

Referee - Philosophy, Procedures & Protocols

Virginia Swimming, Inc.

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INTRODUCTION

Philosophy of Officiating

- Preamble to the USA-S Rules & Regulations

“All competitive swimming events held under USA Swimming sanction shall be conducted in accordance with the following rules which 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 Referee is the final authority when it comes to enforcing the rules in accordance with the preamble
- The Referee has a tremendous amount of authority, but this authority is tempered with a tremendous amount of responsibility
- Enforcing the rules is best thought of as protecting the swimmers who are swimming within the rules rather than as punishing the swimmers who are swimming in violation of the rules
- Our training is geared towards producing well-qualified officials who can enforce the Rules & Regulations within the spirit of the preamble

Attributes of a Successful Referee

- Knowledgeable – Thoroughly familiar with
 - Rules & Regulations
 - Official interpretations
 - Published situations
 - Virginia Swimming Policy and Procedures Manual
 - VSI Recommended Procedures
 - Meet Invitation
- Delegates
 - There are many well-trained officials at a swim meet – they should be allowed to do their jobs
 - If you're doing what everyone else should be doing there's a good chance that you aren't doing what you should be doing

- Communicates
 - Communicate your expectations early and clearly
 - Especially important when working with individuals with whom you are not familiar
- Calm – A meet frequently takes on the personality of the Referee
 - A calm individual is easy to follow and gives the appearance of being in control (even when this isn't always the case)
 - A frantic individual conveys a sense of unease and the appearance of being out of control (even when this isn't always the case)
- Read “The Referee and Rules” by Anneliese Eggert
- Choose to officiate like a duck and not a chicken (You haven't read “The Referee and Rules” by Anneliese Eggert if this doesn't mean anything to you!)
- Experienced
 - Nothing pays like experience
 - It is difficult to contemplate every possible situation that might occur and sometimes learning occurs on the fly
 - Confer with other experienced individuals when possible before making a decision on an issue with which you are uncertain
 - Review new situations with experienced individuals after the fact to get feedback on how you handled the situation as well as possible suggestions for alternative approaches
- Proactive
 - Anticipating a problem allows you to act in such a manner that the problem doesn't occur
 - If you prevent a problem from occurring you don't have to fix the problem after it occurs
- Alert

- Know what's going on around you but don't usurp the authority that you've delegated
- Are officials in place, is the equipment operating correctly, are the coaches happy?
- Team Player
 - A meet will have a single Meet Referee, but may also have Deck Referees and Administrative Referees (defined a bit later)
 - Whether acting as a Meet Referee, Deck Referee, Administrative Referee, or in another officiating capacity, perform the role that you have been assigned
- Confident
 - Grounded in a knowledge of the rules and real world experience
- Multi-tasks and prioritizes
 - Ex. You're the only Referee at a session and you find yourself needing to: (1) process DQs; (2) deal with a coach who is protesting a DQ; (3) help the Timing Judge resolve a timing discrepancy; (4) keep the session going because you're already pushing the time line – what do you do?
 - What needs to be done immediately, what can wait for a few or more minutes?
 - Is there anything you can delegate?
 - Draw on your knowledge which increases with experience, clearly communicate, and at least on the outside display a calm and confident demeanor (swim like a duck!)
- Interpersonally Skilled
 - Must be able to effectively communicate with officials, coaches, and athletes
 - Lead without being overbearing
- Fair
 - All decisions are made according to the spirit and letter of the rules and without regard to the athlete, coach, club, or official involved
- Professional – In addition to all of the above-
 - Understands and follows standard as well as meet-specific procedures and protocols
 - Dresses neatly and according to the current dress code

The Art of Refereeing

- Walk the deck, don't hide
 - Easily done by the Meet Referee when Deck Referees and Administrative Referees are also being used, but even if you're the only Referee at a meet it is important to at least get the pulse of the meet before and between sessions
 - Talk with coaches, swimmers, and officials
 - Keep them informed
 - Sense problems, build respect and 'team'
 - Listen, answer questions, get additional information
 - Take conflict off the deck
- Be careful of setting precedents with early decisions
 - It is rare that a decision has to be made immediately; take your time to review all the pertinent information (rules, meet invitation, policies, etc.) before making the decision
 - Don't be afraid to seek the advice and opinion of others
- Admit it if you make a mistake, correct it as best you can, and move on
- Stuff happens and despite all your planning problems will sometimes occur
 - You don't have to solve every problem on your own
 - We have well trained officials at meets – use them (ex. You may not know how to trouble shoot the timing system but the CTS/DTS operator should)
 - Use the experience of those around you including the coaches (many of them have seen it or something similar before) and other officials (someone need not be an experienced Referee to know that the same problem was fixed at a prior meet by simply doing "X")
- Teach, provide constructive criticism
- Learn, seek out constructive criticism
- Conduct self-evaluation (Read "10 Points of Self-Evaluation" by Joel Black)
- Say "thank-you" to everyone

Rule 102.13.1 Referee

".1 –Shall have full authority over all officials and shall assign and instruct them; shall enforce all applicable rules and shall decide all questions relating to the actual conduct of the meet, the final settlement of which is not otherwise assigned by said rules; can override any meet official on a point of rule interpretation, or on a judgment decision pertaining to an action which the Referee has personally observed."

- The rule book only makes reference to a Referee; there is no use of the terms Meet Referee, Deck Referee, or Administrative Referee
 - These designations are based on the various responsibilities of the Referee
 - These responsibilities may reside in a single individual at a simple meet (ex. Mini B/C) or in multiple individuals at an administratively complex meet (ex. Championship meet with trials and finals sessions)
 - While various tasks below have been "assigned" to the Meet Referee, Deck Referee, or Administrative Referee, it must be remembered that at a given meet and with the available personnel there may be some fluidity to these assignments
- Meet Referee – Team leader, has overall responsibility for the conduct of the meet
 - Assist Meet Director in pre-meet planning
 - Assist Host Team Officials Chair in recruiting and assigning officials for the meet
 - Conduct Officials/Coaches Meetings
 - Supervise Officials Team
 - Make final decisions regarding interpretation/application of the rules
 - Ensure Safety
- Deck Referee – Supervises the "wet-deck" officials and manages the actual swimming
 - Supervise Starters and Stroke & Turn Judges
 - Control the flow of the meet
 - Approve DQs and bring to Coaches
 - Make initial decision regarding interpretation/application of the rules

- Set-up Swim-Offs
- Administrative Referee – Supervises the "dry-deck" officials and manages the behind-the-scenes paperwork
 - Assist Meet Referee and Meet Director in pre-meet planning
 - Supervise the Timing Equipment Operator, Timing Judge, Recorder, and Clerk of Course
- Make decisions regarding fair application of:
 - Entries Procedures
 - Check-in Procedures
 - Scratch / No-show Procedures
- Review seeding and heat sheet preparation
- Approve timing adjustments
- Process DQs
- Review and publish the results

MEET REFEREE

Pre-Meet Responsibilities

- Should work with the Meet Director to help plan the meet
- Review draft Meet Invitation with the Meet Director
 - VSI requires that each meet have a named Meet Referee as a condition for obtaining a sanction
 - If you don't understand something, chances are that someone else doesn't understand it either
 - If you don't understand something make sure it gets clarified
- Look for problems and recommend solutions; the more experience you have the more likely you are to head off potential problems (ex. Is there sufficient time available following positive check-in to seed event, published heat sheets, and distribute timing sheets?)
- You can't enforce what you don't understand; by being proactive and getting resolution ahead of time you're more likely to have a smoothly run meet

- Review site preparation with the Meet Director
- Review entries and timelines; recommend solutions if there are any problems
- Meet officials
 - The number of officials needed and the particular jobs which must be filled is dependent on the level of meet and venue
 - Work with the Club Officials Chair from the host club to obtain the requisite officials and communicate your expectations of how this will be done –
 - Who is responsible for obtaining officials?
 - Approval of final schedule
 - How will trainees be handled?

Coaches Meeting (See VSI Recommended Coaches / General Meeting Agenda for details)

- Usually conducted by the Meet Referee
- The main purpose of the meeting is to make sure that the coaches are informed and that there aren't any surprises
- Typical elements included in the meeting include the following:
 - Introduction of key officials
 - Facility layout
 - Venue Rules
 - Meet Invitation changes
 - Communicate those made before the meet
 - If changes are being contemplated it is a good idea to involve the Meet Director and get the sense of what the coaches want
 - Changes at the meet should rarely be made and consideration must be given to how the change affects all the swimmers, not just the one or few for whom the request is being made
 - While having the unanimous agreement of the coaches for a change is helpful, such agreement does not automatically mean that a change must be made
- Timelines
- Warm-up / cool-down procedures

- Heat sheets
- Relay cards
- Scratches
- Positive check-in procedures
- Start procedures
- Finals procedures
- Time Trials
- Protests / complaints / Meet Jury
- Decorum
- Meet results
- Meet evaluation form
- Who to go to for Information
- Hospitality
- Questions

Officials Meetings

- Responsible for both wet-deck and dry-deck officials – Meetings may be delegated to the Deck Referee or Administrative Referee
- Leadership team (Deck Referees, Administrative Referees, Starters, Chief Judges)
 - Especially in a championship meet setting it is advisable to communicate your expectations to the leadership group prior to the standard officials briefings; this can occur before the meet (telephone, e-mail) or at the meet
 - Division of authority among the Meet Referee, Deck Referee, and Administrative Referee
 - Assignment of particular responsibilities to particular officials
 - Timers briefing
 - Timing equipment check
 - Processing of DQs
 - Swim-offs
 - Time trials
- Wet-deck - frequently conducted by the Meet Referee but may be delegated to the Deck Referee or Chief Judge depending upon the

meet and circumstances (see Deck Referee for details)

- Dry-deck - frequently conducted by the Meet Referee but may be delegated to the Administrative Referee (see Administrative Referee for details)
 - Apprentice assignments
 - Authority delegated to the Timing Judge
 - How timing adjustments are to be made
 - Positive check-in events
 - Seeding
 - Reports and results
 - Processing of DQs, no-shows
- Announcer
 - Discuss responsibilities and expectations, coordinate announcements
 - Scripts for general announcements, announcing qualifiers in a preliminary event, and announcing swimmers during finals are all available on the VSI website

Warm-ups/Warm-downs

- VSI Policies and Procedures require a minimum of two Marshals at each meet
- Marshals supervise warm-ups/warm-downs and maintain order in the venue
- No Marshals, no swimming

Meet Jury (See VSI Recommended Procedure for details)

- Protests other than protests against the judgment decisions of starters, stroke, turn, place and relay take-off judges may be brought to a Meet Jury at the discretion of the Referee (102.11)
- Meet Jury
 - 3-5 persons
 - At least one must be a coach and one an athlete; an official is usually used as well
 - Ideally the Meet Jury pool is constituted prior to the beginning of the meet (best practice for championship level meets) but this usually isn't done prior to regular meets as meet juries are rarely convened
 - Appoint jury from pool

- Determine meeting location
- Gather information and witnesses
- Present question and explain appropriate rules
- Answer questions, provide guidance and instructions
- Allow deliberation
- Announce decision

Report of Occurrence Form

- Available on VSI website
- To be filled out when an accident or medical emergency occurs at a VSI sanctioned meet whether or not it involves a USA Swimming member
- Injuries involving spectators should also be reported
- The form should be filled out by the Meet Director, Referee, Marshal or another responsible official at the time of the incident
- Send the report and required copies to the individual listed on the bottom of the form

Meet Report

- Available on VSI website
- Who worked and who stood out (good or bad)
- Any particular meet related issues (good or bad)

DECK REFEREE

Timer Briefing

- Assign the Starter or other official to do the Timer Briefing
- Explain procedures – Lane Timer briefing sheets are available on the VSI website
- Aim should be to have everyone in place for an on-time start

Starter Briefing

- Have timing equipment checked before the start of the session
- How to handle false starts
- How to handle swimmers stepping up early
- How to announce events (or not if the Announcer is doing it)

- How to handle empty lanes
- What, if anything, to say when swimmers are slow to take their mark
- Swimmers with disabilities and any accommodations needed (visual starting commands for the hearing impaired; in the water starts)
- Rotation if there are multiple Starters
- Taking order of finish

Stroke & Turn Official Briefing (Details available on VSI Recommended Pre-Session Officials Briefing Outline)

- Check-in
- Deck assignments
- Apprentice assignments
- Deck rotation
- Deck protocol
- Jurisdictions
- Relay take-off coverage
- DQ processing
- Radio protocol (if in use)
- Rules review, but be careful of the 'rule du jour'
- Use of Chief Judge
- Previous problems
- Unusual circumstances
- Appearance/uniform
- Thank you

Timing Equipment Check

- Make sure that the Timing Equipment Operator/Recorder download the session into the CTS/DTS in time to trouble shoot should the need arise
- Starter and Timing Equipment Operator should check the timing equipment at the conclusion of warm-ups (includes pads and starting units at both ends of pool if being used)
- Timing equipment check should not be delayed until Timers are in place
- Everything should be ready for an on-time start

Radio Protocol

- See VSI Recommended Practice – “Radio Procedures and Etiquette” for details
- Should only be used for official communications, not for clowning around
- Detailed discussion of a disqualification should not take place over the radios
- Assume others are listening

Whistle Starts

- The pace at which a session is run is determined by the Referee, not by the Starter
 - The interval between heats is controlled by the timing of the Referee’s whistle commands
 - The interval between heats is not controlled by asking the Starter to speed things up or slow things down
 - The Referee has the responsibility of controlling the interval between heats; the Starter has the responsibility of ensuring a fair start for every swimmer
- The 4-5 whistle chirps signaling the next heat of swimmers to get ready for the start of their race
 - For sessions run on 25-35 sec intervals these whistles will typically occur when the slowest swimmer is 5 yards out from the finish
 - Faster timelines require the whistles to be blown earlier
 - Either the Starter or the Announcer will announce the event following the whistles (details provided in scripts available on VSI website)
- A long whistle blast signals the swimmers to step up on the blocks (forward starts) or step in (backstroke start)
 - The timing of this whistle is the most critical factor in determining the heat interval
 - A consistent starting routine is best achieved when the long whistle blast occurs following a consistent time interval following the 4-5 whistle blasts – greatly varying this interval can lead to confusion among swimmers and Timers alike

- Sometimes swimmers will step up before the long whistle – in general it is less disruptive to allow them to stay on the blocks than it is to have the Starter step them down and then immediately have them step back up (if they step up *really* early a reminder from the Starter might be in order)
- Starters should be instructed not to ask swimmers to step up/in, ask if there is a swimmer in lane #, etc. – the more talking that is done the less the swimmers will listen for the whistles
- If the swimmers are stepped down, they should be “whistled” back up, although sometimes a “step up” from the Starter might be needed to overcome any confusion
- The second long whistle in backstroke is used to signal the swimmers to return to the wall without undo delay; as such, it should be blown when the heads of all the swimmers break the surface of the water after jumping in and should not be delayed until the swimmers are back at the wall

Closing the Heat – The Basics

- Control of the heat should be turned over to the Starter as soon as the Referee determines that the swimmers are on the blocks, the pool is clear, and that Timers and officials are ready
 - It is easiest to judge if the Timers are ready by checking the Timers in the lane with the slowest swimmer from the previous heat
 - The Referee should not wait until the swimmers have “settled down” on the blocks before giving control to the Starter – it is the Starter’s job, not the Referee’s, to determine when the swimmers are ready for “take your mark”
- Control is given to the Starter by fully extending one arm towards the Starter
- If there are missing swimmers in one or more lanes do not rush to give control of the heat to the Starter as doing so may prove to be problematic
 - Are the Timers blocking a swimmer from getting to the block?
 - Is there confusion behind the block – are the Timers having a discussion with a swimmer?
- If there is any doubt, clear it up before

proceeding (sometimes this means going to the lane, sometimes it means having the Starter say something, ...)

- We frequently refer to the heat as being “closed” once the Referee turns control over to the Starter (although this language does not appear in the rule book) and a swimmer stepping up late is then subject to disqualification for “deliberate delay or misconduct”
 - If you haven’t rushed the close of the heat a swimmer stepping up late should be a fairly rare occurrence
 - If you rushed giving control of the heat to the Starter or forgot to check behind the blocks for missing swimmers, the swimmer should probably be allowed to swim
 - If the Starter hasn’t started into “take your mark” then one must question whether any delay has taken place – remember, the benefit of the doubt goes to the swimmer (and overzealous enforcement can lead to greater delays when you then go behind the blocks to DQ the swimmer)
 - There must be consistency in how this is handled at a meet – if one swimmer is disqualified for stepping up slightly late, it is not appropriate to then let another swim when they’ve stepped up very late (see Pass Down Report below)
 - How this is handled can be meet specific – more latitude might be given in a B/C meet than a championship level meet for example

Handling Empty Heats in Finals

- How an empty lane is handled in finals is dependent upon three things:
 - The order in which heats are being swum (fast-to-slow or slow-to-fast)
 - The heat in which the empty lane occurs
 - Rule 102.5.6.E which states that “in the event of scratches, empty lanes may be filled by moving the swimmers up in order from the slower heats and by using the available alternates in the slowest heat without reseeding the heats
- Examples:
 - Swimming slowest-to-fastest with bonus, consolation, and finals heats

- An empty lane in the bonus heat can be filled with an alternate
- An empty lane in either the consolation heat or final heat must be left empty
- Swimming fastest-to-slowest with finals, consolation, and bonus heats
 - An empty lane in the finals heat may be filled with the fastest swimmer from the consolation heat; the fastest swimmer from the bonus heat is moved to the consolation heat; an alternate is moved to the bonus heat
 - An empty lane in the consolation heat may be filled with the fastest swimmer from the bonus heat; an alternate is moved to the bonus heat
 - An empty lane in the bonus heat is filled with an alternate
- When an empty lane is observed which can otherwise be filled as indicated above it is important to follow the following procedure before doing so:
 - Take enough time to ensure that a swimmer is a no show so that it is clear that you've waited a sufficient time for the swimmer to appear
 - Give control of the heat to the Starter by fully extending your arm towards the Starter but then bring your arm down to regain control (that you're going to do this should first be communicated to the Starter)
 - If the missing swimmer shows up at this point they are still considered a no show
 - Have the Starter step the swimmers down from the blocks or have them relax if in the water
 - Call for the alternate and place him/her in the appropriate lane
- Deliberate delay or misconduct
 - It is possible, although not necessarily likely, that a swimmer will be disqualified for a deliberate delay or misconduct (*In the past a swimmer not wanting to swim in an event in the finals sessions would sometimes "refuse the block" in order to draw a delay of meet disqualification. A swimmer disqualified for delay of meet was considered to have*

participated in the event and remained eligible for any remaining competition. Under present rules (207.12.10.D(1)) a deliberate delay is considered failure to compete and thus there is no incentive to intentionally draw the disqualification.)

- If a lane becomes empty because of a disqualification the lane must remain empty

Dive Over Starts

- Make sure that swimmers in the water are against the wall and not hanging from the block

False Starts and Unfair Starts

- If you have a potential false start mark it on your heat sheet and wait for the Starter to approach you with "I have a potential false start"
- If both the Referee and Starter have marked a false start for the same swimmer there is a DQ; there should be no discussion
- We don't purposely recall a false start; if a heat is inadvertently recalled there is no false start even if it would have otherwise been dually confirmed
- While we don't recall for false starts we should recall for unfair starts – this can be initiated by either the Starter (horn) or Referee (whistle)

Declared False Starts

- The swimmer must report to the Referee prior to the start of their race and declare that he/she does not wish to compete
- Use of the declared false start prevents the swimmer from being penalized for failure to compete under 207.12.10.C (trials) but not under 207.12.10.D (finals)

Disqualifications (Details available in VSI Recommended Procedure – How To Fill Out the DQ Slip)

- Form should be filled out completely and correctly
- Pose the three questions
 - What was your jurisdiction?
 - What did you see?
 - What rule was violated?
- If a DQ is overturned try to make it a learning experience for the S&T official – most often the

S&T official will withdraw the DQ on their own if the questions are asked in such a way that the elicited information shows that no violation occurred

- Coordination when one or more Chief Judges are being used

Referee's Focus During the Swim

- When a heat is in the water the Referee's attention should be focused on the competition and the officials on deck although multitasking may be needed to process DQs and handle other issues
- The Referee should not become distracted by engaging in miscellaneous conversations with the Starter or other individuals in the area

Handling Swim-offs

- Swim-offs can occur in a preliminary event two or more swimmers have the same time and their overall place requires that one or more of the swimmers will have to swim in a slower heat in the finals session (ex. Finals are being conducted in an eight lane pool and two swimmers tie for eighth place; a swim-off is required to determine which swimmer swims in the finals heat and which swimmer swims in the consolation heat)
- The Administrative Referee will alert the Deck Referee as to the need for a swim-off
 - The Deck Referee handling the swim-off should be the same Deck Referee that ran the initial event
 - Depending upon available staffing, some VSI meets have used the Administrative Referee to set up the swim-off (i.e. there's no hard and fast rule about who has to set up the swim-off)
- The time for the swim-off is set by the Referee but not more than 45 minutes after the last heat of any event in which any one of these swimmers is competing in that session
 - A mutually convenient time can usually be found in consultation with the coaches of the involved swimmers
 - The swim-off can be run during the session or after it has been concluded; if run during the session it is usually run before the start of a new event
- The swim-off must be timed and judged in the

same manner as the original heat

- If a tie occurs in the swim-off another swim-off is held
- A swim-off need not be held if a coach/swimmer agrees to accept a lower place
 - Not real likely when the swim-off is to determine which heat a swimmer will be placed in but more frequently occurs when contesting for an alternate spot
- Once a time for the swim-off has been set the coaches of the affected athletes, the Announcer, and the Timing Equipment Operator should be notified
- A timing card should be made up for each of the swimmers in the swim-off and given to the lane timers prior to the swim-off being contested
- The time from the swim-off counts as an official time, but the time from the original swim is used for seeding purposes in the finals session

Dealing with Disputed Calls

- On occasion a coach will dispute a disqualification
- Expect coaches to be passionate advocates for their swimmers, but also expect them to be respectful
- Listen to what the coach has to say and take it seriously
- Sometimes all the coach needs to resolve a dispute is additional information
 - A clarification or explanation of the applicable rule
 - An explanation of what occurred (ex. what did the S&T official see, what action resulted in a false start?)
- Investigate further if necessary and seek additional information/clarification from the official who made the call
- If warranted, the DQ can be overturned; if not warranted, clearly explain your reasoning to the coach

Calling a DQ as the Referee

- Rule 102.13.2 gives the Referee the authority to disqualify a swimmer for any violation personally observed by the Referee (but the hand must be raised except for false starts)

- Calls under this authority should be extremely rare as they can result in an unbalanced deck
- It is recommended that:
 - If such a call is made it be for a violation that can be seen from anywhere on the deck (and the official missing the call should also be talked to)
 - Such calls not be made for violations that occur that can only be seen in the immediate vicinity of the Referee as such calls result in over-officiating in one area of the deck

Pass Down Report

- Available on the VSI website
- Should be filled out at the end of every session
- Serve as a record of unusual occurrences and precedents that have been set
- Especially needed when different Referees are working different sessions or days and they don't have the opportunity for an oral pass down report

ADMINISTRATIVE REFEREE

Pre-Meet Responsibilities

- Review the Meet Invitation with an emphasis on:
 - Eligibility requirements for both individual and relay events
 - Proof of time requirements
 - Positive check-in requirements
 - Scratch procedures
 - Penalties (if any) for failure to check-in, failure to swim in prelims, failure to swim in finals
 - Are some heats of distance events or relays split between prelims and finals?
- Process entries and import into Meet Manager
- Exception reports
 - Do all the entries meet the entry criteria (not too fast or too slow, but just right!)?
 - Are any swimmers entered in too many events?

- Has Proof of Time been provided in accordance with the entry requirements?
- Make every attempt to resolve any entry issues prior to the start of the meet
- Make a list of any issues that can't be resolved prior to the meet so that they can be resolved on-site prior to the beginning of the meet
- Prepare any needed reports for the Admin Binder or Coaches packets
- Prepare any needed postings (scratch instructions, positive check-in instructions, etc.)
- Export "USA-S Registration" report from Meet Manager and send to VSI Registration Chair to confirm that all entered swimmers are USA-S members

Dry Deck Briefing

- Apprentice assignments
- Authority delegated to the Timing Judge
- How timing adjustments are to be made
- Positive check-in events
- Seeding
- Reports and results
- Processing of DQs, no-shows

Miscellaneous Responsibilities

- Resolve any timing adjustment difficulties
- Ensure that needed logs are being maintained (DQ log, no-show log)
- Ensure that all paperwork and results are being filed in a manner that allows them to be easily retrieved if necessary
- Ensure that all postings are done in a timely fashion

Positive Check-in Requirements

- Post athlete/relay listing for the event
- Post instructions and deadline time for completing positive check-in
- Monitor check-in progress and be proactive if it doesn't appear to be occurring in a timely fashion
 - Is the check-in area in a location that can readily be found (ex. at a well-marked Clerk-of-Course table)?

- Is the deadline and location being announced by the announcer?
- While not required, a timely reminder to the coaches of the teams missing their check-ins is generally well received and can prevent a situation where many swimmers are inadvertently (by the coach/swimmer) prevented from swimming
- Close positive check-in at the close of the check-in period by removing the check-in sheet
- Scratch swimmers not checked in
- Seed the event, print heat sheet, determine time line if necessary and indicate on heat sheet
- Copy heat sheet and distribute/post as required

Scratching From Preliminary Events

- The VSI Senior Champs meets allow for an unlimited number of individual entries in events for which an athlete has qualified, but the athlete is still limited to a maximum number of individual events per day and a maximum number of individual events for the meet
 - Historically, only the VSI Senior Champs meets have allowed unlimited entries; all other VSI Championship and non-championship meets impose entry limits
- Athletes exceeding either the daily limit or the meet limit must “scratch down” within the deadlines imposed in the Meet Invitation; if an athlete does not scratch down prior to the appropriate deadline, any events that place the athlete over the daily/meet limit are eliminated in strict numerical order
- Post instructions and deadline time for completing trials event scratches
- Have well-marked scratch box available at Clerk-of-Course or other advertised area
- Close the scratch period at the designated time
- Scratch athletes from events as indicated on the scratch cards
- Run exception reports to ensure that athletes are within daily/meet limits; if limits aren’t met eliminate events as per the Meet Invitation and notify the coach of the respective athlete
- Seed trials events
- Print a Heat Sheet, review to confirm that it has

been done correctly for the session, and have it photocopied

- Print a session timeline

No Shows in Preliminary Events

- The VSI Senior Champs meets are run using a modification of the USA-S National Championship scratch procedures (207.12.10)
 - Historically, this provision has only been used in the VSI Senior Champs meets and not other VSI Championship and non-championship meets
- Under section C of 207.12.10, an athlete failing to compete in an individual event in which such athlete has entered and not scratched:
 - is barred from further competition in all further individual and relay events of that day
 - cannot be seeded into any individual events on succeeding days unless the athlete checks back into the meet prior to the close of the scratch box for that day’s events
 - No barring occurs if the athlete declares a false start prior to the start of the event
- As indicated in the Meet Invitation the “no show” provision does not apply to relay and distance events
- Maintain the “no show” and “re-entry” log

Scratching From Finals

- VSI meets using a prelims and finals format make use of USA-S National Championship scratch procedures (207.12.10.D&E)
- Following the conclusion of each preliminary event and the results being finalized an announcement is made giving the:
 - Top qualifiers for the event (bonus heat – if used, consolation heat, finals heat) and the top two alternates
 - Instruction that the athletes in the event now have 30 minutes in which to scratch from the event or declare an intent to scratch
- During the 30 minute scratch period for each event the athlete may:
 - Scratch from the event
 - Declare an intention to scratch in which case the athlete must finalize his/her intent within

30 minutes following the athlete's last individual event (if the swimmer declares an intent to scratch but does not return to finalize the scratch, the swimmer is not scratched from the event and is penalized if he/she does not swim)

- Depending upon the particular meet being run the scratches may be done on scratch sheets placed in the scratch box or they may be done directly on the list of qualifiers
- At the conclusion of the 30 minute scratch period the scratch lists/sheets should be removed from the scratch area and the Announcer should announce that:
 - The scratch period for the event is now closed
 - There were no scratches or there were "X" number of scratches and the new seedings
- Once the scratch period has closed each of the swimmers qualifying to swim in the finals session for the event (bonus, consolation, or finals) must swim or the swimmer is barred from further competition in the meet (individual and relay competition):
 - Unless the Referee is notified in the event of illness or injury and accepts proof thereof
 - Unless it is determined by the Referee that failure to compete is caused by circumstances beyond the control of the swimmers
 - It is recommended that the above two decisions be made by the Meet Referee
 - A declared false start or deliberate delay of meet is not permitted and is regarded as a failure to compete
- Once the scratch period has closed, any swimmer not qualifying to swim in the event in the finals session (bonus, consolation, or finals) is an alternate (1st alternate, 2nd alternate, 3rd, alternate, etc.)
 - Alternates do not have to swim and are not penalized if they do not fill an empty lane
 - If a late scratch or barring occurs after the scratch deadline closes and an alternate is moved up to swim, the individual is still considered an alternate and is not penalized for not swimming

Heat Order for Finals Events (Bonus,

Consolation, Final)

- Each event in a finals session can have one heat (final), two heats (consolation, final), or three heats (bonus, consolation, final)
- In VSI if multiple heats are being run for an event, the heats are typically run slowest to fastest (bonus then consolation then final), but they can be run fastest to slowest (final then consolation then bonus)
- The number and order of heats will be specified in the Meet Invitation

Seeding Finals Event

- Enter "judges decisions" for any swim-off results so that seedings in finals will be correct
- Enter any scratches from prelims
- Seed the finals events
- Confirm that scratched swimmers do not appear and that the order of tied swimmers reflects the swim-off results
- Print the meet program, confirm that it reflects the format for the finals session, and give it to the person responsible for photocopying
- Print a copy of the meet program in "referee format" and "2 column format" and give to the Announcer

Reseeding Finals Events

- In the event of a late scratch or barring the heats for an event will need to be reseeded
- If the late scratch or barring occurs early enough the reseeding can be accomplished relatively easily, if the late scratch or barring occurs immediately before the event the reseeding will have to be done on the fly
- Be aware that reseeding can have unintended consequences, for example:
 - You might be reseeding for an open lane in the consolation heat but inadvertently change the lanes of two swimmers with tied times in a faster heat (tied times are seeded randomly) – in this case the swimmers can be manually moved back to their original lanes within Meet Manager
- If time allows all of the following should occur for a reseed:
 - Reseed the event

- Print the new seedings for the event, label as “reseed”, copy, and:
 - Post wherever the session is posted
 - Distribute to key officials (Deck Referee, Starter, Chief Judges)
 - Give to Announcer
 - Give to the Ready Room Coordinator
 - Give to the coach of each affected athlete
 - If time permits give to individual selling heat sheets
- Print new lane timer sheets and distribute or correct if simple to do
- If the late scratch/barring occurs shortly before the start of the event some items may have to be done on the fly or skipped
 - Reseeding may need to be done by hand to be done in a timely fashion
 - If reseeding occurs behind the blocks make sure that every athlete is where they belong
 - It is better to move somewhat slowly and get things right, than it is to move too quickly and get things wrong
- If an event is called to the blocks and an open lane is discovered in the first heat being swum, the Deck Referee will need to insert an alternate if available and possibly reseed the event
 - See “Handling Empty Heats in Finals” under Deck Referee for details
 - The Administrative Referee should be prepared to assist as needed

Time Trial Procedures

- Setting up time trials is not strictly an Administrative Referee function, however, the staffing levels of VSI meets at which time trials are conducted are usually such that time trial set-ups are best handled by the Referee
- Be familiar with any time trial requirements set forth in the Meet Invitation
 - Entry limits – time trial entries count against the daily limit
 - Event order – usually run in the order of that day’s events, then the next day’s events, and then the previous day’s events, however, events can generally be

consolidated and rearranged at the discretion of the Referee

- Events being run – distance events, for example, are sometimes limited to a particular day
- Fee – how much does it cost
- The swimmer should fill out a timing card listing the following information (having pre-made cards is helpful):
 - Swimmer’s Name
 - Swimmer’s Club
 - Event (Stroke & Distance)
 - Seed Time
- Payment should be obtained from the swimmer and the card marked accordingly:
 - Swimmers will frequently show up without money, but can fill-out the card (mark as unpaid), and then return with the money
 - Sometimes a club will “run a tab” and pay at the conclusion of the meet
- Event numbering – A convention that works well is as follows:
 - Time trials on the first day are numbered in the 100 series, on the second day in the 200 series, etc.
 - The original event number is added to the series number to give the final time trial event number (ex. Event 7, Women’s 200 Y Freestyle)
 - Swum on the first day = Event 107
 - Swum on the second day = 207
- After the close of the time trial entry period, the entries need to be arranged in heat order which is based on the order stated in the Meet Invitation
 - Gather all same numbered events together
 - Begin arranging heats keeping in mind that different events (men/women, different strokes) can be combined in a single heat with the provision that an open lane should separate each event
 - Once the heats have been arranged the heat and lane number needs to be indicated on each seed card

- A “master” heat sheet filled in by hand can then be used to set the entries up in Meet Manager
- Print a heat sheet for the time trial session and mark-up such that it is clear which heats are swimming together
- Final preparation for time trials
 - Post heat sheet behind the blocks
 - Distribute heat sheet to key officials (Deck Referee, Starter, Chief Judges, Announcer, Timing Equipment Operator)
 - Make heat sheets available to coaches
 - Timing cards should be placed in heat and lane order and distributed to the lane timers
 - Be on hand to help swimmers get to the appropriate heat and lane

Distance Events

- The normal order of swimming heats is slowest to fastest, but in distance events this order is frequently reversed
- In distance events, women’s and men’s heats are sometimes alternated
- The order in which heats are being swum and whether or not women’s and men’s heats are being alternated will be indicated in the Meet Invitation – unless changes are indicated to the normal order, the normal order is to be swum
- To minimize the number of empty lanes and to minimize the number of required heats it is common practice to have a positive check-in for distance swims with those not checking in usually penalized by not being allowed to swim if they seek to do so after the positive check-in period has closed
- For positive check-in events the swimmers should be listed in psych sheet order in the meet program as doing otherwise will likely result in confusion if there are any swimmers who do not swim and this affects the seeding
- Following the close of the positive check-in period any swimmers not checked-in should be scratched and the events seeded
- Print a heat sheet for each of the distance events, copy, and:
 - Post with other postings
 - Distribute to officials and coaches

- Print timing sheets or labels (as per meet procedure) and distribute timing cards/sheets to lane timers

Relay Procedures

- Relay entries and seeding are seemingly handled in a myriad of different ways depending upon which meet one is at and who is in charge
- Relay procedures should be listed in the Meet Invitation – be familiar with the provisions
- Be prepared to seed the relays if not pre-seeded and to distribute relay cards in sufficient time for the start of the event
- Pre-seeded vs. seeded at the meet
 - If the relay will be seeded at the meet following a positive check-in, the event should be listed in the heat sheet in psych sheet order and not seeded order as this will only lead to confusion when the event is re-seeded following the check-in
 - Relay check-ins are best accomplished by using a positive check-in sheet, and not by turning in relay cards which then have to be redistributed; after the heat is seeded the relay cards can be generated and distributed
- Names on relay cards
 - At some meets coaches are asked to turn the relay cards in early so that the relay names can be entered into Meet Manager
 - This procedure frequently results in extra work as often as not many of the names will change before the event is swum (remember, the names and order of swim can be changed prior to the start of the heat in which the relay is swimming)
 - Names and the order in which they are swimming must be indicated on the cards prior to the event being swum