



The On-Deck Circle

Volume 1, Issue 1

December 2011

I don't know that I ever expected to be standing over a lane judging Michael Phelps' butterfly finish – how cool was that! Somebody asked me what I was thinking. I said I was praying “don't do anything stupid that I have to DQ you...”
- Jim Hanton

CALENDAR

- 12-31-11 USA Swimming Registrations due with Athlete Protection Program Training and Concussion Education Training (Mandatory)
 - 01-22-12 Stroke/Turn Class—Mankato MSU January 22.
- Applications to Officiate**
- FOXJ 'A'
 - 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

Minnesota Officials Observe Olympians at Minneapolis Grand Prix

Although this meet was early in the season and the first Grand Prix meet of the swimming year, the competition at the Minnesota Grand Prix was exciting! Michael Phelps usually "cruises" at the Grand Prix meets, but he was finishing and racing hard.

It is clear that the National Team swimmers are gearing up for Olympic Trials and the Olympics at the end of the season! It was great to be a part of the meet and contribute to those athletes!

The Grand Prix is a great opportunity for Minnesota officials.

1) It is an Officials Qualifying Meet which affords opportunity to obtain or renew National certifica-

tions as officials. Because of the level of competition and the presence of skilled and experienced officials from around the country, the certifications can be obtained or renewed for higher levels.

2) It is a great opportunity to sharpen our skills. It takes focus to watch athletes at that level, as the swimmers go by us very quickly. We learn to function at that level. It also takes a few of the "jitters" out of us once we have been judging the turn of Olympic Gold Medal winners.

3) It is just great to be there as swim fans! It is a privilege to watch (and judge) the likes of Michael Phelps, Dara Torres, Ryan



Lochte and Missy Franklin (just to name a few). We sometimes don't realize how unique the opportunity is to do that without traveling out of state.

It was good to see the Minnesota officials at the Grand Prix. I hope that you put it on your calendar for next year. If you couldn't work it this year, start thinking about next November. It is a real opportunity!

- John Witzel,
Training Coordinator

The weekend ended on a great note as Garrett Gale-Weber stopped on Sunday evening and said “Thank you. This was a great meet.” - Barb Green

Your News: Introducing The On-Deck Circle

Welcome to the First Edition of *The On-Deck Circle!*

This publication of information by and for Minnesota Officials seeks to inform and improve our officials toward greater consistency and overall excellence for

our swimmers as well as to build collegiality among our great group of Minnesota Officials.

There are many topics and areas of knowledge to be shared as well as stories from the deck. We welcome

your inquiries, comments, opinions and “war stories”. If you have thoughts on topics and contributions, please send them to me before the last weekend of each month.

- Gail Andersen, Editor
gailandersen@att.net

2012 FOXJET WINTER CLASSIC January 13-15, 2012 University of Minnesota Aquatic Center

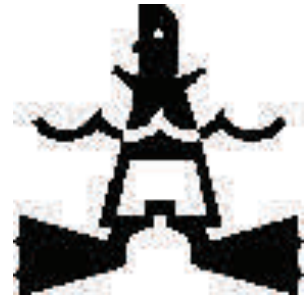
Team Foxjet welcomes all officials who are certified, wanting to fulfill on-deck training, or just wish to participate for love of the sport.

This meet has been submitted for designation 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, will be published on the Minnesota Swimming web site Officials' page. Opportunities for evaluations may be restricted by the available officiating positions,

number of evaluators, and positions which the evaluators are eligible to evaluate.



Heads Up Online Training Course

Get prepared for the new season in less than 30 minutes

Heads Up: Concussion in Youth Sports is a free, online course available to coaches, parents, and others helping to keep athletes safe

from concussion. It features interviews with leading experts, dynamic graphics and interactive exercises, and compelling storytelling to help you recognize a concussion and know how to respond if you think that your athlete might have a concus-

sion. Once you complete the training and quiz, you can print out a certificate, making it easy to show you are ready for the season.

http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/online_training.html

Women in Officiating - Minnesota

- Barb Green, Coordinator

USA Swimming National Women in Officiating development program has come to Minnesota Swimming.

Barb Green will be coordinating efforts to bring more women in to officiating and to support advancement opportunities.

The January Foxjet Meet will feature a get-together for Minnesota Swimming women officials on Saturday afternoon.

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

Questions and comments, contact Barb Green.

barbaragreen61@comcast.net



Training and Advancement

We can always use more officials on our meet decks! Please encourage your friends and fellow swim parents to join us on deck.

Also, remember that you are encouraged to improve and refine your skills and advance your certifications. It is more fun for us all when we have officials with advanced certifications at a meet. We can split time at the positions, give each other breaks, and mentor each other.

Several clinics for advancement will be scheduled in 2012. Look for: Introductory Stroke and Turn Judge Clinics. Advancement to Starter. Advancement to Deck Referee.

Clinics will be posted on the MSI website and messages sent to MSI Club Contacts. If you would like to get on a list for individual notification, please contact:

John Witzel
witzwim@mac.com

We are also looking for hosts for clinics, particularly the Starter Clinics. The Starter clinic combines class with working on deck with swimmers in a practice situation. We need a space for a classroom for about people and swimmers at a practice with a start unit, mic, and speakers. The swimmers do starts like in a meet, but climb out after 25 yards and start in "waves". It makes a great practice for swimmers as well as a break-in for new starters. If your club would be interested in hosting a Starter Clinic, please contact John Witzel.

Coach Perspective Coming Soon!

This column will be available for Coaches to communicate with the officiating community.

If you know a coach who would like to make a contribution to this monthly department, please encourage them.

Coaches may contact Gail Andersen, editor, directly.

gailandersen@att.net

Athlete Protection Program Training

We can all help foster safe and positive environments by educating ourselves on the tragic issue of abuse. USA Swimming has just launched its mandatory online educational programming for coaches, officials and other volunteers.

The education is a REQUIREMENT for all non-athlete members. You can start your online training today. It takes about an hour.

2011 non-athlete members are required to complete the USA Swimming athlete protection training course **by December 31, 2011.** Don't wait until the last minute as the link software is very busy.

USA Swimming Website: Home / Member Resources / Programs & Services / Athlete Protection / Education.



MINNESOTA SWIMMING OFFICIALS

approximately 150 officials
certified

58 are certified as Starter

35 are certified as Referee

CONGRATULATIONS & WELCOME!

New Stroke / Turn Judges

Mary Frances Price

Bonnie Kee-Bowling

Andrew Barnes

Nicole Sanders

Fiona Lefebvre

Julia Erickson

Steve Larson

Jacqueline Shupe

Michelle Shimek

Tong Wu

Christine Graf

Claudia Fairman

Thomas Gessner

(about 100 people have
completed at least one part of
the Stroke/Turn Judge training
over the last two years)

NAME BADGES

If you are interested in obtaining a name badge with the USA Swimming Logo, an account has been set-up through an online vendor, Bestnamebadges. They have officials' white plastic, magnetic (no pins), name badges that are measure 1 ½ x 3 inches.

To order, call them toll free at 888-445-7601 or contact them through their website, www.bestnamebadges.com.

Indicate that you would like 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, www.usaswimofficials.com.



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

basic touchstones: "P-P-P" and "Love your swimmers."

This will be a regular column in "The On-Deck Circle" to share experiences, fundamentals and philosophy notes for Starters.

Preparation: Yourself and your setting. Attitude, position, equipment, and voice. Our first "TYM" should never be inflicted on swimmers! Go talk to yourself until it comes out consistently the way you want to be heard.

Patience: with yourself, your Deck Referee and, most importantly, with your swimmers. USA Swimming starters are servants of the Athletes. No matter what age or skill level of the next heat, give them your best. "Listen" for them to tell you when they are ready for the TYM and when they are ready to be started.

We can start them too soon, but we should never start them too late. (more on that next time)

Practice: Keep a good thing going! When you review yourself after each start, note the times when it was "right on." How did that happen? Do it again. Did you have a particularly good voice come out? How did that happen? Do it again! Building your own good habits and giving yourself a mental pat-on-the-back will lead to consistency and the skill to call up good starts more often.

"Love your swimmers." Smile! empathize, see each heat as 8 individuals that you are serving. They work hard to do well; you owe them your best!

- Gail Andersen, Starter
Short Course Juniors, 2010, 2011