

PRESENTATION PLAN – INTRODUCTION TO USA SWIMMING OFFICIALS

1. Presentation Goals

Present overview of International/National/Local Swimming, Rules Introduction, Swim Meet Structure and Staffing, and Becoming a Swimming Official

2. Presentation Length

30 minutes

3. Presenter Requirements

USA Swimming official with good presentation skills

4. Presentation Plan Goals

Provide parents and spectators with a basic understanding of swimming rules and officiating

5. Materials

- a. One page rules summary
- b. Sample meet invitation
- c. Flyer on next training clinic
- d. Contact Information sheet

6. Equipment

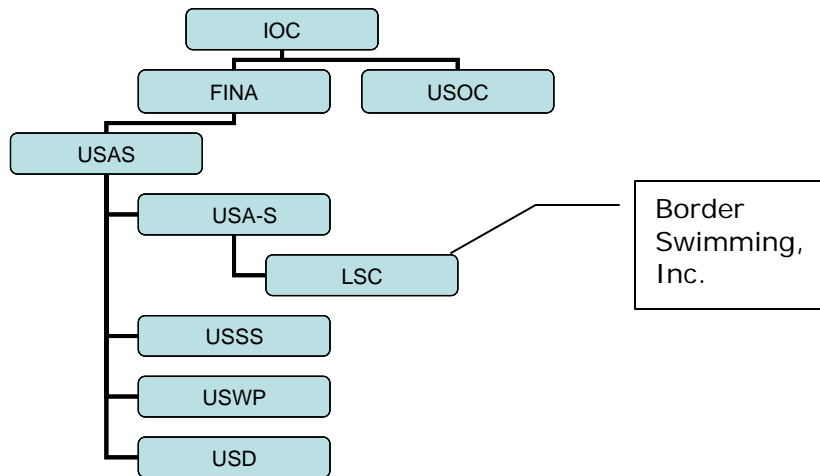
- a. flip chart, or white board with markers or
- b. overhead projector or computer & projector

BODY (PRESENTATION PROCEDURE)

Note to presenter: Much will depend upon the time and location of the presentation. In the bleachers during warm-ups will be difficult but "doable." Try to find a less distracting location if possible.

Use prepared overhead or pre-drawn flip chart diagram to illustrate the governance structure of swimming competition.

Governance Structure – 5 minutes



- IOC - International Olympic Committee – Overall governing body of international sport
- FINA - Federation Internationale de Natation - International governing body of aquatic sports**
- USOC - US Olympic Committee
- USAS - US Aquatic Sports – umbrella organization for US aquatic sports (swimming, syncro swimming, masters swimming, diving, water polo)
- USA-S- USA Swimming - National Governing Body for competitive swimming in the US**
- LSC - Local Swim Committee – one of 59 local administrative groups to organize competitive swimming in US**

Highlight FINA, USA-S, and LSC. The rest just quickly mention. Highlight the swimming rule making process from FINA to USA-S to LSC. The point is to show that swimming rules are the same from LSC to LSC and even country to country. If there is time or someone shows interest you can mention YMCA, NFHS, and NCAA. Otherwise, mentioning the other groups might be too confusing.

USA Swimming Rules – 15 minutes

Pass out the one page rules description (duplicated front & back).

The *Federation Internationale de Natation Amateur* (FINA) governs the conduct of all international aquatic sports. The national governing body for swimming in the US is USA Swimming, part of the US Olympic Committee in Colorado Springs, CO. Border Swimming, Inc. is a Local Swim Committee. The *Rules and Regulations of Swimming* ensures fair and equitable competition for all swimmers.

Breaststroke: Forward start. Swimmer permitted one full arm pull (beyond hipline) and one kick while submerged at start and after turns; head must surface by the widest part of the 2nd stroke (before hands turn inward). Arm pulls shall be in same horizontal plane (parallel to water surface). Hands shall be pushed forward from the breast on or under the water (elbows must remain in water except at turn or finish). Stroke cycle consists of one arm pull and one kick in that order; the head must break water surface at least once each cycle. Swimmer's leg motions must be simultaneous; feet must be turned out in downward propulsive part of kick. No flutter or butterfly kick is allowed, except during the start and each turn when one downward butterfly kick may follow initial arm pull if followed immediately by a breaststroke kick. On the turn & finish, a simultaneous two-hand touch is required. On turn, shoulders must be past vertical toward the breast when swimmer leaves wall.

Common Violations: Two strokes or kicks underwater; alternating kick; scissors kick; butterfly kick; arms not moving in the same horizontal plane; break in stroke cycle; over-water recovery; non-simultaneous or one-hand touch.

Butterfly: Forward start. Swimmer is allowed one arm pull and as many kicks as desired at start and turn, but head must surface by the 15-meter mark. The first arm pull must bring the swimmer to the surface. Arms must pull and recover simultaneously, with forward arm motions over the water surface. Up and down movement of legs and feet must be simultaneous. Breaststroke or flutter kicks are not allowed. At the turns & finish, both hands must touch simultaneously, but do not have to be on the same level. At the turn, shoulders must be past vertical toward the breast when swimmer leaves the wall.

Common Violations: Submerged past the 15M mark; alternating kick; scissors kick; non-simultaneous arm stroke; underwater recovery; non-simultaneous or one-hand touch.

Backstroke: Backstroke start. Head must surface by 15-meter mark. Shoulders must be past vertical toward back throughout race except at turn. Shoulders may turn past vertical as part of a continuous turning action at the turn only. Continuous single or simultaneous double arm pull may be used to execute turn, any kicking or gliding must be part of the turning action. Swimmer must be past vertical toward back when he/she leaves the wall. Swimmer must remain on back and may not be completely submerged except at touch at finish.

Common Violations: Submerged past the 15M mark; getting artificial assistance (pulling on lane ropes or pushing off the sides); shoulders past vertical toward breast (not on back); non-continuous turn; independent kicks or pulls during the turn; no touch on the turn.

Freestyle: Forward start. Head must surface by 15-meter mark. Some part of swimmer must touch wall at turn and finish. No pulling on lane lines, walking or pushing forward off bottom of pool.

Common Violations: Submerged past the 15M mark; no touch on the turn; walking on or pushing off the bottom of the pool; getting artificial assistance (pulling on lane ropes or pushing off the sides).

Individual Medley: Butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle, in that order. Individual stroke rules apply to respective legs. When changing from one stroke to another, the touch must conform to the finish rules for the stroke just completed.

Common Violations: Stroke and turn infractions; transition infractions; swimming strokes out of order; swimming butterfly, backstroke, or breaststroke during the freestyle leg.

Relays: Freestyle (any stroke) and Medley (backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, freestyle, in that order). Individual stroke rules apply to respective legs. When changing from one stroke to another, the touch must conform to the finish rules for the stroke just completed. Swimmers cannot lose contact with the start block until the previous swimmer touches the wall. Swimmers must swim in the order listed on the entry card.

Common Violations: Stroke and turn infractions; transition infractions; swimming strokes out of order; swimming butterfly, backstroke, or breaststroke during the freestyle leg; early take-off; swimmers out of order.

Starts: The start is the most critical part of a swimmer's race. Most events use the forward start - swimmers start the race from the starting blocks, the deck, or in the water facing the racing course. When the Referee blows a series of short whistles, the signal to 'Get Ready!', swimmers should: be behind the blocks in their lane, remove all clothing except their suits, have their cap and goggles on, and be ready to race. When the Referee blows the long whistle, the signal to "Step Up!," swimmers should step onto the starting block. When all swimmers have stepped up, the Referee turns the heat over to the Starter by extending his arm, closing the heat to further competitors. If a swimmer fails to show or fails to step up before the heat is closed, he/she will be disqualified for Delay of Meet, unless extenuating circumstances beyond their control prevented them from doing so. When the swimmers are ready, the Starter says "Take your mark". Swimmers will assume their starting position with at least one foot at the front of the block (or edge of the pool). Once the swimmers are stationary in their start positions, the Starter sounds the start signal and the swimmers dive into the water. A false start occurs when a swimmer is in motion (leaves his/her mark) prior to the start signal being sounded. The Starter notifies the Referee if he observes a false start. If the Referee also observed the infraction and concurs, the swimmer will be disqualified. These observations are done independently. Normally, the heat will be allowed to continue and the swimmer will be notified at the end of the race. If a fair start is not achieved, the Starter and/or Referee will recall the heat with the recall signal. If the heat is recalled, no false start can be attributed. Each swimmer is responsible for his/her start. If a swimmer moves prior to the start signal, the Starter may release the rest of heat by saying "Stand". Any swimmer who enters the water may be disqualified, unless the Starter determines he/she did so in reaction to the command. For backstroke events, the backstroke start is used - swimmers start in the water facing the starting end of the pool. The procedure is essentially the same, except the swimmers enter the water on the first long whistle and the Referee blows a second long whistle for the swimmers to place their feet in the start position. Swimmers must place both hands on the gutter or on the starting grips and feet below the water surface.

General: Swimmers may also be disqualified for:

- Unsportsmanlike or unsafe conduct
- Not starting or finishing in own lane
- Standing on the bottom during any stroke except freestyle and except during the turn after the touch
- Walking or pushing off the bottom of the pool
- Using lane lines or side of pool for forward assistance
- Interfering with another swimmer
- Entering the pool without permission of the referee
- Use of any device or substance to improve speed, pace, or buoyancy

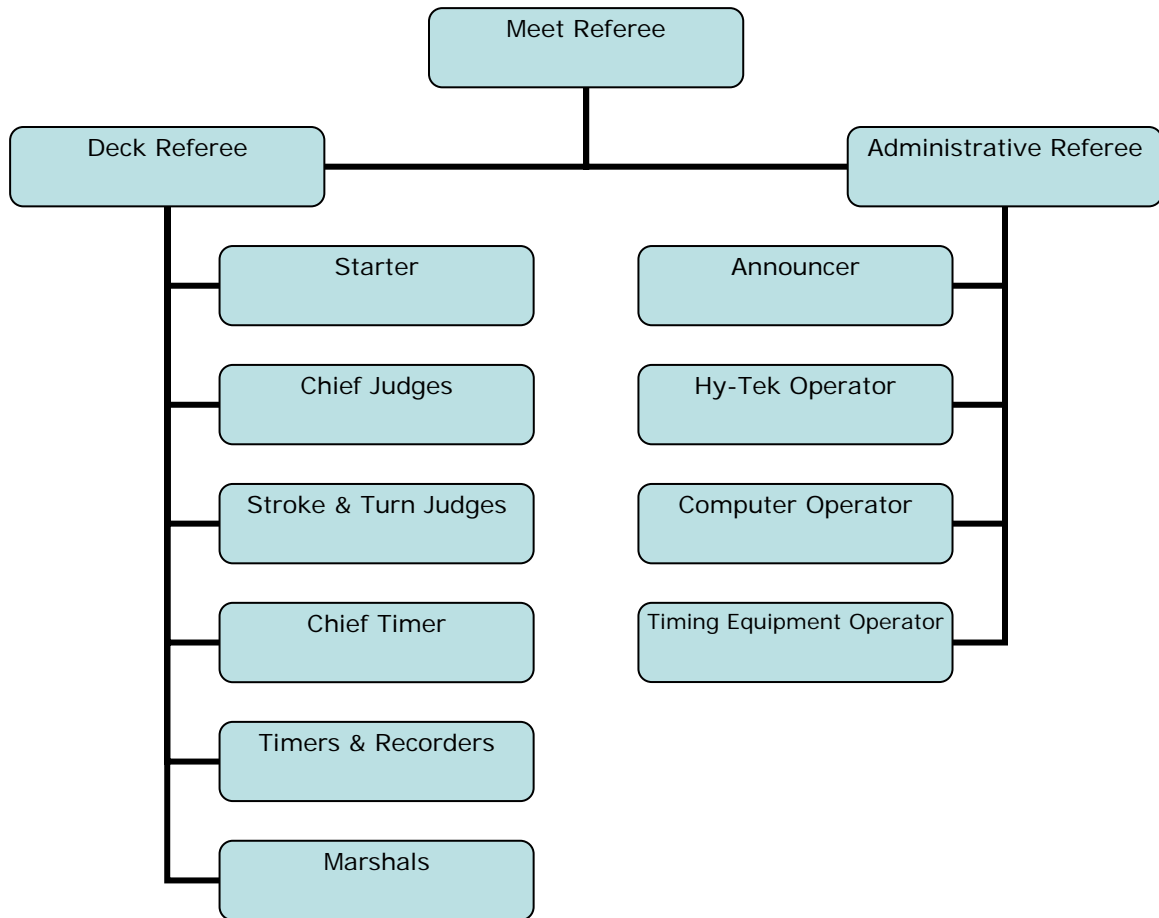
“All competitive swimming events held under USA Swimming sanction shall be conducted in accordance with the following rules which are designed to provide fair and equitable conditions for competition and promote uniformity in the sport so that no swimmer shall obtain unfair advantage over another.” [Emphasis added]

Cover the basics of the rules of swimming using the handout. Try not to engage in much discussion about the finer and more technical points. This is simply a basic overview of the swimming rules. You will be telling them how to find out more in a few minutes.

Meet Organization – 5 minutes

Have prepared overhead or pre-drawn flip chart with meet organization.

The major responsibilities are divided between the **Meet Director** and the **Meet Referee**. The meet referee is responsible for running the swimming competition and is in charge of all officials. She might be assisted by **deck referees** and an administrative referee. The other officials are divided into two categories—“wet deck” and “dry deck” officials. Wet deck officials include the **starter** (responsible for ensuring fair start for all swimmers) and the **stroke and turn** (observe that swimmers comply with technical rules of swimming on stroke, kick, turns, and finishes) officials. Dry deck officials include the **clerk-of-course, timing system operator**, and **computer operator**. [You can also use this portion to make a pitch for the volunteer timers that will be needed. Remind them that timers fill the most important role on the deck. After all, the reason why the swimmers are at the meet is to improve their times.]



Officials' Certification – 5 minutes

Have flyer announcing the next training opportunity ready to hand out.

Training to become an official, either dry deck or wet deck, is available from the LSC. Wet deck officials begin as stroke and turn trainees and progress upwards from there. The initial training is a 2 ½ hour clinic which includes an open-book test. After the clinic, you will be designated as a stroke & turn trainee and will work with experienced stroke and turn officials for a minimum of four full sessions across one or more meets. After successfully completing the four training sessions, you will be a stroke and turn official.

Those interested in the dry deck side of the meet can also received training and mentoring in those positions from the LSC.

Conclusion

Thank them for their time. Hand out a contact information sheet if anyone would like more information. Try to sign some up for the next clinic.