

COACHES CREDENTIALS – ENFORCEMENT AT MEETS

APPLICABLE USA SWIMMING RULES AND VSI POLICY

USA Swimming Rules and Regulations

202.3.3 *All meet directors, referees, starters, and stroke and turn judges, serving in an official capacity in a sanctioned event, must be members of USA Swimming, and all persons acting in any coaching capacity in a sanctioned event must be coach members of USA Swimming.*

502.4.2 *All clubs, including seasonal clubs, shall ensure that all athletes and coaches participating in USA Swimming sanctioned competition are members of their LSC and USA Swimming.*

502.4.3 *Anyone who coaches athletes at a USA Swimming practice or competition, must be a coach member of USA Swimming and must have satisfactorily completed safety training and background screening required by USA Swimming.*

502.4.5 *Anyone who registers for the first time as a coach member, shall complete coaches education required by USA Swimming prior to receiving his/her coach membership for the second year.*

Virginia Swimming Policies

F. CREDENTIALS *At all meets, all coaches are required to have their coaching credentials available and produce them if requested. The date of expiration will be shown on the credentials. Credentials will only be issued by the registration chair. This will only occur after s/he has received documentation that all requirements for certification have been met. Coaches who are registered and in good standing but do not have their credentials with them at a particular meet will be issued temporary credentials by the meet director.*

ESTABLISHING THAT AN INDIVIDUAL HAS CURRENTLY SATISFIED ALL COACH MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

It is the responsibility of the individual coach to ensure that he/she has met all the requirements of 202.3.3, 502.4.3, and 502.4.5. Rule 502.4.2 further stipulates that individual clubs shall ensure that their coaches are members of USA Swimming. *The Registration Chair is the only individual authorized to determine if an individual has met all the requirements of rules 502.4.3 and 502.4.5. Neither the Meet Director nor the Meet Referee may do so.*

In most cases it is expected that proof of meeting these requirements will be possession of a current, valid USA Swimming Coach Membership Card. In lieu of a current, valid USA Swimming Coach Membership Card, only two forms of evidence will be accepted in its place: (1) being listed as having all requirements met on the *VSI Swimming Coaches with Expiring Certification* reports produced by the Registration Chair; or (2) direct communication of the Registration Chair to either the Meet Director or Meet Referee.

USA Swimming Coach Membership Card

- All memberships are valid through 12/31 of the year listed. Current membership is, however, only one of the requirements that must be met. Coaches must also meet the educational, safety, and background screening requirements of 502.4.3 and 502.4.5.

- The membership card will list the expiration dates for first aid, CPR, safety training, and background screening. These items are valid through the date listed.
- A “VALID THROUGH” date also appears on the membership card. If the first aid, CPR, safety training, or background screening expires prior to the end of registration year, the valid through date will reflect the date of the earliest expiration.

VSI Swimming Coaches with Expiring Certification Reports

- These reports list the expiration dates (good through dates) for CPR, first aid, safety training, and background screening. The report also indicates whether or not the educational requirement has been met. Two reports are available:
 - *Virginia Swimming Coaches with Expiring Certifications.* This report is generated for a particular date, typically the first day of a meet, but it can also be the date generated as when it is being posted to the website for informational purposes. The report lists those coaches with one or more requirements that are set to expire. This list is most useful for identifying those coaches who have expired credentials and who should not be allowed to coach unless the Registration Chair says otherwise.
 - *Virginia Swimming Coaches First Expiring Certifications.* This report lists all registered coaches as of the date generated. It also lists the first expiration date for any of their certifications or background screening. This list is the most comprehensive list available as it lists all coaches independent of when their certifications and background screening expires. The list does not, however, list new coaches who have been added since the list was generated.
- The Registration Chair provides these reports to the Meet Director and Meet Referee approximately one week prior to the meet. Monthly versions of the reports are also posted on the Coaches page of the VSI website.

Direct Communication from the Registration Chair

- The Registration Chair is the only person who can indicate that the status of an individual coach member. The Registration Chair may provide updates to the Meet Director and Meet Referee as to the updated status of individuals whose certifications have lapsed or for new coach members. It is important to note, however, that is not always possible to process and communicate last minute updates and registrations. If an individual expects to coach at a meet, it is that individual’s responsibility to make sure that their certifications and registration are dealt with in a timely fashion.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

- It is required by rule.
- Coaching by individuals who do not meet the requirements of rules 502.4.3 and 502.4.5 jeopardizes the insurance for the swimmers of coaches club. They may also jeopardize the insurance for all the swimmers in a meet. The person coaching does not have liability coverage. Others, including the club board and meet officials who allowed the person to coach may also assume personal liability.

ENFORCEMENT AT MEETS

The Meet Referee has the ultimate responsibility for enforcing the USA-S rules and VSI Policies at VSI sanctioned meets. As a matter of practicality, the checking of credentials is delegated to the Meet Director. The Meet Director, or the Meet Director's designee, must ensure that only properly credentialed coaches are acting in a coaching capacity at the meet. Because meets vary in terms of venue, clubs attending, and personnel available, there is no one-size fits all approach to enforcing these provisions. Some approaches include:

- Posting individuals at access points to the deck and check credentials prior to allowing access to the deck.
- Walking the deck and checking the credentials of those who are coaching.
- Checking credentials of those picking up the meet packet.

Things to consider:

- The Meet Director and any designees enforcing these provisions must be made familiar with the contents of this document.
- The *Virginia Swimming Coaches with Expiring Certifications* report and the *Virginia Swimming Coaches First Expiring Certifications* report must be printed and copied in sufficient numbers that they are available to all those who will be checking credentials.
- Any communications from the Registration chair should also be available and used to update the list of coaches who are okay to be on deck.

Procedure to follow with individuals who are not properly certified and/or registered coaches:

- The Meet Director or designee should bar the individual from access to the deck, or ask the individual to leave if they are already on the deck. The Meet Referee should be notified if the individual refuses to comply.
- If one or more coaches are available from that club, one of them will have to take over the coaching duties of the individual being barred or removed from deck.
- If there aren't any properly registered coaches from the club, the swimmers need to be assigned to another coach who will assume responsibility for them (202.3.2. *At a sanctioned competitive event, USA Swimming athlete members must be under the supervision of a USA Swimming member coach during warm-up, competition, and warmdown. The Meet Director or Meet Referee shall assist the athlete in making arrangements for such supervision.*). In this, or other circumstances where swimmers do not have a coach present, it is common to assign the swimmers to coaches from the host club, but when being done it is generally out of convenience and not necessity. If there is a preference for being assigned to a coach from a particular club, that request should be honored if the designated coach is receptive. The Meet Director should notify the Meet Referee whenever it becomes necessary to reassign swimmers to another coach.
- If the individual refuses to leave the deck and there is no other properly registered coach from the club, the athletes from that club shall be designated as "unattached" for the entire competition. The athletes must then be assigned to another coach using the guidance in the preceding paragraph. Changing swimmers to unattached should only be used as a last resort when the coach in question cannot be confirmed as properly registered, refuses to leave the deck when asked to do so, and there is no other coach from the club who can take over the coaching responsibilities. Under these circumstances the individual refusing to

leave the deck is not the coach of record for the athletes. The Meet Director should involve the Meet Referee if this option becomes necessary.

- Any individual who acts in a coaching capacity, is not properly credentialed as indicated above, and who refuses to leave the deck when requested to do so shall be reported to the General Chair of Virginia Swimming and the incident shall be detailed in the Meet Report by the Meet Referee.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- An individual who has one or more coaching requirements listed as being expired says that he/she has sent the appropriate information to the Registration Chair and is therefore okay to be on deck. Can the individual be taken at his/her word?

No. Only the Registration Chair can determine if the individual has met all the requirements. Neither the Meet Director, the Meet Director's designee, the Meet Referee, nor any other individual is authorized to make this determination. The Registration Chair might communicate to the Meet Director and/or Meet Referee that the individual is now okay to be on deck, but unless and until this communication is received the individual is barred from coaching.

- An individual is listed with an expired certification but presents a certification card (such as a Red Cross CPR card) that is valid through some future date. Can this be taken as proof that the individual has met the requirement?

No. Only the Registration Chair can determine if the individual has met all the requirements. There are specific CPR, first aid, and safety classes that meet the requirement and others that do not. Meet personnel ordinarily do not have access to this information and even if they do, they are not authorized to accept it.

- An individual insists that the Meet Director and/or Meet Referee call the Registration Chair or that the Meet Director and/or Meet Referee check their e-mail for a message from the Registration Chair. Does this have to be done?

No. These individuals are present to run a meet. It is the responsibility of the coaches to ensure that they take care of their registration and certifications in a timely fashion. If the Meet Director or Meet Referee checks for an update from the Registration Chair, it is being done as a courtesy only.

- A new coach indicates that all their registration and certification material was recently sent to the Registration Chair so they're okay to be on deck. True?

No. Only the Registration Chair can determine if the individual has met all the requirements. It is the responsibility of the coaches to ensure that they take care of their registration and certifications in a timely fashion.