



PACIFIC SWIMMING APPRENTICE OFFICIALS – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The Pacific Swimming Officials Committee is committed to providing thorough and effective on-deck training programs for apprentice officials. This FAQ serves as a resource for supporting the on-deck training requirements of our LSC in compliance with USA Swimming.

Q1. Which meets can apprentice officials train at and receive session(s) credit?

Any sanctioned meet, where all four strokes are observed. A freestyle “only” meet shall not count for training sessions credit.

Q2. Can an apprentice official train at a Block Party Meet?

Yes. Apprentice officials may train at any block party meet but will only receive session credit if the meet is sanctioned as an OTS meet.

Q3. What is an OTS Block Party Meet?

A meet that is officiated “only using certified officials” in compliance of rule 102.10.4, minimum officiating requirements and rule 102.23, timing requirements.

Q4. Can an apprentice official train at an intrasquad, dual, and invitational meets?

Yes.

Q5. Does the meet have to be a certain length of time?

No. The length of the meet has no bearing.

Q6. Can an apprentice official train at Pacific Swimming Championship Meets?

No. Apprentice officials may not train at Pacific Swimming Awarded Championship Meets, such as; Age Group Championships, Far Western Championships, International Meet, Sectionals, nor any Senior Championship Meet offering preliminary and final events.

Q7. Can an apprentice officials train at a Zone Level Championship Meet?

Yes. Zone Level Championship Meets are not considered Pacific Swimming Awarded Championship Meets. Only the previously listed Pacific Swimming Championship Meets are exempt.

Q8. Can an apprentice official train at a Zone Level preliminary and finals meet?

Yes. Only the previously listed Pacific Swimming Championship meets are exempt from training.

Q9. What is the definition of a Trainer?

A Trainer is an official who is certified at least one (1) year in the position and is assigned by the meet referee or the LSC Officials Chair, to mentor an apprentice official. However, if there are no officials meeting the one (1) year requirement, the meet referee may assign the most experienced official to be a Trainer.

Q10. How long does an apprentice official have to complete their training after having taken the required position-specific clinic?

Certification must be completed within one (1) year from the month in which the clinic was taken.

Q11. Does the Referee Certification require the apprentice official to perform meet referee duties before certification?

No. Once the apprentice official has satisfied the minimum requirements of referee (deck referee), they do not have to perform as a meet referee prior to advancement. We will offer additional training to become a meet referee. It is important to note that just because someone is certified as a Referee, does not mean that the individual must accept an invitation to act as a Meet Referee, nor does an LSC that assigns Meet Referees to meets have an obligation to assign inexperienced Referees as Meet Referees.

Q12. Is there an online clinic for Chief Judge?

Currently USAS has not released an online clinic version for Chief Judge. For now, our annual Chief Judge clinic or zone hosted clinic will be used for certification.

Q13. How many apprentice officials can train at one time at a meet?

It will depend on the availability of meets, the number of Trainers, and the Trainer's ability to mentor; however, we should make every effort to accommodate multiple apprentices at onetime. Meet Referees are empowered to be creative.

Q14. If the number of apprentice officials exceeds the threshold at which effective mentoring can be given, is it acceptable to turn The Apprentice away or must they be provided with training?

Yes. It is acceptable to turn the apprentice away, although that should not be done without an explanation as to why the training cannot be provided. Having a frank discussion about what can or cannot be accomplished at a given session can help the apprentice understand why training at a given session is not advisable or practical. This may also be an opportunity to be creative in figuring out how training can be provided. We should 1st try

to find ways in which meaningful training opportunities can be provided, rather than defaulting to practices that limit training opportunities.

Q15. How does a stroke and turn apprentice official request on deck training to complete their required sessions?

As a practice, stroke and turn apprentice officials “should” contact their Zone Official Chair or Meet Referee in advance of the meet to ascertain training availability. However, if the stroke and turn apprentice reports to the meet without notice, the Meet Referee will make efforts to accommodate the training.

Q16. How does a Chief Judge, Starter, Administrative, or Referee apprentice officials request on deck training to complete their required sessions?

Since these positions are almost always preassigned with “certified officials,” the apprentice “shall” in advance contact the Meet Referee or Zone Official Chair so that arrangements can be made to accommodate training.

Q17. Can an apprentice official request training outside of their home zone or LSC?

Yes. Many teams travel to meets within and outside of the LSC, it is appropriate to request training session(s). Moreover, some zones due to their body of officials, have a finite number of apprentices requesting training. In this event, apprentices may reach out to other zones to request additional training opportunities if desired.

Q18. Can an apprentice official request more than the minimum number of sessions?

Yes. They may request additional sessions before asking to be certified. It is preferred that the apprentice official be comfortable in the position prior to requesting certification.

Q19. What if the apprentice official does not demonstrate the requisite knowledge of the applicable rules and satisfactorily performs the on-deck protocols and duties for the position?

In the event it is believed that an apprentice has not shown the necessary competency in the position after completion of the required training and apprentice sessions, the Certifier shall provide the apprentice with a written action plan of the steps needed to successfully obtain certification. Written notice shall be provided to the apprentice within two (2) weeks of the last apprentice session (or submission of the appropriate documents to the Certifier), and a copy shall be provided to the LSC OC. Additionally, an apprentice may always request additional training.

STROKE AND TURN Apprentice Self Evaluation

Congratulations on completing your deck training to become a Pacific Swimming Stroke and Turn official! Your journey as an S/T official is just beginning. We encourage you to work as many meets as possible to build experience and confidence at all levels. Please review the statements below. Once you can confirm all of these statements, you're ready to request certification. Otherwise, you should consider seeking additional training before applying.

Sign and submit this form along with your sessions check sheet to your Certifier when you have met the requirements to request advancement.

- ☐ **Freestyle:** I feel confident about my knowledge of the rules and my readiness to apply them given my level of experience.
- ☐ **Butterfly:** I feel confident about my knowledge of the rules and my readiness to apply them given my level of experience.
- ☐ **Breaststroke:** I feel confident about my knowledge of the rules and my readiness to apply them given my level of experience.
- ☐ **Backstroke:** I feel confident about my knowledge of the rules and my readiness to apply them given my level of experience.
- ☐ **Individual Medley:** I feel confident about my knowledge of the rules and my readiness to apply them given my level of experience.
- ☐ **Relays:** I feel confident about my knowledge of the rules and my readiness to apply them given my level of experience.
- ☐ I feel confident in my knowledge about how to serve as a **relay take-off judge** and how to **fill out a relay take-off slip**.
- ☐ I feel confident about my knowledge of the language of **the DQ slip** and my readiness to fill one out on my own.
- ☐ I feel confident that I am ready to **raise my hand** for flagrant disqualifications.
- ☐ I feel comfortable **explaining calls to the Chief Judge or Referee using the language of the rulebook**, though I understand I will have more to learn, so I am ready to ask questions as needed.
- ☐ I feel confident about my understanding of what it means to work in my **jurisdiction on deck**.
- ☐ I feel confident that I am **able to watch at least one lane successfully at this point**, though I understand that I will need to keep learning so I can watch multiple lanes successfully.
- ☐ I feel confident that I am **ready to give the benefit of the doubt** to all swimmers.
- ☐ I feel prepared to **arrive with the proper attire** to be a Stroke & Turn judge.
- ☐ I **understand the importance of arriving on time** for all Stroke & Turn meetings. (Meetings are usually held 1 hour prior to the start of the session.)
- ☐ I **get along well** with all coaches, volunteers, spectators and athletes.
- ☐ I have fully reviewed the language of the **Professional Stroke & Turn Document** as published by USA swimming.
- ☐ I have read the **MAAPP document**, and I feel confident that I understand the expectations for officials in the area of **Safe Sport**, especially the idea that all of my interactions must be "observable and interruptible."

Apprentice Signature: _____ Date: _____

Congratulations on completing your deck training to become a stroke and turn official for Pacific Swimming! Your journey to becoming a professional Stroke and Turn (S/T) official has just begun. You are encouraged to participate in as many meets as you can to gain experience and knowledge. This will allow you to have greater confidence in your ability to serve as Stroke and Turn at meets of various levels. Please review each of the statements below. If you agree with all of these statements, then you are ready to ask for certification. If you are hesitant about any of the statements, then you should consider asking for more training before requesting to be certified.

Stroke and Turn Apprentice

Training Progression Plan

This guide outlines the skills and focus areas for each session of your apprenticeship. Trainers can use it to provide guidance, observation, and feedback, while apprentices can use it to follow their progress and understand what to expect in each session. Sessions are flexible and can be adjusted to meet the needs of the apprentice and the flow of the meet.

Session 1 – Stroke Focus: (Freestyle – Always First Session)

- Focus: *Freestyle (required first stroke focus)*
- Discuss common freestyle rulebook language and infractions
- Observe starts and turns
- Emphasize consistent application of rules and jurisdictions
- Have apprentice fill out a DQ slip
- Encourage apprentice to call “Hand” if a violation is observed

Session 2 – Stroke Focus: (Apprentice’s Choice)

- Apprentice selects stroke focus (e.g., Backstroke, Breaststroke, Butterfly)
- Review key stroke and turn rules for chosen stroke
- Observe and discuss live examples at a meet
- Reinforce professionalism and observation protocol
- Review documentation process and how to communicate DQs with the Chief Judge and Referee
- Have apprentice fill out a DQ slip

Session 3 – Stroke Focus: (Apprentice’s Choice)

- Apprentice selects another stroke focus
- Review key differences and common errors between strokes
- Continue reinforcing rule interpretation and consistency
- Discuss relay takeoff judging if not yet covered
- Provide feedback on confidence, positioning, and clarity of calls

Session 4 – Stroke Focus: (Apprentice’s Choice; IM & Relays Must Be Covered)

- Ensure **all four competitive strokes** and **IM/Relay rules** have been covered
- Review integrated understanding of all strokes and transitions
- Observe, discuss, and evaluate IM and relay takeoffs
- Discuss meet flow and communication with other officials
- Confirm readiness for certification with Meet Referee (MR)

After Session 4 – Meet Referee Review

- The **4th MR** is responsible for ensuring the apprentice is ready to move forward.
- The MR will determine if additional sessions are needed.
- If further training is required, the MR will make recommendations to the Certifier, who will then create an action plan.
- The 4th MR ensures the apprentice is confident and there are no significant issues before certification.