

Minutes of the USMS Officials Committee Meeting
Monday, December 10, 2007

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 p.m. Central Standard Time. Due to technical difficulties with the teleconferencing system, several members were not present. The Chair noted the absence of a quorum, but the members who were present proceeded with several discussion topics. Meeting notes will be provided and the committee will meet again in January.

Members present: Charlie Cockrell, Ed Saltzman, Paula Smith, Paula Kelley, and Jan Kavadas. Leo Letendre joined in progress.

1. The Committee plans to meet monthly in 2008. Based on a survey of committee members, the second Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. Central Time was established as a standing meeting time. Leo Letendre will coordinate conference call logistics.

2. The Committee discussed the status of USMS Nationals. Ted Haartz is the liaison for Short Course Nationals (Austin) and has made contact with the Meet Referee, Herb Schwab. Tentatively, we would like to plan on having Herb and other key people involved in the Austin meet on our January conference call. Jan Kavadas is the liaison for Long Course Nationals (Mount Hood). Jackie Allender is the Meet Referee. We will plan to have a status from Mount Hood on the agenda sometime in the spring.

(Post meeting note: The Austin officials will ensure that the meet is approved for observation of swims, but have not secured national evaluators for officials. We did not discuss Applications to Officiate.)

3. The Committee discussed the role of the Championship Meet Liaisons. The role is to work with the Meet Referee and the local hosts to ensure that: (1) Officials are properly briefed on USMS rules, officiating practices, and pertinent situations from previous meets; (2) Procedures are in place to provide for observation of swims so that swimmers may use times achieved at the meet for USA-Swimming entry and qualifying purposes; (3) The meet is approved for observation of officials desiring advanced certifications and National Evaluators are in place; (4) Resources are made available (including Applications to Officiate) to assist with recruiting officials and staffing. We will revise the standard recommended pre-meet briefing notes and provide the notes to Meet Referees.

4. Fred Pigott has volunteered to maintain a database of national championship officials. This will provide another resource for local hosts to recruit officials by identifying people who officiate regularly at nationals. It also provides a means for us to track staffing levels and identify people whom we can recognize for service. The concept of a USMS National Championship certification was discussed and may be a part of our future efforts towards USMS certification.

5. The Committee discussed the concept of LMSC Liaison Roles. Each member of the committee has been assigned several LMSCs for which they will serve as a liaison. This structure is designed to enhance communication with the LMSCs. Charlie Cockrell will draft a letter to LMSC Officials Chairs updating them on Officials Committee projects, agenda through the next convention, and the LMSC liaison contacts. Each committee member should attempt to verify LMSC contact information and following up on a periodic basis to ensure that information is getting to each LMSC, assess the needs of each LMSC, and identify issues.

6. The Committee also discussed the concept of LMSC Minimum Standards. The minimum standards are designed to provide some guidelines for LMSCs to achieve better consistency in how we approach the duties of the LMSC Officials Chair and how we train and educate officials. They are also intended to lay the groundwork for certification, starting with a focus on how we train Meet Referees.

Each committee member has been asked to review the draft minimum standards so we can discuss at our January conference call. Following the January meeting, we will circulate a draft with LMSC Officials Chairs for comment. The goal is to have these in place with an assessment of which LMSCs are in compliance and which need further help by convention.

5. The committee discussed plans for LMSC workshops, starting tentatively in February. LMSCs will be invited to participate via conference call and the idea is to discuss the LMSC minimum standards, other elements of a good officials program, and solicit feedback from LMSCs on help needed.

6. Several Meet Situations have arisen recently that we need to work to clarify. These are examples of things we can gather if we have better and more direct communication with LMSCs. We need to understand where there are questions on rules and officiating so we can identify points of emphasis for officials.

- Meet Referees need to be reminded that USMS does not permit the use of relay lead-off splits if the split was obtained using semi-automatic or manual timing. FINA does permit the use of lead-off splits for World Records obtained with semi-automatic timing using three buttons or manual timing using three watches, so this is a difference of which officials need to be aware for short course meters or long course meets.
- A recent article in *USMS Swimmer* magazine contained incorrect information on the use of watches in competition. Based on the latest guidance from USA-Swimming, simply wearing a watch in competition does not constitute a disqualification. However, use of a watch as a pacing device is an infraction. As with any other disqualification, a clear and definitive observation is required that the swimmer used the device for this purpose. Kathy Casey and Charlie Cockrell have been working with Bill Volckening on a correction to be included in the next issue.

The conference call ended at 8:15 p.m. CST.

Charlie Cockrell
USMS Officials Committee Chair