



AROUND THE DECK

POTOMAC VALLEY SWIMMING OFFICIALS

JULY 2014 NEWSLETTER



FROM THE CHAIRMAN



I want to use this month's column to review the changes that are being made to the PVS certification/re-certification process. These changes will become effective in September. Look for the new procedures to show up on the website this summer.

First, for all officiating positions, the following will be required. (1) Apprentice sessions for a position CANNOT begin prior to the candidate attending a PVS clinic for that position. (2) Prior to the last apprentice session (check-out session) the apprentice must complete all the required USA Swimming tests. (3) For new officials (Stroke & Turn, Hy-Tek Operator, Timing System Operator), there are two new requirements: the candidate must sign up with USA Swimming as an "Apprentice Official" right after their clinic and before their first apprentice session, then register with USA Swimming within 60 days or prior to their last apprentice session, whichever comes first. The "Apprentice Official" category, while not a registration category, will allow us to enter your clinic attendance and apprentice sessions in the Officials Tracking System.

For the Stroke & Turn position, a final apprentice "check-out" session will be required. After having completed the USA Swimming test, this session will insure the apprentice can put the rules and procedures into practice.

For current Hy-Tek and Timing System Operators, they will now be required to be registered with USA Swimming prior to completing their certification. Current Hy-Tek and Timing System Operators will be required to be registered prior to January 2015. These two positions will also be required to re-certify every three years.

For the Apprentice Official (AO) position, a final apprentice "check-out" session will be required. In addition, the apprentice must complete the Timing System Operator (TSO) certification prior to their check-out session. They can work on both the AO and TSO certifications simultaneously.

The most changes will be in the Referee position certification. A referee candidate will no longer be required to be certified in as Hy-Tek and Timing System Operator prior to certification. They can still pursue these certifications and the

Administrative Official certification before or after Referee certification but will no longer be required to do so. However, a referee candidate will be required to be certified as Chief Judge prior to their referee training. These changes were made possible because of the Administrative Official position that was created last year.

I realize this is a lot to process, but we will have the information on the website soon and will be detailed at all the clinics in the fall.

I will be at all the PVS championship meets this month and at both the Sectional Meet and Zone Meets. So, there will be plenty of opportunities to discuss these new procedures with me and ask questions. I look forward to seeing you and talking to you at one or more of these meets.

Tim Husson

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My First Coach Initiated Discussion **Part Three of A Series by Jim Thompson**



What is a coach initiated discussion? It could be what a coach does when he or she is not happy with a Referee's decision. In the New Referee clinic I attended, they mentioned the possibility and how it may, at times, get somewhat vigorous and animated. I'm just glad they can't kick dirt, though splashing of water may be in the realm of possibility.

What was the circumstance that led to my first coach initiated discussion? I was working as Deck Referee for a meet. At this point I was Referee for about six months. It was one of those meets where the venue was running two pools. I had the boys' side. It was Sunday, the last session of the meet. The last event of the session was the 15 & Over 400y Individual Medley. It was a positive check-in event.

According to my program there were 3 or 4 heats with the first heat containing three swimmers. I called up the first heat and only one swimmer appeared. I looked in my program and saw that heat 2 had seven swimmers seeded. Since the 400 IM is a longer event, I got the brilliant idea that by combining heats 1 and 2, I could cut the timeline by 5 or 6 minutes. At this point, I suspected that everyone was tired and wanted the meet to be over. Besides the lone swimmer in heat 1 did not look thrilled to swim by himself. Maybe I'll get some kind of award for this!

So I called up heat 2. Actually I was surprised; it took longer than I expected to get the second heat in place. But I figured I needed to make sure that I did not miss any heat 2 swimmers because I did not want a coach "initiating a discussion" for missing

his or her swimmer. So instead of saving 5 or 6 minutes, I only saved 4 minutes. But I'm thinking that I'm still on the plus side of this decision.

There were eight swimmers for the combined heat, and off they went. The remaining heats got started with no problems. We were done and I was feeling pretty good.

Then I heard a voice behind say, "Hey, Ref. Can we speak?"

I looked around and saw that it was a coach and he was not looking too happy. I replied cautiously, "Sure. How can I help you?"

"Can you tell me why you combined those two heats in the 400 IM?"

Thinking that he wanted to understand the brilliance behind the decision, I proudly said, "Well, there was only one swimmer in the first heat. I figured it would be more competitive for the lone heat 1 swimmer if he swims with heat 2."

The coach squinted his eyes, nodded his head a few times taking in my words. He opened his eyes, "So to make it more competitive for that one swimmer, you decided to disadvantage seven other swimmers?"

A bit taken aback, I said, "What?!?! What do you mean, I disadvantaged seven other swimmers?" I did not do that. All seven swimmers in heat 2 got to swim. I did not miss anyone in heat 2!"

The coach responded, "Swimmers have a ritual or process they go through to get ready for a swim. Some of them may do stretches. Others may stand under a warm shower to loosen their muscles. They have this all planned out and timed to coincide with the start of their heat. When you called up the second heat early, this interrupted their ritual for getting ready. One of those swimmers was my swimmer. He was not ready to swim when you called heat 2. I can understand combining heats if there is a severe time constraint and there is another session after this or the distance is shorter because the swimmers should be already behind the block. This was not the case for that event."

Taking a few moments to let the coach's words sink in, I thought, "Well, maybe he has a point. Maybe I had not completely thought through the situation from the swimmer's perspective."

With a little crow in my throat, I said, "I did not know that." We talked for a little while longer, then shook hands and parted.

Over the years, I've come to realize the coach's comment about warming up for a competition applies to officials as well. As a Referee, I have a routine I follow before

any meet:

- Meet with pool management to discuss any facilities topics
- Discuss with the Meet Director any special considerations for the meet, i.e., excessive timeline, equipment issues, swimmers with disabilities, etc.
- Meet with coaches (if warranted) or walk the deck during warmups to make myself visible to the coaches
- Inspect the starting blocks
- Measure the distance to the backstroke flags. If there is a moveable bulkhead, measure the pool.
- Check the timing equipment
- Discuss with the Starter how we should handle situations such as false starts, swimmer stepping up late, only one swimmer stepping up, missing swimmer for a positive check-in event, etc.
- Brief the Stroke & Turn officials: strokes, jurisdiction, rotations, DQ procedure

At least for me, if this routine is interrupted or short circuited, the session just does not feel right to me. It takes a long time for me to get into the groove if I can't do all of the above.



From the Eastern Zone



July and August are Eastern Zone Championship time! Go to the Eastern Zone Website to learn about officiating opportunities at the Sectional Meet in Buffalo and the Zone Meet in Richmond. You can also click on the links in the Upcoming Meets section of the newsletter. This is a great time for getting an evaluation on the national deck. There are still openings, come and help out the Eastern Zone.

You Make the Call!



Situation: In a heat of the men's 400-meter individual medley, all eight swimmers step up on the blocks in response to the referee's long whistle. The referee turns the field over to the starter and subsequently the starter asks the swimmers to "take your mark." At that point, the referee notices that the swimmer in lane 7 has stepped off the block to remove his drag suit. The referee attempts to take back control of the heat but the starter starts the race as the swimmer in lane 7 is starting to get back on the block. What should be done?

Upcoming Meets



JULY

Date	Meet	Host	Location	Notes
10-13	PVS LC Age Group Championships	FBST	UMD	Application to Officiate Qualifying Times
17-20 17-20	PVS LC Senior Championships PVS LC Junior Championships	NCAP	UMD	Application to Officiate Qualifying Times Event File is for reference ONLY
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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

AUGUST

Date	Meet	Host	Location	Notes
6-10	Phillips 66 National Championships	USA Swimming	Irvine, CA	Qualifying Times
6-9	Eastern Zone LC Championships	Poseidon Swimming	Richmond, VA	Zone Team Application Application to Officiate Qualifying Times

You Make the Call Resolution



Recommended Resolution: Recommended Resolution: If both the starter and the referee agree, the swimmer could be charged with delay of the meet and disqualified. Alternatively, the starter could have immediately recalled the heat. After the heat is run, the swimmer who caused the incident should be spoken to about his actions to try to prevent a similar occurrence in the future.

Applicable Rules: 101.1.5A

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

