



THE ULTIMATE CHIEF JUDGE

Chief Judge Training Guidelines

Virginia Swimming
Moving Forward, Swimming Fast

2016

GUIDE TO OFFICIATING CHIEF JUDGE

The Chief Judge is the stroke and turn officials' mentor. This person is one of the keys to the smooth running of a swim meet. The chief judge position may be combined with another stroke and turn assignment if necessary. The chief judge is responsible to the meet referee and the assistant referees. The Team Lead Chief Judge is the deck officials' representation of the meet referee.

At national meets there is one team lead chief judge with four assistant chief judges. The team lead chief judge is usually stationed in the starting area to assist the deck referees with any no-shows and declared false starts that need to be recorded. The remaining four judges are stationed around the pool to watch the officials in their quadrants. At local meets, two chief judges, one at each end of the pool, are recommended for any large invitational meet and at 50-meter pools.

DUTIES: Pre-meet: Meet with the meet referee to coordinate all duties the chief judge will be expected to perform. Solidify the terminology the meet referee expects during the meet. Attend the assigned officials meeting and make sure of the jurisdiction and protocol the referees expect from the officials. Ask if the referee wants the officials to parade into the finals sessions and if the announcer needs any specific information on the officials working the meet, (ex: hometown, years of volunteering to USA swimming). Also ask where the staging of the awards will take place and agree on how or where the officials should move to if needed. Make sure you send a letter to each of your chief judges welcoming them to your crew and give them a head-up of what the meet is about. If you do not know any of the chief judges assigned to you ask if any of them have worked this position before. Let them know when you expect to meet with them for pre-meet assignments. This is the meeting where you go over the information the referee and you have discussed. Review the letter you have sent to them to make sure they have no questions about their duties during the meet. At this meeting time it is a good suggestion to have already done the first day's assignment and give copies to each of your crew. Make sure the officials are rotated around the deck and explain how they will accomplish this. As the assignments are done the day before each session, post them so the officials will know ahead of time their schedule for the next day.

PRE-MEET SESSIONS: CONDUCTING THE OFFICIALS' MEETINGS (BRIEFINGS): The chief judge is responsible for the officials' sign-in-sheets, introductions, and assignments of officials for deck coverage, deck protocol, jurisdiction, communication and radio etiquette. The chief judges should establish a rotation system and arrange relief shift if possible. The chief judges will conduct stroke mini-clinics and answer officials' concerns before each session. The team lead, with the Vice-President of Operations and/or the Officials' Chair schedules speakers for the group during the course of the meet if it is a National Championship Meet. The chief judges also make sure all officials' equipment and supplies are working and in the right places. Included in the appendix to the Swimming Officials Manual is a "Recommended Stroke Briefing" outline. Make sure you have the latest version. This outline is also on the USA website. If the meet is a camera ready meet you will not have timers. You will not need to be concerned about staffing this position nor the supplies that are needed for this job.

DURING COMPETITION: The chief judges are placed inconspicuously at the pool corners. During the free-style events they may be seated as long as they can still view their officials watching the turns.

The chief judge's focus is on the officials in his or her quadrant. When noticing an infraction, the official shall raise a hand immediately or make eye contact (for FINA protocol meet) immediately to the chief judge. The chief judge alerts the deck referee by two-way radio of a possible disqualification and at what position the infraction occurred, (e.g. "possible disqualification, stroke judge lane 1 or 8 side" or "possible disqualification, lane X start/turn end"). The team lead shall insure continued deck coverage during the discussion of the disqualification. The chief judge will approach that official and ask:

- What did you see?
- What is the rule?
- What is your jurisdiction?

After the chief judge hears the answers from the official, the infraction is reported to the referee using correct terminology. The Radio Etiquette and Protocol guidelines are available on the officials section of the USA Swimming website.

The chief judge then should recommend to the referee that they accept if all information is correct or not to accept the disqualification from the official if something was wrong with the information or jurisdiction. It is then the responsibility of the chief judge at the finish end of the pool to notify the swimmer if the disqualification stands. It is recommended that the chief judge call the swimmer to a position behind the seated officials to notify him/her of the disqualification. It is also the chief judges' responsibility to notify the swimmers that if they do not agree with the infraction their coach has a right to talk with the referee about the call that was made.

The decision to accept or reject a disqualification is the responsibility of the referee. When the decision to accept has been made the chief judge fills out the disqualification slip and verifies all the information is correct, has that official sign the disqualification form and then turns over the slip to the referee. If a slip is filled out at the turn end of the pool, use the stroke judges as couriers to turn the slip into the referee on duty.

In the event there is a false start the team lead chief judge or the chief judge assigned at the starting area corner will notify the swimmer of the infraction.

If an official needs to be excused for any reason, the chief judges have the responsibility to maintain equal coverage on the deck at all times and may assign relief officials to the vacant position or may assume the position themselves if necessary. Sometimes other officials (i.e. the off duty starters or deck referees) are asked to fill these positions if possible.

During relays, the chief judges are assigned to look for dual confirmation of an early take-off from the side and lane judges by comparing both the ballot slips from each lane and the ballot slip from the side official covering the same lane. If an official on the side has marked his/her ballot, the chief judge states possible disqualification lanes 1-4 or 5-8 and immediately goes to

the furthest part of his/her quadrant and gathers all the ballots. As soon as he/she sees there is a confirmation, the chief judge states confirmation lane number or if there is no confirmation, the chief judge states "all clear lanes 1-4 or 5-8" so the referee knows there is or is not a disqualification. If there is a confirmation, the relay take-off slips must be turned over to the referee as well as the completed DQ slip. It is important to tell the team that has been disqualified which exchange it was, (e.g. 2nd swimmer or 1st exchange).

POST MEET DUTIES: It is very important that the chief judges thank every official appropriately for the generous contribution of their time to the meet.

Chief Judges are often asked to evaluate the performance of the stroke and turn judges. Their observations include the protocol established for the meet, as well as the technical aspects of judging. This is meant to be educational! It is meant to point out where improvement in certain areas will help the stroke and turn judge become more knowledgeable and continue to improve, as everyone of the officials' crew should always be trying to do their best for the athletes.

If there is a need to talk with an official about suggestions for improvement this is to be done in a constructive manner not to embarrass or berate, but rather to educate. If this cannot be done while at the site, then chose to do it soon after the meet, but not by an e-mail. A phone call or letter would be appropriate with a copy to the Officials Chair.

The team lead needs to make sure he/she has input from his/her chief judges and especially note the excellent qualities of the exceptional official for recommendation to the Officials' Chair. The team lead needs to evaluate his/her team of chief judges and send that report in to the Officials Chair as well. It is also important for the team lead to submit an overall view of the chief judges and officials to the meet referee in a very timely manor so he/she can complete his/her report.

All evaluations will be sent to the Officials' Chair and a copy for your records for one year. This becomes important when the Vice President of Program Operations and the Officials Chair are looking for upgrading officials and need more information on particular officials that worked your meet. It is important to be fair and educational in evaluating all stroke and turn officials.

SUMMARY: There are many meets where there are not an adequate number of officials. In the case where there are only four stroke and turn judges in addition to the starter and referee, two of them could be made a chief judge and two can be the stroke judges. However, when there is a real shortage of officials, it is imperative that radios be used to expedite the flow of the meet. The idea that a chief judge is only for championship meets is simply not true. An advantage of using this position whenever possible is that it becomes a teaching tool or mentoring opportunity for anyone that fills this position and can assist the other deck officials.

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CHIEF JUDGE RESPONSIBILITIES

- Pre-briefing
 - If at all possible, please come to the session early so that you can get all equipment and paper work ready (realizing that some of you also have a swimmer to take care of so be as flexible as possible)
 - Check credentials of all officials and all trainees. If trainees are to do final blue & white sessions, make sure they have passed the exams, are compliant with APT, background check and registration.
 - Remind trainees that S&T training requires 6 sessions over 3 meets, 3 shadowing sessions and 3 sessions in Blue and White making calls.

- Officials' briefing
 - Be ready to do the stroke briefing (see page 5 and 6).
 - Do the deck assignments (see pages 12 and 13).

- During session
 - At corner, remembering that your focus of attention is the officials and not the swimmers.
 - Remember, you are the chief training officers on deck
 - Be proactive, remind everyone when we're changing protocols, e.g., switching from breaststroke to backstroke, or when we are rotating.
 - If something is being done wrong, start with a gentle reminder; sometimes all that's needed is to make eye contact.
 - Handle DQs
 - Confirm specific lane as soon as you get to the official
 - Satisfy yourself that a rule was violated; vet the call to ensure that the call was within jurisdiction, that you have a description of what occurred, and you know what rule was violated.
 - Take notes for later reference if needed.
 - Complete or check the DQ slip, take it then to the deck referee.

- Post-session
 - Thank and dismiss officials.

EQUIPMENT

- **Officials**
 - Heat sheet (meet director will help you here)
 - Distance counting sheets as necessary
- **Lap counters**
 - Obtain from facility (meet director will help you here)
 - Place on bulkhead prior to the start of distance events
 - Remove from deck at conclusion of distance events
- **Chairs**
 - Line up chairs at corners of pool for S&Ts for distance events

PAPER WORK

- Session sign-in sheet (credentials, confirm sessions being worked)
- Assignment tracking form
- Lap counting sheets and distance counting for starter and referee
- DQ slips
- Relay take-off slips
- Heat sheets

GENERAL DECK INSTRUCTIONS FOR ALL OFFICIALS

- Look professional – neat appearance, shirts tucked in, no hats (preferably)
- Name Tags should be worn
- If you must carry a cell phone or pager, make sure it is set to vibrate; better yet, turn it off or leave it off-deck (if you do have to take a call, notify the CJ, and then take it off-deck)
- Stand at edge of pool with hands behind your back when swimmers are in your jurisdiction (not concerned with right or left foot forward, just be at the edge)
- Please report to your position 5 minutes prior to the start of the session
- Relief changes should occur between heats, not during heats

JURISDICTIONS

(Summarized in Deck Protocol summary table in page 6)

WHEN WALKING THE SIDES:

- Turn Judge
 - Start: heads up.
 - Turn: from the beginning of the last complete arm stroke into the turn through heads up following the turn.
 - Finish: from the beginning of the last complete arm stroke through the finish
- Stroke Judge
 - Wall to wall

WHEN NOT WALKING THE SIDES:

- Turn Judge
 - Half of the pool

RELAYS

- The goal is to have two officials watching 5 lanes each (but staffing may limit coverage to two officials watching 10 lanes each)
- Off deck referees and starters will default to providing side coverage
- Ideally, S&T will provide lane coverage, but we will use additional DR and SR as needed
- Relay take-off slips
 - Prepare slips for S&T, Deck Referees, and Starters and label (ex. Side 1/5, Lane 1/5, Side 6/10, Lane 6/10)
 - Fill out and distribute during sessions for relays at end of session.

STROKE & TURN BRIEFINGS AGENDA

- Stroke briefing. A formal briefing should be done before each session of the meet, especially if trainees are present.
- Assignments including relief rotation (if any)
- Review of jurisdictions and deck protocols
- Relay take-off protocol
- Don't make the briefing so long that the officials can't get to hospitality for their food.
- The last thing they should hear in every briefing: Thank you and **The Benefit of Doubt goes to the swimmer.**

OFFICIALS' BRIEFING

- Assignments
- Deck Protocol
- Jurisdiction
- Special Information

BREASTSTROKE

Start: Forward start.

Stroke: Body kept on breast.
Stroke cycle is one arm pull and one leg kick in that order. Simultaneous arm movement in same horizontal plane.
After start and each turn one arm stroke may be completely back to legs. Head must break surface at widest part of second pull.
Recovery by the hands from the breast-on, under, or over the water. Elbows under water except last stroke before turn or finish.

Kick: After start and each turn, prior to the first breaststroke kick, a single butterfly kick is permitted.
Movement of the legs shall be simultaneous vertically and horizontally.
Feet turned out during propulsive part of kick.
No alternating, scissors, or butterfly kick, except as stated, is allowed.

Turns/ Shoulders at or past vertical toward breast when feet leave wall.

Finish: Touch shall be made with both hands separated and simultaneously at, above, or below the water surface.
At the last stroke before the turn and at the finish an arm stroke not followed by a leg kick is permitted.
Head may be submerged after the last arm pull prior to the touch, provided it breaks the surface of the water at some point during last complete or incomplete stroke cycle preceding the touch.

BUTTERFLY

Start: Forward start.

Stroke: Body kept on breast.
Multiple kicks permitted but first arm pull must bring swimmer to the surface.
Must break surface throughout the race except swimmer may be submerged after start and each turn not more than 15 meters where head must break surface.
Arms, shoulder to wrist, brought forward over water and pulled back simultaneously.

Kick: Simultaneous up and down movement.
No alternating, scissors, or breaststroke kicking movements.

Turns/ Shoulders at or past vertical toward breast when the swimmer leaves wall.

Finish: Touch shall be made with both hands separated and simultaneously at, above, or below the water surface.

BACKSTROKE

Start: In water facing start end with both hands on gutter or starting grips.
(a) guttered pool - feet/toes may be above the water, but may not be in, on, above lip, or bent over the gutter at any time before or after start.
(b) flat wall pads - feet/toes may be placed above the water level.
(c) when using backstroke ledges - the toes of both feet must be in contact with the wall

Stroke/ Any style as long as swimmer remains on back.
Kick: Must break surface throughout the race except swimmer may be submerged after start and each turn not more than 15 meters where head must break surface.

Turns: During turn swimmer may go past vertical to the breast and may utilize a continuous single or continuous simultaneous double arm pull to initiate the turn.
Some part of swimmer must touch wall at completion of each length. Shoulders at or past vertical toward back when feet leave wall.

Finish: Some part of swimmer must touch the wall while on the back.

USA Swimming Officials Committee

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OFFICIALS' BRIEFING

The “Professional” Chief Judge – or – Assistant and Mentor to All Officials

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A Professional Chief Judge (CJ) should:

1. Know the Rules and the USA Swimming Rules Committee interpretations

2. As Team Lead Chief Judge Plan Prior to Arriving at the Meet -

- Contact the Meet Referee based on the level of the meet being conducted to confirm -
 - all duties for the Chief Judges ([see Attachment A “Guide for CJ Assignments”](#))
 - type and use of cameras (TV, timing, underwater judging confirmation), if any
 - pool configuration and locations for starter area and administrative tables
 - the jurisdiction and protocols expected from the Stroke & Turn officials
 - the process how officials will take and leave their deck positions including awards
 - the level of Stroke Briefing expected
 - use of Relief and Reserve Judges
 - the proper procedure, if relay takeoff pads are used for relays
 - use of assigned Chief Judges (or not) for Time Trials
 - radio protocol expected
 - how Declared False Starts (DFS’s) will be processed before and during a session
 - procedures for how Deck Referees and admin table will receive DQ, DFS’ and “No Show” slips for review and sign off
 - finals protocol for alternates so the Chief Judge in Starter’s area can assist the Deck Referee
- Contact the Host and Meet Director to determine (and request) the availability of meet supplies, equipment and services -
 - Radios, clipboards, watches, batteries, disqualification (DQ) slips, paper, chairs, towels, pencils, high-speed copier(s)...etc.
 - Internet access and printers
 - Social time and date, if any
- Communicate all of the above with the CJ team for initial assignments before they arrive at the meet including when they are expected to arrive at the meet (Leadership Team Meeting, Chief Judge Meeting, attendance at General Meeting)

3. Plan Prior to Officials Briefings

- ARRIVE EARLY and be prepared for last minute changes
- All Chief Judges meet upon first arrival at meet to:
 - Review assignments & duties
 - Confirm location of equipment items
- All Chief Judges should allow for approximately one hour before each planned briefing to -
 - Review assignments and prep for each session’s requirements
 - Review and resolve all assignment challenges
 - Prepare sign in sheets

4. At Pre-Session Officials Meetings -

- Call for sign in of all Officials and verify if they will be present for the next session and announce:
 - the expectation that Officials will be staying for Time Trials and start a sign-in sheet
 - ask Starter or Deck Referee evaluation candidates to meet with the evaluators if they have not met already
 - the time to be on deck and in position
- Introduce the Meet Referee, Meet Director and the Assigned Team (usually at the first meeting)
 - STOP the briefing whenever a dignitary enters the room for introduction, especially if there is a guest speaker
- Conduct a stroke briefing using the “Official’s Briefing” on USA Swimming website under “Training Resources”
- Review Deck Protocol expected for the meet
- Review Proper Lead Lag procedure for Stroke Officials
- Review Jurisdictions, including 15m
- Review the Chief Judge’s role and how to communicate with the Lead Chief Judge and Deck Referees
- Review Relay Takeoff’s, Dual Confirmation and X = Early Take Off, O = Good Exchange
- Announce and post Officials’ Assignments in multiple locations
- Announce Relay Take-Off assignments & hand out relay take-off slips
 - Relay take-off slips may be passed out during the relay break, if there is one
- Make sure relief shifts and rotations are clear and when the relief shifts will take place during the session
- Distribute heat sheets to CJs, Deck Referees and Starters

5. During Competition:

- Perform a radio check prior to the beginning of each session
- Advise the Deck Referee that all judges (turn and stroke) in your quadrant are in place (several minutes before the session start)
- Get to know the officials in your quadrant
- Use a mentoring approach when talking to a Stroke or Turn Official that is out of position or using improper protocol
- Always observe the officials in your quadrant, not the swimmers
- Use the Stroke Judges to carry DQ slips from the turn end when things get “busy”. Make sure the Strokes Judges are familiar with this procedure



DECK STAFFING AND ASSIGNMENTS

- Staffing the deck with stroke & turn officials will be done using the table below as a guide.
- Always consult with the deck referee about how to set up the deck
- If we need to, we can use an off starter and deck referee to provide additional coverage. If used, they will cover lanes closest to the start side and will work out their own rotation (if this becomes necessary, see Meet Referee first)

# of Officials	Start End	Turn End	Stroke	Relief
4	2	2	0	0
5	2	2	0	1
6	2	2	1 + 1	0
7	2	2	1 + 1	1
8	2	2	2 + 2	0
9	2	2	2 + 2	1
10	2	2	2 + 2	2
11	2	2	2 + 2	3
12	4	4	2 + 2	0
13	4	4	2 + 2	1
14	4	4	2 + 2	2
15	4	4	2 + 2	3
16	4	4	2 + 2	4

- Rotate after every boy event (especially if there are trainees)
- Relief
 - Relief (when we have it) will rotate, otherwise officials remain in their assigned positions
 - **Not optional**
 - If relief is needed and there is no designated relief, CJ will fill in.

Deck Protocols

Lead=LE Lag= LG

Event	Start End	Turn End	Stroke (2 per side)
Freestyle (50, 100,200)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start: remain seated • Finish: remain seated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turns: stand when swimmers are in jurisdiction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remain in place at 15 M marks on both sides of pool
Freestyle (400, 500, 800, 1000,1500,1650)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe from corners (CJs to workout rotation) • Start: remain seated • Turns: stand when swimmers are in jurisdiction • Finish: remain seated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe from corners (CJs to workout rotation) • Start: remain seated • Turns: stand when swimmers are in jurisdiction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use 1 per side • Start side watches 15 M across all lanes for outbound lengths • Far side watches 15 M across all lanes for inbound lengths • Watch through 100
Backstroke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start: remain seated • Turns: stand when swimmers are in jurisdiction • Finish: stand when swimmers are in jurisdiction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turns: stand when swimmers are in jurisdiction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start: LE at flags, LG at 15 M • Outbound: LE walks to flags, LG walks to 15 M • Inbound: LG walks to flags, LE walks to 15 M
Breaststroke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start: stand on long whistle, move forward after start to observe swimmers while in jurisdiction • Turns: stand when swimmers are in jurisdiction • Finish: stand when swimmers are in jurisdiction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turns: stand when swimmers are in jurisdiction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start: LE at flags; LG at 7 M • Outbound: LE walks to flags, LG walks to near flags • Inbound: LG walks to flags, LE walks to near flags
Butterfly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start: stand on long whistle, move forward after start to observe swimmers while in jurisdiction • Turns: stand when swimmers are in jurisdiction • Finish: stand when swimmers are in jurisdiction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turns: stand when swimmers are in jurisdiction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start: LG at flags, LE at 15 M • Outbound: LE walks to flags, LG walks to 15 M • Inbound: LG walks to flags, LE walks to 15 M
Individual Medley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start: stand on long whistle, move forward after start to observe swimmers while in jurisdiction • Turns: stand when swimmers are in jurisdiction • Finish: remain seated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turns: stand when swimmers are in jurisdiction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fly: same • Back: same • Breast: same • Free: move back to individual 15 M marks
Medley Relay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start: remain seated • Turns: stand when swimmers are in jurisdiction • Finish: remain seated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turns: stand when swimmers are in jurisdiction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back: same • Breast: same • Fly: same • Free: move back to individual 15 M marks

Start/Turn Judge Jurisdictions**Start:** Heads up**Turn:** from the beginning of the last complete arm stroke into the turn through heads up following the turn**Finish:** from the beginning of the last complete arm stroke through the finish**Stroke Judge Jurisdictions**

Wall to wall

Meet Name:				Location:			
OFFICIALS ASSIGNMENTS: ___ PRELIMS ___ TIMED FINALS ___ FINALS ___ TIME TRIALS							
Day/Date:				Session No:		Team: ___	
Meet Referee:			Head Starter:				
Deck Referees:			Starters:				
Team Lead Chief Judge:							
Assistant Chief Judges							
S/L 1		S/L 8		T/L 1		T/L 8	
Stroke Judges							
S/L 1		S/L 8		T/L 1		T/L 8	
TURN JUDGES							
Ln.	Notes	Start End	Turn End	Relief		Ln.	
1				S		1	
				T			
2				S		2	
				T			
3				S		3	
				T			
4				S		4	
				T			
5				S		5	
				T			
6				S		6	
				T			
7				S		7	
				T			
8				S		8	
				T			
Additional Notes							

Name of Meet:						Session Number:	
Deck Officials Assignments: ___ PRELIMS ___ TIMED FINALS ___ FINALS ___ TIME TRIALS							
Meet Referee:				Head Starter:		Day/Date:	
Deck Referees:				Starters:		Meet Day Number:	
Chief Judges: Team Lead Chief Judge:							
S/L 1		S/L 10		T/L 1		T/L 10	
Stroke Judges:							
S/L 1		S/L 10		T/L 1		T/L 10	
Chief Timers:							
S/L 1		S/L 10					
START END							
LEFT CHAIR		CENTER CHAIR		RIGHT CHAIR		TURN END	
Ln.	Watch/Button/Relay Take-off	Recorder/Button/Bell	Turn-Finish Judge/Button	Turn Judge	Ln.		
1					1		
2					2		
3					3		
4					4		
5					5		
6					6		
7					7		
8					8		
9					9		
10					10		
Relief Officials							