



# **PVS Chief Judge's Manual**

Chief Judges used to be a luxury at Potomac Valley swim meets—today they are a staple. The Chief Judge is an assistant to the referee. The Chief Judge is the Stroke and Turn Judges' mentor. He/she is one of the keys to the smooth running of a swim meet.

The Chief Judge is responsible to the meet referee and the deck referee(s). The Team Lead Chief Judge is the deck officials' representation of the meet referee. At non-championship Potomac Valley meets, the Chief Judge's role may be significantly more informal. He/she should discuss his/her responsibilities with the Meet Referee prior to the start of warm-up. This brief manual, though, describes the procedures and functions of the Chief Judge within typical championship protocol.

It is assumed that the Chief Judge has a solid knowledge and understanding of the current technical rules of USA Swimming and the procedures used in Potomac Valley Swimming. The Chief Judge should also be familiar with the information contained in the meet announcement.

## Pre-Meet

The Chief Judge should get together with the meet referee to coordinate all duties the chief judge will be expected to perform. Typically, the CJ is responsible for the officials' sign-in-sheets, introductions, and assignments of officials for deck coverage, rotation schedule, communication and radio etiquette. In addition the Chief Judge communicates the jurisdiction and protocol determined by the Meet Referee. Verify the terminology the Meet Referee expects during the meet. If there is a meeting of the assigned officials, attend this meeting and make sure of the jurisdiction and protocol the referees expect from the officials.

The Chief Judge typically conducts stroke briefings and answers officials' concerns before each session. If the session includes relays, the briefing must include instructions for relay take-off judges. It is also helpful to remind judges that relay take-off judges **do not** raise hands for take-off violations, but turn judges **do** raise hands for stroke/turn violations during the relays. Instruct officials on how to stand while judging. An official should stand erect, hands at the side or behind the back, one foot slightly in front of the other. Typically at a championship meet, nothing should be in the hands—no heat sheet, clipboard, pen, etc. Not only does this look more uniform, but it helps maintain balance while the official is at the edge of the pool.

Deck assignments should be made using the available personnel as effectively as possible. Care must be taken to ensure balanced and fair judging at all sessions. Assignments should take into consideration the available officials' levels of experience. Stroke Judges (officials who walk the sides of the pool and judge swimmers' strokes and kicks) are a necessity for long course sessions and highly recommended for short course sessions, unless staffing or pool design make this impossible. If it is a lengthy session, the Chief Judge must also determine a workable and equitable schedule of relief.

Together with the Meet Referee or the Officials' Chair, the Chief Judge might be asked to coordinate any guest speakers for the group during the briefing. He/she also makes sure all officials' equipment is in working order, and that equipment and supplies have been placed in the correct places:

Heat Sheets	Two-way Radios w/Headsets
Deck Assignment Forms	Split Sheets
DQ Slips	Bells
Clipboards	Lap Counters
Relay Take-Off Slips	Chairs
Towels	Any other equipment deemed necessary

The Chief Judge typically performs a radio check prior to the beginning of the session.

## The Briefing

- Keep briefings on track and on schedule.
- Take attendance.
- Introduce the Meet Referee and the Assigned Team.
- Give a quick guide to the venue (bathrooms, hospitality, etc.).
- Announcements? Timeline?
- Conduct a stroke briefing appropriate for the level of the meet.
  - Stroke briefing does not necessarily need to be from memory, but it should never be read verbatim.
  - If relays are included, review procedures.
- Review deck protocol expected for the meet.
- Review proper lead-lag procedures for Stroke Judges.
- Review jurisdictions, including 15M mark.
- Announce and post deck assignments.
  - If relays are included, include those assignments and distribute relay take-off slips.
- Make certain that relief assignments and procedures are clear.
- Review expectations for Time Trials, if they're on the schedule.
- Announce the time to be on deck and in position.
- STOP the briefing whenever a dignitary enters the room for introduction, especially if there is a guest speaker.
- Remember that you're working with volunteers. Adopt a kind and thoughtful mentoring approach at all times.



## During the Competition

Chief Judges typically stand inconspicuously at the pool corners. During the freestyle events they may be seated as long as they can still view their officials watching the turns. If two Chief Judges are used, one should be stationed on the turn end of the starter's side and one at the start end away from the Start Area. If three chief judges are used, the third should be near the Start Area.

The Chief Judge's focus is on the officials in his/her jurisdiction or quadrant, observing the officials, **not** the swimmers. The Chief Judge should observe that the Stroke & Turn Judges are following the specified protocol when observing the swimmers; if there is a violation of protocol, the Chief Judge should discreetly remind the judge of the proper procedures in a positive and constructive manner.

### **The Start Area**

The area of the pool deck where the Referee and Starter are positioned is referred to as the Start Area. This area often includes the Admin Referee, the timing operator, and other "table workers." The Chief Judge assigned to this busy area must be especially attentive and prepared to assist any of these officials without being a distraction or getting in the way of their activities.

The Chief Judge advises the Deck Referee that all judges in his/her jurisdiction are in place several minutes before the session start.

### **Disqualifications**

When observing an infraction, the official shall raise a hand immediately. Without delay, the Chief Judge then alerts the deck referee of a possible disqualification in a calm, clear, concise manner. At the same time, the Chief Judge identifies the quadrant of pool, turn or start end, stroke side, where the potential infraction occurred (e.g. "Possible disqualification, Stroke Judge lane 1 side" or "Possible disqualification, lanes 5/6, turn end"). Upon reaching the official making the call, the Chief Judge begins by verifying the lane where the potential infraction occurred, and then immediately relays that information to the Referee and other CJs via the radio (e.g. "The possible disqualification is in lane 2"). The Chief Judge will then engage the official in a discussion of the disqualification, without interfering with the judge's ability to observe swimmers within the jurisdiction. The Chief Judge will ask pertinent questions to determine the viability of the possible disqualification. Viability is determined by whether the violation occurred in the Judge's assigned jurisdiction, whether the Judge's description is accurate, clear, and confident, and whether the swimmer's actions were indeed a violation of the rules.

After the Chief Judge gathers information from the official, the infraction is reported to the Referee using proper rulebook terminology. The Chief Judge also recommends to the Referee that the DQ be accepted if Judge's description appears accurate and complete or that the DQ not be accepted if something was wrong with the information or the jurisdiction:

“Possible disqualification in event # \_\_\_\_, heat # \_\_\_\_, lane # \_\_\_\_, for \_\_\_\_  
(description of the violation). I recommend that the disqualification be accepted.”

**OR**

“Possible disqualification in event # \_\_\_\_, heat # \_\_\_\_, lane # \_\_\_\_, for \_\_\_\_  
(description of the violation). I have concerns with this disqualification and need further discussion.”

If the Judge has second thoughts and wishes to withdraw the call, inform the Referee “The Judge has withdrawn the call.” **Don't** simply say “No call.”

The decision to accept or reject a disqualification is the responsibility of the Referee. The Referee may have questions of his/her own, and may pose these questions to the Chief Judge. If the disqualification is accepted by the Referee, the Chief Judge completes the DQ report, has the Stroke & Turn Judge review it for accuracy and signature, and initials next to the Judge's signature. The Chief Judge ensures that the DQ is delivered to the Deck Referee for his/her signature.

In the event that an official's call is overturned or not accepted, the Chief Judge should inform the Judge and explain the reason(s) for the decision.

If athletes are being notified, it is then the responsibility of the Chief Judge at the finish end of the pool to notify the swimmer if the disqualification stands. It is recommended that the Chief Judge call the swimmer to a position behind the seated officials to notify him/her of the disqualification. When notifying a swimmer, respectfully state “You were disqualified for \_\_\_\_.” The Chief Judge should never coach, give a personal opinion, or add extraneous information. If the DQ has not been finalized, move the swimmer away from the start and advise, “There is a possible issue with your swim. We are waiting on details.”

After informing the swimmer, the Chief Judge uses the radio to report to the Referee: “Swimmer notified.”

#### **A Note Regarding Radio Procedures**

Be aware of other radio communication to avoid “talking over” each other while reporting infractions.

### **Another Note Regarding Radio Procedures**

Extended conversations concerning the details of a disqualification should not take place over the radio. If additional information is needed beyond that which can be briefly communicated, the Deck Referee should have another Referee step in and should then confer with the Chief Judge.

### **False Starts**

In the event of a false start, the Team Lead Chief Judge or the Chief Judge assigned to the quadrant where the false start occurred will typically notify the swimmer of the infraction. After informing the swimmer, that Chief Judge uses the radio to report to the Deck Referee: "Swimmer notified." The Start Area Chief Judge will complete the disqualification report and present it first to the Starter and then to the Deck Referee for approval and signature.

### **Declared False Starts**

Declared False Starts are typically accepted and recorded by the Admin personnel if they are declared before the start of the session. After the session has begun, the Chief Judge in the Start Area accepts Declared False Starts and records them on the Deck Referee's heat sheet at a convenient time **prior** to the event or heat.

### **Approaching the Referee**

When approaching the Deck Referee with paperwork, a question, or other information, try to approach the Referee in a manner that allows him/her to keep watching the pool and the swimmers. Don't make the Referee turn his/her back to the pool in order to see you or the paperwork.

### **Relays**

During relays, the Chief Judges are assigned to look for dual confirmation of an early take-off from the side and lane judges by comparing the relay take-off slips from each lane and those of the side official covering the same lane. If an official on the side has marked his/her slip, the Chief Judge uses the radio to state "Possible disqualification, lane X" and immediately goes to the other take-off judges and gathers all the ballots. As soon as he/she sees there is a confirmation, the Chief Judge confirms the early take-off to the referee ("Confirmed early take-off, lane X, swimmer Z"). If there is no confirmation, the Chief Judge states "All clear, lanes 1-4 or 5- 8," so the Referee knows whether there is or is not a disqualification. In the event of a confirmation, the relay take-off slips must be turned over to the Referee as well as the completed DQ slip; the Chief Judge informs the team that has been disqualified and tells them which swimmer was observed leaving early. After informing the relay team, the Chief Judge uses the radio to report to the Referee: "Swimmers notified."

## **Officials' Relief**

If it is a lengthy session, the Chief Judge should determine an equitable schedule of relief for the Stroke & Turn Judges, using additional personnel if possible. If an official needs to be excused for any reason, the Chief Judge has the responsibility to maintain equal coverage on the deck at all times and may assign relief officials to the vacant position or may assume the vacant position themselves if necessary.

### **Smile!**

Clap and smile when the swimmers are introduced before a race, or when they're being honored on the awards stand. Encourage the other officials to do the same by modeling this behavior.

## **Post Meet**

It's important that the Chief Judges thank every official appropriately for the generous contribution of their time.

Equipment and supplies should be collected, prepared for the next session's use, and stored in the appropriate location. Report any problems or circumstances that should be taken into account before the next session.

At championship meets, Chief Judges are occasionally asked to evaluate the performance of the Stroke and Turn Judges. Their observations include the protocol established for the meet, as well as the technical aspects of judging. This is meant to be educational and to point out where improvement in certain areas will help the Stroke and Turn Judge become more knowledgeable and continue to improve, as every member of the officials' crew should always be trying to do their best for the athletes. If there is a need to talk with an official about suggestions for improvement this is to be done in a constructive manner not to embarrass or berate, but rather to educate. The Chief Judge should especially note the outstanding qualities of the exceptional official.



## Use of Radios

Two-way radios are commonly used to conduct meet business including disqualifications, safety incidents, injuries, equipment failures, and other information critical to the operation of the meet. Used properly, they can improve the efficiency with which communication takes place among deck officials.

1. Radios are to be used strictly for the efficient administration of a meet. Extraneous chatter is not appropriate.
2. Always assume that an athlete, coach, or parent with another radio is listening to your conversation, and conduct your communication in a professional and responsible manner.
3. Radios should never be used to call attention to a swimmer (i.e. one official should not use the radio to ask other officials to observe a swimmer's stroke, turn, or finish).
4. Radios should never be used to tell jokes or off color stories of any kind.
5. Abusive language or swearing of any kind, in any language, should never be used.
6. Radios should never be used to talk about any coach, swimmer, parent, or volunteer.
7. Radios should never be used to transmit any information that could be misconstrued as being unprofessional in nature.
8. Key the microphone briefly before speaking; firmly hold the microphone key down during speaking, then stop speaking before releasing the microphone key.
9. If you're in a noisy area, try to shield the microphone from the noise if at all possible.
10. Strive to speak in a calm, clear, natural voice.

Some radios can be switched to "voice activated" or "VOX" which can lead to the transmission of any audible activity. It is therefore important to make certain that these radios are switched to "PTT" or "Push to talk" mode before they are used. All officials using radios should spend some time getting familiar with the operation of the radio before the session begins.

### **Respect the Start!**

Before using the radio, be aware of the Start Area. Avoid speaking on the radio while a start is taking place—this can be **very** distracting to the Deck Referee.





## DISQUALIFICATION REPORT

EVENT# \_\_\_\_\_ HEAT \_\_\_\_\_ LANE \_\_\_\_\_

SWIMMER \_\_\_\_\_ TEAM \_\_\_\_\_

**BUTTERFLY** START \_\_\_\_\_ SWIM \_\_\_\_\_ TURN \_\_\_\_\_ FINISH \_\_\_\_\_

KICK: ALTERNATING (1A) \_\_\_\_\_ BREAST (1B) \_\_\_\_\_ SCISSORS (1C) \_\_\_\_\_

ARMS: NON-SIMULTANEOUS (1E) \_\_\_\_\_ UNDERWATER RECOVERY (1F) \_\_\_\_\_

TOUCH: ONE HAND (1J) \_\_\_\_\_ NOT SEPARATED (1H) \_\_\_\_\_

NON-SIMULTANEOUS (1L) \_\_\_\_\_ NO TOUCH (1K) \_\_\_\_\_

NOT TOWARD THE BREAST OFF WALL (1M) \_\_\_\_\_

HEAD DID NOT BREAK SURFACE BY 15m (1N) \_\_\_\_\_ RE-SUBMERGED (1R) \_\_\_\_\_

OTHER (1T): \_\_\_\_\_

**BACKSTROKE** START \_\_\_\_\_ SWIM \_\_\_\_\_ TURN \_\_\_\_\_ FINISH \_\_\_\_\_

NO TOUCH AT TURN (2I) # \_\_\_\_\_

PAST VERTICAL AT TURN:

DELAY INITIATING ARM PULL (2S) \_\_\_\_\_ DELAY INITIATING TURN (2T) \_\_\_\_\_

MULTIPLE STROKES (2U) \_\_\_\_\_

TOES OVER LIP OF GUTTER AFTER THE START (2P) \_\_\_\_\_

HEAD DID NOT BREAK SURFACE BY 15m (2N) \_\_\_\_\_ RE-SUBMERGED (2R) \_\_\_\_\_

NOT ON BACK OFF WALL (2K) \_\_\_\_\_

SHOULDERS PAST VERTICAL TOWARDS THE BREAST (2L) \_\_\_\_\_

OTHER (2T): \_\_\_\_\_

**BREASTSTROKE** START \_\_\_\_\_ SWIM \_\_\_\_\_ TURN \_\_\_\_\_ FINISH \_\_\_\_\_

KICK: ALTERNATING (3A) \_\_\_\_\_ BUTTERFLY (3C) \_\_\_\_\_ SCISSORS (3D) \_\_\_\_\_

ARMS: PAST HORIZONTAL (3E) \_\_\_\_\_ NON-SIMULTANEOUS (3F) \_\_\_\_\_

TWO STROKES UNDER (3G) \_\_\_\_\_ NOT IN SAME HORIZONTAL PLANE (3H) \_\_\_\_\_

ELBOWS RECOVERED OVER WATER (3I) \_\_\_\_\_

TOUCH: ONE HAND (3J) \_\_\_\_\_ NOT SEPARATED (3N) \_\_\_\_\_

NON-SIMULTANEOUS (3L) \_\_\_\_\_ NO TOUCH (3K) \_\_\_\_\_

NOT TOWARD THE BREAST OFF WALL (3M) \_\_\_\_\_

CYCLE: KICK BEFORE PULL (3Q) \_\_\_\_\_ HEAD NOT UP (3P) \_\_\_\_\_

DOUBLE PULLS/KICKS (3S) \_\_\_\_\_

OTHER (3T): \_\_\_\_\_

### **FREESTYLE**

NO TOUCH AT TURN (4K) # \_\_\_\_\_

HEAD DID NOT BREAK SURFACE BY 15m (4N) \_\_\_\_\_ RE-SUBMERGED (4C) \_\_\_\_\_

### **INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY**

STROKE INFRACTION(S) # \_\_\_\_\_ OUT OF SEQUENCE (5P) \_\_\_\_\_

FOURTH DISTANCE SWUM IN STYLE OF PREVIOUS STROKE \_\_\_\_\_

### **RELAYS**

STROKE INFRACTION: (61-64) # \_\_\_\_\_ SWIMMER # \_\_\_\_\_

EARLY TAKE OFF SWIMMER (66-68) # \_\_\_\_\_

CHANGED ORDER (6P): SWIMMER \_\_\_\_\_ STROKE \_\_\_\_\_

OTHER (6T): \_\_\_\_\_

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

FALSE START (7O) \_\_\_\_\_ DECLARED FALSE START (7P) \_\_\_\_\_

DID NOT FINISH (7Q) \_\_\_\_\_ DELAY OF MEET (7R) \_\_\_\_\_

OTHER (7S-Z): \_\_\_\_\_

JUDGE: \_\_\_\_\_

(print name clearly)

REFEREE: \_\_\_\_\_

(print name clearly)

NOTIFIED: \_\_\_\_\_ SWIMMER \_\_\_\_\_ COACH \_\_\_\_\_

rev. (7/19)

DESK/REFEREE

# Completing the Disqualification Report

The DQ report is our primary and official means of articulating disqualifications to the Coach/Swimmer. To ensure that the report is clear and accurate, and to prevent misunderstanding, confusion, and frustration, please observe the following standards for completing it in a consistent fashion.

When a call is accepted:

1. Enter the Event, Heat, and Lane Number. This critical information identifies the swim in which the infraction occurred. There must be no corrections to this information on the DQ Slip (scratch outs introduce doubt with regards to the identification of the correct swim).
2. Enter the Swimmer's/Relay's name.
3. Write the swimmer's team abbreviation.
4. Locate the name of the stroke in which the violation occurred. "Miscellaneous" is used for non-stroke violations.
5. Mark with an X, or checkmark, when in the swim the infraction was observed (Start, Swim, Turn, or Finish). This is a very important component in the articulation of the infraction – we need to be able to match the violation with the part of the swim during which it occurred. Generally, we define these parts of the race as:
  - a. Start – From the start of the race until the head breaks the surface.
  - b. Swim – From the head breaking the surface until the beginning of the last full stroke into the turn/finish.
  - c. Turn – From the beginning of the last full stroke into the wall until the head breaks the surface.
  - d. Finish – From the beginning of the last full stroke into the wall to the touch at the end of the prescribed distance.
6. If the event is longer than two lengths, write the number of the turn. Remember, it's the Swimmer's turn, not yours. Odd-numbered turns are on the turn end; even-numbered turns are on the start end.
7. Mark the infraction with an X, or checkmark. If the infraction is not listed, write it in next to "Other" for that stroke. Use the correct terminology from the rulebook. There's no need to circle the number.
8. When the report is complete, the official making the call prints his/her name where it says "Judge." Add first name if it's needed for clarification (when two or more judges with the same last name are working in that session). Please make sure the name is legible.
9. The Chief Judge should initial next to the Judge's name.
10. The Deck Referee prints his/her name where it says "Referee."
11. Refrain from making other marks or writing extra information on the report.

## Conventions

**Individual Medley** – Judge the IM as four separate segments, each its own “race”. Each “race” has all four components (Start, Swim, Turn, and Finish).

- Mark when in the swim the infraction occurred under the stroke in which it was observed. Remember, transitions are judged as Finishes, then Starts, so they are marked as such, depending on the part of the “race” in which the infraction was observed. Intermediate turns are judged as turns, and marked the same.
- Mark the infraction(s) under the appropriate stroke(s) (there’s no need to circle it/them), and write the number of the line(s) next to line 41 ‘Strokes Infraction #’ under Individual Medley.

**Relays** – Mark relay stroke infractions just like those for the individual events and write the number of the line(s) next to line 70 ‘Strokes Infraction #’ under Relays and enter the Swimmer number(s) who committed it/them.

While our goal is to have all DQ reports filled out in a standard and consistent manner, failure to do so does not constitute automatic grounds for not approving or overturning an otherwise valid disqualification. Referees should continue to use their best judgment and common sense when processing a disqualification report.

