backboards, exits? Any deck obstacles to clear? Use checklist!
- Are Safety Marshalls in place?
- Talk with Announcer about timelines, announcements, Anthem, etc.

Art of the Officials Meeting

Key items to cover:

- Introductions
- Timeline and session events. Every official (and official's family) wants to know when they will finish.
- Stroke, jurisdiction, deck protocol, rotation/breaks.
- Trainer/Trainee assignments and expectations.
- Any problems/issues. What did someone do well?
- Announcements
- Thank yous – e.g. hospitality, Meet Director

Art of the Officials Meeting

- Strongly recommend one full hour prior to session.
 - Relaxed, team-building and educational opportunity.
 - Leave your team time for post-meeting conversation, hydration, bathroom break.
- Stroke Briefings:
 - Tailor to experience level of the team. Early season or many trainees may merit more detail.
 - Highly experienced, last day of meet? Less, but sharp.
 - Can be fun: Question games, Dr. Seuss, etc.
 - Beware of “rule of the day.”

Coaches Meeting

- Start of EVERY meet, typically 10 minutes
- Cover highlights, what is different at the meet or venue
- Your approach to the meet, e.g. missed swims
- Meet deadlines/timelines
- Scratch/deck seeding/etc. processes
- Disability accommodations?
- Necessary changes from Meet Info? Need approval.
- Warm up/warm down procedures
- Probable contingencies for likely issues, e.g. weather
- Anything else that should be flagged!

During the Meet

- Supervise Warm-Ups
 - USA Swimming/OSI Swimming Policy
 - No marshals or invigilators = no swimming!
- Walk the Deck
 - Talk with Coaches, swimmers, and officials
 - Sense problems, build respect and ‘team’
- Work with Admin Referee / Deck Referee
 - DELEGATE (authority, not responsibility), SUPPORT
- Work with ‘Wet-Deck’ Officials
 - Monitor position, alertness, calls
- Work with ‘Dry-Deck’ Officials
 - Monitor flow of data, decisions, timeliness of results

Other In-Meet Tips

- Work with Coaches, Swimmers, Parents
 - Keep them informed
 - LISTEN, answer questions, get additional information
 - Take conflict off deck
- Work with Announcer
 - Discuss responsibilities and expectations, coordinate announcements
- Work with Chief Timer
 - Starter role: Timer briefing, esp. early in season
- Work with the Meet Director
 - Control the venue
 - Solve problems
- Decide Protests
 - Conduct Meet Juries. (Appoint at beginning of meet.)

More In-Meet Tips

- Be careful of setting precedents with early decisions
 - Rather than answer immediately, "I'll get back to you." Give yourself time to think through implications.
 - Communicate decisions to DRs and CJs.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions or correct mistakes
- Keep a DQ log. At-a-glance view of how S&T team is performing; reveals over- and under-officiating.
- Teach, provide constructive criticism
- Say 'THANK-YOU' to everyone
- Conduct Self-Evaluation

Levels of Meets

- Regional
- LSC
- LSC Championships
- Sectional Championships
- Zone Championships
- National Championships
- International Championships

A meet is a meet is a meet. Most of the procedures and problems are the same. The differences mainly are in staffing, process detail and protocol.

All meets deserve full attention and total quality effort.

Reference Material

- OSI Web Site Officials Page
- USA Swimming Education and Training Resources Page
 - Review Rules and Interpretation Documents
- Create your own "Referee Notebook":
 - Meet information, sign-in sheets, misc. forms, counting sheets, logs.
- Other Referees.

Training Opportunities

- All training sessions must be performed at OSI/ USA Swimming sanctioned meets
- To arrange training, contact the Meet Referee well in advance of the meets you plan to attend

Resources

- Oregon Swimming, Inc. website: www.oregonswimming.org
 - Officials
 - Training forms
 - List of trainers
- USA Swimming website: www.usaswimming.org
 - Official Tracking System
 - Education and Resources page

If All Else Fails - ASK

- Use all resources available
 - Other officials
 - Referees
 - Area Officials Chair
 - Officials Chair

Thank you!
See you on deck
