

Eastern (USA -S) Disability Swimmer Conference

March 4, 2017

East Brunswick, New Jersey (Rutgers University)

Representatives from 7 LSCs in the Eastern Zone attended. The Facilitator, Mark Rieniets, provided an overview of USA Swimming's challenge to "Educate, Empower, and Engage" more disabled swimmers, parents, coaches, and officials to support programs geared for identifying those swimmers with physical or cognitive impairments, optimizing their individual swimming training needs, and providing meets where they can validate their improved performance. Mark is the Chair of the USA Swimming Disability Committee. The three "E"s will be one of the main strategies to increase awareness for and start programs for such swimmers in the USA.

Mark noted that there is an estimate of between 3,000 - 7,000 disabled swimmers in the USA. The number of swimmers actually swimming with "impaired" (physical or cognitive limitations) in the USA is far less than expected. There is a growing interest, worldwide, in Paralympic sports.

Mark conducted the Paralympic Officials Clinic from 8 am to 1200 noon. He reviewed the classification schema, both for starting adaptations and for stroke adaptations, based on their coding. Mark discussed the strategy for tapping blind swimmers, hearing enhancements, access of assistants on deck for the starts, and he explained each of the physical codes for "impaired swimmers."

New Jersey swimming, courtesy of LSC, hosted the afternoon swim meet at Rutgers University pool. The other host was Children's Specialized Hospital. Age range of athletes was 8 to 33 years. One of the athletes, Robert Griswold, had previously competed in the Paralympics, in Rio, De Janiero, in Sept, 2016.

The meet was from 1 pm to 4:30 pm. The Natatorium was the Sonny Werblin Rutgers University Aquatic Center. At the conclusion of the meet, Mark Rieniets and Doug Griswold met with our official trainee group and summarized the coding system and key officiating strategies for open Paralympic

swimming events. Doug also shared with our group other USA clinic dates and Paralympic regional and national meets

Doug and Mark also talked about :

1. Ways to support parents of disability swimmers while not letting them get in the way of the Coach's planned training.
2. How to set up deck (officials, Staging area for swimmers , wheelchair traffic, mats, etc..)
3. Ways to demonstrate respect for each of the impaired swimmers on the deck
4. Ways to involve able-bodied swimmers during such meets for Impaired Swimmers

Doug and Mark provided each of the training officials with a "sample " World Paralympic DQ slip, the key for "Codes of Exception, " and the text /outline for the USA Paralympics "Technical Officials briefing." Each of the participants at this clinic fulfilled all the Part I didactic clinical exposure, and they will receive link from Doug Griswold, to enable them to register as a Level I Paralympic Official, for Stroke / Turn judging. The registration also requires completion of the Paralympic Officials on-line written test, and Doug will send this on line site for the Part 2 Paralympic test to each of the participants . The clinic adjourned at 4:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

David Strider, RN, CCRN,ACNP, DNP

Chairperson - VSI Disability Committee

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