

Guidelines for Officiating Swim Meets

Potomac Valley Swimming

The Potomac valley Swimming Return to Competition Task Force issued a report on returning to competition in the Potomac Valley LSC. The Return to Competition Task Force report follows USA Swimming's "Crawl, Wall, Race" vision.

The "Crawl, Wall, Race" vision and the Return to Competition Task Force report foresees initial competition consisting of a progression from unsanctioned race days to unsanctioned meets to sanctioned meets, which may be contested across multiple sites. The sanctioned meets may be intrasquad or multi-team.

These "Guidelines for Officiating Swim Meets" address officiating sanctioned swim meets in the COVID-19 era. Unsanctioned meets may be officiated following all, part or none of these guidelines. USA Swimming has published additional guidance for virtual meets at <https://www.usaswimming.org/docs/default-source/regulation-docs/virtual-meets-2020-0401-rev-1.pdf>.

Sanctioned swim meets must follow the USA Swimming Rulebook. The technical rules in the USA Swimming Rulebook include requirements for the minimum number of officials. Prior to the outbreak of COVID-19, the number of officials at a swim meet in Potomac Valley Swimming was essentially unlimited. Every official who volunteered to work a meet was usually welcomed to do so.

However, as Potomac Valley Swimming returns to competition, the number of people who are allowed in a pool facility (including athletes, coaches, officials and other meet volunteers) may be limited. So, while it was previously desirable to have as many officials as possible prior to COVID-19, it may now be desirable to have as few officials as necessarily to efficiently run a meet. This is because if the number of people who can be in a pool facility is limited; each official may displace an athlete from competition.

The USA Swimming Rulebook identifies the minimum number of officials in section 102.10.3. Specifically, dual meets must have, at a minimum, the following officials:

- One Referee, who may also act as a stroke and turn judge
- One Starter, who may act as a stroke and turn judge
- Timers (addressed in more detail later in these guidelines)
- One Administrative Official
- One Place Judge
- Marshals

For meets other than dual meets and intrasquad meets, the USA Swimming Rulebook requires the following officials:

- One Referee
- One Starter
- Two stroke and turn judges

- Timers (addressed in more detail later in these guidelines)
- One Administrative Official
- One Place Judge
- Marshals

Providing the minimum number of officials identified in the 102.10.3 satisfies the requirement of the USA Swimming Rulebook. However, Potomac Valley Swimming recommends providing the following at all sanctioned meets during the COVID-19 era:

- One Meet Referee
- One Deck Referee
- One Starter, who also serves as the place judge
- Four stroke and turn judges
- One Administrative Official
- One timing equipment operator or hy-tek operator at meets at which semi-automatic timing (buttons) or automatic timing (touchpads) are used
- Timers (addressed in more detail later in these guidelines)
- Marshals

This minimum number of officials should be provided at each site if a swim meet is conducted in multiple sites. This provides a total of nine officials (not counting timers and marshals): six deck officials, two table officials, and a meet referee who can troubleshoot problems and liaise with coaches and the meet director.

Pre-session briefings should be conducted outside if possible. If inclement weather precludes conducting the briefing outside, it should be conducted in a large area where social distancing can be practiced.

All officials should practice social distancing and wear protective equipment as recommended by local, state and federal guidelines. The referee and the starter should be positioned on opposite sides of the start end. Starters should bring their own microphone instead of sharing a common microphone.

Standard USA Swimming DQ slips should be used. With the reduced number of officials, conducting a paperless meet is not practical.

All officials must be certified by Potomac Valley Swimming in the position in which they work. It is also recommended that the officials be identified and assigned prior to the meet. One additional official can be assigned to function as a relief official. While a relief official is not necessary, a relief official is beneficial in the event of a no-show. Walk-ons are discouraged because it is not possible to predict the number of walk-on officials. A relief official can be assigned as the head timer if there are no no-shows and given credit for the session in OTS. In the event of multiple no-shows, the minimum number of officials required by the USA Swimming Rulebook is sufficient for a sanctioned meet.

At swim meets at which the number of officials is limited, trainee (apprentice) officials are generally discouraged.

The USA Swimming Rulebook prescribes the minimum number of timers in section 102.24.3. Specifically, meets at which manual timing is used (watches only) must have a minimum of three timers

per lane. Meets at which semi-automatic timing is used (buttons, but no touchpads) must have a minimum of two timers per lane. Meets at which automatic timing (touchpads) is used must have a minimum of one timer per lane.

Semi-automatic timing or automatic timing is recommended at all virtual meets to minimize the number of timers who are required. One full-time timer per lane and a head timer are recommended. Athletes should be asked to serve as the second timer in each lane. These athletes would usually be the next-up swimmer or the swimmer who just completed their race. The timer who is permanently assigned to each lane should instruct the athletes who are serving as the second timer how to do so.

The meet director should recruit timers prior to the swim meet. Any no-shows can be replaced by timers recruited by the meet director on the day of the meet.

As with most meets, Meet Manager will likely be set-up by the meet director prior to a meet that is contested in multiple sites. After the session has concluded, the results should be exported by clicking on **"File"** then **"Export"** followed by **"Results for Meet Manager Merge of Same Meet"**. These results can then be integrated with the results from other sites to provide a listing of times (and scoring if desired) that includes all sites at which a meet is contested.