



USMS Deck Officials Roles and Responsibilities - Referee

Referee's responsibility and authority:

Ensure meet is conducted in accordance with the rules. Ensure fair and equitable competitive conditions exist for all swimmers. Resolve all disputes and protests.

Preparation:

- Check meet announcement for specific provisions pertaining to the meet.
- Dress properly—look official—white shirt or blouses and navy blue trousers, shorts or skirts are normally the proper attire.
- Know the rules—attend clinics and know the responsibilities of all officiating categories.
- Display confidence—officiating regularly builds confidence.

Dominant principles—a Referee must:

- Assume full control of the meet. Take responsibility seriously—remember that the swimmers worked hard to get where they are; therefore, officials have an obligation to do a good job. Remember that rules are "standards of perfection"—Conformity to them is therefore relative, not absolute.
- Be fair and impartial to all competitors, exercise good judgment and common sense. Control emotions and disregard club affiliation.
- Call violations as actually seen—never guessing or anticipating. Think about protecting the swimmers, not penalizing them. Give swimmer the "benefit of the doubt" if there is a significant question about violation.
- Admit a mistake, if you discover you are wrong.

Prior to meet:

- Review current *USMS Swimming Rules and Regulations*. Check whistle and uniform.
- Discuss meet program with the Meet Director to identify and resolve any potential problems. It is important you give consistent answers. Read meet announcement.

Upon arrival at meet:

- Be there at least 10 minutes prior to the beginning of warm-ups. Check with the Meet Director—discuss program and any potential problems—review the list of meet officials.
- Inspect physical setup—starting blocks secure, check lane numbering (right to left as the swimmers face the course) on starting blocks, lane lines, height and distance of backstroke flags, deck and lane line markings needed to judge the 15 meters mark, water depth, the recall rope—ensure interfering diving boards and ladders are removed and deck is clear of obstructions—inspect swimmer and spectator areas.
- Coordinate with Announcer (if one is assigned)—discuss procedures.
- Instruct marshals before warm-ups and ensure the entire warm-up will be marshaled. Ensure sprint and pace lanes are opened at the proper time.
- Meet officials—Start meetings early enough that they will be over at least 10 minutes prior to the beginning of the session.
 1. Welcome officials—introduce key officials. Explain expectations (no emotions, undivided attention to responsibilities, etc.) Discuss specific responsibilities and areas of jurisdiction of all officials.

2. Ensure key officials properly instruct other officials—Referee or Chief Judge should give stroke briefing. Have the Starter or Chief Timer to brief them the timers. On deck— no smoking or eating—emotions must be controlled—no swapping of disqualifications—no coaching —no fraternizing with swimmers and spectators—Judges should never warn swimmers about being "close" to disqualification, since being “close” is perfectly legal.
- Get the meet started on time—a prompt start creates a good impression..

During meet:

- Signal Starter that you are ready for the start when timers are ready, judges are in position, you are ready to observe the start and the competitive course is clear for the next race.
- Watch start and entire race—Referee can call infractions, and **must** confirm false start calls.
- Referee’s position is based on the best place to observe the start, the competition and the finish. It is often on the side next to the Starter;
- Watch the officials. Remember you must guide new officials to help them learn.
- Check and initial DQ slips—slips should fully describe disqualification and be written in accordance with the rule. Check the event number, heat and lane to make sure it is correct.
- Referee can interject into the competition at any time—can rerun an event if racing conditions not maintained. (NOTE: attempt to stop the race in progress.)
- Don't start the following heat until all questions concerning the previous heat are resolved or a process has been started for doing so.
- Control swimmers and spectators—don't allow them to crowd the pool.
- Control noise level during the start—don't allow sirens, horns, photo flashes, etc.
- Allow coach to question decisions, but don't get involved in long arguments— make decision quickly; then, protest can be made if not satisfied.
- Avoid overruling an official when possible, but overrule a call if a clear error has been made or an official cannot adequately explain a call.
- Stick to the rules and apply them uniformly—doing so avoids controversy.
- Some calls are based on visual judgment and are not subject to reversal unless personally observed by the Referee or if an interpretation, rule applicability or jurisdiction is involved.
- Infraction signal—Referees, Stroke and Turn Judges, and Relay Take-off Judges (when dual confirmation of relay take-offs is not being used) must immediately raise hand with open palm upon observing a violation. (NOTE: There is NO requirement to keep the hand up until the Referee or anyone else specifically sees it!) If the official did not raise a hand, the disqualification should not be upheld. However, in some situations, common sense dictates that a call should be upheld by the Referee despite the official's failure to raise the hand.
- Interference (obstructing another swimmer) is a discretionary call by the Referee.
- Entry by a swimmer into the pool before all swimmers have completed a race shall bar him from competing in his next individual event in that meet. A relay swimmer who enters the pool under such conditions will disqualify his relay team.
- Coaches or their designee may signal intermediate times to swimmers during competition.
- Verify all decisions made by the Timing Judge (or, when you don't have one, by the Chief Recorder) concerning the determination of official times.
- Protests: (1) Against judgment decisions: considered only by the Referee/ (2) Protests arising from the competition itself shall be made to the Referee, in writing, by the swimmer or coach within 30 minutes after the race in which the violation took place.

After meet:

- Remain 10 minutes to be sure no protest is being made. Critique meet with the Meet Director (both positives and negatives.) Initial time cards or other appropriate documents for records, etc. Verify results.
- Ensure all disputes or questions are clearly resolved.