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## Officials' Newsletter - June 2024

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

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## OFFICIALS' NEWSLETTER



### Greetings from the Chair

*By: Dana Covington*

Excitement was definitely in the air for nine days at the U.S. Olympic Team Trials - Swimming presented by Lilly this month. We are all keenly aware that this meet was held in a FOOTBALL stadium! What a tremendous event to experience, whether it be on deck, in the stands, or from your living room couch. It was fun to watch the event planning and to understand that the officials were an important component required to make this meet happen. Seventy-two officials served on the Trials deck in Indy. It takes years of dedication to hone these skills. As each of you look forward to your career and goals as a volunteer official, please know that there is a path for each official to meet their officiating goals, whatever they may be.

A wise official friend shared this with me, and I believe it is very applicable to each one of us as we navigate our individual path on this journey:

*Commit to Now By: James Clear*

*Many good opportunities are ruined for the dream of slightly better ones.*

*Would you have a more successful career if you had taken that other job or moved cities? Possibly. But your actual career will definitely suffer if you don't commit to doing it to the best of your ability.*

*Would you be 10% happier in a different relationship? Maybe. Maybe not. But you'll definitely be unhappy in the one you have if you spend all day thinking about what else is out there.*

*The surefire way to end up worse off is to agonize over unchosen options and fail to make the most of the one you selected. Every minute spent yearning for your unlived lives is a moment you can't invest in the one you actually have.*

*Choices matter, but so does your level of commitment.*

Thank you for your commitment. I hope you enjoy every meet that you officiate.

The journey is the reward.

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## Announcements

- **Futures Championships:** July 24-27 or July 25-28\* (N2 Certification preferred) **You may apply to be on a site specific Wait List. Currently all sites are full**
    - Austin, Texas - MR Edgar Caraballo
    - Huntsville, Ala. - MR Anne Liles Lawley
    - Minneapolis, Minn. - MR Ken Graham
    - \*Richmond, Va. MR - Marianne Walling
    - Sacramento, Calif. - MR - Kevin Hogan
  - **Speedo Summer Championships:** July 23-27, Irvine, Calif., MR Derigan Silver **You may apply to be on the Waitlist. Currently all positions are full**
  - **Selecting Officials for National Meets:** in an effort to increase transparency regarding how officials are selected for National Meets, two documents have been posted to the website under Officials/Applications to Officiate/bottom of the page: [National Meet Selection Criteria](#) and [National Meet Referee Team Selection Guidelines](#)
  - Seventeen officials took advantage of the clinic at Open Water Nationals to learn everything from safety, pre-race, race, and post-race planning. They were then able to put them into practice working the races both in the water and on land.
  - Looking for an Open Water Clinic???? There is a list of approved clinicians with incredible content they are happy to share. Send all requests to [Mike Murphy](#) and he will get you scheduled. All time zones are represented. These are the only clinics approved by the NOC.
  - **2024 Winter National Meets:** applications posted
    - 2024 Toyota U.S. Open Championships: Dec. 4-7, Greensboro, N.C., MR Anissa Kanzari
    - Speedo Winter Juniors East: Dec. 11-14, Greensboro, N.C., MR Kenneth Chung
    - Speedo Winter Juniors West: Dec. 11-14, Austin, Texas, MR Phil Barnes
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## June Survey Question - Jason Johnson

Responses are ANONYMOUS, and this month they will help the NOC identify both frequency and types of training you would like. Thanks in advance for answering this month's question.

[June Survey Question](#)

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# Survey Results

*By: Jason Johnson*

Thanks to all the officials who take the time to complete the anonymous Newsletter Survey. The National Officials Committee examines the results and uses this information to serve you better. Right now, the voices of a small percentage of our officials are all we hear.

Make your voice heard by filling out the survey! Remember, all surveys are anonymous. The results below represent the last three newsletters.

## [SURVEY RESULTS](#)

If you have any questions or suggestions for future surveys, you can email [Jason Johnson](#).

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## Save the Date: Hot Summer Nights

Mark the dates on your calendar for the Hot Summer Nights series!

- Wednesday, August 14: **Admin 101**
  - Trish Martin and Traci Johnson
  - Prerequisite: Current AO
- Wednesday, August 21: **Hy-Tek Meet Manager**
  - Lisa Olack
  - No prerequisite
- Wednesday, August 28: **Championship AR**
  - Mickey Smythe and Jack Yetter
  - Prerequisite: N2 AR and above

More details and registration info coming soon.

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# Tests Being Removed

*By: Jack Swanson*

In an effort to reduce confusion and ensure that the requirements to become an official are respected, the Online Testing Working Group of the NOC recommended sunsetting tests that are no longer required for certification. LSC Officials Chairs were surveyed and this course of action was reflected by the LSC Officials Chairs.

The following tests will be taken off the website and archived, effective the first week of June:

- Clerk of Course Certification
- Clerk of Course Recertification
- Timer Certification
- Timer Recertification
- Timing Judge Certification
- Timing Judge Recertification
- Admin Referee Certification
- Admin Referee Recertification

This has been communicated to every LSC OC. Please direct questions regarding certification within your LSC to your OC.

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## Block Party Pilot

Block Party meets are short, inexpensive, one-session meets designed for fun and easy introduction to competitive swimming for developmental athletes and their families. The streamlined application process makes it easier for clubs to host a Block Party meet. The intention of the Block Party meet is to comply with Rule 102.10.4 in terms of officiating and Rule 102.23 for timing requirements for a Sanctioned meet. We would like to encourage officials to help out at Block Party meets and understand that, during this pilot, learning about what does and doesn't work is being discovered. As officials, we are tasked with ensuring that rules are adhered to during meets. At every meet, we strive to create a fair and friendly venue for all athletes.

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## The DR-SR Team: Response to an Unfair Star

*By: Kathleen Scandary and Denice Wepasnick, with edits from Robert Scandary*

A fair start is the expectation for and of our athletes. What happens when a start is observed to be unfair, and one or more swimmers is disadvantaged? How does this happen, what are common circumstances, and what should the responses be from the DR-SR team?

Five years ago, an article for the Officials Newsletter about the DR-SR Team was written by Denice Wepasnick and Kathleen Scandary. Within the past year, an update on whistle protocol and the timing of when the DR hands over the heat to the SR has been instituted, requiring edits to the original article. This updated article serves as a basis for the following piece which focuses on how the DR-SR team handles situations when a start is deemed to be unfair. The athlete count for the next heat has been verified and all have approached the block wearing their suit, cap, goggles, and perhaps a permitted wearable. The DR blows the short

whistles to begin the start sequence followed by the long whistle as a means of instructing the swimmers to step up onto the block or into the water for backstroke. Both the DR and SR share observation of swimmer behavior, while the DR has the added responsibility of monitoring activity in the surrounding deck such as additional heats in waiting, location of timers and officials, safety concerns, and a second pool of competition. The DR waits to hand the heat over to the SR until it is determined that the swimmers are steady on the platform, meaning there is no evidence of imbalance. Some may have already established the placement of their feet or have bent down in anticipation while still others stand completely upright. With the act of extending the arm, the DR hands over the heat to the SR who ultimately decides two things, when to deliver, "Take Your Marks," and when the swimmers are settled and set to activate the start signal.

The SR is steadfast in their focus on the field and trusts that the DR is not only attending to the swimmers, but is aware of any sudden or potential interference, or a report of such coming over their headset. A split-second decision must be made by the DR to instruct the SR to use the "Stand." command where their arm remains extended, or to have the athletes step down carefully requiring the arm to be withdrawn. Remember, the athletes may elect to step down upon hearing, "Stand." Whenever athletes step down, a long whistle should be blown again thus allowing the swimmers to reposition themselves on the blocks. This is covered in the previous article, but revisiting it is of particular importance when athletes are competing in two pools or when using chase-starts.

During either of these situations, it is common for athletes to respond to the whistles intended for the other heat/pool. Instructions to CJs and Start End Judges (SEJ) should be part of each protocol briefing and requires vigilance during all sessions. The DR may be involved in another issue and unable to radio the nearest CJ so the SR must be attentive and notify the DR of this unintended activity of the swimmers. The SEJ or the CJ should be ready to ask a swimmer to step off the block knowing that the Starter's use of the microphone for this instruction has the potential to disrupt the heat that is waiting for their start signal in the other pool or at the other end during chase starts. If ever there is a time when the confused athlete from the heat in-waiting steps up then reacts to both the TYM command and the start signal before a judge can stop them, the recall button is not to be used. The heat that correctly is going off the blocks or may already be in the water is likely to react to the recall sound. Now, there are two heats compromised. Try to stop the ones who mistakenly started their race and allow that heat to swim at the end of the event or at a different time during the session. If the start sequence has not begun with the short whistles, or there is no long whistle, or a TYM command has not been given, a swimmer who inadvertently goes into the water is not charged with a FS. This was covered in the previous newsletter.

*Who has the authority to engage the recall signal? When should it be used?*

In the case where a swimmer(s) leaves the block before the starting signal without affecting the others in the heat, the race proceeds without interruption (101.1.3B). The DR-SR team follows protocol outlined in the previous article to determine the outcome. When a swimmer moves after being set but regains the stationary position prior to the start signal, there is no false start. The SR may choose to stand the heat or wait until all are settled to activate the starting signal. The fall-in scenarios and subsequent protocol described in the December 2023 Officials Newsletter as well as other false start scenarios can be accessed through the USA Swimming website.

The DR-SR team must be prepared to react quickly and judiciously when deciding to activate the recall button and its use should be a rare occurrence. If the recall signal is given, no swimmer shall be charged with a FS and the SR shall restart the race upon signal by the Referee (101.1.3C). It is certainly within the jurisdiction of the SR to react independently or at the instruction of the DR when an unfair start has been determined. Some of the athletes may have left the blocks, remained on the blocks, begun late, or entered the water but looked up to see what others from the heat were doing. The swimmers may be halted in their progress down the course by a coach or fellow swimmer. It is common to see one or more athletes swim their entire race without awareness of the recall signal being activated. The DR and SR must discuss their observations and identify what caused the disruption (loud sounds, air or vehicle horns, sudden loud crowd noise, an object blown into the racing course) and when it occurred which often comes just before or concurrent with the sound of the signal. Did those who swam

their race have a legal start?

If the DR and MR consult and agree that either the entire heat or only some experienced an unfair start, it is reasonable that a re-swim be offered to all. Some may elect to keep their original time and others may decide to swim the race again at a mutually agreed upon time before the end of the session. It is important that the coaches be involved in the process and that they understand that those athletes in the re-swim must use their same lane and must accept the time from the second swim. Whatever the outcome, all parties are offered the fairest remedy afforded them within the rules. It is noteworthy to mention that the first start is most often a swimmer's best, and the field is the focus of any start.

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## Congratulations!

**Congratulations to these officials who served at their first open water national meet in Sarasota, Fla.:**

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

Stephen Adams - Sierra Nevada Swimming  
Jonathan Andrews - Kentucky Swimming  
Joshua Blanco - Florida Gold Swimming  
Chad Capps - South Texas Swimming  
Tim Czarnecki - Indiana Swimming  
Courtney Davis - Hawaii Swimming  
Nathan Dean - Florida Swimming  
David DiNardo - Potomac Valley Swimming  
Pierre Guzman - Utah Swimming  
Nancy Harmon - Georgia Swimming  
Alexander Herr - Inland Empire Swimming  
Steven Kidder - Midwestern Swimming  
Kevin Milak - Florida Swimming  
Michael Oehler - Potomac Valley Swimming  
Andrew Olson - Wisconsin Swimming  
Margy Sargent - Connecticut Swimming  
Amanda Schleede - Illinois Swimming  
Hunter Smith - Iowa Swimming  
William York - South Carolina Swimming

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# Officials Excellence Award

*John Gagliardo, Pacific Northwest Swimming*

John has officiated all levels of swimming for many years. He gives his time to all organizations, and travels widely to both share his talents and gain new skills. John has been a Futures Meet Referee as well as a Sectionals Meet Referee, and all levels within the LSC. He is a welcomed addition to any deck and is happy to work in whatever capacity is needed.

In addition to working meets, John is an excellent clinician for PNS.

Now that he is retired, John continues to travel extensively on behalf of swimming and make himself available whenever the need arises.

In addition to officiating, John has been the Officials Chair for Pacific Northwest, and continues to serve on various committees.

John is a friendly face on decks all over the U.S., and is a great representative of PNS. His years of service (long after he no longer has a swimmer) epitomize the type of volunteer that ensures competitions are fair for all. As such, he is the perfect candidate for this award.