

2007 LSC OFFICIALS CHAIRS MEETING

San Antonio, TX

June 15-17, 2007

Attended by Kevin Hogan

General

- Jim Sheehan, Chair of the National Officials Committee was the host

Web-Basted Testing (Paul Jones, Officials Test Task Force Group)

- Five test editors spent three months going through all the questions and have revised, edited, deleted, and added to where necessary
- Questions changed to multiple choice; no more true/false
- Questions are maintained in a master database and are used to populate the different tests; questions used for more than one test type (S&T, Referee, etc.) are drawn from the master database
- Has the ability to add YMCA-specific questions and has the ability to generate a single test that would cover both YMCA/USA-S needs for those officials obtaining dual certification (this feature is not yet implemented as the YMCA will maintain its current testing structure for the next year or two)
- The recertification test questions for a given position cover all the elements required for that position; for example, the Referee tests covers Referee, Administrative, Starter, and S&T, thus a Referee doesn't have to take all the recertification tests
- Lack of complete functionality with the Firefox browser was brought up and is being looked at
- If an official doesn't want to finish a test during a session then SAVE AND RETURN must be selected or a new test will be generated in the next session
- Questions about questions can be sent directly to Paul Jones but he needs the master test question number to help

FINA and the Use of Cameras (Carol Zaleski, Vice-Chair, FINA Swimming Technical Committee)

- Currently, the FINA rules only reference the use of cameras for backup times
- An Extraordinary Congress meeting will be held next year to consider adding two sentences to the rules to allow the use of video for officiating
- To gather data and get some real world experience, 24 cameras will be used at the next National Championships (they will NOT be used as part of the officiating, this is only being done to get a practical feel for the issues involved)
- Beyond authorizing the use of cameras, the FINA rule doesn't address how cameras will be used
- Carol sought input to the following questions (discussion didn't take place, input was provided in written form):
 - Should cameras be used to make calls?

- Should cameras be used to confirm calls?
- Should the cameras be used by the Referee for educational/informational purposes only?
- Should cameras be used on a protest to overrule a call?
- Should cameras be used on a protest to make a call?
- Should the use of cameras be limited to particular infractions and if so, which ones?
- Additional questions that came up included:
 - How many camera reviews can a coach/swimmer request?
 - Will television have access to video? (answer: NO)
- Must balance use of cameras with demonstrating to the on-deck officials that they know what they're doing

YMCA Swimming (Ed Miller, Chair YMCA National Officials Committee)

- Effective September 1, 2006, the YMCA began using the USA-S technical rules rather than the NCAA rules
- The change was met with heavy resistance in some areas, but now that it has been implemented, it has gone relatively smoothly
- Officially, change was only made for the National Championship meet, but qualifying meets have to be run under the same rules which then provides the incentive for lower level meets to be run under the same rules
- Beginning September 1, 2007, there will be two levels of YMCA officials
 - Level 1: S&T, place judge, relay take-off judge
 - Level 2: Referee, Starter, Chief Judge
 - (There are less levels than for USA-S because the YMCA has a greater need to quickly fill its ranks for its club level dual meets)
- Pushing for creativity in getting YMCA officials into USA-S officiating, and vice versa
 - USA-S might get YMCA certification by attending YMCA clinic on core values and other YMCA specific information
 - YMCA officials might get credit towards becoming a USA-S official based on experience and demonstrated competence
 - Combine clinics and have a YMCA-specific component for those that need it
 - YMCA will allow one half of the meets needed for re-certification to come from USA swimming meets
- Found that using one level of official (Level II – certified in everything) did not increase retention and simultaneously hurt the quality of officiating

I've received a number of questions from individuals associated with Y-clubs about the Y requirement for a minimum of two YMCA officials at a

Why Do We Lose Officials (Jeannine Dennis, National Officials Committee)

- Presented the results of a survey sent to members registered as an official in 2006 who did not renew their membership in 2007 (did not include members with an AOL email address as AOL considers USA-S to be a spammer – seriously!)
- Top primary reasons:
 - 28% - child no longer swims
 - 14% - plan to renew, just didn't do it yet
 - 10% - no longer have the time to commit to swim officiating
 - 4% - felt it was time to retire
 - 3% - renew requirements too difficult
 - 3% - didn't enjoy it more
 - 2% - had a difference of opinion with other officials
 - 2% - age and/or health related issues
 - 1% - moved and haven't re-registered yet
 - 1% - didn't like the responsibility
 - 32% - other (pages of additional reasons)
- Hoping to break the data out on an LSC basis so that LSC-specific information can be provided

How Do We Find Replacement Officials (Break Out Session Ideas)

- The discussion could be summarized under three headings: (i) incentives to promote recruitment; (ii) recruitment ideas; (iii) retention ideas which are applicable to both trainees and certified officials
- Incentives to promote recruitment
 - Require clubs to have X number of officials per Y number of swimmers on club; fine the club for not providing the number
 - Require clubs to provide officials at a meet in proportion to number of swimmers; fine the club for not providing the officials
 - Require clubs to have X number of officials or officials at particular certification levels before they can run a meet
- Recruitment ideas
 - #1 primary means is by personnel contact-
 - one-on-one contact with an individual to encourage their participation
 - much more effective than general announcements, clinic advertisements, etc.
 - Recruit from the timers as they're already showing a higher level of interest than most

- Express clinics
- Flyer in meet program
- Clubs must support volunteerism
- Recruit at summer leagues
- Training on demand – don't make them wait
- Clinics at meet
- Retention ideas which are applicable to both trainees and certified officials
 - Mentorship programs
 - Build comradery, make it fun
 - Acknowledge and reward
 - Say thank you
 - Incentives – shirts, badges, lanyards, etc.
 - Club/LSC pays USA-S registration fee
 - Officials chair
 - The tone is set from the top down, if we don't care, don't expect anyone else to
 - Recognize that many don't care about advancement, they just want to be there for their kids while their kids are participating
 - Must make room for those who wish to advance

Screened New Starter Video

- The video has been completely redone and includes a lot of age group level starting
- Still being edited
- Availability date still in question and may depend upon how many comments received from this viewing and how much needs to be fixed/changed
- All in all this video looks like it will be a much more useful teaching tool than the previous version

National Certification Program & Officials Tracking System (Bob Griffiths, National Certification Program Task Force Group)

- Demonstrated the on-line Officials Tracking System (OTS) that is being implemented to support national certification
- Supports setting up of Officials Qualifying Meets (OCM) and entry of officials and mentors
- Also supports tracking of officials at non-OCM
- Supports evaluation of officials at the OQM
- Supports e-mail notification of evaluated officials with the results of the evaluation

- For individual officials maintains history of evaluations, meets worked, mentorship activity, evaluation activity, and certification levels (N2, N3)
- Supports application for N2/N3 certification
- Robust reporting capability
- Five dollar application fee will go away as it is not practical to collect it
- Certification card may be sent as a PDF attachment to e-mail notification – speed up process and save on postage
- Patches/pins will not be part of program as the desire is to not create distinctions among on-deck officials
- The OTS will hopefully be available within a month or so
- Many expressed a desire for a list of National Evaluators

LSC Extensions to the Officials Tracking System (Breakout session ideas)

- To ensure that the OTS was completed within a reasonable time frame and within budget constraints, the first phase of the OTS development has concentrated on supporting National Certification
- The second phase of development will begin incorporating functionality that will support LSC-level needs
- Prior to the meeting the LSC Officials Chairs provided Jim S. with a list of needs and these needs were collated into a single list
- Breakout groups prioritized the items on the list

FINA Update (Carol Zaleski, Vice-Chair, FINA Swimming Technical Committee)

- Reviewed history and member composition of FINA
- Rules changes are passed by the FINA Technical Congress which meets every four years (next meets in 2009)
- An Extraordinary Congress will convene in 2008 to consider adding two sentences to the FINA rules to allow for the use of cameras for officiating; no other rules changes will be considered

Rules and Interpretations (Bruce Stratton, USA-S Rules & Regulations Chair)

- Breaststroke – 4 major questions this past year:
 - When must the swimmer be on the breast? From the time the feet leave the wall, not permitted to roll on the back
 - Upward butterfly kick is permitted
 - Meaning of “while wholly submerged”? Meant to be permissive, the swimmer is not required to be wholly submerged in order to take a single butterfly kick followed by a breaststroke kick

- Timing of butterfly kick – kick must come during or following the 1st arm pull and prior to the breaststroke kick; separation of the hands is not necessarily the beginning of the arm pull, i.e. the beginning of the pull is a judgment call
- Breaststroke rule language
 - Originally kept the language the same as FINA to keep things simple
 - Rules & Regulations Committee is recommending two housekeeping changes to the rule at the next convention
 - Remove the words “while wholly submerged”
 - Removing the reference to a “downward butterfly kick”, i.e. “After the start and each turn, a single ~~downward~~ butterfly kick followed by...”
 - This is housekeeping only, the changes are only meant to clarify the rule and they do not modify the meaning of the rule
- Backstroke
 - Rules & Regulations Committee is recommending a housekeeping change to the backstroke rule at the next convention
 - 101.4.3 “...double arm pull may be used to ~~execute~~ initiate the turn.” (“initiate” replaces “execute”)
 - This is housekeeping only and is meant to clarify the rule and does not modify the meaning of the rule)
 - Can be underwater at the instance of the touch at the finish
- Must compete within age group
- Butterfly
 - If the swimmer first touches with the head and then has the presence of mind to touch the wall with both hands simultaneously, it is a legal finish
 - There is a situation in the *Stroke and Turn Situation Resolutions* that contradicts this interpretation and it will be removed or changed
 - This presents a timing difficulty as 102.16.3C(2) requires that the timer stop the watch and/or push the button “when any part of the swimmer’s body touches the wall.”
 - The Referee will have to handle this situation as it arises
- Proposed rule change 102.4.7 – dropping the requirement to list ages on relay cards (seldom, if ever enforced any way)
- Proposed rule change 102.5.1 and 102.5.4A – changing the requirement to enter with the “best competitive time” to something along the lines of “seed according to time entered”
 - LSCs can still impose restrictions such as “best competitive time” within a defined time period or restrict entries to swimmers with no faster than a BB time, etc.
 - Restrictions could be in LSC policies or Meet Invitation
- Ratify change to 103.2.2

- Under the emergency power granted under 504.8, the USA-S BOD changed the minimum depth requirement for teach racing starts to 6 feet
- This change must be ratified by the HOD at the next convention
- Teaching racing starts
 - Teaching is at the discretion of the coach
 - Once taught, practice can occur at racing depths
 - May change rule to require demonstration of proficiency
- False start vs losing balance
 - Losing one's balance, if judged not be part of a starting action, is not a false start
- What defines having at least one foot at the front of the starting platform?
 - "Front edge" was changed to "front"
 - Front is the front, back is the back; there is no requirement to be within a certain distance from the front
- How many officials are need for a meet?
 - 102.12.3 says "...there *should* not be fewer..."
 - "should" is defined in the glossary as "recommended but not mandatory"
 - 1 Referee + 1 Starter + 2 S&T (one of whom could be the Starter) = 3
 - It is ultimately a judgment call that must be made by the Referee
- An athlete is talking to someone behind the blocks and fails to step up following the long whistle and prior to the Referee outstretching the hand – is this automatically a "deliberate delay"
 - This is a judgment call that must take into account the totality of the circumstances
- Use of National Championship scratch procedures (207.10)
 - If National Championship scratch procedures are used, they should be used in conjunction with National Championship procedures
 - At National Championships if a swimmer moves up from an alternate position to swim due to a scratch during the scratch period, the swimmer or the swimmer's coach is always notified
 - If this notification does not take place, the swimmer should not be penalized due to failure to compete
- Submersion past 15 M when 15 M is not marked
 - The call cannot be made when the swimmer surfaces within a reasonably close distance to 15 M
 - It is appropriate to make this call when it is evident that the swimmer is well beyond the 15 M mark, for example, when the swimmer doesn't surface until at or past the backstroke flags

Miscellaneous (Jim Sheehan)

- 2008 Olympic Trials
 - Officials will be invited to work with notification approximately by the end of 2007
 - Carol Zaleski will be the Meet Referee
 - Still planning to swim prelims in the AM and finals in the evening
- Officials Training Clinic
 - October 12-13 in St. Louis
 - Planning on having the clinic every year
- Do trainees (S&T) have to be members of USA-S?
 - Under the insurance plan they are treated like any other volunteer on deck (such as timers); they have liability coverage but not excess accident coverage
- Use of deck aerobics at Officials Qualifying Meets and turning volunteers away because they can't sit/stand or otherwise do it all
 - In Jim's mind, deck aerobics are way far down the list in terms of what is important at a meet
 - Must keep in mind that a big part of the protocol is in place to get officials out of the way of television cameras
 - Use common sense - no need for volunteers to be turned away or feel that they can't work, especially at meets that are short of volunteers
- National Evaluators-
 - Who can be a National Evaluator at an OQM was a frequent question
 - The answer from Bob Griffiths is that it is spelled out in a document on the National Evaluation section of the USA Swimming website
 - Nonetheless, the question was frequently raised, and there may be some effort into generating a list, at least at the N3 level

On the side....

- Talked with Richard Pockat (NC), Don Smith (MD), Jim Van Erden (PVS), and Jamy Pfister (Eastern Zone Officials Chair) about the need to share National Evaluators within our LSCs
 - General agreement as to the need
 - \$\$\$ is an issue for some
 - How to do it remains a question
 - Jamy will try to put a list together for the Eastern Zone
- YMCA has a requirement that YMCA closed competition meets must be officiated by a minimum of two YMCA officials
 - Per Ed Miller, one of these officials must be the Referee and the other should be serving as a wet deck official (Starter or Stroke & Turn)