CHAPTER 7

CLERK OF COURSE

The Clerk of Course role and functions vary broadly between LSCs, depending on the nature of the meet and the practices utilized within that LSC. In many situations, this role and function may be shared by a number of individuals. In some instances, the Clerk of Course's role may consist only of collecting, organizing and delivering the swimmers to the start in the appropriate heat and lane

The Clerk of Course (hereinafter referred to as the Clerk) is responsible for all of the paper work at the meet before the swimmers swim. This includes check-in, seeding, preparation and distribution of cards or lane timing record forms. Also included is the preparation, posting and distribution of heat sheets for deck seeded events to all appropriate officials and spectators. The extent of this will depend on many factors. Meet operations will vary considerably between LSCs and also between meets held within any LSC. Perhaps the most important consideration for any meet is whether the meet is entirely pre-seeded, or is partially or completely deck-seeded. Other key factors include whether the meet is being run manually or using a computer(s) and the nature of the computer program in use. Whether or not pre-meet scratch procedures or meetings are used within the LSC will also be a consideration. It is assumed that the collection and compilation of swimmers' entries will have been done well before the meet and is not the responsibility of the Clerk. The Clerk has responsibility for check-in of swimmers and such seeding operations as are appropriate for the meet. If a computer program is being used to run the meet, the Clerk will work closely with the computer operator. An experienced and knowledgeable computer operator is invaluable in providing rapid, efficient and accurate seeding operations.

The Clerk should personally oversee the seeding operations and should appoint appropriate personnel for the necessary task. The Clerk should ensure that the personnel are well trained and understand the procedures and that the necessary forms and materials are available in advance. The Clerk should consult the Referee concerning preferred procedures for late check-ins, no-shows, entry problems, etc.

If a meet is entirely pre-seeded and the seeding is done by computer, there is no need for a check-in operation and the Clerk needs only to see that the paper work for recording lane times is available and distributed to the timers. This probably will have been prepared in advance by the entries person(s).

If the meet is partially or completely deck seeded, then the Clerk will have to deal with check-in and seeding operations. Procedures for doing this may vary considerably according to the practices in use in the LSCs and whether a computer program is used to run the meet, but generalized guidelines are provided below

Check-in procedures, scratch rules and penalties for violating these rules vary between LSCs and efforts should be made to assure that swimmers and coaches are familiar with them.

CHECK-IN

The purpose of the check-in procedure is to determine which swimmers will be competing in an event, so that the entries can be seeded in the most efficient manner with the minimum number of heats.

Advance preparations for the check-in process should include the necessary supplies, paper work, tables and chairs as needed. Signs and/or chalkboards for information and posting of deadlines should be available or prepared in advance. An appropriate location should be selected to avoid crowding and interference with the meet.

Alphabetical listings by sex and age groups of swimmers entered in the meet, with a notation of which events each swimmer has entered may be used. Alternatively, psych sheets for individual events may be used. Use of computer program for entries makes the preparation of these sheets more accurate and easier. Check -in sheets and a list of any entry problems should be obtained from the entries person(s) prior to the start of the meet. Whatever the process, an accurate procedure of check-in is necessary to ensure, that the correct swimmers are properly recorded on each sheet. This must clearly record whether the swimmer has checked in to swim or has scratched from the event. No marks should be made on the check-in sheet other than those designated for a check-in or scratch. Swimmers who have been marked as an entry problem should not be checked in until the problem is resolved.

Check-in Guidelines

·   Each swimmer should check themselves in. A swimmer should not check in another swimmer. Coaches may check-in their swimmers but should be cautioned that the swimmer is responsible. If allowed to do so, they must accept the responsibility for doing so. Coaches should be asked to initial the "check in" when this is done.

·   Be Neat! This is essential to avoid errors when deciding which swimmers are to be scratched

·   When only a single event per swimmer at a session requires check-in, the check-in is usually done on a psych sheet. Place a check mark by each swimmer's name as they check in. Draw a line through the swimmers name if they choose to scratch. Do NOT mark through the ID # of the swimmer.

·   When there are multiple events requiring check-in within a session, swimmers may (and are encouraged to do so)check-in for all events in that session at one time. If a swimmer does check-in for multiple events they may change their choice up until the closing time for each individual event. If a swimmer checks-in and wants to scratch later, it should be noted who requested the scratch and the change should be initialed.

·   When a swimmer checks-in to swim an event, circle the event number after the swimmer's name. If a swimmer wishes to scratch an event, cross-out the event number. Do NOT make marks on the swimmer ID # as this will be needed to scratch

swimmers from an event. Be careful to insure that the marks are placed on the correct line after the swimmers name. If two last names are the same, be sure the marks are placed after the correct swimmer.

· Anticipate the closing time for specific events and have appropriate announcements made. If possible, seek out the Coach of those swimmers who have not checked-in as closing time approaches.

· Do NOT leave the Check-in sheet unattended. Do NOT allow swimmers or others to make unobserved changes on the sheet.

· The Clerk should inform the check-in people when an event is closed and no additional swimmers may check in. Event closure should be announced and the time noted on the check-in sheet.

· Generally, when deck seeding, an event is closed approximately 30 minutes before an event is to start. Usually a time line is available prior to the start of the meet. This time line is helpful, but is not precise. The Clerk must carefully track the progress of the meet ensuring that an event is not closed too soon or too late, resulting in confusion or delay of the meet.

· In some LSCs, swimmers who have not checked-in (positive check-in) for a deck seeded event will not be seeded into that event but may still be allowed to swim in that event by reporting to the Referee prior to the start of that event. They will be allowed to swim in the slowest heat.

· When an event has been closed, a list of swimmers to be scratched should be prepared on a form prepared prior to the meet. For each **event**, list the name and ID # of each swimmer who has (a) indicated their desire to scratch the event, and (b) those who have not checked-in for the event. Double -check the list (preferably by a second person). Count the scratches and the positive check-ins and make sure that the total equals the number of swimmers on the entry list for that event.

· Take the list of scratches promptly to the those responsible for seeding the event.

Seeding Events

Seeding is the assignment of a heat and lane to each swimmer according to their submitted entry time. There are two ways to seed a meet: 1) prior to the meet (pre-seeding), or 2) during the meet (deck seeding).

Pre seeding is done before the meet and heat and lane assignments are printed in the meet program. No check-in is required at the meet. If entries are done with a computer program, lane time recording forms can be prepared before the meet. If cards are used for manual entries the cards will be distributed on the day of the meet.

Deck seeding is done during the meet. Swimmers who have entered an event check-in to swim that event. Only those who check-in are given a heat and lane assignment.

If the meet is being run by computer, the seeding is done by the computer operator,

who uses the scratch list provided by the people responsible for check-in. The operator will enter the scratches into the computer and produce the seeding. While entering the scratches the operator should carefully compare the names of the swimmers shown as scratches on the computer screen with those on the scratch list. Once the seeding for the event is completed, a sufficient number of heat sheets are prepared to distribute and post so that swimmers, coaches, officials and spectators are informed of the seeding.

If a computer is not used and entry cards are used to run the meet, seeding must be done manually with the cards. Cards for swimmers who have scratched should be removed from the pack and the remaining cards seeded manually. The seeding procedures are described in the U. S. Swimming rule book, Article 102. There are important differences in the seeding of a timed final meet and a meet with preliminary and final heats.

Relay events must also be seeded. A time should be established for the coaches to pick up and return their relay cards. The deadline should be announced several times during the early part of the day and again when the deadline is near. The coach is required to write the full names and the ages (and also the meet ID#s if a computer is used to run the meet) for all eligible relay swimmers on the card before returning it to the Clerk for seeding. Alternate swimmers may be listed on the cards. Coaches may change the swimmers or the swimming order until the team is called to the blocks. The swimmer's order of swimming must be declared immediately prior to the start of their relay heat, and no changes are permitted after that. The cards are collected earlier only for the purpose of seeding the event. The seeding procedure is the same as for individual events.

The minimum personnel recommended is two people to seed the girls' cards and two people to seed the boys' cards for meets up to 2000 entries. As the number of entries increases, more people will be needed. At least two runners are necessary to distribute the paper work to the announcer and the referee. The entry cards must be sorted by event and time, using the heat sheets. The cards will be provided by the Meet Director or entry chairman.

The seeding area should have pencils, erasers, red pens, scratch pads, blank cards, the schedule of events the referees's time line and the necessary number of tables and chairs. The area should be conveniently located where the workers are free from disturbance. There is an advantage to locating the seeding group near the Results desk.

Card Distribution

If cards are used to seed the meet, the cards must be distributed to the swimmers after seeding. In a pre-seeded meet the cards may be distributed to the swimmers or given directly to the lane timers. The card distribution center must be clearly marked. If the younger swimmers are to wait in the card distribution area, a covered location large enough for adequate seating must be provided. If the cards are only going to be handed out, the size of the distribution area is not important, but the location should be convenient for the swimmers.

The cards should not be distributed too early before the event. The lane recorders may become confused with cards from several events.

Any unclaimed seeding cards should be delivered to the referee. Occasionally a late swimmer will arrive in time to swim. The Referee can then easily send a card to the lane recorder. The referee also needs these cards to prepare the "no-show"slips.

For 50 -meter and 25-yard events that start and finish at opposite ends of the pool, copies of the heat sheets with heat and lane assignments should be posted at the end of the pool where the swimmers will start. this procedure will reduce the chances of a swimmer being in the wrong lane. One swimmer out of place in these shorter events can result in confusion at the desk.