



OFFICIALS' NEWSLETTER



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Greetings from the Chair

By: Dana Covington

Know your mission.

We are now looking at 2024 in the rearview mirror. What an exciting year it was with the implementation of Local Swim Committee (LSC) Officiating Standards, online USA Swimming University training, and Block Party meets, not to mention Olympic Trials in a football stadium!

LSC Officiating Standards were implemented in February of 2024, and the Stroke and Turn online training through the USA Swimming University was rolled out on April 1, 2024. From September 2023 through August 2024, there was an increase of 331 new Stroke and Turn Officials compared to the preceding year! Thank you to all the LSCs that have thoughtfully embraced the changes over the past year and worked to find creative solutions to help apprentice officials engage with these new strategies in place. A reminder that the free online trainings for USA Swimming member officials are the required clinic training for all LSCs. We will continue to monitor how these new programs affect officiating.

As we embark on our journey into 2025, the National Officials Committee (NOC) and our working groups are diving into our goals for the current year. We will build over this next quad, to meet the needs of officials, so that we can provide the best officiating for athletes and coaches.

In the coming newsletters, we will be highlighting one or two of the NOC working groups to give you a more in-depth look at how the NOC functions. This month we will highlight the position of the NOC Chair.

The NOC is comprised of 12 voting members:

- Athletes: Noah Berryman, Hannah Cousins, Colin Gibbons, and Dylan Nelson
- Jason Johnson (ST), Education
- Kevin Hogan (VA), Communications and Social Media
- Trish Martin (NC), Evaluation and Mentoring
- Mike Murphy (PN), Open Water
- Curtis Myers (MV), LSC Officials Chairs Liaison
- Jack Swanson (MN), Testing and Athlete projects, Annual Surveys
- Marianne Walling (IN), OTS and National Certifications
- Dana Covington (SN), Chair
- Non-voting, Ex-Officio members: Jay Thomas (AQUA), Kathleen Scandary (Programs & Events), Judy Sharkey (YMCA), and Taylor Rogers (Rules & Regs)

The chair of the NOC works with all of the NOC members and USA Swimming staff to meet our mission: "To conduct programs to recruit, educate, train and certify a diverse team of USA Swimming officials to provide the highest quality and consistent officiating for athletes at all levels of swimming." This is accomplished through regular meetings to address questions or issues, to develop new online and in-

person training programs for officials, and to ensure communication via this newsletter or through direct communication with LSC Officials Chairs.

The NOC Chair is also responsible for National Meet Applications which includes working with the Program & Events Coordinator and Meet Referees to select all officials for Futures and higher meets (2-star and above). The guiding principles for selecting officials for meets can be found [here](#). The [Walk Of Stars](#) also helps to outline these processes.

In 2024, we needed 417 officials to fulfill the officiating needs for the seven, 3-star and above national meets that required an application to officiate (three TYR Pro Swim Series meets, Speedo Champs, Toyota U.S. Open, and Speedo Winter Juniors East and West). At these meets, 297 different officials were utilized for these 417 positions. The goal is to give as many officials as possible an opportunity to officiate at a national meet while maintaining a qualified team of officials for the athletes who have worked hard to achieve their goals on the national stage. I am proud of the officiating excellence that is demonstrated on the national decks throughout the country. These officiating skills are developed and sharpened every weekend within your LSCs. I appreciate the desire and hard work that each of you put into maintaining your skills as a proud swimming official for USA Swimming.

Announcements

- 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.)
 - **National Championships:** June 3-7, 2025, in Indianapolis, Ind. MR: Mickey Smythe. Applications are now closed.
 - **Open Water National & Junior Championships:** April 4-6, 2025, in Sarasota, Fla. MR: Hector Acevedo. Applications are now closed.
 - **Summer Meets:**
 - **Futures:** July 23-26, 2025. N2 certifications preferred. [Applications are now open](#).
 - Greensboro, NC – MR: Jason Shibata
 - Justin, Texas – MR: Barb Ship
 - Madison, Wis. – MR: Curtis Myers
 - Ocala, Fla. – MR: Betsy Russell
 - Sacramento, Calif. – MR: Rob Stevens
 - **Speedo Junior National Championships:** July 30-Aug. 3, 2025, in Irvine, Calif. MR: Anne Lawley. N3 certification preferred. [Applications are now open](#).
 - **TYR Summer Championships:** Aug. 5-8, 2025, in Irvine, Calif. MR: Ellen Colket. N3 certification preferred. [Applications are now open](#).
- The “2025 USA Swimming Rulebook” has begun shipping. If you missed the pre-order deadline of Dec. 2, 2024, you can purchase one through [SwimOutlet](#), with availability expected soon. Both the [full rulebook](#) and the [mini rulebook](#) are available as PDF documents.
- The next **LSC Officials Chairs Quarterly Meeting** will be held by Zoom on Wednesday, April 2, 2025, at 8 p.m. EDT. 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 next **National Officials Committee Quarterly Meeting** will be held by Zoom on Wednesday, May 7, 2025, at 8 p.m. EDT. This is an open meeting.

- The December 2024 Officials' Newsletter featured an article by Traci Johnson and Mickey Smythe on the use of Relay Judging Platforms. Phil Barnes has designed a simple form to track the data. The form is available in both [.XLS](#) and [.PDF](#) formats.
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A Perfect Match

By: the USA Swimming Foundation

Andrew Choy, an Official with the Pacific Northwest Local Swimming Committee, was able to donate more than \$10,000 back to the sport by simply logging his officiating hours and a corporate matching program through his job.

Read more about his efforts [here](#).

Companies of all sizes offer corporate matching programs to employees as an easy, structured way to support good work being done in their communities. While Choy's matching comes through his own company, 65% of Fortune 500 companies offer matching programs and over 26 million individuals work for companies that offer some iteration of a matching gift program. To see if your company offers a corporate matching program, visit <https://www.doublethedonation.com>.

February Survey

By: Jason Johnson

Two survey questions this month focus on how officials get officiating information at the national level and how they would like to get that information. Responses are ANONYMOUS, and your responses will help the National Officials Committee know how to best communicate with you. Thank you in advance for answering this month's questions, which can be found [HERE](#).

LSC Leaders: Developing N2 Mentors

By: Trish Martin and Marianne Walling

The USA Swimming National Officials Committee Evaluation and Mentoring Program provides experienced LSC officials with the opportunity to hone and polish their skills in preparation for a good performance on higher-level decks. The entry-level N2 national program targets skills that develop officials for LSC and Sectional Championship (1-star) decks. The N3 program focuses on preparation for Futures (2-star), Speedo Juniors (3-star), TYR Pro Series (4-star), and National (5-star) decks. Both programs also provide continuing education for officials who want to keep their skills state-of-the-art for every deck.

The N2 Mentor plays a critical role in the art of officiating. Through their participation in and continued training at higher-level meets, these talented officials are the conduit through which the latest protocols and best practices reach the LSC deck. They help advance the skills of all officials so that every athlete at every meet is judged fairly, expertly, and consistently.

The N2 program is dependent on local certified officials who are committed to being strong officials themselves, but who also want to help other officials develop advanced skills. These officials are identified at the LSC level and appointed by LSC Officials Chairs.

What is the profile of a good N2 Mentor?

- The N2 Mentor candidate is a capable, experienced official who demonstrates commitment to top-notch officiating when volunteering at LSC meets.
- The candidate shows an interest in, and talent for, positively teaching and coaching, such as the officials tapped to train new apprentices.
- The N2 Mentor candidate has participated successfully in the National Mentoring program themselves. They are an N3 ST and are N2 certified for positions they mentor.
- The official has attended a 2-star or higher meet within the past five years.

LSC Officials Chairs should actively recruit N2 Mentors to build an LSC cadre of experienced local teachers and trainers. Not only is this good for ensuring quality mentoring at LSC meets, but this also enables staffing of the LSC's Officials Qualifying Meets (OQMs) where N2 evaluations will be offered. By using the meet attendance report in the Officials Tracking System to identify N2 officials who attend Futures and higher meets, LSC Officials Chairs can identify potential N2 Mentors. Plus, with the five summer Futures meets coming up, now is a great time to encourage any N2 Mentor candidates who have not yet attended a 2-star or higher meet to apply.

Also, qualified N2 officials who are ready to take on a mentoring role within their LSC should reach out to their LSC Officials Chair to express their interest and learn more about their LSC's programs.

More information about mentoring is available on the [National Certification & Evaluation page](#) of the Officials' section on the USA Swimming website.

“USA Swimming 2024-2028 Swimmers with Disabilities Parallel Time Standards” Now Available

By: Susan Mechler, Mike Dilli and Scott Shea

Motivational time standards are essential benchmarks that inspire swimmers to progress and achieve higher performance levels. Swimmers and coaches use these standards to set goals and celebrate achievements, such as earning a swimmer’s first "A" cut. With the introduction of the “USA Swimming 2024-2028 Swimmers with Disabilities Parallel Time Standards,” swimmers with disabilities and coaches can now set goals that align with their able-bodied peers. These parallel time standards are linked to the Performance Groupings for swimmers with disabilities (P1, P2, and P3), fostering a shared language of progression and motivation that promotes competitive inclusion. The development of the parallel time standards was a joint effort involving the Disability Subcommittee Time Standards Task Force and the USA Swimming staff members in charge of time standards.

Beyond individual motivation, these parallel time standards also support qualification for time-standard-based swim competition. Their implementation empowers clubs, LSCs, and Zones to ensure the competitive inclusion of swimmers with disabilities in sanctioned meets. For example, if a club hosts a B/C meet, the parallel time standards can be used to set an entry limit not exceeding a B time for swimmers with disabilities. Similarly, LSCs organizing Senior Championships that require an A time or faster to compete in an event can set a corresponding parallel entry time. Zones conducting Sectional Championships meets with time standards set halfway between an AAA and AAAA time can use the parallel time standards to make the same calculation. When used in these manners, the parallel time standards ensure fairness and inclusivity across all competitive levels.

The “USA Swimming 2024-2028 Swimmers with Disabilities Parallel Time Standards” took effect on October 29, 2024. These standards can be accessed on the USA Swimming website under the following sections:

- [Time Standards](#)
- [Resources for Swimmers](#) (available on the USA Swimming DEI page under Disability Engagement)

The Disability Subcommittee of the USA Swimming National DEI Committee, developed its Resources for Swimmers to provide a centralized and easily accessible point of reference. This initiative enhances accessibility for LSCs and Zones by consolidating relevant disability swimming information in one location.

The Disability Subcommittee extends a heartfelt thank you to our community for recognizing the value that swimmers with disabilities and their coaches bring to our organization. Together, we continue to build a more inclusive and supportive swimming community from the first age group splash through podium placement.

Swimmers with disabilities are welcome and encouraged to participate in USA Swimming meets. Article 105 of the “USA Swimming Rules and Regulations” provides specific guidance on how this can be accomplished.

Situations and Resolutions

By: Jack Swanson

The USA Swimming National Officials Committee maintains Situations and Resolutions documents for Stroke and Turn and Starter/Deck Referee that outline common scenarios at meets and how to resolve them. The situations and resolutions are currently being updated, and new versions of the documents will be posted soon. In each newsletter, the committee will highlight one Stroke and and Turn and one Starter/Deck Referee scenario. Enjoy!

Stroke and Turn

Situation: An official makes a resubmerged call at the finish of the backstroke. The swimmer's coach speaks with the referee and adamantly believes that the swimmer's toenail was breaking the surface of the water prior to the touch. The referee investigates the call with the official, where the referee learns that the official did not observe the location of the feet when the official made the call, nor where the swimmer's head was with respect to the flags when the swimmer submerged. Should the call be upheld?

Recommended Resolution: No, the call should not be upheld. In order to make a resubmerged call, the official must be certain that the entire body of the swimmer is underwater and the head was submerged prior to the flags. This is extremely difficult to do while also attempting to observe the touch. By failing to note the position of the feet (or any other part of the body, for that matter) there is no certainty that the swimmer's body was underwater. Therefore, the benefit of the doubt must go to the swimmer.

Applicable Rule: 101.4.2

Starter/Deck Referee

Situation: In the 100-yard butterfly, the Starter gives the "take your marks," command, and the swimmers become stationary. The swimmer in lane 1 leaves their stationary position prior to the starting signal. Upon realizing the early starting motion, the swimmer attempts to stop this motion, trying to remain on the block. The Starter gives the "Stand, please," command, and the swimmer in lane 1 falls into the pool. Is this a false start?

Recommended Resolution : Yes, this is a false start. The rule states, "Any swimmer initiating a start before the starting signal is given shall be disqualified if the Referee independently observes and confirms the Starter's observation that a violation occurred." The rule also states, "When a swimmer does not respond promptly to the command, 'take your marks,' the Starter shall immediately release all swimmers with the command 'Stand please,' upon which the swimmers may stand up or step off the blocks." When this command is given, the swimmers may either stand up or step off the blocks; the swimmer in lane 1 did neither—but fell into the pool. Pending that the Referee independently observed and confirmed the Starter's observation of a false start, the swimmer in lane 1 should be disqualified and removed from the heat.

Applicable Rules: 101.1.2D, 101.1.3A

N3 Evaluator Nomination Calendar Update

By: Trish Martin

The Evaluating and Mentoring Working Group has updated the deadlines for submitting nominations for N3i and N3f evaluators. The Evaluator Appointment Guidelines for nominating N3 mentors can be found on the USA Swimming website on the National Certification & Evaluation tab of the Officials' webpage.

2025 N3 Evaluator Nomination Calendar:

Nomination Deadline	For Quarterly List Update
April 1	May
July 1	August
October 1	November
January 1	February

Junior Official Certification in the Officials Tracking System

By: Marianne Walling

Stroke and Turn Junior Officials are 16-17 years old and may officiate at competitions below LSC Championships for 12&Under athletes. Junior Officials may be tracked in the Officials Tracking System (OTS) once they are registered as Junior Official members. They should be given credit for sessions in the same fashion all other officials receive credit.

Currently, Junior Officials must identify themselves to the Meet Referee. Junior Officials will appear in the "Participation Certifications" report, which is used to verify certifications before the meet, and in the "Meet Detail" post-meet report. Additionally, since Junior Officials are not required to take the Athlete Protection Training (APT) or undergo a background check, these credentials will be indicated in red when adding a Junior Official to the meet.

Edgar Caraballo Named Chairman of the Swimming Committee for PanAm Aquatics

By: Dana Covington

It is with great pleasure that I share with you that Edgar Caraballo, from Ohio Swimming, has been named the Chairman of the Swimming Committee for PanAm Aquatics. In this role, Edgar will collaborate to guide PanAm Swimming through the quad by developing competitive opportunities and training of officials and coaches.

Edgar brings an impressive skill set as a bilingual professor of engineering and as a national official who has served at the highest level of competition of swimming in the USA. He has also served on local and national governance committees.

Please help me in congratulating Edgar to this prestigious role.

USA Swimming Officials Included on World Aquatics Swimming Officials List #23

By: Dana Covington

We received confirmation from World Aquatics that the USA representatives for World Aquatics List #23 have been confirmed. Congratulations to the following officials for this prestigious appointment. We look forward to you representing USA Swimming as officials on the international stage. Your dedication to officiating excellence is evident, and we are proud of you!

- Trish Martin, Referee, North Carolina Swimming (renewed)
- Peter LaGow, Referee, Maryland Swimming (renewed)
- Mickey Smythe, Referee, Indiana Swimming
- Jason Johnson, Starter, North Texas Swimming (renewed)
- Tracey Garrett, Starter, Oklahoma Swimming



Officiating at the World Aquatics Swimming Championships in Budapest, Hungary

By: Peter LaGow

“Take Your Marks.”

We have all heard those familiar words repeatedly on deck, but what I did not expect was the amazing performances I was about to witness at the World Aquatics Swimming Championships (25 M) in Budapest, Hungary. As the Short Course Championships are held every other year, there is a better-than-not chance of seeing a few world records; but 30 World Records, the final tally at this meet, was beyond what I had hoped for. The excitement of the Hungarian spectators continued to build as the week went on and the volume of outstanding performances was incredible. A sub-20-second Men’s 50m freestyle – CHECK; abundance of world records – CHECK; first-time champions – CHECK; Team USA on the podium – CHECK.

I had the privilege and honor to participate in these Championships as an International Technical Official. My assignments for the week included both wet and dry positions, on deck and in underwater video review. As I stood over a lane watching these athletes, I was reminded of those anxious first days on deck as a newly certified official – making sure I knew the rules, taking notes on where I was to position myself, and remembering to focus on my lanes regardless of what was happening elsewhere in the pool – not an easy task when these athletes were putting on one heck of a show.

The same but different is how I described my time at this meet. So many sights are the same from pool to pool and meet to meet, but the small differences while working a World Aquatics event take some getting used to. Back home, we use Chief Judges regularly on deck as an extension of the Referee, working with officials who have observed an infraction of the rules and helping to clarify for the Referee what was seen. At a World Aquatics event, it is the official who observed the infraction, not a Chief Judge, who heads directly to the Referee and verbally provides them with the information about what was observed. If accepted, you would write your own disqualification record, in long hand might I add, sign it and turn it in. While I did not observe any infractions during the meet, I kept the protocols required for my position top of mind.

The entire experience was exhilarating and WET. I think the enthusiasm of the spectators propelled these athletes who thanked them with tremendous splashes at each turn. Each session I left more than drenched, but more importantly, I also left with the memories of seeing friends with whom I had worked before and making a whole new group of friends from the most committed swimming officials from across the world. While I hope that you enjoy each and every time you are on deck just as I do, I am very appreciative for the opportunity to have this particularly special experience.

What to Do if You Are Not Receiving the Officials’ Newsletter from USA Swimming

Occasionally we hear from officials that they are not receiving the newsletter. Some common fixes to this problem include the following:

- Are you registered as an official? If not, you won’t receive the newsletter as the newsletter is sent to registered officials. Perhaps you’ve forgotten to renew your membership for the current year or you did not register in the “official” category. You can check this information by checking your profile by either using the USA Swimming app or by logging onto your account on the USA Swimming website.
- Is the email address listed in your USA Swimming profile the one at which you are expecting to

receive the newsletter? If not, you will need to either update your email address in your profile, or you will need to check for the newsletter in the corresponding email account.

- Not sure how to check the above items? Contact your LSC Registrar for help.
- Have you looked to see if the newsletter is located in your spam/junk mail folder? If the newsletter is being identified as spam/junk, and depending on your email service provider, there may be different approaches you can take to keep the newsletter from going to the spam/junk mail folder. One approach is to mark the email as “not spam” and letting machine learning hopefully learn that the sender is not a spammer. Another approach is to make the sender’s email address a trusted sender. With Gmail, this is done by adding the sender’s email address to your contacts list.
- If none of the above suggestions solves the problem, reach out to your LSC Registrar. In many cases, the LSC Registrar may be able to solve the problem on their own. If they can’t, they can then submit an IT ticket to USA Swimming so that they can investigate.

Congratulations!

Congratulations and thank you to the following official who recently served at her first national meet (Note - we apologize for omitting Lydia from the December 2024 newsletter):

Speedo Junior Championships West - Austin

- Lydia Lee - South Texas Swimming



Officials' Excellence Award

Congratulations to the January winner of the Officials' Excellence Award: Teri Madill from the Inland Empire LSC.

With over 20 years of experience, Teri Madill has been a long-standing swim official in the Inland Empire LSC. Her children have long since retired from the sport, but she continues to serve her club and the LSC in any way she is asked. Teri has served as a trainer for the LSC for many years, and she has mentored numerous swim official apprentices in the craft of officiating. She has served on the board of her swim club and served the LSC as the Officials Chair.

Without hesitation, Teri can be counted on to step forward and volunteer her time on deck. She willingly continues to serve the Spokane Waves Aquatic Team as an official. When asked and when she is available, Teri serves in any position from Stroke and Turn Official to Meet Referee for championship-level competitions. When she serves as a Meet Referee, she does so with the goal of teaching others and equipping them to be the best official they can be.

Teri is more than deserving of this award. She could easily serve on a national deck, but chooses to focus on the LSC and help grow the base of future officials. Through her dedication and professionalism, Teri serves as a role model for both apprentice and certified officials.

Thank you, Teri!

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](#).



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