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## Officials' Newsletter - April 2022

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**USA Swimming Officials** <Officials@usaswimming.org>

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## Officials' Newsletter



### Greetings From the Chair

Welcome to Spring!

Spring has sprung-ish (check local listings), which means that long course season is here!

As we move from short course to long course, I want to thank everyone again for the countless hours you all spend on pool decks around the country. The last two years have posed new challenges and the transition to our current "normal" has brought even more tests. I appreciate how you all have stepped up and worked harder than ever to overcome any trials that have come your way. You have thought both inside and outside the box, looking for creative solutions to sometimes difficult obstacles, and your efforts are much appreciated by athletes and coaches alike. It is a pleasure to work the deck with you all and I look forward to seeing old friends and making new ones in the coming weeks and months.

## Announcements

- Summer meets (Applications can be found on the [USA Swimming website](#)):
  - Phillips 66 National Championships, Irvine, CA (Amy Hoppenrath), July 26-30
  - Futures Championships, five sites, July 27-30:
    - Cary, NC (Rich McMillen)
    - Geneva, OH (Kathy Fish)
    - Minneapolis, MN (Matt Wilson)
    - College Station, TX (Mike Dilli)
    - Santa Clara, CA (Traci Johnson)
  - Speedo Junior Championships, Irvine, CA (Mickey Smythe), August 1-5
- If you need a hard copy of the 2022 Rule Book contact Denise Thomas at [denise.thomas@usaswimming.org](mailto:denise.thomas@usaswimming.org)

## Officials Tracking System

As discussed on the Officials Chair Quarterly call, the current OTS application will come to an end in September 2022, with a new OTS anticipated launch in 2023. This fall we will not have an operating user interface for traditional input of OTS data but there will be an interim solution without full customized LSC-based functionality.

The existing data in OTS will be ported over and available in the new SWIMS 3.0 Database. We will have an online member portal for officials to check membership eligibility as well as some national level/rulebook specified reporting functionality for LSCs and the Officials Committee and a staff member to support.

The interim solution will not have all the customized uses LSCs currently employ. However, when an official achieves a new level of certification, we will be able to manage the record in SWIMS, just not record all of the steps within the LSC that led to that achievement.

As with all technological transformations, decisions about hierarchy and strategy are difficult. This is true with the development of SWIMS 3.0. We will work with the Officials' Committee and others to ensure that the new OTS will have full functionality as prescribed by our business rules and the future state of officials' education and preparation.

Thank you all for your patience and understanding. Any questions can be directed to Abigail Howard at [ahoward@usaswimming.org](mailto:ahoward@usaswimming.org).

## **USA Swimming Board of Directors Application Period Is Open Now Through May 15**

USA Swimming is accepting applications for three positions on the Board of Directors—two at large positions and one 10-year athlete position. At least one of the new at-large members must be from the Eastern Zone. The deadline for individuals to submit the [Board of Directors Application Form](#) is Sunday, May 15. USA Swimming members with proven skills in governance, risk management, financial management or digital transformation, and those who would broaden the Board's demographic diversity, are encouraged to apply.

Find out more about the USA Swimming Board of Directors [here](#). Questions? Contact Michelle Steinfeld, USA Swimming's Secretary & General Counsel, at [msteinfeld@usaswimming.org](mailto:msteinfeld@usaswimming.org).

## **Electronic Whistles – Kathleen Scandary**

Prior to the pandemic, most of us would agree that the electronic whistle was not a part of the deck scene for USA Swimming meets. When facilities began to host meets again, many Deck Referees took these in hand as a matter of precaution and would never let go, citing a realization that post-session ringing in the ears familiar to this position had been reduced. Just as some may choose to use a different size of the metal whistle, the Deck Referee with an electronic whistle can adjust the tone for outdoor versus indoor venues and crowd noise.

If using an electronic whistle, please be aware of a basic premise in all officiating and do not draw attention to yourself. The e-whistle should be kept at your side and not pointed at the athletes. Place it in the hand that remains at your side so it does not become part of the outstretched arm toward the Starter. Using these points of protocol keeps you and the often-brightly-colored bar in your hand from being alerting to anyone.

Otherwise, the routine is essentially the same. Short whistles (roughly 4-7 in number) should be crisp and distinct so as to avoid confusing swimmers at a time when their thoughts are about the competition. Long whistles are just that and no different than those heard for years.

## **Congratulations to These Officials Who Served at Their First National Meet Recently**

*Note - We apologize for any omissions or errors.*

### ***TYR Pro Swim Series Westmont***

Mei Chen - Illinois Swimming  
Vibah Chetan - Illinois Swimming  
Don Fritz - Illinois Swimming  
Brian Keating - Illinois Swimming  
Kim Mozdierz-Frank - Illinois Swimming  
Kim Pickering - Illinois Swimming  
John Rusco - Illinois Swimming  
Mike Walker - Illinois Swimming

### ***TYR Pro Swim Series San Antonio***

Geoff Alms - Virginia Swimming  
Fred Bogar - Gulf Swimming  
Zoe Galan-Comas - South Texas  
Mike Petrakis - Middle Atlantic  
Suzannah Rogers - Connecticut Swimming  
Jacqui Wright - Southeastern Swimming



## **Officials Excellence Award**

*Pam Birnbrich - Ohio Swimming*

Pam is an official with history in both Arizona and Ohio. Upon returning to Ohio in 2011, she quickly became active in the LSC and was elected as the Officials Chair in 2015. When Pam took over there was little encouragement to work outside the LSC or pursue national certification. Evaluators were almost always local, so the opportunity to work with new people and learn different ways of doing things didn't really exist.

Few officials were involved with governance, and communications to officials was not consistent. Pam assessed needs within the LSC and drafted committees that were promptly

staffed, many by officials who were just waiting to be asked to help. They produced outstanding training materials for all positions that were rolled out to the LSC through training modules. The training greatly helped standardize and elevate the skills of Ohio officials and provided clear expectations and a path for advancement.

Along with raising the skill set in each position, Pam was instrumental in drafting a new Officials Travel Reimbursement Policy that radically increased the budget for expenses incurred while traveling to meets. The policy included meets before the national level, encouraging officials to gain valuable experience and national certification at meets outside the LSC. You can see the effects of this policy in the large increase in Ohio Officials applying for and working on the National Deck.

Pam's leadership has brought many positive changes to Ohio Officials and her dedication makes her a most deserving candidate for this award.

Talk to us today

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