

THE PROFESSIONAL N3 MENTOR

The Art of Crucial Conversations

THE PROFESSIONAL MENTOR SHALL:

- **Know the Rules** and the official interpretations published by the USA Swimming Rules Committee
- **Be on time for each session and officials' briefing, dressed appropriately in a professional manner.** Be aware that you may be asked to answer questions about rules.
- **Be flexible** and adaptable to all procedures made by the Meet Referee.
- **Realize that you are not the Meet Referee. Work with the Meet Referee. DO NOT make meet function decisions independent of the Meet Referee.** Remember you are an invited guest.
- **Understand that you are representing the National Evaluator group. We should strive to work together as a team of Evaluators to help the mentee meet their goals.**
- **Understand** that you are considered an expert on the deck, but you may not always have an answer to a question. Know where to obtain the answer.
- **Remember that the purpose** of the National Certification process for USA Swimming officials is to ensure high quality officiating consistent with the National Standards. The process will achieve and maintain the requisite knowledge, skills, experience, qualities, and participation of each individual USA Swimming official. Evaluators should provide education, mentoring and constructive feedback to improve and retain officials.
- **Use the Evaluation Templates and Certification documents** that are located on the USA Swimming website.
- **Continue their own education** through participation in formal or informal forums and discussions at National or other high-level meets, Convention, meetings, clinics, etc
- **Self-Evaluate**

NATIONAL EVALUATORS ARE ALSO EXPECTED TO:

- Represent USA Swimming in a professional manner to mentor and motivate fellow officials.
- Support other National Evaluators. We are a TEAM working together to educate and train officials to successfully officiate at the National level. (Honor the Action Plans that have been previously developed for a mentee).
- Approach each evaluation with a fresh set of eyes. Officials may demonstrate skills or perform differently from evaluation to evaluation.
- Evaluate officials to ensure the official is ready to work that position on the Sectional/Zone deck (N2) or National Championship deck (N3); this includes the official knowing the rules, the position protocols/procedures and demonstration of a being a positive team member.
- Provide meaningful feedback during the process.
- Based on the mentee's previous Action Plan, work with the mentee to develop additional goals.
- Understand the difference between and OQM advancement or recertification evaluation and a national level meet where evaluations are mandatory.

EVALUATOR GUIDELINES

- National Evaluators may not give two consecutive evaluations in the same position for the same official.
 - i.e. N2 ST and N3 ST would not be permitted, but N2 ST and recert N3 would be
 - i.e. N2CJ and N3i CJ would not be permitted
 - No mentor should give an N3i and N3f in the same position

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- Certification and Recertification evaluations for multiple positions may be completed at the same meet provided the minimum number of full sessions for each position is able to be observed.
- Evaluators may participate as an official at an OQM provided the number of candidates for advancement is limited to allow fair and objective evaluation and interaction. While the maximum limits may vary from evaluator to evaluator it is recommended that an evaluator limit the number of candidates per session to three (3) when also acting as an official for the meet in ST, CJ, SR, DR, AR /AO or MR positions.
- When acting strictly as an evaluator, it is recommended that an evaluator limit the number of candidates to 8 advancements. Evaluators may not be working in auxiliary roles, i.e meet director, announcer, marshal, timing operator, timer, because attention is pulled from the direct observation and mentoring of officials.
- An evaluator should also consider the combination of positions being evaluated in a session. For example, when evaluating starters and deck referees, an evaluator will likely be able to handle more candidates than if it was stroke & turn judges and admin referees. Certain combinations of positions will contribute to how many evaluations can be done at a given session.
- Evaluators should give priority to those officials who have submitted a request.
- Requests for evaluations when you arrive at the meet should only be accepted as an exception
 - if you have the capacity to do a complete and effective job
 - if you can adequately vet the official's OTS record and previous evaluations
- An N2AO may perform N2AR evaluation if they are an N3ST and have been granted permission to conduct N2 evaluations by their LSC.
- National Evaluators approved to give Initial or Final N3 evaluations may earn their own re-certification per the N3 Mentor Recertification document.
- It is strongly recommended that National Evaluators request periodic evaluations by a National Evaluator regardless of eligibility requirements for evaluation.

PRE-MEET PREPARATION

- Discuss with LSC Officials Chair what evaluator credentials you hold and if those credentials will meet the needs of the LSC's OQM.
- Review Meet Announcement prior to OQM Sanctioning.
- Review Announcement to ascertain if the meet will have the components necessary for you to adequately evaluate the officials at the level requested in the QOM application
- Review *Considerations prior to Application* for OQM N2/N3 grid to assist in determining level of OQM
- Receive applications for evaluation at OQM from Meet Referee or designee at least **two weeks prior to start of meet**
- Review with the Meet Referee the ability to accommodate the requests for evaluation
- Work with other mentors to divide requests appropriately. Keep in mind the number and types of evaluations that can be meaningfully conducted given the length of the meet and the volume of mentoring that can be accomplished. Be mindful of the types and number of evaluations.
- Review the professional documents for each position, which include certification and recertification requirements, before reviewing requests for mentoring
- Run or request Officials OTS Detail Reports and Evaluation reports for each mentee
 - Request reports based on meet level to the LSC Chair, Zone Chair, NOC Evaluation or OTS

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- sub-committee chairs
 - Ensure that you were not the previous evaluator for the position.
- Check mentees' Activities
 - within 18 months of anticipated National Certification application and make note of any learning or teaching/mentoring needs prior to submission
 - this is a different time frame than the Officials Detail Report, which is 39 months
- Check the type of meets and sessions for each mentee to determine whether they are eligible to request evaluation. This information is located in the N2 and N3 Certification and Recertification document by position.
- Review past evaluations for the position and make note of action plan items
 - Does the action plan require completion of specific skills prior to requesting an evaluation?
- Determine that appropriate credentials exist, i.e., N2 ST must be in place before evaluating for N2 DR
- Determine if time frame between N3i and N3f is within 3 years.
- Email mentee and cc the Meet Referee regarding the mentee's application for evaluation
 - If eligible and proceeding with the evaluation
 - Introduction
 - appropriate Professional documents
 - N2 and N3 Certification and Recertification document for the position
 - Meet Announcement
 - follow-up questions regarding request
 - If not eligible for evaluation explain why and send documents for further education
- Organize materials for use at the meet
 - Discussion notes, templates, professional documents, certification requirements, OTS reports, previous evaluations
 - Recertification evaluations should use the N2 or N3f template respectively

DURING MEET

- Introduce yourself to the Meet Referee and other evaluators upon arrival.
- Introduce yourself to your mentees as soon as possible.
- Confirm the mentee has read the appropriate professional documents.
- Advise mentees on how you will be observing and communicating with them during each session.
- Discuss the feedback level that works best for each of them and factor that into your communication schedule.
- Answer any questions mentees may have.
- Observe your mentees as they officiate. Be visible on deck. Be sure to take thorough notes for your conversations and your written evaluations.
- Use the professional documents and the evaluation templates
 - Track the mentee's understanding and demonstration of required skills,
 - Discuss if the opportunity doesn't arise at the meet, e.g., setting up a swim off or handling a no show from finals. Skills such as a starter's signals for a hearing-impaired swimmer can be demonstrated even if no hearing-impaired swimmers are present.
- Touch base with mentees throughout each session
 - Provide feedback even if minimal mentoring is required, in a professional manner

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- Document in the written evaluation mastery of skills as well as instances where coaching or deficiencies were evident
- Encourage mentees to ask questions.
- “Educational Evaluations” are not to be offered unless they are requested in advance as part of a previously written Action Plan.
 - An Educational evaluation is not alternative for a negative evaluation. If someone is not meeting the requirements to earn your recommendation for advancement, be clear with them as soon as possible.
 - Consider how to constructively deliver that news with care and respect.
 - Give them every chance to elevate their performance.
 - If all else fails, work together on a specific plan to assist the mentee with getting the necessary experience to be successful at the next evaluation.
 - The goal is to help the official be successful at the next level of officiating.
- Manage your time so at the meet so you can observe and meet with each mentee.
 - Amount of time allotted to discuss observation and answer questions may vary based on the level of mentoring required
 - Discussion should be informal and formal
 - Timing may vary based on requested feedback from the mentee, i.e. pre or post session or even during breaks
 - The Formal meeting should include review of the evaluation template, and personal observations. Use real examples to support your points. Respond constructively to any questions or concerns. Make any edits that are appropriate. Solicit input on the mentoring experience and improvements you can make.
- Provide a hard copy and/or electronic version of the evaluation form to your mentee for their records.
- Review the steps the mentee must take to apply for advancement.
- Encourage your mentees to complete the Evaluate the Evaluator survey
- Be prepared to fill in as an official if mentoring requirements have been completed.

POST MEET

- Review all evaluations completed during the meet and enter in OTS. Confirm that the entire template is copied and entered. DO NOT LEAVE EXTRA SPACES or WHITE SPACE in the copied evaluation as OTS cannot generate reports and will spin.
- Follow up with each person being evaluated that you may not have had a chance to review at the meet and discuss evaluation status and confirm that the completed evaluation is in OTS.
- Answer any questions that the mentees have regarding the evaluation and support them on how to submit an application once the evaluation is finalized in OTS.
- Follow up with the meet referees and officials chair (if applicable) to discuss any exceptional performers as well as others that may not meet the current standards for position that they were wishing to achieve.
- Consider following up and continuing to mentor an official that did not have a successful outcome at the OQM.
- Self-evaluate your performance and identify at least two take aways.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- 3-Star and 5-star meets
 - Have mandatory evaluations for all officials regardless of eligibility
 - Do not require pre-meet vetting in OTS
 - Do not require professional documents or evaluation templates be emailed in advance
 - Officials should be notified that they will be evaluated by their evaluator and/or TLCJ
 - Minimal mentoring is expected at these meets, but performance will be reviewed
- 4-star meets
 - The assigned team will be evaluated regardless of eligibility
 - If eligible the stroke and turn officials may be evaluated
 - The Meet Referee has the discretion to mandate all be evaluated
 - Do not require pre-meet vetting in OTS
 - Do not require professional documents or evaluation templates be emailed in advance
 - Officials should be notified that they will be evaluated by their evaluator and/or TLCJ
 - Minimal mentoring is expected at these meets, but performance will be reviewed