

CLINIC NOTES – REFEREE

SIMILARITY TO OTHER POSITIONS:

- ✓ Primary focus and attention always on the **athletes** in your **jurisdiction**.
- ✓ **Rules** (USA, LSC, Meet Sheet) are framework for all actions.
- ✓ Rules must be applied **fairly and equitably** for ALL athletes in your jurisdiction.
- ✓ ALWAYS call what you see (=fairness to all competitors, regardless of age/experience)
- ✓ ONLY call what you see (=benefit of the doubt, in every instance, to the swimmer)
- ✓ **Personal qualities:** Professional, Calm, Confident, Communicator, Team Player, Knowledgeable, Experienced, Skilled, Proactive, Fair.
- ✓ **ATTITUDE IS CONTAGIOUS:** greatly influences the tone of the meet.
- ✓ **Knowledge: most learning is “on-the-job”**, plus clinics, tests, online reading.
- ✓ **Skills come from Experience: Practice, Practice, Practice.**
- ✓ **Knowledge + Skills + Experience = Confidence, optimal service to the athletes.**
- ✓ **An athlete is NEVER penalized for errors by officials or meet management.**

DIFFERENCES FROM OTHER POSITIONS

- ✓ **Jurisdiction:** entire competition, including coaches, officials, volunteers, spectators, facility, venue.
- ✓ **Rules:** ALL. (Try searching USA Rule Book for the word "referee").
- ✓ **Room for compassion:** exceptions to some **administrative** rules for “circumstances beyond the control of the swimmer.” This can be age and experience dependent. (Look for reasons to let kids swim!)
- ✓ **Unexpected consequences** when applying some administrative rules, avoided by proactive communication. (Example: combining heats or events).
- ✓ **Experienced in ALL positions**, able to train other officials in any position.

KINDS OF REFEREES

- ✓ **Deck Referee** – in charge of the pool and deck for the competition in progress.
- ✓ **Administrative Referee** – oversees and ensures compliance with administrative rules.
- ✓ **Meet Referee** – fully in charge of all aspects of the meet; decisions are final.
- ✓ USA Swimming rules do not recognize difference between “Deck Referee” and “Meet Referee.” There may be a "Team Lead" Deck Referee, or that may be the Meet Referee.
- ✓ **Decisions must be coordinated** between referees to ensure they are fair and uniform for the entire meet.

DECK REFEREE:

- ✓ In charge of the **active competition (wet side)** – athletes, coaches, officials, timers, pool and deck, equipment. Deals with late/missing athletes.
- ✓ Ensures compliance with all **technical rules**, benefit of the doubt always to the athlete.
- ✓ Helps maintain **pace and consistent “flow”** of meet, so athletes can focus on their races.
- ✓ **Blows whistles** to prepare the next heat to race – consider timing based on meet needs.
- ✓ Decides and **signals Starter** when each heat is ready – timing considerations.
- ✓ Works with Starter to achieve the fairest possible start for each competitor. May recall a race for a bad (unfair) start, but not merely for a false start.
- ✓ Carefully observes each start for compliance with the rules, independently marks any false starts. Does not initiate false start call unless egregious.
- ✓ Gives full attention to the competition and ensures that any issues are resolved. If distracted by another issue, FIRST clearly delegates this responsibility to Starter or other qualified official.
- ✓ Records order of finish for each heat, and for each lap (2 lengths) of distance events (sometimes done by Starter instead or in addition).
- ✓ Receives, reviews, and records all DQ slips. “It’s not a DQ until the Referee signs it.”

ADMINISTRATIVE REFEREE:

- ✓ Oversees and ensures compliance with **administrative rules (dry side)**. As delegated by the Meet Referee, may include any or all of:
 - Entries and eligibility
 - Check-in
 - Event closing and seeding (including **relays**)
 - Scratches
 - Fixing errors in any of the above
 - Re-seeding
 - Requests for split times
 - Changes during competition (split heats, athlete swam in wrong lane, etc.)
 - No-shows
 - Timing corrections
 - Recording DQs
 - Results and scoring
- ✓ Championship meets – additional tasks to prepare for Finals (Announcement of results, Scratch Book, closing scratches, arranging swim-offs, seeding, no-shows and alternates, timing, results)
- ✓ Supplies forms as needed
- ✓ Organizes/maintains paperwork as needed

MEET REFEREE

- ✓ Responsible for the entire meet – ALL OF THE ABOVE AND MORE
- ✓ **Before the Meet:** at least 80% of job is pre-meet preparation.
 - Careful review and adjustment of meet announcement in coordination with Meet Director. You are stuck with whatever gets sanctioned – make sure it is right and will work in practice!
 - Anticipate and address potential issues prior to the meet.
 - Be clear about expectations with other officials and meet personnel.
 - With good preparation, the meet will usually “run itself.”
- ✓ **During the Meet:**
 - **Delegate**, monitor, intercede only when necessary to ensure correct procedures.
 - **Anticipate** and address issues before they become problems.
 - Monitor and fix **safety issues** throughout venue, from parking lot on in.
 - **Communicate** with coaches and officials through meetings and during competition, and with athletes when necessary. Be **available** and **accessible**.
 - Handle **protests** according to the rules, other questions or issues as needed.

FROM THE RULEBOOK: THE [HEAD] REFEREE.....

“Shall have full authority over all officials and shall assign and instruct them; shall enforce all applicable rules and shall decide all questions relating to the actual conduct of the meet, the final settlement of which is not otherwise assigned by said rules; can overrule any meet official on a point of rule interpretation, or on a judgment decision pertaining to an action which the Referee has personally observed.”

“Shall give a decision on any point where the opinions of the judges differ; and shall have authority to intercede in a competition at any stage, to ensure that the appropriate racing conditions are observed.”

“Protests against the judgment decisions of starters, stroke, turn, place and relay take-off judges can only be considered by the Referee and the Referee’s decision shall be final.”

“For consideration of all other protests lodged at the meet, the Referee may appoint a meet jury. The jury shall consist of not fewer than three (3) and not more than five (5) persons, at least one of whom shall be a coach and one an athlete.”

THE REFEREE MAY NOT:

- Change the rules or arrangement of events stated in the Meet Announcement, except to combine events or heats.
- The Referee may modify the rules for the swimmer with a disability, in accordance with Section 105.
- Any other changes should be made with reluctance and caution, only for compelling reasons benefiting safety or conditions of competition for ALL participants, and only with the concurrence of ALL affected parties (usually Coaches, sometimes individual swimmers, meet personnel, etc.), including those not directly participating in the change.