

Officials Committee Report, September 2006

1. Committee membership:

All officials in good standing (35 at the time of this report) are members of the "committee of the whole". The committee of the whole meets twice annually, at each state championship meet, with the Officials Committee Chair presiding.

The "executive panel" of the committee includes the Chair and other officials identified by the Chair, typically those who regularly serve as meet referees. The "executive panel" typically collaborates via correspondence, and meets when necessary, as determined by the Chair.

2. Committee Chair:

At the "committee of the whole" meeting in August, Jeff Crain (HYCAT) was elected as Officials Committee Chair.

At present, the executive panel of the committee includes Greg Prater (past Chair, HYCAT), Bill Coyle (HYCAT), Jeff Northcutt (HYCAT), and Scott Wilson (HEAT). Qualified representatives from other clubs are welcome; candidates should be identified to the Chair.

3. Continuing Education:

Jeff Crain (HYCAT) and Paul Dryden (HYCAT) attended the USA Swimming Officials Clinic, held Memorial Day weekend in Colorado Springs, CO. The clinic consisted of presentations by coaches, athletes, and senior National-level officials, including the chairmen of the national Rules and Officials Committees. An team-based "Situations and Resolutions" ("How would YOU make the call") exercise was held during the clinic, and representatives from each team presented the proposed resolution to all participants. Subsequent discussions were very enlightening and, at times, vigorous.

A panel discussion was also held, which included the USA Swimming VP for Program Operations, the Rules Committee Chair, and the National Officials Committee Chairs. Questions were solicited from the floor, and were answered by the panelists. One consistent point of discussion was officiating philosophy, e.g., how legalistic must officials be to provide equitable conditions for competition? Opinions varied widely, largely along LSC lines. Concerns were expressed regarding the consistency (among LSCs) of officiating and technical rules administration.

Other interesting presentations included a comparison of YMCA and USA Swimming "codes of conduct" (now very relevant, YMCA having adopted USA Swimming technical rules), and a presentation regarding the new National Officials Certification program. The intent of the new program is to improve officiating consistency between LSCs, and to streamline National level certification for those who seek it.

4. Recruitment and Certification:

According to August 2006 registration statistics, 22/35 (63%) of WV officials in good standing are from a single club. Two clubs appear to have no officials, and three clubs appear to have only one official in good standing. All clubs, and particularly the under-represented ones, are encouraged to recruit officials (new or renewing) and send them to the upcoming Officials clinics.

An Officials clinic will be held in Charleston on October 1st at 3 PM, in the 2nd floor classroom above the HYCAT @ Charleston offices. Additional clinics have been authorized for the Clarksburg/Fairmont/Morgantown and the Beckley areas; details (location/date/time) and contact information will be sent to the LSC mailing list as soon as they are available.

Greg Prater has agreed to work with the National Officials committee to determine if our current LSC Officials certification requirements are in compliance with the new National certification program. The entry-level certification in this program ("N1") is administered at the LSC level, and is relevant if, at a future date, it is determined that all LSCs must meet this standard. This possibility was mentioned at the National Officials Clinic. We should also identify in-state opportunities and mechanisms that will facilitate promotions to the "N2" (National meet) level.

John Moore (HYCAT) was certified as a Referee during the past year. Paul Dryden (HYCAT) is currently in the Referee certification process. Additional candidates for Referee are being identified. Paul Dryden and Brenda Howard (FAST) worked at the Southern Zones meet, initiating the process to obtain National-level ("N2") certification as Stroke and Turn judges.

As mentioned above, as of September 1, YMCA has adopted USA Swimming technical rules (the blue pages of the rule book). At present, certification procedures for YMCA and USA Swimming officials remain separate.

5. Situations and Resolutions:

At the recent LSC LC Championship, a situation occurred in which a false start was induced by a flash photograph taken at the start of a race. The chairs of the Rules and National Officials committees have indicated that, in this case, the correct resolution is as follows:

Since the swimmer in question gained an unfair advantage at the start, and since the referee and starter both observed the false start, the swimmer is disqualified. However, since the false start was induced, the swimmer may be offered a re-swim. The other members of the field may also be offered a re-swim, understanding that if they choose to re-swim, the second (re-swim) time will be their official time, whether it be faster or slower.

If the disqualified swimmer chooses not to re-swim the event, then the disqualification stands.

Per this guidance, the situation at the Championship meet was incorrectly resolved.

6. Upcoming meets:

Meet directors are reminded that, under rules 202.3.7 ("Conditions of Sanction"), 102.12.2 and 102.12.3 ("Officials"), a minimum of three officials (Referee, Starter, and Stroke and Turn judge), duly certified, are required to conduct a sanctioned event. Meet directors are thus encouraged to contact the Referee (if one is identified) or the Officials chair as early as possible if there is any reason to believe that their meet will be under-staffed. In this situation, every reasonable effort will be made to procure volunteer officials; however, the only certain solution is for the host club to supply the required officials.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeff Crain
Chair, Officials Committee