



# AROUND THE DECK

POTOMAC VALLEY SWIMMING OFFICIALS

# NEWSLETTER

2015  
JUNE



## FROM THE CHAIRMAN



I had the pleasure to attend the LSC Officials Chairs Meeting last weekend in Minneapolis. It is an opportunity to hear what the National Officials Committee has been up to lately. But, more importantly, it is a chance to network with the other 58 LSC Officials Chairs. We trade tips, procedures and experiences that give us ideas we can implement back home to make our officiating better and more consistent. Bob Vincent, who is the Eastern Zone Officials Chair, has a very good summary article below.

One of the most exciting things announced at the meeting was the release of the new USA Swimming Stroke & Turn training videos. We were told they will be available on the USA Swimming website very soon. Another interesting announcement is that beginning in the fall, the Arena Pro Series will be considered "national championship" level meets for officials. If you need to attend a national championship level meet to complete your N3 certification, this is very good news.

There are two good articles below that will help us become better officials. The first one by Bob Vincent describes the National Championship Scratch Procedures (rule 207.11.6). These are the procedures we use for our PV Senior Championship Meets so it is worth becoming familiar with the rules, even if you are not a referee.

The other article by Clark Hammond, the past National Officials Chair, is a reminder of why we need to maintain consistent officiating at meets of all levels. We teach this in all our clinics and say it at all our briefings, but it is good to be reminded of it.

In addition to the PVS LC Open meets in June, there is a full slate of PVS championship meets in July. To sign up for those championship meets, see the links at <http://www.pvswim.org/official/applications.html>. There is also a Sectional meet in July in Ithaca, NY. It is a beautiful area to visit in the summer. There will also be the Zone Age Group Championship in August in Richmond, VA and the new Zone Senior Championship in Buffalo, NY. These are opportunities to officiate at the higher level and meet other officials from the Eastern Zone. If you are interested in an opportunity at a national-level meet, the new USA Swimming Futures Championships are being held at the end of July. I will be at the meet in beautiful Gresham, OR and love to see some more familiar faces. Jack Neill will be the Team Lead Chief Judge at the meet in Greensboro, NC. S&T positions are still open at all three Futures Meets and the applications can be found on the USA Swimming website.

Thanks for all the volunteer time you provide to Potomac Valley Swimming.

See you on deck!

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



# The "Death" Penalty

by Bob Vincent



So you're the Meet Referee and you have been given a Meet Announcement that says National Protocol will be used for scratch procedures as prescribed in 207.11.6 in the USA Swimming Rule Book. These rules are very specific about how and when a swimmer can scratch. Let's take a look:

## 207.11.6 Scratch Procedures

- A Swimmers may scratch from an event in which they are entered by following the procedures set forth in the meet announcement.
- B The scratch deadline for the first day's events shall be fifteen (15) minutes after the general meeting is adjourned. The scratch deadline for all subsequent day's events shall be thirty (30) minutes after the time established for the start of the finals sessions.
- C In the event where preliminary heats are necessary, after the heats have been seeded, any swimmer who fails to compete in an individual event in which such swimmer entered and has not been scratched in accordance with sub-paragraphs A and B above will be barred from all further individual and relay events of that day. The application of this penalty shall pertain to the order in which the event/heats are swum, not the numerical order of the events. Additionally that swimmer shall not be seeded in any individual events on succeeding days unless that swimmer declares an intent to swim prior to the close of the scratch box for that day's events.
- D Scratching from finals:
- (1) Any swimmer qualifying for a C, B or A (bonus and consolation final or) final race in an individual event who fails to compete in said final shall be barred from further competition for the remainder of the meet, except as noted in paragraph E. A declared false start under 101.1.3E or deliberate delay of meet under 101.1.5 is not permitted and will be regarded as a failure to compete.
  - (2) In the event of withdrawal or barring of a swimmer from competition the Referee shall fill the C, B, or A (bonus and consolation final or) final, when possible, with the next qualified swimmer(s). First and second alternates shall be announced along with the final qualifiers. These alternates shall not be penalized if unavailable to compete in finals.
  - (3) Where C and B (bonus and consolation) finals have not been swum and a barring or withdrawal is known by the Referee, the Referee shall reseed the C, B and A (bonus final and consolation final and the) final, if necessary, to insert the alternate(s) in the appropriate lane(s), filling all lanes in the final.
  - (4) If the C and B (bonus and consolation) finals have already been contested, the (championship) final shall be swum without reseeding for the empty lane(s).

Again, these rules are very specific about the requirements for a swimmer to swim or scratch. However, often times the Referee overlooks the reference in 207.11.6.D (1) where it states that the "swimmer shall be barred from further competition for the remainder of the meet, except as noted in paragraph E. Let's take a look at what paragraph E says:

E Exceptions to Failure to compete – No penalty shall apply for failure to withdraw or compete in an individual event if;

- (1) The Referee is notified in the event of illness or injury and accepts the proof thereof.
- (2) A swimmer qualifying for C, B, or A (bonus or consolation final or) final race based upon the results of the preliminaries notifies the Referee within thirty (30) minutes after announcement of the qualifiers for that race that they may not intend to compete and further declares their final intentions within thirty (30) minutes following their last individual preliminary event.
- (3) It is determined by the Referee that failure to compete is caused by circumstances beyond the control of the swimmer.

While paragraph (2) is very specific, paragraphs (1) and (3) require a determination by the Referee. Because of the severity in being barred from all further competition (thus the term “the death penalty”) it is important that the Referee consider all information available before rendering a decision. This is the ultimate penalty and giving the swimmer the benefit of the doubt is an absolute must.

In the case of paragraph (1) where the Referee is notified of illness or injury the Referee must make a judgement call as to whether or not to “accept the proof.” What constitutes proof allows good judgement to be applied by the Referee. Again, the burden of proof should be consistent with giving the benefit of the doubt to the swimmer.

In the case of paragraph (3) where the failure to compete is caused by circumstances beyond the control of the swimmer the same kind of judgement call as to what kind of circumstance would be considered beyond the control of the swimmer provides the Referee the ability to apply good judgement to the decision. It should be noted that the rule does not state that the failure to compete is caused by circumstances beyond the “coaches” control. There clearly can be a case made between what circumstances are beyond the control of a swimmer versus those that are beyond the control of a coach.

Once a decision has been made by the Meet Referee there begs the question of whether or not the decision could be protested. Since the rules for scratching fall under the Administrative Rules and not the Technical rules the decision could be protested and should a protest be filed according to the rules it would then be referred to a Meet Jury.

While it is not written in the rules that Officials should notify a coach or a swimmer if the scratch penalty is being enforced, it is recommended. There have been multiple times that the penalty has been applied improperly and making the effort to contact the swimmer or coach can save a lot of heartache later on.



Every other year the LSC Officials Chairs meet. This year the meeting was in Minneapolis. Every LSC sends their Officials Chair or a representative. The meeting also includes the four Zone Officials Chairs and the Officials Committee. This year was the first meeting for Jim Holcomb (Pictured left), as our new USA Swimming Officials Chair.

The meeting began with a dinner on Friday night. Jim set the tone for the meeting by talking about what he wanted the attendees to get out of the meeting. He also announced the new USA Swimming Officials Training



Videos. Copies were provided to each attendee.

The next morning began with a Rules and Interpretations Update from Dan McAllen, USA Swimming Vice President. Dan also talked about the new Training Video.

Next on the Agenda was Carol Zaleski, who gave a FINA update. She provided the group with the general history and make-up of the organization. Carol continues to be active with FINA, Serving as the Chair of the Technical Committee. This committee provides the Rules and Regulations that govern swimming for the Olympics. USA Swimming conforms all of the technical rules to comply with FINA.

Joel Black (USA Swimming Officials Committee) provided an update on the interaction between YMCA and USA Swimming Officiating. He talked about the evolution of how the two organizations work together to provide consistency between the two sets of rules.

Lucy Duncan (USA Swimming Officials Committee) gave a presentation on the position of Administrative Official (AO). This position is now two years old and the committee was looking for feedback as to how it is working at the LSC level. There was some general discussion about the differences in an Administrative Referee and an AO. The overall opinion of the group seemed to be that this was a good position and was leading to more accuracy and consistency in verifying times for our swimmers.



**USA Swimming Zone Officials Chairs: Right to left: Jim Patterson (Western), Wayne Shulby, (Southern), Edie Mueller (Central), Anne Lawley (Central Assistant), Bob Vincent (Eastern)**

The Eastern Zone LSC Chairs got together for some discussion and lunch on Saturday. Bob Vincent, Eastern Zone (EZ) Officials Chair led a discussion on how Meet Referees were selected for the Zone Championship meets; how host teams provide travel and accommodations for the leadership teams at these meets; as well as how pre-meet protests were handled. It was an excellent opportunity for the EZ Officials Chairs to get to know each other and stimulate some communication between them.

After lunch Melissa Hellervik-Bing (USA Swimming Officials Committee) led a discussion on Standards, training, advancement and mentoring officials. Melissa highlighted the characteristics that make a good mentor. She also talked about Officials Qualifying Meets (OQM) and how to determine what level of evaluation and certifications would be used.

Jamie Cahn (USA Swimming Officials Committee) gave a presentation on the role of an LSC Officials Chair. His presentation was an outline of the characteristics that make LSC Chairs successful. After his presentation Jamie led an Open Forum discussion on the topic.

The meeting concluded on Sunday morning with a presentation by Bob Griffiths (USA Swimming Officials Committee) on the Officials Tracking System (OTS). Bob is in the process of implementing several things that will enhance the user experience of the system. He then gave a demonstration of some of the capabilities and answered question from the group.

Jim Holcomb ended the meeting with several of his goals. These included creating a stroke and turn PowerPoint presentation to be used at the LSC level for training.



**Right to left: Betsy Coe (MD), Bob Vincent, Jamie Cahn (MD), Jo Ann Faucet (AD), Tim Husson, and Bryan Wallin (VA)**



**Situation:** Joe has an attention deficit disorder. He has difficulty managing to be at the right place at the right time during swimming meets because he gets so distracted. Joe's coach has requested that his father serve as a personal assistant during the meet, helping Joe to manage the meet environment.

**Question:** Should the Referee approve this request?



You have just finished a four and one-half hour B/C meet and an official says to you, "I was pretty nice today; I didn't write one DQ slip. I could have written a couple, but I decided since this was the first meet I'd give them a break. I figure the other end probably caught them anyway."

What is wrong with this statement other than the fact that this judge did not enforce the rules? What are the real issues? How do you deal with a judge who makes this type of statement? It is obvious (or should be) this is not an acceptable perspective for any official, but it is important to know why this is true so we can educate officials as to why this point of view is improper. To whom was the judge giving a break or being kind? Was the official being kind to the child that should have been disqualified? Was he or she being kind to the other children swimming in the same event? How about the parents of the child or the child's coach? Was this official thinking about the impact on the other officials who are calling them as they see them? Exactly who was this judge helping? The simple answer is no one and, in fact, they potentially harmed each of the above groups. Let's start with the basics. In the USA Swimming Rules and Regulations, the introduction to the Technical Rules states:

"All competitive swimming events held under USA Swimming sanction shall be conducted in accordance with the following rules that are designed to provide fair and equitable conditions of competition and promote uniformity in the sport so that no swimmer shall obtain unfair advantage over another."

The rules apply to ALL competitive swimming events held under USA Swimming sanctions. This includes B/C meets as well as senior level competitions. It applies to the first meet of the season as well as the season ending championship. The introduction further states that the purpose of the rules is (1) to provide fair and equitable conditions of competition so that NO swimmer shall obtain unfair advantage over another and (2) to promote uniformity in the sport so that NO swimmer shall obtain unfair advantage over another. Let's look at those two purposes in light of the official's post meet statement.

If you do not disqualify Johnny or Susie for a violation of the rules, you have not only failed to enforce the particular rule but have violated the above basic principles upon which the rules are based. But this is not all you have done. You have potentially harmed Johnny or Susie because they will be under the mistaken assumption that they are performing the stroke properly. Real life examples are the best teaching tools and this one happened just a few years ago. I was the stroke judge in a long course senior level meet during the 200-meter breaststroke. As I watched my lanes, I was drawn to a swimmer that appeared to be intermittently doing an illegal downward butterfly kick. Once I confirmed that this swimmer was in fact doing a downward kick after each second or third stroke, I raised my hand and immediately I heard from behind me a coach expressing appreciation for my call. Needless to say, I was surprised by the coach's comment. Later, the coach told me that he had been

trying to correct this problem, but the officials in his LSC had not been uniformly making the call and the swimmer therefore believed it was not a chronic problem. Certainly, it is not our duty as officials to teach swimmers the strokes but we do provide feedback in the form of disqualifications that allow coaches and swimmers to adjust their training to correct any improper strokes. Apparently, in the coach's opinion, this had not occurred with this particular swimmer on a consistent basis. When we decide not to make a call, we leave that swimmer with the false impression that he or she is swimming the stroke in compliance with the rules.

Not only does our non-call potentially harm Johnny or Susie, it also harms the other swimmers who are performing the stroke correctly. Our rules are in place to ensure that NO swimmer obtains an unfair advantage over another. By not making the call, we are violating this fundamental principle. In most meets, we are happy to have six officials to officiate the meet. This means that we have only two stroke and turn judges at each end of the pool, each judging four lanes. In the above example, the judge felt it was OK not to disqualify Johnny or Susie because the other officials will catch the infraction. This means that one quarter of the pool was not being judged according to the rules, while the other three-quarters were. Clearly those swimmers in lanes being judged by this judge receiving an unfair advantage. There is only one judge enforcing the rules in a quarter of the pool and he or she might not see the violation. The judge may be looking at other lanes when the infraction occurs in their jurisdiction or the swimmer may not violate the rules while in the judge's jurisdiction. The violation may have been a kick infraction and the judge at the other end may not be able to see the kick because the swimmers are swimming towards them for a finish. The lighting in the swimming venue may obstruct the judge's ability to see the same infraction. If the infraction was an illegal touch, the other judge cannot make the call (even if he could see it) because it is outside his jurisdiction. So to abdicate your responsibility and to justify your actions by saying someone else will probably catch it is a failure to appreciate the real facts of the situation.

On this same issue, I have heard people say that it did not matter that they did not disqualify Johnny or Susie because they weren't going to win anyway. They argue that there was no unfair advantage. This statement is based on 20-20 hindsight. You can only know if this is true after the event is over. What if the other officials who are correctly performing their duties disqualified all of the other swimmers? Johnny or Susie would receive an award by default when in fact they should have been disqualified. You may say this is an absurd illustration and while that is true it does demonstrate that this viewpoint is results driven. You only know if it is true when it is too late to disqualify Johnny or Susie. If the meet is a small one and the top eight swimmers are being given awards, it might not be such an impossible outcome. Moreover, it is entirely possible that a swimmer may be able to achieve a faster time performing the stroke illegally than those swimmers performing the stroke correctly and thus be improperly awarded for his or her efforts.

Again, the rules speak clearly to the duties of a stroke judge and state:

“Stroke Judge — Shall operate on both sides of the pool, preferably walking abreast of the swimmers during all strokes except freestyle, during which events they may leave poolside, at the Referee's discretion; shall ensure that the rules relating to the style of swimming designated for the event are being observed; and shall report any violations to the Referee on signed slips detailing the event, the heat number, the lane number, the swimmer's name and the infraction.” (Rule 102.15.3 - emphasis added).

The rules again speak to the duties of the turn judge and state:

“Turn Judge - Shall operate on both ends of the pool; shall ensure that when turning or finishing the swimmer complies with the turning and finishing rules applicable to the stroke used; and shall report any violations to the Referee on signed slips detailing the event, the heat number, lane number, the swimmer's name and infraction observed.” (Rule 102.15.4 - emphasis added)

The rules are clear in both cases; stroke and turn judges “shall ensure” the rules are being followed and “shall report” any violations. It is mandatory, not permissive. It does not matter how you feel about Johnny or Susie or if it is the first meet. It does not matter if you think they did not get an unfair advantage. You call them as you see them. It is that simple.

Finally, not only does the failure to make a call potentially harm Johnny and Susie and the other competitors, it also harms the other officials working with you and officiating as a whole. Again, the introduction states that the rules are designed “to

promote uniformity in the sport so that no swimmer shall obtain unfair advantage over another.” By not making the call, you are violating the principle that the rules be uniformly applied in all USA Swimming competitions. Who hasn’t been at a meet where Johnny’s or Susie’s coach (or most likely parent) comes up to you after a call and says: “Why did you disqualify them, they have not been disqualified for that infraction all year.” Assuming the violation did occur in earlier meets and the officials observed it but choose not to make a call, it brings into question the overall quality and uniformity of officiating.

Moreover, when we make comments on the deck about giving swimmers a break or not disqualifying a swimmer for a clear infraction, we need to realize the walls have ears and it can jeopardize the entire officiating team if a parent or coach repeats that comment to others in the swimming venue.

To further illustrate, have you ever had a coach approach you about his swimmer being disqualified and he was not mad about the call because it was correct? He was fuming about an official who he has been watching who has not been making calls and he wants a fair and uniform forum. He would say something like: “If you are going to disqualify my swimmer then be consistent and also disqualify the other swimmers who also violate the rules.” He is totally correct. It is an unfair forum if one of the officials is knowingly not enforcing the rules.

Whenever we take it upon ourselves to not enforce the rules, it can have real consequences. We not only potentially harm the swimmers because they never learn they are doing the stroke incorrectly; but we also potentially harm the other swimmers and officiating as a whole. If it is difficult for a person to disqualify someone, then it is better for that person to work in another position other than officiating on the deck. When we step on the deck, we are pledging to each swimmer, coach, parent and official that we will judge the meet in accordance with the rules, will be fair and equitable and will uniformly officiate the meet so that no swimmer obtains an unfair advantage over another.

If we keep the above principles in mind, then we will not be prone to give Johnny or Susie a “break” or fail to enforce the rules because we understand that the consequences



Clinics from the following Summer Swim Leagues can be used as a USA Swimming certification or re-certification clinic for the Stroke and Turn Judge position only. Follow the links to the league web sites for further information.

These leagues may also hold clinics for the positions of Referee, Starter and Computer Operator. These clinics CAN NOT be used for USA Swimming certification. Pre-Registration is NOT required for these clinics.

Northern Virginia Swim League		<a href="http://mynvsl.com">mynvsl.com</a>
Date	Time	Location
Saturday June 6	8:00 AM	Annandale ( <a href="#">map</a> ) 7530 Little River Turnpike Annandale, VA 22003
Saturday June 6	8:00 AM	Fairfax Club Estates ( <a href="#">map</a> ) 5601 Snowy Owl Dr. Fairfax, VA 22032

Saturday June 6	8:00 AM	Lee Graham ( <a href="#">map</a> ) 7319 Lee Hwy Falls Church, VA 22042
Saturday June 6	8:00 AM	Virginia Hills ( <a href="#">map</a> ) 6500 Robinson Dr. Alexandria, VA 22310
Sunday June 14	9:30 AM	Hunt Valley Swim Club ( <a href="#">map</a> ) 7100 Sydenstriker Rd Springfield, VA 22153
Wednesday June 17	7:00 PM	Hunt Valley Swim Club ( <a href="#">map</a> ) 7100 Sydenstriker Rd Springfield, VA 22153
Wednesday June 17	7:00 PM	Sully Station ( <a href="#">map</a> ) 5101 Sequoia Farms Drive Centreville, VA 20120
<b>Montgomery County Swim League</b>		<a href="http://www.mcsl.org">www.mcsl.org</a>
<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Location</b>
Tuesday, June 2	6:00 PM	Stone Ridge School of the Sacred Heart ( <a href="#">map</a> ) 9101 Rockville Pike Bethesda, MD 20814
Sunday June 7	8:00 AM	<a href="#">Olney Indoor Swim Center</a>
Tuesday June 16	7:00 PM	<a href="#">MLK Jr. Swim Center</a>
<b>Prince-Mont Swim League</b>		<a href="http://www.princemont.org">www.princemont.org</a>
<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Location</b>
Saturday June 6	5:30 PM	<a href="#">University of Maryland Armory</a>
<b>Colonial Swim League</b>		<a href="http://csl.nvblu.com">csl.nvblu.com</a>
<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Location</b>
Thursday June 11	7:00 PM	Manorgate ( <a href="#">map</a> ) 14300 Green Trails Blvd Centreville, VA 20121
<b>Country Club Swimming and Diving Association</b>		<a href="http://countryclubswimanddive.org">countryclubswimanddive.org</a>
<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Location</b>
Thursday, June 4	6:30 PM	Belle Haven Country Club ( <a href="#">map</a> ) 6023 Fort Hunt Rd Alexandria, VA
<b>Herndon Swim League</b>		<a href="http://hsl.swim-league.us">hsl.swim-league.us</a>
<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Location</b>
Wednesday June 10	7:00 PM	<a href="#">Herndon Community Center</a>
Monday June 15	7:00 PM	<a href="#">Herndon Community Center</a>



# YOU MAKE THE CALL RESOLUTION



## Recommended Resolution:

**Disability?** Joe has a disability that probably does not affect his ability to swim, but does affect his compliance with meet routines.

**Fair to SWAD (swimmer with a disability) interpretations?** The coach's request for a personal assistant should be evaluated in light of the coach's ability to provide such assistance. If the coach is responsible for a large number of athletes, s/he may be unable to provide the needed help to Joe, in which case a parent acting as personal assistant is reasonable.

**Fair to others?** The proposed accommodation should not affect other swimmers.

**Feasible?** The proposed accommodation is feasible; however, the coach should be instructed to ask Joe's parent to be as unobtrusive as possible while on deck. Although personal assistants are not required to have membership in USA Swimming, membership is advisable.

**Applicable Rules:** .Article 105 Case Studies; Inclusion of Swimmers with Disabilities at USA Swimming Competitions

# UPCOMING MEET SCHEDULE



## JUNE

Date	Meet	Host	Location
6-7	<a href="#">June LC Invitational</a>	FISH	<a href="#">Fairland</a>
12-14	SNOW LC Invitational	SNOW	<a href="#">Claude Moore</a>
14	<a href="#">PVS LC Open 1</a>	FBST	<a href="#">Lee District</a>
		PAC	<a href="#">Fairland</a>
		MACH	<a href="#">Wakefield Park</a>
18-21	<a href="#">Arena Pro Swim Series (LCM)</a>		<i>Santa Clara, CA</i>
20-22	<a href="#">Black &amp; Red LC Invitational</a>	UMAC	<a href="#">UMD</a>
20-21	<a href="#">PVS LC Distance Meet</a>	FBST	<a href="#">Fairland</a>
27	<a href="#">Eastern Zone Open Water Meet</a>	<i>Middle Atlantic Swimming</i>	<i>Atlantic City, NJ</i>
28	<a href="#">PVS LC Open 2</a>	FBST	<a href="#">Lee District</a>
		FAST	<a href="#">Fairland</a>
		PM	<a href="#">Wakefield Park</a>

## JULY

Date	Meet	Host	Location
16-19	PVS LC Age Group Championships	TBD	<a href="#">UMD</a>
16-19	<a href="#">Speedo Championship Series Eastern Zone (Combined Meet)</a>	<i>Syracuse Chargers</i>	<i>Ithaca, NY</i>
23-26	PVS LC Senior Championships	TBD	<a href="#">UMD</a>
23-26	PVS LC Junior Championships	TBD	<a href="#">UMD</a>
30-3	<a href="#">Speedo Junior Nationals</a>	<i>USA Swimming</i>	<i>San Antonio, TX</i>
30-3	<a href="#">Futures Championships</a>	<i>USA Swimming</i>	<i>Greensboro, NC</i>

## AUGUST

Date	Meet	Host	Location
6-10	<a href="#"><u>Phillips 66 National Championships</u></a>	USA Swimming	San Antonio, TX
5-8	<a href="#"><u>Eastern Zone LC Championships</u></a>	Poseidon Swimming	Richmond, VA
6-9	<a href="#"><u>Eastern Zone LC Senior Championships</u></a>	Star Swimming	Buffalo, NY

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

Call what you see and see what you call

