



## **Swim Officiating Standards of Conduct**

- As an Official, you are a member of USA Swimming whose mission is to encourage participation and the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of swimming. As an Official, you help enforce the technical rules of swimming so that competition is fair and equitable to all Swimmers.
- In accordance with the Meet Announcement, arrive on time, in the proper uniform with the necessary equipment, and ready to officiate. Report to the Meet Referee to receive your assignment and attend the Officials Briefing. Be in position on time, work the entire session, be focused on your assignment, and perform your duties to the best of your ability.
- If you sign up to work, please show up to work. If you cannot make it, be sure to let the Meet Referee know as early as possible.
- Know the rules. Continually review the rules. Ask questions. Stay informed. Be consistent in the application of the rules at all times and at all levels of competition.
- Enforce all rules fairly and equitably. Do not allow rule infractions to go uncalled simply because no one has gained an advantage. If there is a violation, it must be called.
- If you see it, and you are sure of what you saw, call it. Be prepared to answer the "who," "what," and "where" questions. Use the proper terminology. But, remember, the benefit of the doubt always goes to the Swimmer.
- There is no dishonor or disgrace in the withdrawal of a disqualification. If you have second thoughts, discuss it with the Chief Judge or Deck Referee. Admit mistakes and correct them according to the rules. Do not make a decision to "make up" for a poor decision made earlier.

- Always exercise fair and unbiased judgment by disregarding a Swimmer's identity or Team affiliation. Ensure that not even a perception of bias is exhibited, e.g., cheering for a Swimmer in the water; expressing delight over a disqualification; marking your Team's Swimmers in your Heat Sheet; not disqualifying Swimmers from your Team when warranted.
- Always answer inquiries in a very brief and professional manner. One answer should be sufficient. Further inquiries should be referred to the Deck Referee.
- Remember, the Meet Referee is the final authority at the meet. If you are unable to provide complete support (readily complying with instructions/decisions), including gracious acceptance when overruled, do not officiate. Follow the instructions/guidance from the Referee and Chief Judge - they directly represent the Meet Referee. If you disagree with something they tell you, comply and discuss it with the Meet Referee after the session.
- Refrain from "warning" Swimmers (or their Coaches) that they were almost disqualified. A violation either occurred or it didn't. A warning constitutes coaching and Officials are present to officiate — not coach.
- Refrain from entering into discussion with Coaches or Parents about violations, disqualifications, judgment calls, or rule interpretations (unless you are a Referee on duty). Be aware of unsportsmanlike conduct and report such acts to the Referee.
  - Coaches should not become hostile, arrogant, or abusive to Officials. Such incidents must be promptly reported to the Referee and notified in writing to the VSI Officials Chair.
  - Parents or other spectators should not be allowed to interfere with or question calls and/or decisions of Officials. They should be encouraged to see their Coach.
- Refrain from publicly criticizing another Official or an Official's decision. Report any concerns about another Official to the Meet Referee. Report concerns about a Meet Referee to the VSI Officials Chair.
- Refrain from discussing calls or decisions with other Officials on deck, in the halls, in the locker rooms, or in Hospitality. Refrain also from discussing

calls and decisions with Parents or Swimmers. If you have questions, comments or concerns, save them for the Officials Briefing or address them off deck away from the public.

- Never, under any circumstances, leave the deck without notifying the Referee or Chief Judge. If offered a break, take it, and be sure to be back in position on time.
- Refrain from using your cell phone, while performing your duties on deck.
- Be aware that no cameras, cell phone cameras, or other recording devices are allowed behind the blocks at any time. If use of such electronic devices is observed behind the blocs, notify the Chief Judge or the Deck Referee.
- Exercise appropriate discretion when using social media<sup>1</sup> for your own personal communications (with friends, colleagues, and athletes) with the knowledge that your behavior may be publicly observed. Refrain from posting or participating to discussions on social medias on issues regarding the athletes.
- Be safety conscious! Obey the rules of the facility and safely execute the meet announcement. Stop unsafe acts and report unsafe conditions to the Referee.
- Be prepared to assist with the education of Apprentice Officials. Cover all the applicable tasks on the Training Card. Do your best to impart your knowledge and experience on the new Official. Report your observations about the Apprentice's ability to perform the required tasks to the Referee at the end of the session.
- The ultimate goal of your officiating mission is "to provide safe, fair, and equitable conditions of competition" so no Swimmer gains a competitive advantage, rather than to catch violators of the rules. Be mindful that your conduct influences the respect that Swimmers, Coaches and Spectators hold for Officials.

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<sup>1</sup> The term "social media" refers broadly to new computer-mediated communication media such as blogs, YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter.