



# AROUND THE DECK

POTOMAC VALLEY SWIMMING OFFICIALS

# NEWSLETTER

2015  
MAY



## FROM THE CHAIRMAN



We had a great short course season and I thank you for all the hours you put in volunteering as swim officials. There are some articles below that should help us reflect on our role in this sport. Here are a few notes from me as we look towards the long course season.

### Officials Social

Potomac Valley would like to show their appreciation for all the volunteer hours you provide by hosting a social for all the PVS Officials. It will be on Saturday, May 16 at 6:30pm at [Overlee Community Pool](#). Food and drink will be provided as we get the opportunity to socialize outside of a swim meet.

You may bring one adult guest with you. If you are going to attend, please indicate your intention at <http://whoozin.com/K3X-UJ-3EYV> so we have enough food and drinks for all.

### Officials' Representative on the PVS Board

The officials have their own representative on the PVS Board. This representative is our voice and vote on the Board and is the liaison between all our officials and the Board. Our current representative, Mike Rubin, is not eligible to run for the position again so we must elect a new representative to begin a two-year term in September.

The election will take place (per the PVS By-laws) at the summer championships meets. The Officials Committee Vice Chair, Pam Starke-Reed will be running this year's election and is looking for candidates. Any PVS official in good standing is eligible to run for the position. The only requirement is the willingness to attend PVS Board Meetings and represent your 500 fellow PVS Officials. If you are interested in running for this position, please contact [Pam](#).

### Special Olympics

Some of you have volunteered at Special Olympic meets this spring and have found them a rewarding experience. There is another opportunity coming up on May 16. A Special Olympics meet will be held at the Stone Ridge School of the Sacred Heart in Bethesda, MD starting at 11:00 am and going to about 3:00 pm. If you are interested or want more information, please contact me.

See you on deck!

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



**Mission Statement:** *USA Swimming is committed to safeguarding the well-being of all of its members, with the welfare of its athlete members as the top priority.*

### Safe Sport Meet Standard

*The Meet Director, Meet Referee, and Facility Management need to work together to ensure compliance with the USA Swimming Code of Conduct and Athlete Protection Policies during swim meets for the protection of Athletes and Non-Athlete Members of USA Swimming*

*Consultation during the meet may be obtained, if available, with the USA Swimming Safe Sport Office, LSC Safe Sport Chair/Coordinator, LSC General Chair, or the Meet Committee at the venue*

### Meet Director

#### Prior to the meet

- Identify emergency services
- Determine responsibility for enforcement
- Confer with meet referee
- Prepare briefing sheets
- Check "Banned List"

#### At the meet

- Distribute briefing sheets
- Participate in briefings as needed
- Meet presence

**Remember, the Meet Director and Meet Referee must, together, use common sense and consistent application of USA Swimming Rules and Safe Sport Policies for the protection of all USA Swimming Members, volunteers and spectators of the meet**

**Have a Plan – pre-think responses and responsibilities.**

### Potential Issues

- What if you receive a report that someone in the stands is acting suspiciously?
- What if you receive a report that there is a suspicious person in the locker room?
- What if you get a report of a peer-to-peer incident on deck or in the locker room?

### Meet Marshalls Briefing Sheet

- No cameras
- Good sportsmanship is expected at all times
- Deck changing is prohibited/strong discouraged
- Rubdowns & massages are not allowed except by licensed professionals – Or.....there are exceptions.
- Swimmers not allowed to sit on laps of coaches or other non-athlete members
- Only registered coaches, officials, swimmers and meet volunteers allowed on deck
- Have an active role in keeping swimmers safe

### Timers Briefing Sheets

- Do not text or use cell phones during meet
- No cameras, cell phone cameras, or other recording devices behind blocks
- If you observe camera use behind blocks, notify the chief timer or nearest Official.
- Everyone is part of the Safe Sport Team – Timers included!

### Coaches Briefing Sheets

- No cameras, cell phone cameras, or other recording devices behind blocks
- Deck Changing is prohibited / strongly discouraged
- Rubdowns & massages are not allowed except by licensed professionals
- Swimmers not allowed to sit on laps of coaches or other non-athlete members
- Report to Meet Director or Meet Referee any suspicious activity or something that makes you uncomfortable involving any athlete

**USE COMMON SENSE!!**



**Situation:** An event is announced and the swimmers are on the blocks. A coach approaches the referee and tells him that the swimmer in Lane 3 is ineligible to swim for one or more reasons.

**Question:** What action should the referee take?

# GOOD INTENTIONS

By John Leonard, ASCA



It has been said that nothing is as dangerous as “good intentions.” I believe the following situation reflects that danger perfectly. In Florida Gold Coast Swimming, we are blessed with dedicated and well-meaning swim officials, as is the case in most of the USA. **Officials in the USA, and their leadership, are the best in the world so I do not want this to come across in any way as criticism. I believe it is simply a case of misguided “good intentions.”**

FGC has a series of meets called “Sizzlers” which are beautifully designed to have an excellent two hour or less first competitive swimming experiences for 8-and-under swimmers. These meets serve their purpose admirably. The kindest, most gentle officials work those meets and provide loving help to our newest swimmers. In fact, they overdo it.

At times, officials have decided that it is unnecessarily harsh to actually disqualify 8- and-under swimmers for stroke violations. When questioned, officials have stated that there is no need to create stress on children that small, or tell them that they are doing something wrong, as it is damaging to their self-image/self-esteem.

At first glance, this seems like a kind and gentle world that is “swimmer first.” In point of fact, it is a very serious problem for the long term best interests of the child.

### **Let’s look at it a bit closer.**

Susie is seven. She’s been trying to learn to swim breaststroke but, like a lot of seven year olds, she has trouble turning out her left foot into a breaststroke position. As a result, most of the time she has one breaststroke foot position and one butterfly foot position when trying to swim breaststroke. Her Coach, John Leonard, has been trying for months to explain to her that the legal way to swim breaststroke requires that both toes turn outward to begin the kick. Susie can’t really see or feel the difference. Nor can Susie’s Mom.

Susie’s Mom enters her in the Sizzler Meet. She enters her in breaststroke because she (The Mom) can’t really tell the difference in a legal or illegal stroke nor does she particularly care. Coach John sees that Susie is entered in the breaststroke and even though he didn’t want that done decides, “Why get into an argument with the parent. When the official DQ’s Susie, both Mom and Susie will get the message.”

You can see where this is going. Susie does NOT get disqualified due to the “good intentions” of the officials at the meet. And, after the event, she comes back over to Coach John to show off her shiny blue ribbon and her coupon for a six pack of Dr. Pepper for winning her heat.

Now if Coach John says “but Susie, you swam an illegal stroke with one toe turned in,” Susie can rightfully say....”Gee Coach John, I didn’t get disqualified, you must be wrong.” And, much worse, the “learning moment” is lost and Susie will continue to swim her breaststroke in her fastest possible manner, i.e. with one butterfly foot. This will continue until



Susie turns 9 and swims in a “real USA-S meet” when finally an official will DQ her.

Good intentions, terrible result for the child. The non-DQ is based on two false premises. First, children don’t “really” need to learn to do things properly in swimming and that “close” is good enough. Any experienced coach will tell you that both of those ideas are remarkably destructive to an athletic career. Second, that our children are somehow so psychologically fragile that a disqualification followed by a simple explanation of what they did incorrectly by the official and reinforced by the coach’s explanation will somehow crush the tender psyches of our young swimmers.

This is total nonsense. Children need to hear the unvarnished truth about their performances with explanations as thorough and clear as possible. Our children are plenty tough enough to handle the occasional disappointment in life, especially ones over which they must learn that they have control.

***Disqualify when necessary. Please do the job that officials are on deck for. We trust you; we believe in you; we need you. Together we build America’s swimming team, one young swimmer at a time.***



The DQ report is our primary and official means of articulating disqualifications to the Coach/Swimmer. To ensure that the report is clear and accurate, and to prevent misunderstanding, confusion, and frustration, please observe the following standards for completing it in a consistent fashion.

1. Enter the Event, Heat, and Lane Number. This critical information identifies the swim in which the infraction occurred. There should be no corrections to this information on the DQ Slip (scratch outs introduce doubt with regards to the identification of the correct swim).
2. Circle the name of the Event. Except for “Other,” this corresponds to the event being swum. “Other” is used for non-stroke violations.
3. For regular stroke events, mark with an X, or checkmark, when in the swim the infraction was observed (Start, Swim, Turn, or Finish). This is a very important component in the articulation of the infraction – we need to be able to match

the violation with the part of the swim during which it occurred. Generally, we define these parts of the race as:

Start – From the start of the race until the head breaks the surface.

Swim – From the head breaking the surface until the beginning of the last full stroke into the turn/finish.

Turn – From the beginning of the last full stroke into the wall until the head breaks the surface.

Finish – From the beginning of the last full stroke into the wall to the touch at the end of the prescribed distance.

4. If the event is longer than two lengths and the infraction occurred on a turn, write the number of turn above your X, or checkmark. Remember, it’s the Swimmer’s turn, not yours. Odd-numbered turns are on

#### ***NOTE***

***While our goal is to have all DQ reports filled out in a standard and consistent manner, failure to do so does not constitute automatic grounds for not approving or overturning an otherwise valid disqualification. Referees should continue to use their best judgment and common sense when processing a disqualification report.***

the turn end; even-numbered turns are on the start end.

5. Mark the infraction with an X, or checkmark. If the infraction is not listed, write it in next to "Other" for that stroke (e.g., hands past the hips in Breaststroke). Use the correct terminology from the rulebook. There's no need to circle the number.

6. When the report is complete, the official making the call prints his/her name where it says "Judge." Add first name if it's needed for clarification (when two or more judges with the same last name are working in that session). Please make sure the name is legible.



7. The deck referee prints his/her name where it says "Referee," and marks an X or checkmark next to Swimmer or Coach, as appropriate.

8. Refrain from making other marks or writing extra information on the report.

### Some Conventions

Individual Medley – Judge the IM as four separate segments, each its own "race." Each "race" has all four components (Start, Swim, Turn, and Finish).

- Circle the Event (Individual Medley).
- Mark when in the swim the infraction occurred under the stroke in which it was observed. Remember, transitions are judged as Finishes, then Starts, so they are marked as such, depending on the part of the "race" in which the infraction was observed. Intermediate turns are judged as turns, and marked the same.
- Mark the infraction(s) under the appropriate stroke(s) (there's no need to circle it/them), and write the number of the line(s) next to line 41 'Strokes Infraction #' under Individual Medley. Relays – Mark Relay stroke infractions just like those for the individual events and write the number of the line(s) next to line 70 'Strokes Infraction #' under Relays and enter the Swimmer number(s) who committed it/them.



### DISQUALIFICATION REPORT

EVENT # \_\_\_\_\_ HEAT \_\_\_\_\_ LANE \_\_\_\_\_  
SWIMMER \_\_\_\_\_ TEAM \_\_\_\_\_

**BUTTERFLY** START \_\_\_\_\_ SWIM \_\_\_\_\_ TURN \_\_\_\_\_ FINISH \_\_\_\_\_  
KICK: ALTERNATING (1A) \_\_\_\_\_ BREAST (1B) \_\_\_\_\_ SCISSORS (1C) \_\_\_\_\_  
ARMS: NON-SIMULTANEOUS (1E) \_\_\_\_\_ UNDERWATER RECOVERY (1F) \_\_\_\_\_  
TOUCH: ONE HAND (1J) \_\_\_\_\_ NOT SEPARATED (1K) \_\_\_\_\_  
NON-SIMULTANEOUS (1L) \_\_\_\_\_ NO TOUCH (1M) \_\_\_\_\_  
NOT TOWARD THE BREAST OFF WALL (1N) \_\_\_\_\_  
HEAD DID NOT BREAK SURFACE BY 15m (1P) \_\_\_\_\_ RE-SUBMERGED (1R) \_\_\_\_\_  
OTHER (1T): \_\_\_\_\_

**BACKSTROKE** START \_\_\_\_\_ SWIM \_\_\_\_\_ TURN \_\_\_\_\_ FINISH \_\_\_\_\_  
NO TOUCH AT TURN (2A) # \_\_\_\_\_  
PAST VERTICAL AT TURN:  
DELAY INITIATING ARM PULL (2B) \_\_\_\_\_ DELAY INITIATING TURN (2C) \_\_\_\_\_  
MULTIPLE STROKES (2D) \_\_\_\_\_  
TOES OVER LIP OF GUTTER AFTER THE START (2E) \_\_\_\_\_  
HEAD DID NOT BREAK SURFACE BY 15m (2F) \_\_\_\_\_ RE-SUBMERGED (2G) \_\_\_\_\_  
NOT ON BACK OFF WALL (2H) \_\_\_\_\_  
SHOULDERS PAST VERTICAL TOWARDS THE BREAST (2L) \_\_\_\_\_  
OTHER (2T): \_\_\_\_\_

**BREASTSTROKE** START \_\_\_\_\_ SWIM \_\_\_\_\_ TURN \_\_\_\_\_ FINISH \_\_\_\_\_  
KICK: ALTERNATING (3A) \_\_\_\_\_ BUTTERFLY (3B) \_\_\_\_\_ SCISSORS (3C) \_\_\_\_\_  
ARMS: PAST HIFLINE (3D) \_\_\_\_\_ NON-SIMULTANEOUS (3E) \_\_\_\_\_  
TWO STROKES UNDER (3F) \_\_\_\_\_ NOT IN SAME HORIZONTAL PLANE (3G) \_\_\_\_\_  
ELBOWS RECOVERED OVER WATER (3H) \_\_\_\_\_  
TOUCH: ONE HAND (3J) \_\_\_\_\_ NOT SEPARATED (3K) \_\_\_\_\_  
NON-SIMULTANEOUS (3L) \_\_\_\_\_ NO TOUCH (3M) \_\_\_\_\_  
NOT TOWARD THE BREAST OFF WALL (3N) \_\_\_\_\_  
CYCLE: KICK BEFORE PULL (3P) \_\_\_\_\_ HEAD NOT UP (3R) \_\_\_\_\_  
DOUBLE PULLS/KICKS (3S) \_\_\_\_\_  
OTHER (3T): \_\_\_\_\_

**FREESTYLE**  
NO TOUCH AT TURN (4A) # \_\_\_\_\_  
HEAD DID NOT BREAK SURFACE BY 15m (4B) \_\_\_\_\_ RE-SUBMERGED (4C) \_\_\_\_\_

**INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY**  
STROKE INFRACTION(S) (5A) # \_\_\_\_\_  
OUT OF SEQUENCE (5B) \_\_\_\_\_

**RELAYS**  
STROKE INFRACTION: (6A-D) # \_\_\_\_\_ SWIMMER # \_\_\_\_\_  
EARLY TAKE OFF SWIMMER (6F-H) # \_\_\_\_\_  
CHANGED ORDER (6L): SWIMMER \_\_\_\_\_ STROKE \_\_\_\_\_  
OTHER (6T): \_\_\_\_\_

**MISCELLANEOUS**  
FALSE START (7A) \_\_\_\_\_ DECLARED FALSE START (7B) \_\_\_\_\_  
DID NOT FINISH (7C) \_\_\_\_\_ DELAY OF MEET (7D) \_\_\_\_\_  
OTHER (7T): \_\_\_\_\_

JUDGE: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(print name clearly)*

REFEREE: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(print name clearly)*

NOTIFIED: \_\_\_\_\_ SWIMMER \_\_\_\_\_ COACH \_\_\_\_\_  
rev. (5/14)



### Is Everybody Happy?!

It's Session 5 and the officials are gathered for the briefing. The Meet Referee thanks everyone for coming and says, "It's been a successful meet so far because the coaches are happy. None of them has disagreed with any of our calls." I suspect we all know that's a colossal simplification—many things determine whether or not the meet has been a success, from the number of personal-best times, to the camaraderie and sportsmanship of the participants, to the hospitality

room. Certainly the coaches provide valuable feedback and their views should be considered very seriously. But is it always a bad thing when a coach disagrees with a call? Should that put a damper on the session? Let me tell you a story.

A few years ago I made a major decision on Day 1 of a 4-day championship meet to uphold a controversial call for an early relay take-off. While there were clearly some areas for debate, I had no doubt that it was the correct call: the rules were clear and there was simply no wiggle room. The call pretty much guaranteed that the disqualified team had no chance to contend for the championship—and this was only Event 2. Needless to say, the head coach was unhappy (gross understatement!) and quite eager to express that unhappiness to me. Nothing he said or did was inappropriate or disrespectful, but there were several very uncomfortable minutes between the two of us. We talked it out and finally had to agree to disagree. For the remainder of the weekend we had a rather chilly relationship.

I suspect he too knew it was the right call. Eventually. As time passed, my relationship with this coach has improved significantly and we've actually become friends. Recently he gave me one of the best compliments I've ever received. He told me, "I always feel good when I see you on deck, because I know you'll be fair, consistent, and always have the best interest of the swimmers in mind." I was speechless (and those of you who know me understand how remarkable that is!).

I don't share this story to blow my own horn. I offer it to suggest that it's not necessarily a bad thing to have a coach on deck who's unhappy with a decision—assuming the decision is fair, rules-based, consistent, and athlete-centered. Not everyone will agree with every call you make. And when disagreement occurs it's never about you. It's always about the swimming competition. Coaches are advocates for their swimmers; you are the advocate for all of the swimmers in the venue. If your integrity is without question, if you are consistent, and if you give the benefit of any doubt to the swimmers, you've had a successful session. Coaches will respect you for it. Eventually.



**Recommended Resolution:** Tell the coach that the request needs to be made in writing including objective evidence as to the basis of the protest. Since there is little time to determine the actual eligibility of the swimmer, start the heat and announce that the race is being run “under protest”.

**Applicable Rules:** 102.11.4, 102.11.3 .



**MAY**

Date	Meet	Host	Location
1	<a href="#">SNOW SC Spring Classic Invitational</a>	SNOW	<a href="#">Claude Moore</a>
1-3	<a href="#">Spring LC Classic</a>	RMSC	<a href="#">KSAC</a>
1-3	<a href="#">OCCS Spring Splash Invitational</a>	OCCS	<a href="#">Freedom Center</a>
2-3	<a href="#">SNOW LC Classic Invitational</a>	SNOW	<a href="#">Claude Moore</a>
2-3	<a href="#">LC Derby Meet</a>	FISH	<a href="#">GMU</a>
2-3	<a href="#">Early Bird LC Invitational</a>	MSSC	<a href="#">Fairland</a>
9-10	Mini Olympics	MACH	<a href="#">Maderia</a>
14-17	<a href="#">Arena Pro Swim Series (LCM)</a>		<a href="#">Charlotte, NC</a>

22-24	<a href="#">Virginia State LC Championships</a>	PM	<a href="#">Oak Marr</a>
29-31	<a href="#">Maryland State LC Champs</a>	RMSC	<a href="#">Rockville</a>
<b>JUNE</b>			
Date	Meet	Host	Location
6-7	June LC Invitational	FISH	<a href="#">Fairland</a>
12-14	SNOW LC Invitational	SNOW	<a href="#">Claude Moore</a>
14	PVS LC Open 1	TBD	<a href="#">Lee District</a>
		TBD	<a href="#">Fairland</a>
		TBD	<a href="#">Wakefield Park</a>
18-21	<a href="#">Arena Pro Swim Series (LCM)</a>		Santa Clara, CA
20-22	<a href="#">Black &amp; Red LC Invitational</a>	UMAC	<a href="#">UMD</a>
20-21	PVS LC Distance Meet	TBD	<a href="#">Fairland</a>
27	<i>Eastern Zone Open Water Meet</i>	<i>Middle Atlantic Swimming</i>	<i>Atlantic City, NJ</i>
28	PVS LC Open 2	TBD	<a href="#">Lee District</a>
		TBD	<a href="#">Fairland</a>
		TBD	<a href="#">Wakefield Park</a>



During Senior Champs as the Meet Referee I had the chance to go upstairs and take a look at the meet from the stands. What I saw were happy officials in the right places and doing their jobs. Then I took a little closer look and what I saw made me very happy! If you will look at the two pictures below you will notice something unusual for USA Swimming officials.

At Senior Champs this year we had over fifty percent women on the deck. And I don't just mean serving as stroke and turns; it was that way for the Leadership Team as well. This made me very proud to be associated with Potomac Valley Swimming, not because we have done anything special to recruit women officials, but that we, in my opinion, do a very good job of treating all of our officials as professionals and make all of our officials welcome. For that reason I believe we have more good officials on deck than most LSCs.

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

Call what you see and see what you call



