



Swimmers might only see Officials as rules enforcers. But they are much more. Officials hold many positions, from running the meet to keeping swimmers safe. In this edition, the Athlete Reps took the time with an Official in their zone to find out how they got into officiating.

Zone 1 North: Jimmy Hong

Grace Tramack: *Why did you decide to become an official?*

Jimmy Hong: Initially I became an official because I hated coming to the swim meets and just sitting around and doing nothing. The most boring thing is just waiting around for the kids to swim, so I wanted to be involved with what was going on. After that I found it to be fun; it's productive, you're really close to the swim, you know what's going on, and it's good to be involved. Later, it really became about the people I was working with and the excellent people all around. All of the officials I work with are volunteers, they work really well and they're great people so I love hanging out with them, chatting with them in the corner and running the meet together.

GT: *What is your favorite part about being an official?*

JH: My favorite part is definitely first the people. You get to see people at the meets that you wouldn't normally meet and normally wouldn't see, and it's great to see people you haven't seen in a while when we do the bigger meets with the other zones. I also love to see and watch great swimming. We have a lot of fast swimmers in the area and it's really nice to be able to watch them and see them up close. And also, just to be able to help out. It's really nice to be able to help out instead of just sitting around.

GT: *Do you have a favorite meet to officiate at?*

JH: I love CCS. I think that's really exciting, there's a lot of school spirit going on, a lot of intense races, especially the relays at the very end. I think it was a couple of years ago that the boys' relay at the end was deciding the CCS Champion, Gunn versus Bellarmine, and the chance to beat Bellarmine for the first time in 31 years. I was the starter for that one, and that was a great race. That's a great meet to officiate.

GT: *What are some of the most important things you've learned as an official?*

JH: Teamwork, especially in the corner. You have to work really well with your starter or deck referee; that's very important. Also organization, because as you move up in your role to be meet ref at some of the bigger meets, there's a lot of organizing, a lot of working with people, a lot of relationship building, and that's all very important not just at a swim meet but everywhere. It's also learning how to appreciate people who give up their time to make these meets run smoothly, and I think we do that well in our area.

GT: *What is or should be an official's relationship with athletes and coaches?*

JH: To be friendly and fair, to keep things safe and keep things running well. We can be cordial and friendly with everybody but ultimately our job is to make sure swim meets are safe and fairly run, and we have to keep that in mind, too.

Zone 2: Alison Zamanian

Taylor Thomas: *Why did you become an official?*

Alison Zamanian: I love swimming and wanted to give back as much as possible in a sport that I continue to enjoy almost daily, and one that my son participates in.

TT: *How can you help the swimmer become better?*

AZ: I can help a swimmer be better by making sure that he/she understands the rules and answer any questions related to stroke and turn, in addition to providing an explanation for a DQ. A lot of times it is just a few tweaks that are needed to prevent a disqualification. Most importantly, a swimmer should always review a DQ slip with his/her coach.

TT: *What is or should be an official's relationship with coaches?*

AZ: Officials and coaches should have an understanding that each is looking out for the best interest of the swimmer. Officials are tasked with creating as fair of an environment as possible, and coaches are the advocate for their swimmers. The two can work well in providing a safe, fair and fun experience for swimmers.

Zone 3: Ellen Cisco

Robert Mitchell: *Why did you decide to become an official?*

Ellen Cisco: A fellow Swim Parent and USA Official, Anibal Parrado, recruited me to become an official and became my mentor showing me how being an official assists swimmers and coaches in achieving their goals.

Zone 3: Ellen Cisco (cont.)

RM: *What is your favorite part about being an official?*

EC: Being part of the amazing swim sport and getting inspired by the athletes every time I step on deck.

RM: *What is your favorite meet to officiate at and why?*

EC: I do enjoy all C/B/A meets because of the diversity of age and skill levels. Seeing the very young swimmers going for their best swim is always my favorite.

RM: *Do you have any favorite memories from being an official?*

EC: One of my favorite memories is my very first meet when I was training to become an official, a Zone 3 Championship meet. A whole group of senior official took me under their wings and provided me with as much information as they possibly could. They showed me that being an official is a serious job but you also enjoy great friendships and comradery.

RM: *What are some of the most important things you've learned?*

EC: Being an official is a very dynamic endeavor, you never stop learning, and there is always a first, a swim you have never seen before that makes you think.

RM: *What is or should be your relationship with coaches and athletes?*

EC: As an official I see myself as part of a team that works together with coaches, we have a common goal to assist the athletes. The coach is the advocate for his or her athlete, as official I am the advocate for all swimmers to create a fair environment in the pool and on deck.



Zone 4: Kendra Follett

By Sam DeRuse

At the King of the Hill Meet this past October, I had the privilege to interview a fixture in Zone 4 officiating, Official Kendra Follett. I have known Ms. Follett, having swum with her daughter, Claire, for almost 9 years. During most of this time, I have seen Ms. Follett officiate swim meets of all kinds and at all levels. It would seem out of sorts to go to a swim meet in Zone 4, Pacific Swimming, Sierra Nevada or numerous other championship meets where her daughter is swimming and not see Ms. Follett on the pool deck officiating.

I wanted to learn more about her journey in becoming an official, so I thought the best way to get answers was to ask lots of questions. Ms. Follett was very accommodating and patient with all my questions to learn why she became an official and what continues to motivate her to stay on deck during the grueling heat of summer and the bitter cold of winter meets.

Ms. Follett has been an official for 8 years, she is a meet referee, and has earned national certification. She became an official to become involved in her daughter's swim team and enjoys working and meeting people. The most rewarding part of being an official is being involved in her daughter's sport. Her role models that have helped her along the way are fellow officials, Jim Morefield and Bill Rose. Ms. Follett would like to continue officiating once her daughter graduates from high school in a little over a year, possibly moving up to the college level.

Being an official is not without its challenges. The most difficult part of the job is enforcing the rules for everyone, and in doing so knowing there will be disappointment for some. Ms. Follett shared with me that she would hope that everyone, parents, coaches, and swimmers, can appreciate that enforcing the rules creates equal environment of competition for all swimmers at all levels. I asked Ms. Follett where she sees the role of

officials in 5 years, and her response surprised me. With all the technological and training advancements in the sport of swimming, she believes there is NO taking away the human element of eyes on deck determining if a swimmer is doing the correct stroke or turn. Officials will always be needed to make these calls. For anyone aspiring to become an official, no worries there will always be the job of being an official.

I concluded our short interview with questions on what advice she would share with someone thinking about becoming an official. Ms. Follett said the job allows someone to meet and interact with great people, who are interesting and committed to the sport of swimming. Her journey in officiating has been fun and has been a great way to become involved in sport that she loves while watching her daughter grow up. It is easy to see how privileged our zone and LSC are in having such a dedicated and professional official like Ms. Kendra Follett.

Contributing Athlete Representatives



Grace Tramack
Zone 1N Rep.

Taylor Thomas
Zone 2 Rep.



Robert Mitchell
Zone 2 Rep.

Sam De Ruse
Zone 4 Rep.

