

New Jersey Swimming Officials' Committee

Report for the NJ Swimming Board - December 20, 2016

There is not much to report at this time, but here are a few things that might be of interest to you. We have also offered two proposals for your consideration.

Retention of Officials

Retention of officials continues to be a challenge. Of the 484 officials who were active in 2016, only 245 of them have renewed their credentials for 2017 thus far. Of course many people wait until the very last minute and then some of them find out that they needed to take a class in order to recertify. (Officials have to take a class and test every three years.) We have added two classes this month to accommodate these late registering people needing a clinic. Of course there were the normal retirements and moves, but they only accounted for 10-15 of the lost officials. Moreover, there are many of our "active" officials who work the bare minimum number of sessions and can be seen sitting in the stands at meets where we are short of deck officials.

We have trained a large number of new officials; 101 of them have already passed the test and begun apprenticing. We also have a few more in the pipeline, including those in the class we added on December 19th. Unfortunately, only about half of these people will ultimately become active officials.

As I have said before, like everything else in swimming, officiating is driven by the coaches. If the coaches believe that it is important to have sufficient qualified officials on their team, and they communicate that to the parents, then the team will generate officials who will stay with the program and regularly work meets. If the coaches are lackluster towards the need for officials on their team, that message also gets through. If you look at the teams with the large numbers of officials, you'll find the coaches behind the program every time.

Officials Training

During the Fall, we ran 9 USA-S training clinics: five stroke & turn clinics and four A/O clinics. These are in addition to the 19 clinics run under the YMCA auspices, which can be used by USA-S officials to initially become stroke & turn judges and to recertify as referees, starters and stroke and turn judges. The clinics were run throughout the state, making them readily accessible to officials and prospective officials.

We also ran two state-wide referee meetings/clinics where referees could attend, take the test and renew their credentials for the next three years. We reached almost 65% of our referees and the meetings were lively and informative. We will continue to do this in coming years.

Proposal for Consideration

Attached are two proposals for the Board's consideration:

Reimbursement for Attendance at National Meets – After much discussion and review of what other LSCs do to assist officials traveling to national meets at their own expense, we came up with a modest proposal to partially reimburse such officials, with certain restrictions to make sure those officials are doing substantial officiating in New Jersey as well. You should be aware that NJ officials going to work at national meets are generally not reimbursed by USA Swimming. The cost to the individual official in transportation, lodging and meals for officiating at Olympic Trials was over \$1,500! We benefit when our officials work at these meets, as they bring back new ideas and approaches, as well as building relationships with other officials around the country.

No-show Policy – The Officials Committee has also developed some standard language for meet invitations to deal with no-shows (swimmers entered in the meet and not scratched who do not show up for their scheduled races). This is a bigger problem for officials than people realize, as the question comes up at virtually every meet, particularly, multi-session meets. The proposal gives the meet host two options, and the meet host may offer some variations thereto, as long as it is stated in the meet invitation. The Officials Committee unanimously approved this recommendation to the Board and we request your approval and support.

Resignations of Committee Members

Ben Seto, who we just appointed to the committee, had to resign to return to the Philippines to help his elderly parents. Frank Rivera decided it was time to hang up his whistle as well. We will miss both of them.