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**Minutes of the USMS Officials Committee September 27, 1997 Burlingame, CA**  
**Chairman: Hugh Moore Recorder: Meg Smath**

The meeting was called to order by chairman Hugh Moore at 8:30 a.m. Committee members present: Michael Moore, Bobbi Turcotte, Judy Gillies, Steven Holloway, Rick Harris, Jan Kavadas, Bill Koerber, Ted Haartz, and Meg Smath.

**LMSC Communications:** During the past six months members of the committee contacted the LMSCs within their zone in an effort to improve communications between the USMS Officials Committee and the LMSC Officials Chairmen. The following summarizes what was learned.

- A few addresses were corrected.
- The quarterly newsletters are appreciated.
- Most of our meets are well officiated. However, many meets have an inadequate number of officials, while some meets may not meet the minimum requirements. A common problem is officials being too lax. USMS needs to emphasize standards of officiating.
- A few rule change proposals were suggested.
- There are still problems with USS officials taking us seriously, but we've made a lot of progress.

The committee discussed possible solutions to lax officiating. One method could be that if you don't have adequate officials, times don't count for records and Top Ten purposes. Hugh pointed out that we can't revoke a sanction once it's given, because of insurance concerns. We may want to create legislation that allows for the meet to be sanctioned, but for the times to not count if the meet is not in compliance. Many LMSCs have a "bond" put up. If conditions are not met, the meet host either receives a financial penalty or receives less reimbursement.

Hugh recommended that we add LSC Officials Chair to the newsletter distribution. The business card, which shows the differences between USMS and USS Rules, is used by most LMSCs. It was suggested that we create cards that show differences between USMS and Y rules and USMS and NCAA rules.

Since USS officials certification varies among the LSCs, many, but not all, allow apprenticeships at USMS meets. We need to utilize the resources of the LSCs that do allow apprenticeship at our meets and work with those that don't to convince them to start allowing apprenticeship.

**Most Common Disqualifications:** Hugh complimented Michael Moore on his "The Dreaded DQ" article in SWIM. Based on DQs from Short Course Nationals, the Pacific Northwest LMSC championships, and Pan Pacs, Hugh compiled a list of the most common DQs. The most common infraction was early takeoffs on relays, followed by regular false starts. The committee feels that it is important to get this information to coaches. Steve Holloway asked Don Hart, the USS Officials Committee Chairman, if our DQ rate was comparable to USS's. Don indicated that it was.

The committee discussed whether further studies are warranted. It was agreed that if LMSCs want to pursue this, they should be encouraged to do so, but that an extensive study was not warranted.

**Articles/Newsletters:** Ideas for articles for SWIM magazine include a dual perspective of DQs (athlete's and official's points of view) and a "Thank You to Officials."

Ideas for articles for LMSC and USMS Officials Committee Newsletter distribution include:

- Publicity for volunteer officials. Make them feel special. List officials in heat sheets.
- Pre-meet meeting for swimmers.

**Officials Certification Manual:** The committee discussed methods of encouraging use of the manual. The next chairman of the committee should contact the LMSCs who have expressed interest in certifying officials and work with them directly.

Meg Smath has updated rule references, made grammatical corrections, and reformatted portions of the manual. Other members of the committee have reviewed the updated manual. The committee agreed to work on merging the USMS and San Diego-Imperial certification processes.

The committee expressed concern that there is no readily available list of "USMS-approved certifying bodies." It was agreed that the rule book should specify which organizations have been approved. It was also felt that the currently approved organizations should have their processes reviewed.

It was stressed that if you have an adequate relationship with your LSC, you don't need to self-certify.

**Rule Change Proposals:** Most people support the use of a backstroke start during freestyle events. The USS glossary defines forward start as facing the course, while FINA and USMS rules do not require the swimmer to face the course.

*Executive Committee*  
MSC to recommend as an action item to the ~~House of Delegates~~ to update Appendix B as indicated by the underlined wording in the following:

**"Appendix B, Differences Between USS and USMS RULES, Forward Start.**

**"Forward start. The forward start may be taken from the starting block, the pool deck, or a push from the wall. The starter shall direct the swimmers to assume a position with at least one foot at the front of the block, the edge of the deck, or on the wall before the command "Take your mark." Those starting in the water must have at least one hand in contact with the wall or starting block. A backstroke start may be used in freestyle events."**

There are still problems interpreting the backstroke turn. Interest was expressed in working with USS to clarify the rule. Ted Haartz expects a change in the USS rule this year.

**FINA Officials List:** Hugh suggested setting up a subcommittee to screen and encourage applicants.

**MSC that Bill Tingley bring to the attention of the International Committee our concern about the 60 year age limit.**

**Tasks for Upcoming Year:**

- Investigate methods of ensuring compliance with officiating requirements. Possibilities include penalties, "bond" reimbursements, and possibly changing rules to allow for a sanctioned meet in which all times are declared unofficial.
- Continue quarterly newsletters.
- Create business cards that show differences between USMS and YMCA rules and USMS and NCAA rules.
- Propose a rule change for Article 103.2, "Certification of Officials," so that all USMS-approved certifying bodies are listed in the Rules and in Appendix B.
- Review USMS-approved certifying bodies for appropriateness.
- Consolidate San Diego-Imperial and USMS officials certification processes.
- Establish subcommittee to screen and encourage applicants for FINA Masters Officials list.

**Adjourn: 10:30 a.m.**