



**DECK REFEREE CLINIC –
PACIFIC SWIMMING OFFICIALS' CLINIC
OCTOBER 2019**

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DECK REFEREE

- GOAL - DISCUSS RESPONSIBILITIES OF DECK REFEREE
- SESSION DESIGNED FOR NEW DECK REFEREES
- MORE EXPERIENCED DECK REFEREES – ALWAYS GOOD REFRESHER
- COVER THE FOLLOWING TOPICS:
 - THE TEAM
 - BEFORE THE MEET
 - PROCEDURES DURING THE MEET
 - HANDLING CALLS / DQ'S
 - INTERACTING WITH COACHES
 - OTHER THINGS THAT COME UP
 - APPROACHES / OPEN DISCUSSION / Q&A / SITUATIONS

DECK REFEREE

- RESPONSIBLE FOR CREATING A FAIR ENVIRONMENT FOR COMPETITION FOR ALL ATHLETES
- FACILITATE THE TEAM ON DECK
- SUPPORT YOUR TEAMMATES
- TRUST EVERYONE TO PERFORM THEIR ROLES WELL
- KNOW ALL THE JOBS ON DECK, BUT NOT YOUR JOB TO DO THEM ALL
- ENABLE THE MEET REFEREE TO FOCUS ELSEWHERE

THE TEAM

- MEET REFEREE – Sets guidance for meet. Responsible for all aspects of competition. "Race Day Job is Boring Until it's not..."
- ADMIN OFFICIAL / REFEREE – Handles the dry side – effective communication ensures fair entry / competition / results for all.
- HEAD STARTER – Sets Corner assignments and provides guidance, working with MR.
- DECK REFEREE – You – responsible for the deck. You set the pace per the Meet Referee's direction.
- STARTER – Your partner and your second set of eyes. Good DR/SR partnership is critical to the flow of the meet. (could be different in other LSC's)
- CHIEF JUDGES – Managers – eyes and ears; #, positioning, handling of slips, and understand how you will communicate.
- STROKE & TURN JUDGES – We are all S&T judges first.

THE TEAM – additional dynamics

- HANDLING OF SLIPS – Willingness to adapt.
 - Written by S&T Judges (anything could show up...)
 - Written by CJ's
 - Working with Back-up Corner Officials. Next up Deck Referee always ready to step in.
- ROTATION OF S&T JUDGES –
 - Balanced versus unbalanced deck
 - Coverage for Freestyle Events
- DUAL COURSE – SCY and LCM
 - Pacing and working with Corner team from other course.
 - Chase starts – managing the timing prioritizing safety first.
- THE TIMELINE –
 - Understand timeline up front.
 - Understand how the meet is running relative to timeline.
- THE REASON WE ARE HERE –
 - Working with the Athletes and Coaches
 - Parents, fans, patrons and you.

BEFORE THE MEET

- RULE BOOK - Refresher of rules, and how to describe them.
- UNDERSTAND KEY THINGS:
 - How are heats to be run – fly-overs, when to clear the pool.
 - Standard whistle protocols – when to blow short whistles
 - How rotations will work and how backup teams will support. Always speak with the Chief Judge to verify coverages.
 - Any unusual venue characteristics that need to be managed.
 - Backstroke ledges – will they be used and if so how?
- INVIGILATING – beyond safety, setting up the meet.
 - Warm-up procedures – opening pace lanes and race start lanes.
 - Getting a feel for the deck – the mood, buffer from the stands / spectators, sense of calm / stress – your role...

BEFORE THE MEET

- WORKING WITH YOUR STARTER

- Communicate – know what to expect from each other.
- Relative positions on the deck – where the SR will be, and go from there.
- Handling possible false starts – what to do and what not to do.
- Keeping order of finish – in Pacific Swimming, it's the DR (not everywhere)
- Checking the next heat to see if there are any open lanes/missing swimmers

- BEFORE (AND DURING) MEET

- The Starting Area – how it will be managed
- Behind the blocks – ensuring sense of calm and space, and no photography.
- Be aware of any accommodations to be made for swimmers with a disability
- Make sure that you communicate with SR on cadence for whistles.
- Watching for issues/situations that could cause a problem

BEFORE THE MEET

- WORKING WITH ADMIN

- What are the scratch procedures for the meet?
- What are the procedures for “no-shows” and declared false starts?
- Understand how the MR would like to handle these based on meet (timed finals, CBA, Senior Meets, Prelims/Finals, etc). Setting up Swim-Offs.

- WORKING WITH CJ / S&T

- What are the procedures for a DQ?
- Who is writing the slip?
- Who tells the swimmer/coach?

- RADIO PROTOCOLS

- Make sure you and CJ’s all understand what / how much to cover on radio.
- USA Swimming Radio Etiquette and Usage Guidelines
- Less is more...



DURING THE SESSION / MEET

- THE POOL IS YOURS WHILE YOU ARE THE DECK REFEREE
 - Why are you there?
 - What sort of environment do you want to have?
 - What does a successful meet / session look like to you?
 - How will you interact with:
 - Athletes
 - Coaches
 - Fellow Officials
 - Volunteers
 - Parents / Spectators

DURING THE SESSION / MEET – THE START

- THE START

- Allow starter to pick his or her best spot and then position yourself

- Can see all lanes clearly
- Do not block the starter's field of vision
- Allows the starter to see you out of his or her peripheral vision

- Whistles

- Blow series of short whistles to advise next heat that their heat is coming up shortly
- Blow long whistle to ask the swimmers to step on the block or step in the water
- For backstroke blow second long whistle to call swimmers to the end of the pool
 - We recommend that the second whistle be blown as soon as all swimmers are in the water and all their heads have come up above the water
- Awareness of missing athletes
 - Are you calling for them? One Call? No Calls? - Per Meet Referee.
 - Are you pacing properly to optimize chances they will be there?

DURING THE SESSION / MEET – THE START

- THE START

- Extending the arm turns the heat over to the starter
- Be prompt in turning the heat over to the starter
- Balance is key here
 - Waiting too long – until swimmers are ready to start – before handing it over to a starter will force athletes to wait too long to start.
 - Ideally – hand heat over when all swimmers are safely on the blocks (or in the water for backstroke) and getting themselves ready
 - The risk – Starters need to understand that turning the heat over is not a cue for “take your mark”.
 - Advice – a deep breath – as Referee, and a deep breath – as Starter – if you are calm, the athletes will be calm.
- Issues prior to the Start – DR is in charge – step down, excuse athletes in water, willingness to go behind blocks to address issues.

DURING THE SESSION / MEET – THE START

- THE START – FOR FINALS SESSIONS
 - Be aware of how finalists will be announced before a race. Is there an Announcer?
 - Understand instructions on short whistles and long whistle.
 - Work with Starter to see if all finalists are in place. NEVER EVER miss an Athlete in Finals.
 - Call for Finalists – Ensure it is a clear call by Starter for Athlete.
 - Look around to give called athlete opportunity to report to blocks.
 - Stepping down athletes.
 - Call For Alternates – when an event is closed.
 - Handling no-shows during Finals – working with Admin team.

DURING THE SESSION / MEET – THE START

- FALSE STARTS -
 - After watching swimmers until they surface and you are sure the start should not be recalled, circle /mark heat sheet in a consistent way - the lane number(s) of those you observed conducting a false start.
 - Do not notify Starter – they come to you.
 - Observe their mark of Observed Possible False Start – simply compare with your board.
 - Remember – Dual Confirmation
 - Timing – approach by SR. Benefit of Doubt.
- THE DECK REFEREE’S CLIPBOARD
 - Marking Heats that have started
 - Marking Order of Finish – from easy to hard, from good to “less good”. Note: this might be the only piece of information to determine the Athletes time. It is important!
 - Marking Lanes with Missing Athletes
 - Notes on DQ slips or other things that happen during a heat (possible equipment issues, distractions, etc).

DURING THE RACE

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- IT'S YOUR POOL
- Primarily focus on the race. Move to a location to see the entire pool.
- The chief judges are watching the S&T judges. DR communicates actively with CJ as necessary for advice / clarifications
- Don't "hang out" with the starter
- Your jurisdiction is the entire pool – when / how to exercise this (in a few slides)
- You have a good team on deck – let them do their job!
- Support your team - avoid distractions and help prevent them as possible.
- Remember why we are here – “we are here for the athletes” – M.Davis

DURING THE RACE – THE CALLS

- HANDLING POSSIBLE DQ'S – THE CALL(S)
 - The three questions
 - What was the judge's position/jurisdiction?
 - What did he or she see?
 - What rule was broken?
 - The deck referee should be able to “see” the infraction from the description without having actually observed it. "Paint the Picture"
 - If the description is not clear, ask the CJ or judge to repeat the call
 - Do not lead the CJ or judge and do not jump to conclusions
 - Listen actively – why would you accept a call? Why would you choose not to accept a call?
 - Procedures on next slide.

DURING THE RACE – THE CALLS

- Recording the information
 - When initial call comes in, note it on your heat sheet
 - When full call comes in, confirm record in heat sheet
 - If you accept the call, repeat the call back to the CJ or judge including event, heat and lane information (unless radio protocol is different)
 - After accepting a call, make sure the admin table gets the information
 - Check the DQ slip against what you have recorded
 - Reject incorrect slips
 - have them rewritten - write clean DQ Slips
 - If OK, sign the slip and get to admin. table
 - Is there enough information to define the infraction
 - Who tells the swimmer or coach?
 - These are the steps – the “what” and the “how”.

DURING THE RACE – THE CALLS

- Referee making a call alone
 - Rule 102.13.2 -“The Referee has the authority to disqualify a swimmer for any violation of the rules that the Referee personally observes . . .”–
 - In order to keep balanced officiating, the violation must be observable from anywhere on the pool deck
 - Otherwise, the lanes closer to the referee are receiving more observation than others – this should be an extremely rare occurrence
 - More often – observing something that a S&T judge also observes; or observing something that is a teaching moment for S&T judges.

DURING THE RACE – THE CALLS

- Relays – often handled by CJ, but be aware of process.
 - Make sure that your judges know how to complete the relay take-off
 - Chief Judges confirm whether there is a DQ or if the heat/lanes are “all clear”
 - since no hands are raised on relay take-offs, you want to positive confirmation either way.
 - If there is a call, accept or don't accept. Check the DQ slip and take-off slips before you sign the DQ slip.
 - If "all clear", confirm by saying "Thank You".

DURING THE MEET – WORKING W/COACHES

- Coaches are not the enemy – best interests of their swimmers.
- Coaches are smart when it comes to their swimmers and swimming –take advantage of that –they can help solve problems or resolve issues (find your trusted advisors).
- Keep the communication lines open
- When to step off deck – role of back-up DR to support.
- Be Approachable
- We are also there for the Athletes. All about fair competition.

DURING THE MEET – WORKING W/COACHES

- If a Coach comes to you with an issue, be calm – do not become defensive. Step off deck if needed (role of back-up / off-duty DR).
- LISTEN – Ask for time to look into situation and be clear about plan to follow up. This gives you time to think and talk to other team members.
- Understand what the issue is about and then investigate
- Use your team, Use your resources. Ask for advice from other officials or even other Coaches as needed. Defer to Meet Referee if appropriate.
- Make your decision based on the best information you can get.
- Be calm and empathetic, make your decision and deliver it in a clear but non-confrontational way.
- If the Coach is not happy, he or she can go see the Meet Referee
- Setting the right tone with Coaches, Athletes and other Officials.

DURING THE MEET – WHAT ELSE HAPPENS?

- **ATHLETES**
 - Common sense in dealing with them – empathy and clarity.
 - Remember why you are here
- **PARENTS / SPECTATORS**
 - Most of us are Swim Parents
 - You see anything and everything – your role as DR and when to involve MR.
- **EQUIPMENT / SUITS**
 - Rules around equipment near pool during meet (depends)
 - Illegal suits, taping, etc.
- **BEING FLEXIBLE**
 - When things go a little off the rails
 - Splitting heats, Recalling heats
 - Decisions to overturn calls. Decisions to offer re-swims. Swim-offs.
- **SEEING SOMETHING NEW ALL THE TIME – COUPLE OF KEY QUESTIONS**
 - What can we do that is consistent with why we're here (for the Athletes) within the rules.
 - Common Sense Answers to questions.

WHY DO THIS? PROCESS TO BE DR

- **WHY ARE WE HERE?**
 - Volunteerism
 - What Swimming has meant to each of us.
 - Here for the Athletes
 - Great people – it's a lot of fun!!!
- **LEARNING SOMETHING NEW EVERY DAY**
 - Every meet offers something new
 - Hard to imagine every scenario (if not impossible).
- **PROCESS TO BECOME A DECK REFEREE**
 - Clinic – check!!!
 - Shadow Process
 - When to get reps
 - Evaluation Process.
- **WE ALWAYS WANT TO BRING UP NEW DECK REFEREES – PLEASE JOIN US!**





DECK REFEREE CLINIC – Q&A / OPEN DISCUSSION