
Officials' Newsletter - February 2024

USA Swimming Officials <Officials@mail.usaswimming.org>

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**OFFICIALS' NEWSLETTER**

Greetings from the Chair

By: Dana Covington

2024 is underway! The National Officials Committee met earlier this month to develop our goals for the future, which are largely based on the feedback we received from the 2023 winter survey that was made available to all LSC Officials Chairs and all officials who attended the 2023 winter championship meets. A sincere thank you to those of you who took the time to provide constructive feedback with both positive comments and items that we are now set to work on. Your thoughtful responses are appreciated.

In preparation for developing our goals, we wanted to look back and see what was accomplished since the last survey from the winter of 2019. We have had some MAJOR hurdles during the last four years between COVID and OTS. Even with these hurdles, the NOC answered much of the feedback that was received in 2019.

2020-2023 NOC accomplishments in response to 2019 survey

Theme	Suggestion (# of comments related to)	Action
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	theme)	
Communication	Newsletter/Info more often (15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bi-monthly newsletter • Increased Facebook engagement • LSC OC quarterly call
	Engagement with LSC (4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSC liaison position developed for NOC member. • Direct email communication with LSC OCs • LSC OC training in person 2019 • LSC OC training in person 2023
Culture	“Transparency” “Criteria for selecting Assigned Teams at National Meets” (46)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk of Stars ladder developed, published & shared • National MRs announced in newsletter, Facebook and USA Swimming Website • 2020–2023: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Unique officials at Jr/PSS/Nationals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2020: 245 ▪ 2021: 296 ▪ 2022: 329 ▪ 2023: 246 • 217 unique officials assigned at Jr/TYR Pro Swim Series/Nationals out of 632 opportunities • 26 unique National Meet Referees/45 National meets
	Transparency. Criteria for selecting N3 Evaluators & Retaining Evaluator credentials. Increase N3 evaluators (20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N3 Evaluator nomination criteria and maintenance requirements developed, published, and disseminated via emails, newsletters, training and website • NEW officials that earned N3 evaluator status: 45 • N3 evaluators removed from list: 47 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ 36 retired ◦ 6 passed away ◦ 5 did not maintain N3e requirements. • Evaluators in positions (2019 vs 2023): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ CJ - 114/116, ◦ SR - 55/53, ◦ DR- 76/70, ◦ AR 42 (not all active)/52 (all active)
	Consistent Evaluation criteria (6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Templates developed, published, mandatory training for N3 evaluators/optional for N2 evaluators • Training webinars posted to website • Summer Mentoring Series 2022 • Professional Mentor document developed/shared /published

	Celebrate volunteerism (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officials Excellence Award (LSC) every two months • Newsletter highlights first-timers at National meets • Newsletter/Facebook: AQUA Travel highlights
Training	Provide more training in person & web-based (12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Evaluation Template virtual training • Walk of Stars Virtual and in person • Summer Mentoring Series virtual • New Deck Referee 2023 in person • Hot August Nights virtual Deck Referee training • WWOWW (Open Water Intro) virtual
	LSC training Standardization (14)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently working: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ ST online training ◦ LSC standardization of training requirements (R9)
	Recruitment & Engagement (15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2024/2025 goal

Announcements

- **National Meet Applications:**
 - **2024 Open Water Nationals Championships** (May 3-5)
 - LAST CALL
 - Sarasota, Fla. - Championship Referee Tom Lombardo
 - **18 & Under Spring Cups** (May 2-5)
 - No National Certification required, N2 preferred!
 - *Elkhart, Ind. - MR Kathleen McNeill Fish (CLOSED)*
 - Fort Lauderdale, Fla. - MR Allan Golding
 - Mesa, Ariz. - MR Curtis Myers
 - **Futures Championships** (July 24-27 or July 25-28*)
 - N2 Certification preferred. Applications are open EXCEPT Richmond!
 - Austin, Texas - MR Edgar Caraballo
 - Huntsville, Ala. - MR Anne Lawley
 - Minneapolis, Minn. - MR Ken Graham
 - **Richmond, Va. MR - Marianne Walling (CLOSED)*
 - Sacramento, Calif. - MR - Kevin Hogan
 - **Speedo Summer Championships** (July 23-27)
 - N3 National Certification required. Applications are open.
 - Irvine, Calif. - MR Derigan Silver
- Futures Meet Referees are still sorting through applications. Notifications will not occur until late March/early April
- The Certification Standards to be used by ALL LSCs went into effect February 1, 2024. **If you have any questions please contact your LSC Officials Chair.**
- The new Certification Standards can be found on the web site [HERE](#) (Officials/Officials Documents/Officials Training/LSC & General Certification Guidelines).
- Optional templates were provided for LSCs to use when working with Apprentice Officials. They are located in the same place as the Certification Standards and are listed by position [HERE](#).

- Standard Certification FAQs can be found [HERE](#).
 - If you missed the pre-order deadline of December 1, 2023, you can purchase a 2024 USA Swimming Rule Book through SwimOutlet [HERE](#).
 - The next OC Quarterly call will be held Wednesday, April 3, 2024 at 8 p.m. ET. This is an open meeting (no comments or questions). You may request the Zoom link from your OC.
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Reminders

National Certifications are not up to date in OTS. The National Certification spreadsheet is updated monthly and posted on the National Certification and Evaluation webpage [HERE](#).

February Survey Question

By: Jason Johnson

A survey question will be appearing in each Newsletter. Responses are ANONYMOUS and will help direct efforts of the NOC. Thanks in advance for answering this month's question.

[February Survey Question](#)

OTS Update

By: Patrick Murphy

On Tuesday, February 13, USA Swimming released a number of enhancements and features to Officials Tracking System. Included in the release are dynamic evaluations along with evaluation history. Officials can now pull a report called "Official History" to view past Evaluations, Meet history, and Certification history. Due to R-9, USA Swimming completed the final migration of certification history to satisfy R-9 guidelines. For more detail on what enhancements were included in this release, please contact your LSC Officials Chair. USA Swimming continues to work towards improving the National Certification application experience.

Online Testing Reminders

By: Jack Swanson

- The universal standards for LSC certification did affect recertification exams. To recertify:
 - The Stroke and Turn recertification exam recertifies Stroke and Turn officials.
 - The Starter recertification exam recertifies Stroke and Turn officials and Starters.
 - The Administrative Official recertification exam recertifies Administrative Officials.

- The Referee recertification exam recertifies Stroke and Turn Officials, Starters, Administrative Officials, and Referees. If the Referee is also a CJ it will recertify that position as well.
 - In the next few months, USA Swimming will be developing new modules for Officials that will replace current online tests and LSC official clinics (LSCs may continue current clinics as a supplement to the online modules). The Stroke and Turn training module is scheduled for release in April 2024 and the Admin Official and Starter modules are scheduled for release in Fall 2024.
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Summer Meets for LSC Mentors

By: Trish Martin

LSC Mentors interested in advancing to N2 Mentor status should consider applying for this summer's Futures meets.

To be appointed by your LSC Officials Chair as an N2 Mentor for LSC OQMs, prospective Mentors must be:

- N2 certified in the positions they want to mentor
- N3 ST certified
- Have attended a Futures or 3-star and above meet within the last 5 years

Now is a great time for N2 Mentor candidates to check their meet histories and apply for those summer meets. [See the Officials Tab on the USA Swimming website](#) for applications and other information about mentoring.

Heat Flighting

By: Ron Van Pool

When considering whether to flight heats, the interest of the athletes should be first and foremost. As with many decisions relative to the conduct of swimming competitions, there are many factors to be evaluated before deciding to flight heats. Among the factors are:

- **Level of Competition:**
 - Generally, flighting should only be considered for higher level meets (Sectionals and above). These meets typically provide opportunities for individual athletes to qualify for higher-level meets and, in turn, qualify for national-level teams. Lower-level meets are important to athlete progression, but are also important to their team's success.
- **Purpose of Meet:**
 - The organization governing the competition often has objectives for the competition, such as a key, direct step to qualifying for a higher, national-level meet or team. Among those setting the meet objectives may be the USA Swimming National Team, Coaches Advisory Committee and zone committees.
- **Meet Size and Timelines:**
 - A large meet with a timeline approaching five hours and a limited time between prelims and finals may argue for flighting to allow portions of teams to have a break before finals. Creating flighted events may allow parts of teams to leave the competition early, but may also divide the team and the team atmosphere. Depending on team size and resources it may not be possible to transport some of the team while others are still competing. Another consideration is the qualifying and seeding process for the meet; i.e., bonus events and seeding sequence (LCM, SCM and SCY). A senior-level athlete may not be entered in the first seeding level that could qualify for the top-flighted heats and could be placed in later heats to their detriment.

- **Flighting Process:**
 - A) The Meet Announcement must include the provision for flighting.
 - B) The recommendation and agreement to flight heats must be made at the Technical (General) Meeting with coach endorsement.
 - C) Flighted events should be no less than four or five heats in the first flight of fastest swimmers, and more than two heats in the second flight.

Flighting heats is an effective tool in certain circumstances, but it is key to remember what is the best for all the athletes. HAVE A GREAT MEET!

Congratulations!

Congratulations to the following officials who were named to PanAm Aquatics Positions:

- Discipline Committees 2023-2027:
 - Jayne Spittler (Open Water)
 - Kathy Fish (Swimming)
- Officials List #5 2023-2027:
 - Referees:
 - Edgar Caraballo
 - Kathy Fish
 - Traci Johnson
 - Starters:
 - Tom Allison
 - Anne Lawley

Congratulations and thanks to the following officials who represented USA Swimming in international competition:

- World Aquatics Swimming Championships (Qatar, Doha)
 - Mike Murphy (Open Water)
 - Mike Dilli (Pool)

Congratulations to these Officials who served at their first national meet recently:

Note - We apologize for any omissions or errors.

- TYR Pro Swim Series Knoxville
 - Mary Hartman - Southeastern Swimming
 - Richard Hartman - Southeastern Swimming
 - James Patterson - Mississippi Swimming
 - Debra Slack- North Dakota
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Officials Excellence Award

Ruth-Ann Bode
Kentucky Swimming

Ruth-Ann is a dedicated volunteer for Kentucky Swimming. Long after she had swimmers in the water, she continues to work all sorts of meets both inside and outside of her LSC. She is happy to work any position and helps mentor as well.

Ruth-Ann travels all over the U.S. to higher-level meets to gain experience and be mentored by other officials. In addition to pool events, Ruth-Ann has taken a keen interest in open water swimming, attending LSC, Zone, and National meets.

Ruth-Ann also serves in Governance positions for Kentucky Swimming. She is passionate about getting all levels of athletes involved and has taken a special interest in finding ways for athletes with disabilities to compete.

Officials like Ruth-Ann make officiating fun and welcoming for all.

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