



OFFICIALS' NEWSLETTER



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Greetings from the Chair

By: Dana Covington

Fall is off to a good start and ushering in a new short-course season. I hope everyone is feeling refreshed and invigorated after a short break following a successful long-course championship season this past summer.

Last month in Denver, USA Swimming hosted its Annual Summit. Thank you to the Local Swim Committee (LSC) Officials Chairs who made it a priority to send an official to Denver to learn about mentoring. The underlying theme of the training sessions was how a mentor can have a positive impact on officials when the evaluation and mentoring experience is displayed in a positive and constructive manner. Be on the lookout for some information to be shared within your LSC from the officials who attended this training in Denver.

The other important outcome from Summit was the outcome of the legislative actions approved by the USA Swimming House of Delegates. The details of all legislative updates may be found [here](#), while a summary may be found [here](#). The items of greatest importance to your officiating practice are R-2, R-4, R-5, R-10, HK-1, and M1, but please review all of the legislation.

Thank you for your volunteerism, you make a difference!



Pinnacle Award Winner: Bob Vincent

Congratulations to this year's Pinnacle Award winner, Bob Vincent!

Bob has served as an official since 2003 and as a board member, board president and ex-officio, interim CEO for USA Swimming, making a difference in the sport from grassroots to the highest levels. Bob has obviously shown incredible servitude to not just the athletes and officials, but the well-being of the organization as a whole.

As an official, Bob serves at the LSC and national levels. Over the last 12 months, Bob has served at 59 LSC sessions as a stroke and turn official, deck referee, meet referee, and as a national evaluator to share his expertise with others. Even as a board member and as interim CEO, Bob continued to offer

his skills as an official in a less-prominent, yet still supportive role on the national deck. This past summer, Bob served in the shadows as a head timer at the Toyota National Championships in Indianapolis. Bob tackled all of this while volunteering as a board member and as interim CEO. He embodies the heart of servitude from the developmental age group meets to team selection meets with humility. Bob quietly leads by example. We could not be more proud than to have him in the ranks of the USA Swimming officials.

The Pinnacle Award, formerly the Kenneth J. Pettigrew Award, is the highest honor given annually to an official whose robust volunteer service spans decades. Recipients of this award have made significant contributions at both the LSC and national levels and exhibit attributes of servant-leadership through work in governance and the highest officiating positions. Selected by the National Officials Committee, the Pinnacle Award is presented each year at the USA Swimming Annual Summit.

Announcements

- As a part of your 2026 membership, you may request (without additional costs) one **2026 USA Swimming Rulebook**. Use this [order form](#) to request either the regular-size rulebook or the mini-rulebook. You will need your USA Swimming ID number to complete the form. The order form must be completed no later than Monday, December 1, 2025. After this date, the rulebook will need to be purchased through SwimOutlet.
- **National Meets:** Applications to officiate at national meets are generally posted six months (~180 days) prior to the meet start date. Applications typically close four months (~120 days) prior to the meet start date, but applications may close earlier if a sufficient number of applications have been received.
 - **Toyota U.S. Open:** December 3-6, 2025, in Austin, Texas - MR: Mike Dilli. Applications are now closed.
 - **Speedo Winter Junior Championships:** December 10-13, 2025. Applications are now closed.
 - East: Indianapolis, Ind. - Kevin Hogan
 - West: Austin, Texas - Marianne Walling
 - **TYR Pro Swim Series:** Officials may apply to each of the first three meets in the TYR Pro Swim series, but depending upon the application pool, will be selected to serve at only one of them.
 - January 14-17, Austin, Texas - MR: Derigan Silver (application is now closed)
 - March 4-7, Westmont, Ill. - MR: Phil Barnes (application is now closed)
 - May 20-23, Sacramento, Calif. - MR: TBA (application to be activated the week of November 20, 2025)
 - June 17-20, Indianapolis, Ind. - Officiating details TBA
 - **2026 Open Water National and Junior National Championships** (Applications for Open Water will be considered alongside the TYR Pro Series winter/spring meets in Austin, Westmont, and Sacramento)
 - April 2-4, Sarasota, Fla. - MR: Mike Murphy ([application is now open](#))
 - **Toyota National Championships**
 - July 28-August 1, Irvine, Calif. - Officiating details TBA
- The next **National Officials Committee Quarterly Meeting** will be held by Zoom on Wednesday, November 5, 2025, at 6 p.m. MT. This is an open meeting.
- The next **LSC Officials Chairs Quarterly Meeting** will be held by Zoom on Wednesday, January 7, 2026, at 6 p.m. MT. This is an open meeting (request the Zoom link from your LSC

Officials Chair), but only LSC Officials Chairs may comment or ask questions. Please contact your LSC Officials Chair to learn more about the items discussed at these meetings.

- The [NCAA 2025-26 and 2026-27 Swimming and Diving Rules Book](#) is now available as a downloadable PDF. Information on the [NCAA Officials Education and Registration Program](#) has been updated for the upcoming season. The [2025-2027 NCAA Swimming & Dive Exam](#) is now available beginning August 15, 2025.
 - The 2024 and 2025 editions of the USA Swimming Officials' Newsletter can be found on the [Newsletter Archive page](#) (scroll down to "Officials' Newsletter" section) of the USA Swimming website.
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Time Trials Referee

By: Phil Barnes

So, you have been assigned as the time trial referee – now what? As with any swim meet, there are two key elements that the referee needs to keep in mind to ensure a successful event for the swimmers: preparation and communication. [This article](#) focuses on preparation, both before and during the meet, as a key to success.

Our Kids Initiative (OKI) – New Details Regarding the Early History of OKI!

Whether the Our Kids Initiative (OKI) is something you are hearing about for the first time or you have followed its efforts for many years, OKI has had a significant impact on bringing the technical rules of swimming together from multiple rule making bodies. [In this article](#), Jay Thomas traces the history of OKI and the impact it has had on "putting ALL our kids first."

Rules and Regulations Updates

By: Trish Martin and Kevin Hogan

The USA Swimming House of Delegates met on September 27, 2025, to consider proposed legislation, some of which has a direct impact on officiating swimming. The details of the legislation can be found [here](#) with the document showing each legislative item and whether it was adopted (with or without amendment) or defeated. A brief summary of the legislation and the action taken can be found [here](#). Each of the adopted proposals are effective immediately. [Click here](#) to see some highlights of the adopted legislation.

Online Testing Working Group

By: Jack Swanson

To learn more about who is on the USA Swimming National Officials Committee Online Testing Working Group and what they do, [click here](#).

Situations and Resolutions

By: Jack Swanson

The Online Testing Working Group spent the last year updating the Stroke and Turn and Starter/Referee Situations and Resolutions, adding situations and resolutions based on recent rule changes and adding situations pertinent to officiating athletes with disabilities — thanks to the Disability Subcommittee of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee for their help!

Links to the situations and resolutions are below and are also published to the USA Swimming webpage:

- [Stroke and Turn](#)
- [Starter and Deck Referee](#)

Each newsletter, we will highlight a situation and resolution from each group. [Click here](#) to see two selected situations and resolutions.

Terminology and Acronyms Used in Competitive Swimming

By: Kevin Hogan

The swimming community is no different from any other group in having its own terminology and acronyms. While these terms and acronyms may be well known to those who have been involved in the sport for some time, they can also serve as a barrier to understanding for those new to the sport. The [attached list](#) of terms and acronyms is intended to help newcomers to swimming understand the language and provide context for its use.



Officials' Excellence Award

Congratulations to the October winner of the Officials' Excellence Award: Dayna Gripp from Wyoming Swimming.

Wow, Dayna! Where do we start? The words that come to mind when describing Dayna are commitment, spirit, selfless, humble, visionary, quick-to-action, unafraid, confident, real, and motivating. Dayna is a go-getter with a positive attitude. She has embraced the role of Wyoming Swimming Local Swimming Committee (LSC) officials chair with an enthusiasm that is absorbed by everyone around her. Wyoming Swimming is a geographically diverse and yet, Dayna has continued to promote officials qualifying meets for the LSC to enhance learning opportunities for the officials of Wyoming and Montana. Dayna's enthusiasm has translated to positive results for Wyoming Swimming's recruitment and retention!

During Dayna's tenure as the Wyoming Swimming LSC officials chair, she led all of us into territories that at times were dark and unfamiliar. She does this through setting the vision, empowering those around her to build that vision into reality, supporting them, and then celebrating achievements as a whole – as Wyoming Swimming. Those achievements? Driving change throughout the LSC that embraces support and guidance from the national level, but at the same time values and recognizes the independence that makes Wyoming, Wyoming. Developing a culture of officiating that has people excited to be part of the team; a team that has grown to the point that a chief judge team has a tough time figuring out what to do with all of the officials at the recent LSC short course championships. And her latest venture, developing a separate network of fundraising driven by the officials throughout the LSC whose funds will be 100% returned to the athletes of the Wyoming Swimming. Excellence with Dayna . . . nah . . . that would be like calling a Ferrari an excellent automobile when all you can think about is get in, buckle up, and hold on!

Thank you, Dayna!

Looking for more details on the Officials' Excellence Award?

The Officials' Excellence Award:

- National recognition for outstanding officials for LSC contribution
- Anyone can submit, although we will ask the LSC Officials' Chair or LSC General Chair for input
- The nominee must be an active member of USA Swimming with current registration
- There are six awards each year, one each in odd-numbered months
- Nominations close around April
- Nominations are held for two cycles (24 months) unless selected
- The National Officials Committee votes in May for the July through next May period (1 cycle)

Hopefully, your LSC OC committee is actively looking for ways to acknowledge officials and appreciate their service at the local level. This award is just a way to further acknowledge those deserving higher recognition. The link for the nomination form is [here](#).

Newsletter Feedback

In this newsletter, we strive to provide information that will benefit the community of USA Swimming officials. Please let us know if we are meeting that objective. Feedback, both positive and negative, is welcome, as are suggestions for future topics. [Click here](#) to provide us with your feedback and suggestions. Your comments are anonymous unless you choose to leave your name.



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