

New Jersey Swimming Officials' Committee
Report for the NJ Swimming Board
April 26, 2016

Again, there is not much to report at this time, but here are a few things that might be of interest to you.

Retention of Officials

Retention of officials continues to be a challenge. Of the 487 officials who were active in 2016, 111 of them did not renew their qualifications for 2017 (a slight improvement over last year). Of course there were the normal retirements and moves, but they only accounted for 5-6 of the lost officials.

Also, of the 124 people who took a clinic for the first time and passed the test this past Fall, 55 have not yet completed their apprenticeships, which should have been done by the end of the short course season. This is normal; I will contact them shortly and encourage them to complete their apprenticeships this summer.

So right now, we have 500 officials on the books, including 63 Referees, 56 Starters and 53 Administrative Officials. However, many of our "active" officials work only the bare minimum number of sessions and can be seen sitting in the stands at meets where we are short of deck 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.

We will continue to look at possible initiatives to increase our numbers and participation, but this is not solely an Officials' Committee problem. We are in this with the coaches together and we have to work together to increase our numbers and participation.

Observed High School Meets

For times from high school meets to be used to qualify for various higher level USA-S and YMCA championship meets, the high school swims must be observed by USA-S/YMCA certified officials. This change took place several years ago, but it only hit home this year, not just here in New Jersey, but across the country. We went from one or two meets in prior years to 10-12 this year, and with the increased requests came some confusion on the part of the high school meet directors. We are developing some guidance which we can give to high school meet directors to help them navigate the process, as well as making it easier on our people who have to handle the requests.

Training Clinics

We will be running at least two Starter Clinics in May, along with a Referee Clinic.

One Starter Clinic will be held at the Ridgewood YMCA on Wednesday night, May 24, 2017. The second Starter Clinic will be held at the Berkeley Aquatic Center for Excellence on a Saturday morning in May to be determined. We are trying to schedule a third Starter Clinic for the southern teams. Details to follow.

The Referee Clinic will be held at the Ridgewood YMCA on Thursday night, May 25, 2017.

National Officials Activities

I will be attending the USA-S Rules and Regulations Committee Meeting in Seattle in early June and Judy Sharkey will be attending the USA-S Officials Chairs Meeting in Houston in mid-June on my behalf, as I have a conflict. This is a year for FINA rules changes, so we'll have to wait and see what comes out of the FINA meeting.

Ed Miller
NJ LSC Officials' Chair
April 24, 2017