

Subject: Officials Newsletter: New Athlete Protection Training Requirements

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USA Swimming Officials Newsletter | February 2019



OFFICIALS NEWSLETTER

Thoughts from the Chair

Kathleen Scandary, Chair, USA Swimming National Officials' Committee

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce the members of the National Officials' Committee:

- Dana Covington (SN)
- Sandy Drake (HI)
- Clark Hammond (SE)
- Jim Holcomb (BD)
- Amy Hoppenrath (MV)
- Eddie Hughes (SC)
- Anne Lawley (CO)
- Scott Mengelkoch (ND)
- Shelby Mullendore (athlete from MW)
- Bill Rose (SN)
- Jack Swanson (athlete from MN)
- Matt Wilson (IN)
- Carol Zaleski (AM)



Additionally, we are all grateful for the work and ideas that came from past members, Jamie Cahn, Melissa Hellervik-Bing, and athlete-member, Patrick Hunter.

The committee will meet at the end of April to discuss plans to move forward in recruitment and retention of officials across the country, as well as ways to educate and promote mentoring opportunities. In the interim, please contact Gina Mensay, at USA Swimming, with questions related to officiating at gmensay@usaswimming.org.

Thank you.

Kathleen Scandary
Chair, National Officials Committee

The Block - Wedges and Ledges

Kathleen Scandary, Chair, National Officials' Committee

Besides the standard measurements of the starting platform (103.14), there is much to be

said about what an athlete is permitted or required to do in order to have a legal start from this piece of equipment, should it be used at all.

The forward start from the block is performed with at least one foot at the front of the platform as the swimmer assumes the starting position. The non-slip surface may be covered with a single layer towel should it become slippery from wear, or if the temperature rises to a level that is uncomfortable or even unsafe for bare skin. Some blocks might have hand grips along the sides to assist in the launch. The wedge, or fin as it is sometimes called, has become common-place since the FINA decision allowing its addition to the block a decade ago. It is important to note that an athlete is not permitted to stand with both feet on the apex of the wedge for any start.

All starting platforms are equipped with starting grips for in-the-water backstroke starts, the front of which are both parallel to and flush with the face of the end wall (103.14.4). Other grips that may be part of the platform structure are not allowed to be used for the backstroke start.

Backstroke ledges have provided swimmers the security of having a non-slip start. This may require some getting used to for the developmental swimmer as well as patience from the starter-deck referee team. There are retractable ledges and those that hang passively from the block. The apparatus must conform to specifications stated in the rulebook (103.15) and the athlete must have the toes of both feet in contact with the wall or the touchpad. You may be asked to place and remove the backstroke ledge at a meet, but the swimmer will make the adjustments for their optimum start.

Athlete Protection Training – New Requirements

Hopefully you received the email message that was sent in late January with the new changes from the US Center for Safe Sport to the Athlete Protection Training program. In case you missed it, here are some highlights:

- Training must be completed annually. Current expiration dates will be honored, but going forward, you will need to do the training every year.
- New members and first-time renewals will complete the Core Training courses provided by the US Center for Safe Sport (the Center). Thereafter, every non-athlete member will take the Center's refresher course and a USA Swimming elective course in order to maintain certification.
- Your expiration date will correspond to when you take the training. So if you renew your APT on February 1, 2019, your expiration date will be February 1, 2020.
- The access to the training remains unchanged. You must have a member record (either official or apprentice official) on file and you access the training using your First and Last Name and DOB. The portal is still located at www.usaswimming.org/APT.
- Any questions on athlete protection training (including technical issues in accessing the courses or completed training not appearing on your member record) should be addressed to learn@usaswimming.org.

Officials' Excellence Award February 2019

Bill Fieger - Multi-level Official

Bill Fieger has distinguished himself over an extraordinary officiating career supporting all aspects of amateur (USAS and its predecessors), YMCA, high school, college and Special Olympic swimming. Bill's extraordinary dedication to the sport of swimming began as an apprentice when he was 19. Over the nearly six decades since, Bill has mentored hundreds and hundreds of officials, and taken on leadership roles by running championship meets, organized officials across high school and college seasons, and more. He will work any meet where there is a need, in any position that is needed, but prefers to help beginner swimmers.

In 1960, Bill first started his swimming affiliation with YMCA in Dover, Ohio; In 1966, Bill started working with AAU swimming, and became more active in the 70's (and since) in Columbus and



Cleveland. In 1973, he began working with Ohio Special Olympics, and has been active since, including running the State Meet for several years. In 1975, he became active in NCAA officiating, and has led several conference championship meets, including DII champs where he worked all positions, including as Referee, since 2006. Finally, he was honored to be named honorary coach of the 2016 Special Olympics Summer Games.

Bill, a retired Ohio State Police Commander, exemplifies the very best professional and personal qualities we expect as an officiating role model, and is truly deserving of this Officials' Excellence Award. Bill is married and lives in Delaware, Ohio.

Congratulations, Bill!

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