

New Jersey Swimming Officials' Committee
Report for the NJ Swimming House of Delegates
May 16, 2018

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 506 officials who were active in 2017, 130 of them did not renew their qualifications for 2017 (a slightly larger number than last year). However, unlike last year the normal retirements and moves accounted for almost half of our losses this year.

Also, of the 130 people who took a clinic for the first time and passed the test this past fall, 50 have not yet completed their apprenticeships, which should have been done by the end of the short course season. I have contacted all of them and encouraged them to complete their apprenticeships this summer. We should pick up another 10-15 people over the summer.

So right now, we again have 506 officials on the books, including 66 Referees and 63 Starters. 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 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 Swim Meets

As you know, as high school swimming follows different rules. In order 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 year we observed some fifteen high school championship meets. It was a learning experience for many of the schools and for us, but we now have a process in place to handle the requests.

On the other hand, the NCAA has now adopted USA-S Rule 101 concerning the technical rules for the strokes, and their meets are now automatically entered into SWIMS. Thus, NCAA meets no longer need to be observed by USA-S/YMCA officials.

Training Clinics

We will be running two Starter Clinics over the next four weeks, along with a Referee Clinic.

One Starter Clinic will be held at the Ridgewood YMCA on Wednesday night, May 23rd. The second Starter Clinic will be held at the Berkeley Aquatic Center for Excellence on Friday night, June 15th.

The Referee Clinic will be held at the Ridgewood YMCA on Thursday night, May 24th.

We are also now offering a Chief Judge course for qualified Stroke & Turn Judges. Bruce Petersen put together the program based on draft materials the Committee worked on previously and his long experience working as and with Chief Judges. The first offering of this new course will be held on Thursday, May 31st at the Berkeley Aquatic Center for Excellence.

For a person to attend either of these programs, they must have your approval as the head coach of the team they will be representing. Before signing off on their form, ask yourself if you would be comfortable with them refereeing or starting a meet in which your swimmers are entered. Working with these officials as stroke & turn judges, chief judges and, in some cases, YMCA starters and referees, you will have a better feel for their capabilities than we may, so your consideration before signing the registration form is critical.

Communications with Officials

Attached for your information is the spring edition of the new Officials Newsletter written by Chris Barry. It is our intention to publish the Newsletter three times a year in September, early January and May to coincide with the swim calendar.

National Officials Activities

I will be attending the USA-S Rules and Regulations Committee Meeting in Dallas. I haven't seen the proposed rules changes yet, but I doubt there will be many changes of any significance related to the conduct of meets, as this is not a year for FINA rules changes.

Ed Miller
NJ LSC Officials' Chair
May 15, 2018