



# AROUND THE DECK

## POTOMAC VALLEY SWIMMING OFFICIALS

### APRIL 2014 NEWSLETTER



During past several weeks I have had the pleasure of making the rounds at many of the Zone and Sectional meets. I have had the opportunity to talk to several officials that have experienced the Official's Qualifying Meet (OQM) process for the first time. While it can be intimidating there are several things that you can do to make the process more enjoyable.



First, read the material provided to you on the position that you are being evaluated in. It can all be found on the USA Swimming website. This will give a good idea of what you will be expected to do during your evaluation.

The next thing that you can do is to spend a minute or two with the evaluator prior to the start of the meet. During this time you can ask about expectations that the evaluator might have that could be different from what you are used to doing in your LSC, or even what is expected on the National Deck. Remember that just because the meet is being run using "National Protocols" each Meet Referee will do things differently. Be flexible, and always say thank you for the input that you get from your evaluator.



Bob Vincent



## FROM THE CHAIRMAN



As we transition from the short course season to the long course season, I have a few comments looking back and looking ahead. As you can tell, we had more meets this fall/winter than ever before in Potomac Valley Swimming, sometimes five in one weekend. Our number of officials has increased but we need to keep growing our ranks to handle as many meets as we have.

We had three Officials Qualifying Meets (OQMs) during the short course season. At the two OQMs in March (Senior Championships and Junior Olympics), we had 42 officials achieve an N2 or N3 certification, advance a level in their certification, or renew their current certification. I am very pleased to see that many of our officials take advantage of these opportunities for learning. We will have another OQM in July at the LC Senior Championships. Please consider joining the ranks of our N2/N3 officials.

The requirement for Administrative Officials at all meet sessions began in the fall. From what I can see the quality of the times going into the SWIMS database has improved. This increased experience on the “dry side” has allowed our “wet side” officials to concentrate more on the operation of the meets.

The Officials Committee has been working hard this winter to improve the training and certification process, not only to better incorporate the Administrative Officials, but also to improve the quality of our other newly-certified officials. There will be changes in our training and apprentice program going into effect in September. You will hear more about them over the next month or so. The most notable changes will be in the certification process for Referee, Administrative Official, and Stroke & Turn Judge.

Thank you for your continued service to Potomac Valley Swimming. I hope to see you at a PVS Meet this summer.

Tim Husson  
[OfficialsChair@pvswim.org](mailto:OfficialsChair@pvswim.org)



## A Talk with Paul Memont



**Thanks for taking the time to talk with me today. Tell us a little about Paul Memont.**

I've been officiating about 33 years and get more and more out of it every time I walk on deck! My First National Meet was the US Open in 94 and ever since then

I've worked one or two National Meets each year in addition to the LSC Meets and OQMs.

Shortly after that first National Meet I decided I wanted to advance and become a National Championship Starter. The process back then involved evaluations given by the Head Starter at National Championship Meets during time trials. There was no other way to advance. You needed two positive evaluations to be approved, then work a National Championship Meet and you would receive the certification. The problem at that time was there was no mentoring process in place. We had to watch and learn. We would make sure we knew where the Head Starter stood and stand in the same place, we would listen and observe everything the Head Starter did and learn how everything was done. Then we would have maybe ten to twelve starts during time trials and either make it or not. Typically it would take three or more tryouts before we had the two approvals. This usually took a few years.



After being approved we could ask for a Starters Assignment! Most everyone I know who was approved and applied to be a Starter received a letter from the Officials Chair stating they were accepted to work the meet, only to read further and see they were approved to work as a Chief Judge! Again, most of us were approved to work as a CJ twice before being allowed to be a Starter. This process from start to Starter took three to five years. Not much mentoring was given for the Starter. Chief Judges received a lot of mentoring and learned the workings of a swim meet, a very positive experience.

When we became Head Starter for Junior Nationals we became Evaluators ourselves. I don't know exactly when, but mentoring was introduced, more at Junior Nationals. I worked two Junior National Meets a year for a long time before applying to the National Deck, this is where most mentoring was done. It's not fair to judge without setting the expectations. This is where we started trying to teach how a Starter should start and learn how to mentor.

The system we have now, N2/N3 was a big step forward! I'm sure we can improve, I learn a lot at every meet I evaluate, I take suggestions from everyone at these meets.

Being a National Evaluator is the second best job on a pool deck! Starting is the first!

### **Why do you spend so much of your time being an evaluator?**

I enjoy being a National Evaluator more than anything except starting because I feel I can improve the level of officiating and help bring a consistency to the process. It's

very satisfying to see Officials improve and see them on deck some time later doing a great job!

The process has changed greatly from the years before the N2/N3 system we have today. Before this system there were only evaluations, almost no mentoring. We were expected to learn by observation. A system of evaluations given by Officials who fear being replaced is not a good system at all. It was changed to this positive system so qualified Officials could be identified and moved up to replace retiring Officials. Without new highly qualified Officials in all positions we cannot run high level meets!

Look at Olympic Trials! Did anyone ever believe a swim meet would be so popular?

It's great to be part of USA Swimming and a National Evaluator! Every deck I see now has Officials I gave time to help improve, I like to believe we Evaluators are part of all these meets!

## The Four Hour Rule



From: Daniel W. McAllen III, Chair, Rules & Regulations Committee  
Re: Interpretation of USA Swimming Article 205.3.1F (4 hour rule)

Rule 205.3.1F, commonly referred to as the four hour rule, was adopted by the USA Swimming House of Delegates in 1989 to ensure that swimming would be competitive with other youth sports, namely baseball and soccer, insofar as time commitment for both athletes and parents was concerned. ***Clearly, it was not in the best interest of our sport for developmental athletes to be at a pool all day or for the entire weekend to the exclusion of other family interests, particularly when other athletic activities could be completed in a far more reasonable time.*** With that by way of background, it has come to my attention that rule 205.3.1F is being improperly interpreted and enforced in some LSCs. Therefore, I am issuing the following interpretations:

Meets must be planned such that events for 12&Unders can reasonably be concluded within four (4) hours. Sessions that exceed four hours are not in violation of the rule if properly planned.

The rule does NOT apply to Open events even if swimmers 12 years of age or younger are entered.

Measurement of the time duration applicable to this rule begins with the published meet start time of a session that offers 12U events and ends with the conclusion of the last 12U event of the day for the same gender.

Under NO circumstances may a meet or meet session be terminated before all individual events have been concluded as a means of complying with the rule. Relays may be eliminated only if the meet announcement clearly states the conditions under which relays will be eliminated and whether relay entry fees will be refunded.

Events that are scored multi-age are impacted by the rule if the multi-age scoring involves 12U designations, such as 11-12, 10U, 12U, etc.

Some suggested planning tools that facilitate compliance include:

- Using meet management software to monitor the timelines as entries are processed.
- Selection of a heat interval appropriate for the session. ☑ Being aware of the number of swimmers appropriate for the number of lanes available and distances offered.
- Adequate meet staffing such that marshals, timers and other meet personnel are properly trained and in place.
- Keeping equipment (computers, timing systems, printers, etc.) in proper working order.

## Swimming Facts



Titanic was the first ocean liner to have a swimming pool and a gym.

Elephants are capable of swimming twenty miles a day. They use their trunks as natural snorkels.

African Black-footed penguins, although they cannot fly, can swim up to 25 miles per hour, which is faster than the Atlantic Bottlenose dolphin, which can attain speeds of 18-23 mph

If you have blonde hair that goes greenish from swimming pool chlorine, you put ketchup on it and it balances the pigments out.

Sharks gills can't take in water by themselves. This means that sharks have a hard time sleeping or stop swimming.

It is illegal to swim in Central Park, New York City.

Turtles possess the ability to absorb oxygen directly from the water in which they swim.

*source: <http://www.jokes4us.com/sportsjokes/swimmingjokes.html>*

## You Make the Call!



**Situation:** In a heat of the 50-yard freestyle, the swimmers in all lanes take a set position following the "take your mark" command. At the start, the swimmer in lane 4 leaves her mark early. The starter recalls the heat and upon returning to the start end, the swimmers are signaled to step up by the deck referee sounding a long whistle. The coach of the swimmer in lane 5 immediately protests verbally, claiming that the false start was clear to everyone and that the starter recalled the heat intentionally. Should the swimmer in lane 4 be allowed to swim?

## Upcoming Meets



APRIL				
Date	Meet	Host	Location	Notes
-6	<a href="#">FISH LC Fever Invitational</a>	FISH	<a href="#">Fairland</a>	<a href="#">Timer Sign-up</a>
24-26	<i>Grand Prix Series (LCM)</i>		Mesa, AZ	
26	<a href="#">10&amp;U Spring Penguin Meet</a>	PAC	<a href="#">Fairland</a>	<a href="#">Timer Sign-Up</a>
26-27	<a href="#">Spring Sprints Invitational</a>	SDS	<a href="#">South Run</a>	
27	<a href="#">Spring Champ Invite</a>	ERSC	<a href="#">PGCC</a>	
MAY				
Date	Meet	Host	Location	Notes
2-4	Spring LC Classic	RMSC	<a href="#">KSAC</a>	
2	SNOW SC Spring Classic Invitational	SNOW	<a href="#">Claude Moore</a>	
3-4	SNOW LC Classic Invitational	SNOW	<a href="#">Claude Moore</a>	
3-4	LC Derby Meet	FISH	<a href="#">GMU</a>	
3-4	<a href="#">Early Bird LC Invitational</a>	MSSC	<a href="#">Fairland</a>	
3-4	<a href="#">Mini Olympics</a>	MACH	<a href="#">Maderia</a>	
9-11	Long Course Classic	MACH	<a href="#">Lee District</a>	
15-18	<i>Grand Prix Series (LCM)</i>		Charlotte, NC	
23-25	Virginia State LC Championships	PM	<a href="#">Oak Marr</a>	
30-1	Maryland State LC Champs	RMSC		

## You Make the Call Resolution



### Recommended Resolution:

While a race can be recalled for an "unfair" start, by rule it is not recalled for a false start. Therefore, even though the starter recalled the race in reaction to the false start, it is still inadvertent in that the recall should not have taken place. As the rule states, "if the recall signal is activated inadvertently, no swimmer shall be charged with a false start...." The swimmer is not charged with a false start and is allowed to swim.

Applicable Rules: 101.1.3C

## One Last Thing



**"The man who is swimming against the stream knows the strength of it."  
— Woodrow Wilson**

If you have any stories or pictures about experiences you have had concerning any of our officials please send them to [Bob Vincent](#) so that we can get them in the newsletter.

## **BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT GOES TO THE SWIMMER**

**Call what you see and see what you call**

