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USA Swimming Officials Newsletter | August 2018



OFFICIALS NEWSLETTER

Thoughts from the Chair

Jim Holcomb, Chair National Officials Committee

Recently, I have received a number of emails, and even a few telephone calls, about the underwater recovery in the butterfly and how we officiate the call.

First the rule (101.3.2), "Both arms must be brought forward simultaneously over the water and pulled back simultaneously under the water throughout the race." The recovery portion of the butterfly is the "brought forward simultaneously over the water" portion. The questions have been about the entry of the hands during the recovery to start the pull portion of the arm stroke.

Mostly the question has been, "Can the hands enter the water prior to full arm extension?" That is, can the hands enter the water and extend any distance forward while under the water?

The answer is "probably." If we are talking about entering the water a few inches short of full arm extension, then the answer is yes. The hands entering the water just short of full arm extension is legal. Of course, it is possible for the hands to re-enter far too soon, which would constitute a disqualification. It is a judgement call (we are called judges after all). However, one of our overarching tenets as swimming officials is that the benefit of the doubt goes to the swimmer, which we must always keep in mind.

Underwater Recovery in Butterfly – Prior to the Touch

Jay Thomas, Chair, Rules and Regulations Committee

Questions sometimes arise regarding what constitutes an underwater recovery in butterfly prior to the touch at the turn and finish. The last sentence of USA Swimming Rule 101.3.2, "Stroke," governs. "**Both arms must be brought forward simultaneously over the water and pulled back simultaneously under the water throughout the race.**" The Official Glossary is also relevant to the discussion regarding the definition of the "**ARM – That part of the body that extends from the shoulder to the wrist.**"

With the above language, the official can determine the legality of the following observations.

1. Just prior to the touch, a swimmer with outstretched arms moves the hands down and back up, and then touches the wall. The rule requires that if the arms are pulled back, they must be recovered over the water. In this case only the hands moved, and not the arm – so this would not be a violation.
2. Just prior to the touch, a swimmer separates their arms and then moves them back together, and then touches the wall. This swimmer's arm movements did not constitute a pull and therefore this would not be a violation.
3. Just prior to the touch, the swimmer's arms move backwards as if they were beginning a stroke, and are then pushed forward – under the water— and then followed by the touch. Since the swimmer pulled the arms back, by rule, they must then be recovered over the water. This swimmer pushed the arms forward under the water after pulling – that is a violation. The judge should recommend to the Referee that the swimmer be disqualified for performing an underwater recovery.

The key to making the determination that what was observed was an underwater recovery is to understand that the arm being *pulled back* is what drives the requirement to recover over the water. Judges should consciously think – arms pulled back require arm recovery over the water. As always – if there is any doubt as to what was observed – give the benefit of the doubt to the swimmer.

USA Swimming Officials Represented at International Championships

USA Swimming is fortunate for the opportunity to send officials to two international championships this summer.

Three officials served at the Pan Pacific Swimming Championships, August 9-12, in Tokyo, Japan—Wayne Shulby (Referee), Fran Werner (Starter), and Ron Van Pool (Underwater Replay Referee). Mark McCaw and Mike Murphy served at the Pan Pacific Open Water Swimming Championships, August 14, in Tateyama, Japan.

Four officials are serving at the Junior Pan Pacific Swimming Championships, August 23-26, in Fiji—Dan McAllen (Meet Referee), Robert Broyles (Administrative Referee), Deb Baldwin (Head Starter), and Jim Holcomb (Deck Official).

Applications to Officiate for 2019 TYR Pro Swim Series Meets

It is generally the practice of the National Officials Committee to post applications to officiate for national meets approximately 180 days prior to the start of the meet, and to close applications for national meets approximately 120 days prior to the start of the meet, unless insufficient applications have been received.

However, the locations for the 2019 TYR Pro Swim Series meets have not yet been determined, and will likely not be determined until late September. As a result, the posting of the applications to officiate for the January and March TYR Pro Swim Series meets will not occur within this timeframe. Applications to officiate these meets will be posted as soon as their respective locations have been determined.

Thank you for your patience, and please let us know if you have any questions or concerns.

Officials' Excellence Award

Niffey and Mark Carmody, Sierra Nevada Swimming

With this husband and wife team, usually getting one official means getting two. Niffey became an Official in 1998 and Mark began two years later in 2000. Both have been very active members of the Sierra Nevada Swimming Officials Committee.

Niffey is certified at the N3 level as a Stroke and Turn Judge, Chief Judge, Starter, Deck





Referee, and Administrative Referee.

When there was a need for dry side parents to step up and become Administrative Officials, Niffey volunteered to become one. She has also been selected to attend many National Championships, Futures, Sectional, and Zone meets. She has been to many Officials Qualifying Meets where she has asked to be mentored to be the best official that she could be. Throughout her career, she has been a Meet Referee at 26 LSC meets for a total 76 sessions.

Mark has worked at many of the same meets that Niffey has worked, but also has gone in his own direction. He loves working at Sectional, Zone, and National Championship meets. He has been evaluated at many Officials Qualifying Meets to become certified as an N3 Stroke and Turn Judge, Starter and Chief Judge. He is now working on his N3 Deck Referee certification. Originally, he was under the impression that he didn't want to advance to N3 Starter or Deck Referee, but he now enjoys being one of the officials who is asked to start time trials at National Championship meets, since he is now a certified N3 Starter.

In addition, both Mark and Niffey find time to work at Special Olympics meets and high school meets. They also open up their home to hold clinics for new Stroke and Turn Judges in their area. They are both respected as wonderful officials, who mentor new officials to be the best they can be, and giving the swimmers, while giving their swimmers the best gift they can give, their time.

Don't Miss the First-ever Keynote Speaker at the 2018 USAS Convention

Attending the United States Aquatic Sports Convention in Jacksonville?
Don't miss the first-ever Keynote Address – Thriving in Transformational Times with Rishad Tobaccowala, Chief Growth Officer at The Publicis Groupe. Open to all USA Swimming members.

Wednesday, September 26, 4:30 – 6:00 p.m. EDT.

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