



AROUND THE DECK

POTOMAC VALLEY SWIMMING OFFICIALS

JUNE 2014 NEWSLETTER



FROM THE CHAIRMAN



The long course season is now underway, and we've seen the first use of chase starts in Potomac Valley (see the article immediately below). There are a lot of meets to look forward to over the next two and a half months. I know many of you are involved in summer leagues this time of year. But, please continue to support the swimmers in PVS by working the LC meets.

Applications to officiate the PVS and Eastern Zone championship meets are now available and are all linked at <http://www.pvswim.org/official/applications.html>. PVS LC Age Group Champs is on July 10-13 at the University of MD. The following weekend, July 17-20, UMD will host the PVS LC Senior and Junior Champs meets.

The Eastern Zone Super Sectional meet follows in Buffalo from July 20-24. Finally, the Eastern Zone LC Age Group meet will be in Richmond from August 6-9. Potomac Valley officials will be Meet Referees at both of these meets and would love to have PVS officials supporting them.

I will be at all five of those meet and I hope to see you at one or more of them.

Tim Husson

OfficialsChair@pvswim.org



U.S. Masters Swimming Nationals Meet



We have an opportunity this summer to officiate at a national championship meet without traveling to California. U.S. Masters Swimming will be bringing their Long Course National Championship to the University of Maryland from August 13-17. Swimmers up to age 100+ will be competing in this "age group" championship meet. It is rewarding to officiate at a meet where some of the swimmers are older than you and competing at a high level.

There will be five days of competition so a lot of officials are needed. If you are interested in helping at the meet submit an [Application to Officiate](#) or email the Meet Referee, [Jim Carey](#).

Chase Starts in Potomac Valley Swimming



The Virginia State Long Course Championship Meet held at Oak Marr ReCenter in Oakton, Virginia over this past Memorial Day Weekend, May 23-25, 2014 brought a new way of running a swim meet to Potomac Valley. The meet, hosted by Potomac Marlins, became the first PVS sanctioned meet to use a starting procedure called "Chase Starts". Use of the new procedure was proposed because this year's meet had significantly more entries than previous years. As a result, meet management estimated session timelines would be impossible to fit within the allotted pool rental time using current procedures.

Chase Starts is a starting procedure used only in Long Course competitions. These types of starts are only used for 100, 200 and 400 meter events and involve starting heats from both ends of the pool. A heat of swimmers starts after the previous heat, which started from the opposite end, makes the final turn and is on their last length within 10 to 15 meters of their finish. For a few seconds after the start, there are two heats in the water, one heat "chasing" the other one. For 50 meter events, all heats start from the same end of the pool.

In many ways, running a meet using Chase Start is similar to running a meet using two pools simultaneously, much like our bigger short course meets in PVS. With the exception of Stroke & Turn Judges, two sets of other official roles are required, i.e., Deck Referees, Starters, Chief Judges, Timing System Operators, Computer Results Operators, Administrative Official/Referee and Lane Timers. With Stroke and Turn Judges there are two options. You can either use a single set of Stroke and Turn Judges that is responsible for all heats or you can use a single set of Turn Judges that are responsible for all heats and two sets of Stroke Judges that cover alternate heats. Besides the two sets of officials, two sets of timing equipment are required.

Another requirement for Chase Starts is that water depth at each end of the pool allows use of starting blocks. This means only a few pools in the PVS area can support this procedure.

For the Virginia State Long Course meet, we decided to use the new starting procedure for the 400 meter event session and 13 & over preliminary sessions. The 12 & under sessions used the typical dive-over starts. Girl events started from the end with the diving boards and Boys from the bulkhead end. Compared to using dive-over starts, Chase Starts were able to reduce the sessions by 40 minutes. For

some heats we were able to achieve as much as 20 seconds of overlap in swimming.

For readers interested in Chase Starts, PVS has documentation on the procedure at http://www.pvswim.org/official/training/2008-05_GuidelinesforChaseStarts.pdf.

John Kost and Jim Thompson

You Make the Call!



Situation: At a long course Sectional, several National Team and Olympians are seeded into the championship final. Each swimmer will be competing in major international meets representing the USA later that summer. Just prior to the start and after the command is given to “Take your mark” the lane 4 swimmer twitches his right knee. Reacting to the movement, the lane #5 swimmer takes off. No starting signal has been given. What is the ruling?

Upcoming Meets



JUNE

Date	Meet	Host	Location	Notes
6-8	SNOW LC Invitational	SNOW	Claude Moore	
7-8	June Invitational	FISH	Fairland	Timer Signup
7	Eastern Zone Open Water Meet	Virginia Swimming	Lake Anna, VA	Course Layout
15	PVS LC Open 1	MACH	Lee District	
		PAC	Fairland	
19-22	Grand Prix Series (LCM)		Santa Clara, CA	
20-22	Black & Red LC Invitational	UMAC	UMD	
21-22	PVS LC Distance Meet	FBST	Fairland	
29	PVS LC Open 2	PM	Lee District	
		FAST	Fairland	
Date	Meet	Host	Location	Notes
10-13	PVS LC Age Group Championships	FBST	UMD	Application to Officiate Qualifying Times
17-20	PVS LC Senior Championships	NCAP	UMD	Application to Officiate Qualifying Times
17-20	PVS LC Junior Championships	NCAP	UMD	Application to Officiate Qualifying Times
24-27	Speedo Championship Series Eastern Zone (Combined Meet)	Star Swimming	Buffalo, NY	Application to Officiate Qualifying Times

30-3	Speedo Junior Nationals	USA Swimming	Irvine, CA	Qualifying Times
10-13	PVS LC Age Group Championships	FBST	UMD	Application to Officiate Qualifying Times

My First “Bonehead” Decision A Series From Jim Thompson



What is a “boneheaded decision”? Well, one could describe it as any decision where a coach feels the need to initiate a discussion with the Referee. No, those are the run-of-the-mill decisions that occur in most meets. To reach the distinction of boneheaded, we add a conversation with the Meet Director and, to really wrap it up with a bow, add a conversation with a very, very senior PVS official (VSPVSO) several days after the meet.

The meet in question was the PVS Age Group Long Course Championship from 2001. For that season this meet was sandwiched between the Preliminary and Finals sessions of the Senior Long Course Championships at the University of Maryland.

This was my first time at the Maryland’s Aquatic Center. When I walked into the main competition area from the rear entrance, I had a flashback to a scene from the movie “Hoosiers”. The scene was when the basketball team from the small school walked into the arena for the State championship game. The team members had this look of awe on their faces. I had the same expression on my face.

Maybe if I measured the pool like Gene Hackman’s character measured the basketball court in the movie, I would have felt more comfortable. I would know the Maryland pool is the same length as Lee District RECenter’s pool, only with better lighting.

I’m scheduled to be the Deck Referee for the Age Group meet’s Sunday session. At this point of my officiating career I had about a year as Referee under my belt. Since my session precedes the Senior meet’s Finals session, I have to finish the session on schedule so Finals warm-ups for Finals aren’t delayed. I am the only “Referee” at this session, no Meet Referee, no Admin Referee, just me.

About five minutes before the session starts, a couple of coaches approach me and say they want to get a lead off split for their swimmers in the first event, the 200 meter Freestyle Relay. They were looking to get a LC Zone qualifying time for their swimmers. I respond, “Sure”. Get three timers with watches and we’ll take the middle watch for the split time. Make sure they bring the watches to me so I can inspect them.

Other questions come up and I’m late in getting the first event started. As a newbie

Ref, I'm anxious to get the session going so "The Powers That Be" in the Senior meet don't complain about affecting their time line.

About 4 or 5 heats into the session one of the coaches that requested a lead off split comes to me with the three watches and says, "Jim, you said we should take the middle watch time, right? The watch time is just under the Zone time and the pad time is just over the Zone time."

I turn from observing the heat in the water and quickly confirm the three watches are consistent and answer, "Yes."

"Even if the pad time is over?"

Since I'm focused on running the heats and keeping on timeline, I miss what the coach is saying. I'm thinking, "What is he talking about?" and repeat, "Like I said take the middle watch time," and turn my attention back to the heat in the water. The coach, looking a little confused, walks off.

A little while later, with the 50 meter Butterfly events underway, the Meet Director approaches me and asks, "Jim, did you really tell the coach to take the middle watch time for that lead off split?"

"Hang on just a sec until I start this next heat." After the heat dives into the water, I turn to the Meet Director, "What was the question?"

"Did you tell the coach to take the middle watch for the lead off split?"

"Sure, why not?"

"But the far-end pad had a different time, about 0.03 seconds slower. Was there something wrong with the pad?"

To start the 50 meter events, I'm at the turn end of the pool. I think, "Pad, what pad?" I look in the water and notice 8 timing pads hanging on the wall. At that point the light bulb finally goes off and I realize there are timing pads at both ends of the pool. Where did these other pads come from? The pads are only at the finish end at Lee District!

I finally understand what the first coach was telling me! The watch and pad times were straddling the Zone cut time.

Darn...what do I do? In the New Referee clinic the instructors talked about being decisive and making decisions and keeping the session moving. I made a decision, so I need to stick by it, right? I need to be stubborn. . .u . . .decisive, right? ("Stubborn" would be my wife's description.) I don't want to be known as an indecisive Referee

who flip-flops!

I look at the Meet Director and shrug my shoulders, "I made a decision when I said to take the middle watch. I think I need to stand by that decision. We take the middle watch time."

The Meet Director gives me a strange look, stares at me for a few more seconds, shakes his head and turns to walk back to the table.

What lessons did I take away from this situation? First, listen to the coaches when they come to talk to you. The two coaches involved, the swimmer's coach and Meet Director offered several opportunities for me to make the right decision. Unfortunately, I was not experienced enough to recognize those opportunities. They really want the Referee to make the right decision, even though at times there may be a different view of what is the right decision. Don't let the timeline interfere with listening to coaches. The timeline is only a guide, not a mandate.

Second, I learned that just making sure buttons and pads are working is not enough. A Referee needs to understand what timing equipment is in place and that the timing system is properly configured.

The third lesson I took away was that a decision at a meet could have consequences beyond the meet. When the VVSPVSO called my home two days after the meet to discuss my decision, he pointed out that the timing decision from the meet allowed a swimmer to qualify for the LC Zone team. If this happened during the short course yard season, then the above decision would have denied another swimmer a berth on the Zone team since only two swimmers are selected for an event. In the long course season, the two swimmers per event limit does not apply. Luckily for the swimmers, the decision allowed adding a swimmer to the Zone team but did not displace another swimmer from the team.

For the fourth lesson, the VVSPVSO pointed out that if there was a pad malfunction and if a valid backup time existed for a lead-off split the Referee needs to instruct the Hy-tek operator to update split times stored in the Hy-tek Meet Manager database because those times are loaded to the USA Swimming database and can be used to justify a qualification for a future meet.

Fifth lesson, there is no rule that says a Referee cannot consult other officials when deliberating a particular situation. Even though the person who was working as Starter was not a certified as a Referee, I could have solicited his input for the situation at hand. Maybe hearing another voice say, "Jim are you sure you want to take a watch time over a valid pad time?" would have changed my frame of mind.

Finally, the most important lesson: it is better to eat a little crow and change a decision when factors come to light that shows it to be a poor decision than to let

the decision stand.

I'll end this story with the following thought. In one of those innumerable training courses required by my corporate day job, I remember the instructor saying something like, "*Good decisions come from experience. Experience comes from bad decisions.*"

You Make the Call Resolution



Recommended Resolution: Recommended Resolution: If it is determined that this swimmer started before the start signal and both the starter and referee confirm this, the offending swimmer in lane #5 should be disqualified. The referee should first, however, determine that there were no extenuating circumstances such as a flash from a camera, etc. If the starter and referee both saw the movement in lane #4 as well and felt that it was a starting action, the swimmer in lane #4 should also be disqualified.

Applicable Rules: 101.1.3A, 101.1.2C

Summer League Clinics



Northern Virginia Swim League		nvsl.nvblu.com
Date	Time	Location
Saturday June 7	8:00 AM	Annandale (map) 7530 Little River Turnpike Annandale, VA 22003
Saturday June 7	8:00 AM	Fairfax Club Estates (map) 5601 Snowy Owl Dr. Fairfax, VA 22032
Saturday June 7	8:00 AM	Lee Graham (map) 7319 Lee Hwy Falls Church, VA 22042
Saturday June 7	8:00 AM	Virginia Hills (map) 6500 Robinson Dr. Alexandria, VA 22310

Sunday June 15	9:30 AM	Hunt Valley Swim Club (map) 7100 Sydenstriker Rd Springfield, VA 22153
Wednesday June 18	7:00 PM	Hunt Valley Swim Club (map) 7100 Sydenstriker Rd Springfield, VA 22153
Wednesday June 18	7:00 PM	Sully Station (map) 5101 Sequoia Farms Drive Centreville, VA 20120
Montgomery County Swim League		www.mcsl.org
Date	Time	Location
Sunday June 1	8:00 AM	Olney Indoor Swim Center
Monday, June 2	6:00 PM	Georgetown Prep
Sunday June 8	8:00 AM	Olney Indoor Swim Center
Tuesday June 17	7:00 PM	Germantown Indoor Swim Center
Prince-Mont Swim League		www.princemont.org
Date	Time	Location
Wednesday May 14	7:00 PM	Fairland Aquatics Center
Saturday June 7	5:30 PM	University of Maryland Army
Colonial Swim League		csl.nvblu.com
Date	Time	Location
Saturday May 3	8:00 AM	Broadands (map) 43008 Waxpool Rd Ashburn, VA 20148
Monday May 5	7:00 PM	Countryside (map) 46020 Algonkian Parkway Sterling, VA 20165
Wednesday May 28	7:00 PM	Ashburn Village Lakes Rec Center (map) 44078 Cheltenham Circle Ashburn, VA 22147
Saturday May 31	8:00 AM	Burke Center (map) 5701 Roberts Parkway Burke, VA 22015
Thursday June 5	7:00 PM	Manorgate (map) 14300 Green Trails Blvd Centreville, VA 20121
Wednesday June 11	7:00 PM	South Riding (map) 42420 Unicorn Dr South Riding, VA 20152
Country Club Swimming and Diving Association		countryclubswimanddive.org
Date	Time	Location
Wednesday, May 21	6:30 PM	Army Navy Country Club (map) 1700 Army Navy Drive Arlington, VA

Thursday, May 29	6:30 PM	Chevy Chase Country Club (map) 6100 Connecticut Ave. Chevy Chase, MD
Sunday, June 1	6:30 PM	Congressional Country Club (map) 8500 River Rd. Bethesda, MD
Tuesday, June 3	6:30 PM	Lakewood Country Club (map) 13901 Glen Mill Rd. Rockville, MD
Wednesday, June 4	6:30 PM	Belle Haven Country Club (map) 6023 Fort Hunt Rd Alexandria, VA
Thursday, June 5	6:30 PM	Manor Country Club (map) 14901 Carrolton Rd Rockville, MD
Old Dominion Swim League		www.teamunify.com/Home.jsp?team=recodslva
Date	Time	Location
Saturday, April 26	9:00 AM	Claude Moore Recreation Center
Saturday, May 10	9:00 AM	Claude Moore Recreation Center
Wednesday, May 21	6:00 PM	Claude Moore Recreation Center
Prince William Swim League		www.pwswim.com
Date	Time	Location
Saturday May 10	9:00 AM	Occoquan Bible Church (map) 3700 Old Bridge Rd Woodbridge, VA, 22192
Wednesday May 21	6:30 PM	Central Park Aquatic Center (map) 10371 Central Park Dr Manassas, VA 20110
Saturday May 24	9:00 AM	Sudley Swim Club (map) 8613 Rixlew Lane Manassas, Virginia 20109
Herndon Swim League		www.herndonswimleague.com
Date	Time	Location
No Information yet.		

One Last Thing



If you have any stories or pictures about experiences you have had concerning any of our officials please send them to [Bob Vincent](#) so that we can get them in the newsletter.

BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT GOES TO THE SWIMMER

Call what you see and see what you call

