
Officials' Newsletter: October 2023

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

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Featured Content

- Parting Words
 - Greetings from the Chair
 - Announcements
 - Rules and Regulations Update
 - Mentors/Evaluators Reminder
 - OTS Update
 - WWOWW: Wonderful World of Open Water Webinar
 - 2024 Open Water School
 - Safe Sport Training for Officials
 - R-9
 - Junior Officials
 - Congratulations and Thanks
 - Officials Excellence Award
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Parting Words

In early September, I notified Tim Hinchey that I would be resign as Chair of the National Officials Committee and my seat on the Committee, effective after the Annual Business Meeting.

I have made this difficult decision due to the need for more flexibility with regard to time and ongoing health issues with family. Because of these circumstances I no longer feel I have the bandwidth necessary to continue on the Committee, much less serve in the role of the Chair. Pam and I will be largely stepping away from the deck for at least a year, and will reassess again as circumstances warrant.

It has been an honor to serve on the NOC for the past five years and as the Chair for the past two. That all comes from the opportunity to work with such a great group of like-minded people. I cannot thank you all enough for the time you devote to swimming.

I am extremely confident that Dana Covington will be a fantastic incoming Chair of the NOC.

Thanks again for your support and partnership.

Matt Wilson

Greetings from the Chair

New LSC OC's

Congratulations on your new leadership role! The NOC is looking forward to helping you transition. Please email [Curtis Myers](#) to let him know your name, LSC and preferred contact information so we can keep you up to date and reminded of important information and resources. Welcome!

Fall is definitely in the air here in California. Just as there are seasons of the year, there are also seasons of life. Matt and Pam Wilson have decided they are in a season of needing to focus on family and are stepping away from swimming for a bit.

I have been asked to transition to the role of Chair of the National Officials Committee. I have been an official for 15 years in Sierra Nevada and have served in swimming governance at the club, LSC and National level in various roles. I believe that officials are part of a team, a team of officials and part of the team of swimming, coaches and athletes. I believe we each bring something special to the sport of swimming, in our own unique way, that no one else can bring to the team.

Thank you for giving your time, talent and treasure to help raise the next generation of great people. My door (email) is always open. Please, do not hesitate to reach out to me. I look forward to working with you in this new role.

Dana Covington

Announcements

- As part of your 2024 membership, you may request ONE 2024 USA Swimming Rulebook through this link: [Request Form](#). The deadline for requesting a FREE copy is FRIDAY, December 1, 2023. After this date Officials may purchase through SwimOutlet. A digital copy of the rulebook is available here: [Rules & Policies](#)

- National Meet Applications, including status:
 - 2024 TYR Pro Swim Series:
 - Knoxville - January 10-13, 2024. (Application CLOSED)
 - Westmont - March 6-9, 2024. MR - Dana Covington (Application CLOSED)
 - San Antonio - April 10-13, 2024. MR - Scott Powell (Application OPEN)
 - 2024 Open Water National and Junior National Championships
 - Sarasota, Flor. - May 3-5, 2024. MR - Tom Lombardo (we will post the Application early/mid-November)
 - We hosted the most recent OC Quarterly call on 10/4. Reach out to your OC for information.
 - This summer's educational series, with tracks for new meet referees, experienced referees, and N3 evaluators, were all recorded. Please reach out to your OC if you are interested in watching them.
 - The Mentoring Sub Committee is pleased to announce that 5 Officials advanced to N3i status, and 10 advanced to N3f in the latest quarterly review. Here is the criteria for Evaluator Appointment and Advancement: [Evaluator Appointment Guidelines](#)
 - **National Certifications in OTS are pre-9-1-2022. The spreadsheet on the Officials/National Certification and Education webpage is the only current resource and is being updated at the beginning of each month to reflect changes. This will continue until further notice.**
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Rules & Regulations Update

The Rules and Regulations Committee would like to express our appreciation to everyone who participated in the most recent rulemaking cycle, culminating in our House of Delegates meeting each year. Whether you submitted legislation, worked to advocate for a position, cast your votes, or contributed by discussing the proposals with your peers, you are an extremely important part of the process and we appreciate everyone's advocacy for the sport.

If you're looking for the adopted legislation, here's a quick summary of the HOD results: [Actions Taken by HOD.](#)

You can also find a full version of all the adopted language here: [Full Language - Actions Taken by HOD.](#)

Remember to check the effective date on the passed legislation. Most of this year's rules changes are effective immediately.

We have also changed the swimsuit exemption request process, allowing for quicker approval of complying requests. If you have an athlete that wishes to wear a swimsuit that exceeds the coverage limitations of 102.8.1B, requests may be made following the process outlined here: [Request for Swimsuit Exemption](#)

Derek Paul

Mentors/Evaluators | Reminder

Mentors should continue to retain all evaluations written post-OTS shutdown, September 1, 2022. Once the feature comes online, Mentors should enter these evaluations into OTS. Mentors should still load all evaluations into the holding tank. Each OQM approval letter includes instructions on how to do so.

The purpose of the holding tank is for the National Certification reviewers to be able to review evaluations in conjunction with requests for advancement and recertification of national credentials.

The holding tank is not a permanent location for these evaluations, nor will the evaluations be loaded into OTS from the holding tank.

OTS Update

New in OTS is an online testing module under each official showing tests taken and passed. OTS does not show past testing from the old OTS, just the new certification and recertification testing. OTS only shows the pass designation, not the scores.

Also new is an email contact for each official. Once you search for an official and open their page, you will see an email in the top right corner.

Reporting for testing is available under LSC reports, but pass/score is not. The report only shows when an official took a test and which test they completed.

Marianne Walling

WWOWW: Wonderful World of Open Water Webinar

We will host an informational webinar containing everything there is to know about Open Water that can fit in one hour at 6 p.m. MT on Thursday, November 9. The presenters are Hector Acevedo, Anne Lawley, Mike Murphy, and Jayne Spittler. The Zoom link will be distributed to all LSC OCs as well as posted on the Officials Facebook page.

2024 Open Water School | May 2 in Sarasota, FL

We will host an Open Water School in conjunction with Open Water Nationals. The School is an opportunity for officials who have yet to take the class to learn more about officiating Open Water in advance of working Open Water Nationals and Junior Nationals. There are limited spots available. If you are interested in attending, please speak to your Officials Chair.

Safe Sport Training for Officials

Thank you to those who attended the OPTIONAL Safe Sport Training for Officials. Two trainings were held on 9/9 and 9/30 to provide information about Safe Sport that is specific to your role as an official. While the 9/30 training included some additional information from the 9/9 questions, the training was practically identical. Attending either one of these sessions did NOT extend or take the place of your APT requirements. If you could not attend, the training link has been distributed to your LSC OC, and is also available here: [OPTIONAL September Safe Sport Training](#).

Thank you for your continued support of Safe Sport!

Liz Hahn

R-9

At the USA-S annual HOD last month, the House of Delegates passed the R9 legislation. This legislation stirred up passionate emotions and opinions. Many of you felt frustrated with the lack of discussion while the motion was on the floor. Please trust we shared those frustrations with relevant parties. Many of you have questions about what transpired leading up to HOD. I cannot answer those questions as I was not part of the process before September 23.

We could continue to share our opinions, concerns, and ideas for hours on end, but the House has spoken, and now we must move forward and find a collaborative solution for R9.

The underlying goal of R9 is to have a uniform standard of LSC certification for officials across all 59 LSCs. Coaches hope this legislation will encourage more officials to complete their training to officiate, increasing involvement at developmental LSC meets. We know this is a multifaceted issue; this is just one possible intervention to help rectify that problem, but every bit helps.

I have met with the Chair of the Coaches Advisory Council, and we are committed to working collaboratively while adhering to R9. We have formed seven small working groups, called Pods, to define the certification standards for LSC officials: ST, CJ, Starter, Ref, AO, AR, and there is a group looking at the language of the legislation. Each Pod has an NOC member, a CAC member, an athlete, and an LSC OC. This legislation does not affect OW.

There are 59 LSCs with 59 personalities and quirks. Pods aim to develop acceptable standards while allowing autonomy for your LSC's personality to remain. For example, Pods will not set standards for uniforms. If your LSC wears khaki or black or blue, that will not change. The R9 Pod will not be developing the curriculum for your officials. The R9 Pod *aims* to determine what components of the certification process will be required to certify an entry-level LSC official: a class, test, sessions, shadowing, etc. Pods will use all the tools available to develop the final R9 product. They use the rule book, the currently published Minimum Standard Guidelines, our Professional Documents and Evaluation Templates, Reciprocity guidelines, current LSC certification standards, training videos, and online testing.

We realize that the LSCs will have some work to conduct, so we aim to complete and present our work to the USA-S BOD by the end of this month. In the meantime, continue to train your officials as you have been. I also strongly encourage LSC OCs to ensure that each official's current LSC Certifications are visible in OTS.

Dana Covington

Junior Officials

A new effort will allow 16–17-year-old officials at meets beginning September 2024. A working group led by Zach Toothman and Marco Greico met to define the Junior Official membership category and parameters. The effort culminated in the proposal that the USA Swimming Board overwhelmingly approved at the September 2023 meeting. Getting enough officials for small, intrasquad, or developmental meets is sometimes difficult. Adding these Junior Officials can help make these important developmental competitions possible. This role will provide another way for 16–17-year-olds to give back to the sport they grew up with. This experience could encourage them to continue officiating after their competitive swimming career. As we get closer to implementation, more communications will be forthcoming about how to enroll in and take advantage of this great opportunity. We look forward to seeing Junior Officials on deck!

Message From USA Swimming Risk Management | Report of Occurrence

Meet Referees and other meet officials: You manage risks at swim meets, but injuries or incidents can sometimes occur. When this happens, you or someone on the meet team must complete a Report of Occurrence.

The link to complete a Report of Occurrence is here: [Report of Occurrence](#)

Timely incident reporting helps us promptly respond to the injured party and review for potential future risk mitigation planning.

Injuries, regardless of severity, should all be reported. When in doubt, report!
If you have questions, please reach out to RiskManagement@usaswimming.org

Thank you for all you do for our athletes and teams!

Congratulations and thanks to the following USA Swimming Officials who represented USA Swimming in International Competition:

World Aquatics Junior Swimming Championships - Netanya, Israel
September 4-9, 2023

Dana Covington - Official

Congratulations to the following Officials named to the Assigned Team for Olympic Trials:

Program & Events - Kathleen Scandary (CO)

Meet Referee - Jamie Cahn (MD)

Admin Referee - Traci Johnson (NT)

AAR - Mickey Smythe (IN)

AAR - Jack Yetter (IL)

DR - Edgar Caraballo (OH)

DR - Dana Covington (SN)

DR - Mike Dilli (CO)

DR - Anissa Kanzari (OH)

DR - Peter LaGow (MD)

DR - Phil Lakota - (NT)

DR - Trish Martin (NC)

DR - Scott Powell (CO)

VR - Clark Hammond (SE)

HSR - Lisa Vetterlein (SI)

SR - Ellen Colket (MD)

SR - Jason Johnson (NT)

SR - Robert Scandary (CO)

TLCJ - Rich McMillen (MD)

CJ - Kenneth Chung (NT)

CJ - John Gagliardo (PN)

CJ - Ken Galica (NE)

CJ - Anne Lawley (CO)

CJ - Lisa Olack (NC)

CJ - Marianne Walling (IN)

TTR - Phil Barnes (IA)



Officials Excellence Award

Clyde Tinkelpaugh, Mid Atlantic Swimming

Clyde Tinkelpaugh is a soft-spoken, ever-present Middle Atlantic Official. He has been certified with USA Swimming for over 25 years and has become one of the most knowledgeable administrative referees in the LSC. He's been a stalwart member at our championships, usually the first official on deck each morning and the last official to leave each night. He is a current member of the Middle Atlantic Officials Committee and, for decades, has taken on the unenviable responsibility of processing the certification and recertification of our 700+ officials. Clyde is highly involved in Delaware High School Swimming and has helped run their championships for years. He has always been a mentor for everyone. His love for the sport is unmatched, and few deserve this award.