



OFFICIALS' NEWSLETTER



Greetings from the Chair

By: Dana Covington

Fall is off to a good start and ushering in some winds of change. The Starter and AO clinics are now up and running through USA Swimming University. These changes, along with all sorts of information, are shared with your Local Swimming Committee (LSC) Officials Chairs during their quarterly calls. This past summer, we altered the format for the LSC OC quarterly calls to have a greater focus on the requests of the LSC OCs, and we also include a brief educational component at these meetings. If you have a lingering question, ask your LSC OC. If they do not have the answer, they can bring it to the quarterly meeting for an answer. It is expected that all LSC OCs will share the information from these quarterly calls with their LSC officials. This added information can only enhance our performance and "job satisfaction" as volunteer officials. Another venue where information is shared regularly is in the National Officials Committee quarterly call. The NOC meeting is an opportunity for NOC members to share the work that they have completed and what they are working on. Both of these meetings are posted under "Events" on the USA Swimming website and are open for you to observe if you would like. The meeting minutes are also posted [here](#) if you would like to read those minutes.

Your LSC OCs also just participated in a training session at the Annual Business Meeting in Denver last month. We covered a lot of ground. Please ask your Chair what was shared and, if you are so inclined, ask how you can help your OC implement some of the ideas that were shared at ABM. Your LSC OC is a conduit to help share information with you!

Thank you for your volunteerism, you make a difference!

Announcements

- If you are a newly elected Officials Chair for your LSC, please contact Curtis Myers at ic-clearly@sbcglobal.net to be added to the Officials Chair distribution list. Congratulations and thanks in advance for all you do.
 - As part of your 2025 membership, you may request ONE 2025 USA Swimming Rulebook [HERE](#). You will need your USA Swimming ID number. Please complete this order form **no later than Monday, December 2, 2024. After this date, they may be purchased through SwimOutlet**. A digital copy of the rulebook is available on the [USA Swimming website](#).
 - National Meet Applications (N3 required) are generally posted 180-days, or six months, before the start of the competition. Applications typically close 120-days, or four months, before the start of the competition OR if the meet has received a sufficient number of applicants.
 - TYR Pro Swim Series - All sites CLOSED
 - Westmont, Ill. (March 5-8, 2025). MR - Rich McMillen.
 - Sacramento, Calif. (April 2-5, 2025). MR - Trish Martin.
 - Fort Lauderdale, Fla. (April 30 - May 3, 2025). MR - Traci Johnson.
 - Open Water National & Junior National Championships Sarasota, Fla. (April 4-6, 2025). MR - Hector Acevedo. **Application OPEN**
 - Happy Feet! The NOC passed a motion that, at the Meet Referee's discretion, allows white shoes and white socks OR black shoes and black socks to be worn with shorts during Prelims at Futures Championships and above.
 - Congratulations to five brand new N3 evaluators: Ken Graham MR (N3i CJ), Phil Paspalas MR (N3i SR), Margy Sargent CT (N3i CJ), Jeff Sargent CT (N3i CJ), and Darcy Smith OR (N3i SR). Plus, current mentors added five new N3i and five new N3f positions to their evaluating credentials. The latest list of national evaluators is posted on the website.
 - N3 mentors- please make sure you have read the communication regarding the writing and use of Action Plans.
 - The most recent OC Quarterly call was held October 9. Reach out to your OC for information that was shared on the call.
 - Next National Officials Committee Meeting is November 6.
 - A webinar for N2 and above Admin Referees on how to be a Time Trial Referee. This will include tools to make the transition from the main meet to the TT meet smooth sailing. This webinar will be offered on Wednesday, November 13, and may not be available for later distribution. This webinar is geared towards all officials that may serve in the role of TT Referee at a Futures and higher meet. Zoom link [HERE](#).
 - Next LSC Officials Chair Quarterly call is January 8.
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October Survey Question

By: Jason Johnson

A survey question will be appearing in each Newsletter. Responses are ANONYMOUS, and will help direct efforts of the NOC. Thanks in advance for answering this month's questions [HERE](#), while June's survey results can be found below.

June Survey Results

By: Jason Johnson

The "Hot Summer Nights" series of educational instruction will continue this August with a series of Admin Official and Admin Referee. Do you find these type of interactive video teleconferencing programs helpful?

63% - I haven't attended one
37% - Yes

Would you like to see more training sessions offered, or is once a year sufficient?

46% - twice a year
35% - More than twice a year
19% - Once a year

What topics would you like to see covered in future training programs? Choose all that apply.

24% - Mentoring
24% - Starter
23% - Chief Judge
22% - Referee
7% - Walk of Stars

New Chair of Rules & Regs

By: Derek Paul

I'd like to welcome Taylor Rogers as our new Rules and Regulations Committee Chair. Taylor has been an integral part of the Rules Committee for the past three years. As Co-Secretary with Herb Schwab, Taylor helped lead the committee as it worked to ensure our membership is prepared and informed heading into the House of Delegates each year. She has been an incredible resource for the committee as we've worked through several large changes these past few years. With experience as an athlete, coach, facility director, and official, Taylor really has seen all sides of the sport.

I'm incredibly pleased to have been able to hand off the committee's work to such a deserving volunteer. We're all fortunate to have her stewarding the rulemaking process moving forward. If you see her around the pool, please be sure to say hello. It has been an honor to serve with each of you these past few years, and I look forward to continuing to help Taylor and the whole committee serve our community. Welcome, Taylor Rodgers!

Rules & Regs Updates

By: Taylor Rogers

The Rules & Regulations Committee would like to thank everyone who participated in any part of the process that led to this year's legislative changes, adopted at the 2024 Annual Business Meeting. From submitting legislation and casting your vote at the House of Delegates meeting to participating in legislative review sessions and offering your perspective to voting members of the House prior to ABM, this is a true "all hands on deck" effort each year and we are grateful for everyone's continued service to the sport.

The summary of the action taken by the House of Delegates ([HERE](#)) and the full version of the adopted language ([HERE](#)) are both available on the [Rules & Policies page of the USA Swimming](#).

If you have questions about any of the adopted legislation, I encourage you to reach out to your LSC Officials' Chair. They are incredible resources and leaders in our sport and participated in a legislative review during their most recent LSC Officials' Chairs quarterly Zoom.

Tips for Training

By: Trish Martin

On-deck training of apprentices is a critical responsibility we all share. Any official certified for at least a year can be called upon to serve as an on deck trainer for apprentices.

Here are a few quick tips for a productive training session:

- Introduce yourself. Make the apprentice feel welcome.
 - Review the position responsibilities and the rules that the apprentice will observe during the session.
 - Position yourself so the apprentice can clearly see and you can easily converse while you officiate.
 - Engage the apprentice in an inquisitive way. What did you see? How would we describe that? Help the apprentice learn to describe observations according to the rules.
 - Let the apprentice fill out any DQ slips, which you check and sign, and explain the call to the Referee or CJ.
 - Spend a few minutes with the apprentice at the end of the session to fill out the paperwork and answer any questions.
 - Thank the apprentice for working to become a certified official. (And thank you for being part of that process!)
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Two New Officials Courses Added to USA Swimming University

By: Devonie Pitre

With the continued interest in formal and personalized education, USA Swimming is excited to add two courses to USA Swimming University explicitly designed for Officials. The [Administrative Official Certification](#) and [Starter Certification](#) courses are now available and free for Officials.

OTS Updates

By: Patrick Murphy

On October 22, USA Swimming launched the National Officials Certification Application for officials to request a national certification and/or recertification. Special thanks to Marianne Walling for helping us get to this point!

Other updates include numerous new reports and enhancements to existing reports. In addition, this release includes updates to the LSC Bulk Recertification tool. The tool now displays tests/clinics and automatically extended certification dates for children positions (EX: a change in SR dates updates ST dates).

Open Water Clinics and Certification Update

By: Mike Murphy

Open Water (OW) Swimming is gaining in popularity across the country. The NOC Open Water Working Group wants to ensure that Open Water Meets are run by officials well-trained in safety and best practices. There are minimum requirements for Open Water certification and OW Clinics are an integral part of that process.

Below is an updated list of NOC-approved OW Clinicians who are available to share their experience and expertise. These officials have worked OW National Championships, demonstrated high standards of professionalism, and understand the components required to run a safe and successful OW event.

- Hector Acevedo (FG)
- Jamie Cahn (MD)
- Jeffrey Chu (MR)
- Sandy Drake (HI)
- John Fox (SE)
- Andrea Kelley (IA)
- Becky Gilpatrick (KY)
- Anne Lawley (CO)
- Tom Lombardo (OZ)
- Mike Mellock (WI)
- Mike Murphy (PN)
- Ray Peden (MA)
- Mike Repko (IA)
- Jayne Spittler (IL)
- Paul Szuskiewicz (CA)
- Jeff Walkley (IE)

Clinics are usually initiated by an LSC or Zone representative and can be done online or in person, depending on time, location, and clinician availability. Clinicians should be contacted directly to check their availability and interest.

While the clinic host will promote the event in their local area, clinicians will also send information to the NOC LSC Liaison, who will share the information with all Officials Chairs. The information may also be posted on the USA Swimming Officials Facebook page. The intent is to make these

Clinics available to officials across the country.

Should you have any questions about OW Clinics specifically, or other aspects about Open Water, contact Mike Murphy, the Open Water liaison on the NOC at swimoff1@gmail.com.

Our Kids Initiative (OKI)

By: Jay Thomas

Our Kids Initiative is a cooperative effort of the leadership from the member organizations of the 11 governing bodies and associations to “Putting ALL of Our Kids First.” Its purpose is to find ways for competition to be as fair as possible, regardless of the organization the swimmer is representing. Additionally, members are working together to find ways to help each other in making swimming in the U.S. the best activity for all Americans.

The initial work to get what ultimately became OKI was initiated by Pat Lunsford of Ohio in 1990. Now in its 25th year, the program was officially formed in 2000 to bring leaders together from all swimming organizations to discuss what could be done to help swimmers in the United States have the ability to compete without fear of being disqualified, regardless of whether the competition was held under World Aquatics-AQUA (formerly FINA), NCAA, NFHS, USA Swimming, U.S. Masters Swimming or YMCA rules.

After the Paris Olympic Games in August, the committee members of ASCA, CSCAA, CSOA, AQUA, NCAA, NFHS, USA Swimming, USMS, and the YMCA met virtually via Zoom to continue collaborating regarding recent rules changes by World Aquatics, and discussed the possibility of changes that would be implemented after the 2025 World Championships in Singapore. The different rule-making bodies have different processes and timeframes for adopting and implementing new rules. The reasons for the different implementation schedules are the timing of Championship-level meets and coaches, athletes and official education. As a Member of World Aquatics, USA Swimming is obligated to adopt technical rules changes. As always, the USA Swimming Rules and Regulations Committee and the National Officials Committee will communicate any changes and details regarding implementation should any changes be forthcoming. Again – if there are changes, the likely implementation would be approximately a year away.

The meeting was also an opportunity to discuss safety and training initiatives by each group and how those resources can be shared. The meeting was a resounding success, reinforcing our unwavering commitment to work together for the betterment of the sport for all of our athletes. Our next meeting will be in August 2025, unless the group feels that an interim meeting sooner.

Many officials work across multiple organizations. One challenge officials have when working across different rule-making bodies is maintaining a keen understanding of the differences in rules among the sanctioning organizations. OKI maintains a “Rules Differences” and “Water Depth Differences” summary chart to assist officials with that challenge. These documents are on the OKI website [HERE](#). Please take advantage of this tremendous resource.



Pinnacle Awards - 2023 & 2024

The Pinnacle Award, formerly the Kenneth J. Pettigrew Award, is the highest honor given annually to an official whose robust volunteer service spans decades. Recipients of this award have made significant contributions at both the LSC and national levels, and exhibit attributes of servant-leadership through work in governance and the highest officiating positions. Selected by the National Officials Committee, the Pinnacle Award is presented each year at the USA Swimming Annual Business Meeting.

Marianne Walling of Indiana Swimming won the 2023 Pinnacle Award for her dedication to developing mechanisms for tracking officials participation, to be matriculated back into the new OTS once built, into SWIMS. Her efforts have spanned over two years and she has gracefully led her working groups to manage this massive project while working collaboratively as the Subject Matter Expert for the USA Swimming staff.

Jamie Cahn of Maryland Swimming won the 2024 Pinnacle Award for his leadership as the Meet Referee for the 2024 Olympic Trials. Jamie led a group of 70 officials through months of pre-meet preparation integrating with USA Swimming staff, local LSC leaders, television, and other key partners to deliver a technically flawless and fair meet for our highest performing athletes. In Jamie's own words, #BME -- Best Meet Ever.

Congratulations!

Congratulations and thanks to the following officials who represented USA Swimming in international competition:

Junior Pan Pacific Championships (Canberra, Australia; August 21-24):

Traci Johnson
Trish Martin

PanAm Aquatics Age Group Championships (San Juan, Puerto Rico; August 22-25):

Kathy Fish



Officials Excellence Award

Anita Walker, Oklahoma Swimming

Anita is a great official. She is always professional and kind when she is on any deck. Oklahoma Swimming considers her to be one of our top mentors and is honored to have her on our team. Anita lives a minimum of an hour and twenty minutes from any competitive pool in our state, and yet she is at most meets and works all sessions. She will tell you that her favorite position on deck is as a stroke and turn official, and she is excellent at it. But her hidden super power is Chief Judge. In March 2024, she earned her N3 CJ Certification and easily knocked it out of the park. She always comes well prepared and asks the important questions before, and during, any meet. Oklahoma Swimming is honored to have her among us!

Thank you, Anita, for your service to the swimmers, coaches, and officials of Oklahoma Swimming, as well as outside our LSC.