



The On-Deck Circle

How to Handle Missed Heats

- Jack Campbell, Chair

Every referee is familiar with the coach or athlete who shows up and says: "My swimmer just missed his race. Can you find him a lane?" Traditionally, many of us have parked the swimmer at his or her side and then plugged him into the first same distance lane in a subsequent event. At the timing table, the admin referee then picks up the time and manually moves it to where it should have been. Everybody goes away happy. Problem solved, right?

Section 102.24.1A(2) states: **"An official time for an event or a stroke can be achieved only in that event or stroke, or in an initial distance of such event or stroke .**

Recently, this rule was reinforced from the USA Swimming Rules Committee and the SWIMS database. If a time is achieved in an Event or with a gender other than originally entered, even if we intentionally moved the swimmer, the time is not official. It cannot go into SWIMS and should not be considered for scoring, awards or records.

At first blush this seems pretty harsh and certainly flies in the face of what we have all previously seen. Consider the rea-

sons behind the rule and its purpose becomes more apparent :

-Is it possible that an inexperienced swimmer competing in a 200 yard event might achieve a better time if dropped into a lane next to a swimmer who understands pace?

-Is a sprinter moved into a slower heat going to advantage of quieter water that would not have existed in her originally assigned heat?

Absolutely! The position of a swimmer in a race matters. That's why we seed the races. While trying to be "helpful", the Referee who tries to fix a problem by swimming an athlete out of position has directly intervened in the competition.

Where should we hold the line on this rule? The answer is we draw it at the rule. We are reminded: "You don't get to decide which rules you like and which ones you don't." Sometimes we get a little too creative in trying to make everybody happy.

Certainly, there are cases when extenuating circumstances require good judgment; a timer prohibits an athlete from competing or a reseed never makes it around the deck. These are cases where a good referee will

investigate to make sure an athlete is not penalized. However, if the athlete simply fails to report, that's a mistake on the part of the coach or athlete.

So finally, how does the officials' community change a process that has mistakenly been in place for a long time? More importantly, how do you keep coaches and parents from going ballistic when you say no? I would recommend two steps:

1. ALWAYS hold a coaches' meeting. Alert coaches how missed swims will be handled. Make sure they know this is not just a local policy. Times which are not properly achieved will not go into the SWIMS database.

2. Be consistent and trust that your fellow referees are being consistent. Nobody is going to be upset with you for following the rules. However, all of us end up in trouble when something is legal one week and illegal the next. Ask a coach what they want from an official and they'll tell you: "Know the rules. Be fair and be consistent!"



2012 FOXJET WINTER CLASSIC

This meet has been designated as an "Officials Qualifying Meet" for national (N-2 / N-3) certification and re-certification evaluations. N-3 Evaluators John Witzel (MN) and Amy Hoppenrath, Missouri Valley, will be providing evaluations. Applications for evaluation are published on the Minnesota Swimming web site Officials' page.

If you will be able to assist with officiating at the Foxjet Winter Classic, please forward your intended sessions on the Application whether you wish an observation or not.

Notes from Short Course Junior Nationals, Austin TX

Couple notes to pass along from Clark Hammond and the other National Officials Committee folks at the meet:

1) Starter / Deck Ref protocol for dual confirming false starts *has not changed*. There has been

some leaning toward no conversation at all, however Clark reinforced that starters should still approach the Referee with some kind of statement of observation on the heat. Wait for the Referee's response and then share programs if indicated.

2) Backstroke starts: Be aware of how long the swimmers are holding on to the grips before the TYM. If it gets too long as you are waiting for toes or feet placement, you should 'stand down' the heat.

Women in Officiating - Minnesota

The January Foxjet Meet will feature a get-together for Minnesota Swimming women officials on Saturday afternoon before the 12-under Timed finals Session.

Amy Hoppenrath, Missouri

Valley Swimming, will be serving as an evaluator at the meet. She is a member of the USA Swimming WIO Task Force.

Plan to come down to meet Amy and learn about the

- Barb Green, Coordinator

Task Force and initiatives here in Minnesota to recruit and support women as officials.

Please let Barb Green know you plan to attend:
barbaragreen61@comcast.net

SWIMS Data Base:

The LSC NTV Coordinator, Michael Bougie, must receive all post meet files. Meet results should be imported by the Coordinator into the SWIMS database within 1-2 days following each meet.

It is Michael Bougie's job as NTV Coordinator to enter the results of all meets into the SWIMS database. If the times are not loaded, they cannot be used to verify entries. Swimmers will not be

Referees: Take a Meet Manager backup after a meet

able to see their results in a timely manner.

The Coordinator reviews the results and contacts the Meet Director and the Meet Referee to research potential errors and correct them. If there is correction required, the Meet Director is responsible for the file update and to redistribute of the revised meet file to the NTV Coordinator, the Meet Referee, and all participating clubs.

While it is the responsibility of the Meet Director to file all meet-related information, if the Meet Referee or Admin Referee send the backup to Michael as soon as you can, he will load the times into the SWIMS database as soon as he receives them. The times will then be available as soon as possible. This is especially important for meets that precede a meet that has proof of times requirements.

Training and Advancement

Training & Orientation for New Officials

- **01-16-12** Stroke/Turn Class—Deluxe Corp, Shoreview. 6:45 pm
- **01-22-12** Stroke/Turn Class—Mankato, Highland Center, MSU. 3:00 pm

Clinics will prepare attendees for certification as Stroke and Turn Judges.

1. Certification - Steps to complete for certification

2. Swim Competition - What Officials do at swim competition

3. Philosophy - How officials should view and approach competition

4. Expectations -

When can / should officials work

Uniform and dress

Organization of deck officials at meets

Conduct of deck officials at meets

Teamwork

5. Judging the Competition

A review of the Rules of Competition

Viewing the USA Swimming video on the Rules

The Clinic takes three hours.

Register for the Clinic by contacting Officials Training Coordinator John Witzel

johnwitz@mac.com

Clinics for advancement for certification for Starters are being scheduled. Look for one at St. Michael in February. If you are interested in becoming a Starter and would like personal notification of Clinics, please send a message requesting notification to John Witzel. Notices of these Clinics will be posted on the MSI website and sent to clubs, but you will get direct notice if you let John know of your interest. The format of these clinics limits the number who can attend each clinic.

Clinics for Deck Referee and Administrative Referee are also being developed. Again, let John know if you would like to be on a list for direct notification.



T.I.P.S. - Improving Starter Skills

“Always Getting Ready”

Every meet, every heat is getting ready, always getting better, always finding another way to find ‘it’ in yourself to give your best for the swimmers. A starter is not measured by the level of swimmers she starts; a starter should measure herself by how well she can give consistently good starts to any level swimmer under any conditions.

Practice is the best preparation. Build your skills and good habits. You will need them in your back pocket at the most unexpected times.

Is it noisy, crowded, wet? Develop coping skills that you can rely upon. Is your Deck Ref impatient, distracted, inconsistent? Learn to focus on your swimmers even more.

Working in a new place with new equipment? Make friends with it, listen to it, walk your blocks, set your eyes, find your spot... No matter how long it takes to get comfortable before you start, you owe your first TYM to be the best for your swimmers. Ensure that to the best of your ability.

“Just starting little kids”? They are the greatest teaching experience a

starter can have. They are totally random. If you can give 8Us consistently great starts, Olympians are a piece of cake. (They do all the same things, only faster).

Not all of us will have the opportunity to be assigned as a starter on a National Deck, but we should all aspire to have the qualities and skills required, just like our swimmers aspire to these meets. Hard work, focus, dedication.

Own your skills, coping strategies and confidence. And always, smile and love your swimmers.

- Gail Andersen



CALENDAR

- 12-31-11 USA Swimming Registrations due with Athlete Protection Program Training and Concussion Education Training (Mandatory)

- 01-16-12 Stroke/Turn Class—Deluxe Corp, Shoreview. 6:45 pm
- 01-22-12 Stroke/Turn Class—Mankato MSU 3:00 pm.

ALL HANDS ON DECK!

- Feb 25-26 C-Finals Two Sites
- 3-5 March A/B Finals Four Sites

Applications to Officiate

- FOXJ Winter Classic
- Austin TX Grand Prix
- Indianapolis Grand Prix, Mar 29-31
- Missouri Grand Prix, Columbia MO, Feb 10-12
- Ohio State Grand Prix, Columbus OH, Mar 9-11

Summer 2012 Speedo Sectionals

Iowa City, IA
July 19-22

Oxford, OH
July 31-Aug 3

Columbia, MO
July 18-21



NAME BADGES

If you are interested in a name badge with the USA Swimming Logo, an account has been set-up through Bestnamebadges for officials' white plastic, magnetic name badges that measure 1 1/2 x 3". To order, call 888-445-7601 or contact them through their www.bestnamebadges.com to order a name badge that is set-up in the "USA Swimming folder". Current pricing can be checked on their website.

SHIRTS

Officials' shirts with the USA Swimming Logo can be ordered through the vendor listed on the USA Swim website,



Count-down to the 2012 London Olympic Games

Just as our Athletes work hard to achieve their goals, Swimming Officials spend years honing skills to provide our US Olympic Team the best meets and experiences from their first age-group meet to London Finals and the Olympic Podium.

What you do every meet does affect our sport and out Athletes. We never know which 8-year old will become Dara Torres or Ryan Lochte. But we should always treat our Athletes as if they possess this potential.

For Officials, Trials is not an "application meet." It is officiated by "invitation only" issued by the national Officials Committee Chair, Clark Hammond.

The "Assigned Team" was selected in December. You will recognize many of them from Minnesota Grand Prix meets.

Recently, invitations were sent out to deck officials for the meet. For this event, the invited deck team will number less than 45 from over 10,000 officials nationwide. Pending responses to the invitations, the deck team will be finalized.

Watch this box for developments as USA Olympic Trials Officials prepare for the most important meet of each quadrennium.... wardrobe, TV, security passes, underwater cameras... oh, and FINA no-hand DQ protocols.