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# DECKSIDE

USA SWIMMING OFFICIALS NEWSLETTER

ADDENDUM

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## MESSAGE FROM OFFICIALS CHAIRMAN

R. Patrick Lunsford

### **ADDITIONAL NEWSLETTER INFORMATION**

Due to a number of officials not receiving the last edition of this Newsletter, we are resending it along with an addendum to update every one on the projects and programs the National Officials Committee has initiated. Once you have read this edition, please share it with another official.

**The number one priority of the Committee is to greatly improve communication to all officials. .**

Accessibility to information will provide greater consistency in officiating.

The project that will make that possible is the introduction of an officials section on the USA Swimming website.

All projects are designed to give our athletes the best competitive conditions possible. Progress cannot exist without your help believing in, and promoting these projects. **We thank you in advance for your support of USA Swimming** and hope that you will join the Committee in taking officiating to the next level.

### **PROJECTS STATUS**

- 1** STRATERS VIDEO COMPLETED & ON SALE
- 2** 1999 TEST & RECERTIFICATION TEST COMPLETED
- 3** STROKE & TURN VIDEO ready by CONVENTION
- 4** WEBSITE in final stages DEMO at CONVENTION
- 5** DIRECT COMMUNICATION with LSC OFFICIALS CHAIRMAN in progress every 4 - 6 weeks

### **PROPOSED WEBSITE INFORMATION**

1. Applications to Officiate
1. Newsletter
1. Test
1. Recertification test
1. Blank answer sheets
1. Minimum Standards
1. Training Workbook
1. New Parent's Introduction to Officiating
1. Advancement procedures
1. "Read Only" rule interpretations
1. All training/resources materials
- 1. What are your suggestions?**

### **PROPOSED CONVENTION SCHEDULE**

1. Workshops
2. Adapted Swimming
3. Open Water
4. Videos (Starter and Stroke and Turn)
5. Website

### **MINIMUM STANDARDS**

- 1.** Recruitment/Retention/De-certification procedures
- 2.** Reciprocity LSC, if standards are not equal, must upgrade before working in new LSC
- 3.** National/National Championship--if LSC does not meet minimum standards, may not work at National or National Championship Meets

### **GENERAL**

- 2 National workshops (2000) Lake Placid/San Diego
- Zone Officials Chairman in each zone
- YMCA proposal
- Assign Observers at all National Certification Meets
- Starter observation procedures

**WE ARE VOLUNTEERS  
TREAT EACH OTHER WITH RESPECT,  
UNDERSTANDING AND PATIENCE**

# DECKSIDE

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As the newly elected President of USA Swimming, I am honored to have the opportunity to recognize the outstanding work done by thousands of volunteers who serve as officials on the local and national level throughout the United States.

You may know that my background includes serving as meet director for more than a dozen national championship events, including Olympic Trials, the U.S. Open, and USA Swimming National Championships. From this experience, I know how important it is to have a trained cadre of officials who provide fair and equitable competition for our athletes. We are fortunate to have such loyal and dedicated volunteers who are willing to travel at their own expense to serve the best interest of swimming, and no other Olympic sport has a system which compares to ours.

Additionally, on virtually every weekend of the year, officials provide necessary services for thousands of sanctioned competitions in our 59 Local Swimming Committees. Sometimes, the indoor pools are hot and humid, while the outdoor pools can have unrelenting sun; in every situation, officials carry on their duties with pride and efficiency. The commitment to providing opportunities for our athletes knows no bounds.

You may not always receive a thank you for the work that you do, but that doesn't mean that your contribution to our collective success isn't noticed and appreciated. Quite simply, without you, the job doesn't get done. Please accept my sincere gratitude for all that you do to make swimming the best possible activity for the growth and development of youth in America.

Best Wishes and special thanks for your continued efforts on behalf of our athletes!

**Dale Neuburger**  
President,  
USA SWIMMING

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

I have a small plaque just outside the door of my office that offers a short, but powerful quote. It says "Speak little do much." I'm not sure exactly what St John Berchmans had in mind when he offered this comment, but I do know that reading the quote as I walk into my office every morning is an important reminder to me that I need to focus on the substance of my daily responsibilities.

When I think about our officials and the service they provide to our sport, the substance of the work being performed always impresses me. Often, this work goes unnoticed and unappreciated. No matter what the sport, officials are the quiet workers who ensure that the competition comes off smoothly and fairly. Officials serve their sport because they love their sport. Their satisfaction comes from speaking little and doing much.

As we move into the holiday season, I think it is an appropriate time to pause and consider the great service that USA Swimming officials continually provide for our sport. Your commitment to swimming is appreciated by athletes, coaches, administrators, parents, sponsors and so many others and it only seems right that once in a while we ought to speak up and heartily say **THANK YOU!**

Best wishes to each of you and your families for the holidays.

**Chuck Wielgus**  
Executive Director  
USA SWIMMING

**NEW LEADERSHIP- OLD & NEW EXPECTATIONS****Ron Van Pool, Vice President - Program Operations**

As we begin the next two years under the new leadership of USA Swimming, it is fair to say that some things will continue as they have been while others will change. A trite statement for sure but also a chance to discuss a couple of my visions of the future.

As officials I would expect us to continue to be "**THE BEST OFFICIALS IN THE WORLD.**"

**We will** continue to intensively train and update our officials.

**We will** encourage the recruitment of officials at the starting level and then for these officials to advance to the highest levels that they desire.

<sup>a</sup> **We will encourage** our officials to ask questions when they don't understand and to challenge when they disagree.

In the end, we want to be uniform and consistent in the application of the rules of swimming at all levels.

**CHANGES**

With the advent of the Club Championships in 2001, there will be many more opportunities for officials to work at the higher level meets. We will have the regional meets that will lead to the eventual National Club Championships. Some may be concerned that the elimination of the spring championships will lessen opportunities. Along with the Club Championships we are adding the World Cup meet, strengthening the U.S. Open and, likely, adding a "signature" meet of international scale. In addition, we will be growing the total USA Swimming membership to over 400,000 athletes. More opportunities! This all says that we must grow our ranks and be even more professional. We are moving the bar up an cam notch in the sense of the higher level meets that we will be expected to officiate. I have confidence that, through the new Officials Committee leadership, we will be able to recruit, train and develop officials at all levels of USA Swimming.

**As I take on my new responsibilities,**

**I am excited**

**I am confident in our new leadership team.**

**I feel that USA Swimming will be even greater than it already is!**

**See you on deck**

**RECRUITING NEW OFFICIALS****Don Hart - National Events Coordinator**

There isn't an LSC in swimming that wouldn't like to recruit more officials to the sport. All of us know that this is one of the epitomes of volunteerism, no matter what the circumstance in your LSC. So why is it so hard to do?

Some individuals would tell you they do not like to make those kinds of judgements. Others would say they do not like interacting with the coaches - it can be stressful. Others simply are concerned about the time commitment. AN of the above are factors in the decision process. I have concluded that there is another big factor. To paraphrase a statement from many organizations that find themselves in difficulty "We have met the enemy and he is us!" Now what do I mean by that because we all know we are wonderful people who share a great sport. How could we be our worst enemy?

I would ask you to examine the programs in your LSC and ask how you serve this specific customer base - new officials. Many of us use a clinic approach to covering the rules and using other training aids. These clinics perform a vital function in the communications process. These should be invitations to come find out more about the sport and how each person can contribute. Our LSCs generally cover huge pieces of the US geography. We need to find a way to take the clinics to the people. We should not expect new people who we are trying to recruit to drive long distances to attend a clinic. (We can get them to do that later - with swimmers). Have your instructors go to them -even if it's a small clinic. The training of officials is a slow process. If you have to build cooperative relationships with neighboring LSC's so that your training programs are similar do that to minimize

Try to make the qualification process a positive experience. Use the test materials to reinforce the knowledge they already have. Dottie Bruchez didn't make up any trick questions -these are training devices. "Group think" on the tests can lead to interesting discussions sitting around while the kids work out. This also helps make the new parents feel like they have a common conversation topic and part of what is going on.

When it comes time to go on deck and complete the on-the-job training make sure the feedback is a positive experience. Tell them what they are doing well and what they can do to improve. Remember it is intimidating and we are trying to get people to relax, focus and achieve consistency. Sure officials are a special group of people - let's remember what made us that way and invite many more people to join us. If we do a good job of making people feel welcome, that we are an open group of people and that we are competent **then they will see us as the professionals we are and want to join us**

**1998 OFFICIALS NUMBERS**

By: CAROL BURCH, Director, Member Services

**LSC Certified Officials**

For the 1998 membership year which ended August 31, there were 26,426 non-athlete members. Of this total number 9,919 had checked official on their membership application form. Certification as a Local Swimming Committee Official is obtained through the LSC Officials Chair.

**National Certification**

National Officials Certification is obtained by working at a regional or local championship meet approved for such certification by the Officials Committee. The competition must meet established criteria and an application for approval for the National Certification level must be submitted prior to the meet. Individuals applying for national certification must be certified officials for at least one year within their own Local Swimming Committee, must be current non-athlete or athlete members, must attend an officials' briefing session at the meet and work at least three sessions at the meet. In 1998 there were 1,873 National Officials.

**National Championship Certification**

National Championship Certification is obtained by working at a USA Swimming National Championship Meet (currently the Speedo junior Championships, Phillips 66 National Swimming Championships or the US Open Meet). Applications to work at a USA Swimming National Championship must be submitted to the Officials Committee Chair prior to an established deadline date. In order to receive National Championship certification, individuals must have National Officials certification, must attend officials' meetings at the meet and must work- at least four sessions (Prelims and finals count as separate sessions), For 1998, there were 514 National Championship Officials.

**The Member Services Department** maintains a listing of all National and National Championship Officials and sends out National and National Championship cards, pins and patches. If you have questions about your certification Please contact us.

**INSURANCE QUESTION ANSWERED**

Question: As a USA Swimming Official and a registered non-athlete member does insurance coverage apply if I am working at an approved meet? Answer: Yes, when you are working at an approved meet your USA Swimming insurance coverage is in effect.

If you have questions or need additional Information about your USA Swimming insurance coverage please contact Carol Burch at USA Swimming National Headquarters office.

**OFFICIALS' CHAIR MESSAGE**

By: R. Patrick Lunsford, Chair

As the new Board of Directors begins its work for the next two years to advance the level of commitment to U SA Swimming and its athletes, so will the new Officials Committee. The Committee will face meeting the challenges as set forth by the Board of Directors as well as continuing to complete various projects that are already in the works as developed by the outgoing Committee in the four year plan established by Don Hart two years ago. The new Committee wants to congratulate and thank Don for his extremely dedicated efforts in taking the Officials Committee to a new level of involvement. Don has set a precedent that will be difficult to surpass. Hopefully, the next two years will see continued growth. The structure of the Committee has been changed for the next two years. LSC Officials Chairs will not be listed as a part of the Committee but will still be utilized in ongoing Committee projects. The size of the steering committee has been more than doubled and represents 12 LSCs from around the country. A coach representative and two athlete representatives has also been added to the committee to better enhance communication with the coaching and athlete community.

**1COMMITTEE MEMBERS (LSC & Z0)**

Chair: Pat Lunsford, Ohio & CZ

Vice Chair: Joel Black, North Carolina & SZ

Vice Chair: Pauline Hubbell, Central California & WZ

Testing: Dottie Bruchez, New England & EZ

National Certification: Virginia Bay, Ohio & CZ

Coach Rep: Dave Knochenhauer, Pacific & WZ

Athlete Rep: Kent Nelson, Indiana & CZ

Athlete Rep: Beth Scott, Potomac Valley & EZ

**Program Ops** VP: Ron Van Pool

National Events Coordinator: Don Hart

Staff Contact: Carol Burch

Carolyn Burt, Utah & WZ

Frank Ching, New England & EZ

Dave Coleman, Hawaii & WZ

Paul Jones, Michigan & CZ

Francis Klier, Niagara & EZ

Dan MacAllen, North Texas & SZ

J.R. Pooler, Arizona, & WZ

Jim Sheehan, New Jersey & EZ