

SWIM MEET OFFICIATING

HOW CAN I HELP?



This booklet presents just a few of the options open to anyone who has the time, desire, and willingness to give a little of themselves to help the many USA Swimming athletes who are working to fulfill their dreams—whether their dreams be to finish their first race, to swim a personal best time, or to become an Olympic gold medal winner.

As a parent of a swimmer, you have the opportunity to be involved with your child and his sport in a variety of ways. One very instrumental way of contributing to the success of any program is by volunteering your time and effort. All USA Swimming Officials are volunteers and contribute greatly to the development of the program at all levels.

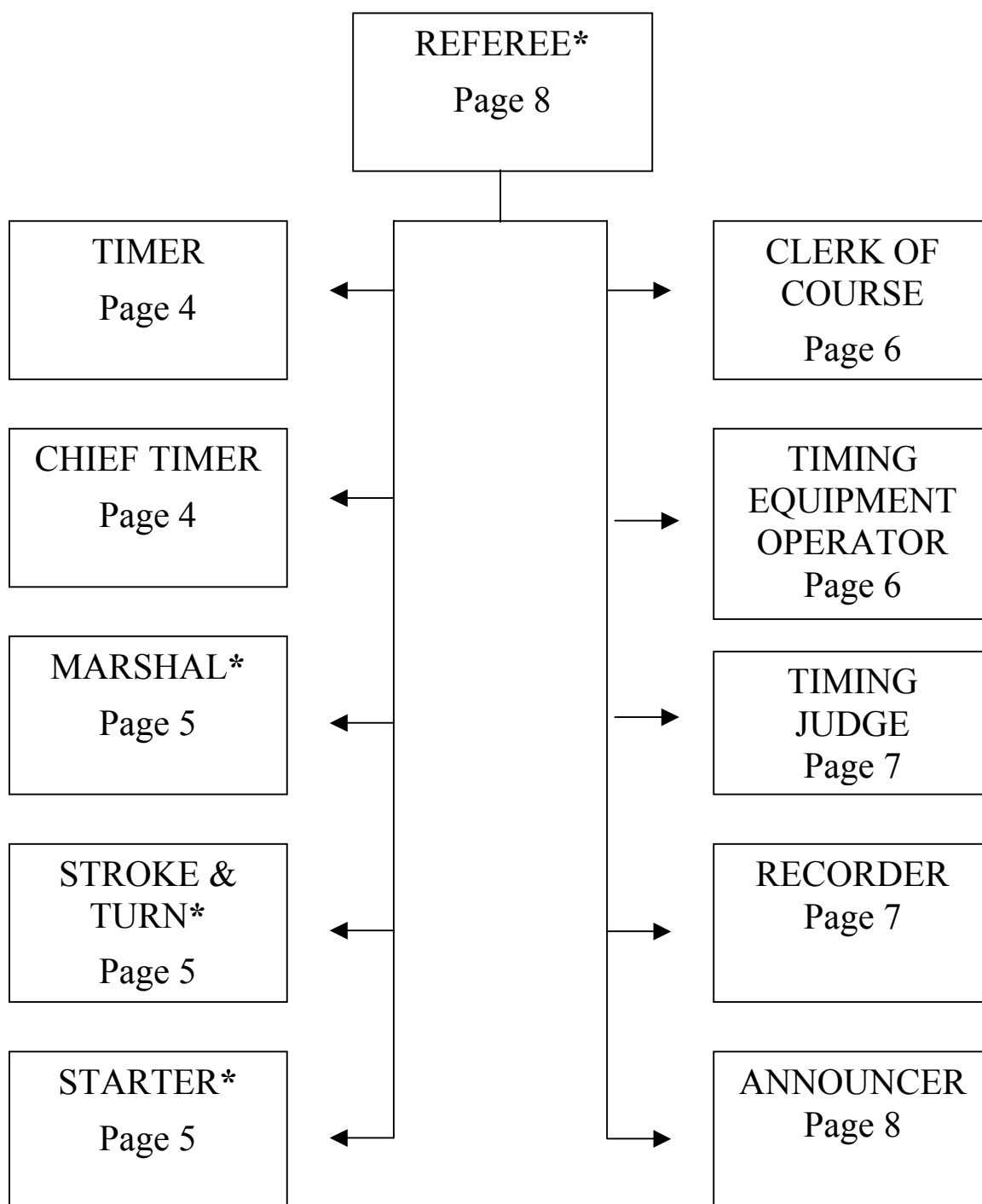


There are many levels of officiating that require different degrees of involvement and time, one of which may be right for you. The first step towards volunteering is to determine your area of interest. The following brief description of the officials needed at every swim meet will help you make that determination.



Officials in Virginia attend clinics, receive training, and are certified by Virginia Swimming, Inc. (VSI), the local swim committee for USA Swimming. Officials are present at all competition to implement the technical and administrative rules of swimming, thus ensuring that the competition is fair and equitable to everyone.

ORGANIZATION OF OFFICIALS AT A SWIM MEET



*Individuals in these positions must become members of USA Swimming and VSI. A rulebook is included in the membership fee.

TIMER

If you've ever been to a swim meet, you're sure to have heard the announcements calling for parents to volunteer as timers. What you may not appreciate is that timers are officials, and that it takes a lot of timers to run a swim meet. An eight lane pool requires 16-24 timers per 1 hour shift; if each timer works 1 hour in a 4 hour meet, that's 64-96 timers per session!

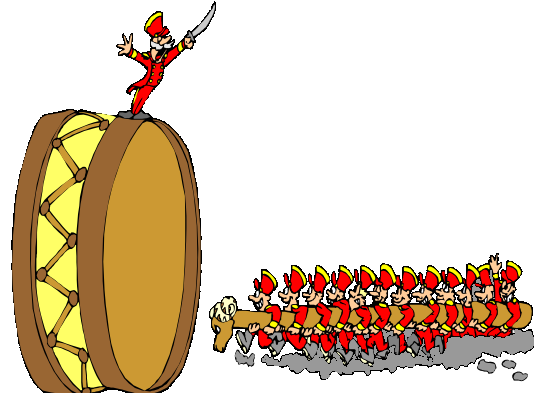
Most parents start off their volunteer activities as lane timers. As a lane timer you operate various timing devices such as stop watches or buttons that are



attached to the automatic timing equipment. Lane timers are responsible for starting their watches at the Starter's signal, and stopping their watches or activating their buttons when any part of the swimmer's body touches the wall at the finish. The watch time is then recorded and used to determine the race results.

Timer's meetings are usually held just before the start of a session, and cover duties of the timer.

CHIEF TIMER



Bored with timing? Ready to take on a job with more action and responsibility?

The chief timer assures that all lanes have timers, working stop watches and buttons, clipboards, pencils, and timing cards or sheets. The chief timer starts two watches on every race, and delivers a working watch to timers when their own watches fail. The chief timer may also be asked to help train the lane timers at the beginning of a session.

MARSHAL



Safety is an important concern at USA Swimming meets, and the marshal is assigned the important responsibility of maintaining a safe swim environment. This may include supervision of warmups, crowd control on deck, and supervising the behavior of swimmers in and out of the pool.

STROKE & TURN JUDGE



The stroke judge walks along the side of the pool, typically between the backstroke flags, and observes the swimmers on his half of the pool.

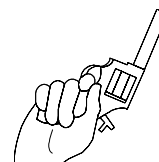
The stroke judge ensures compliance with the rules pertaining to the mechanics of the swim such as the arm stroke and kick.

The turn judge observes the swimmers from either the start/finish end or turn end of the pool. The turn judge is responsible for judging the

starts, finishes, and turns during each race. The stroke judge and turn positions frequently are combined into one position called stroke and turn judge.

Before working on their own, stroke and turn judges must attend a training clinic and apprentice under the guidance of a certified stroke and turn official.

STARTER



The starter ensures that all swimmers receive a fair and equitable start.

The starter works closely with the referee, and assumes responsibility for the start at the referee's signal. The starter steps the swimmers onto the starting blocks or into the water, directs the swimmers to "take their mark", and in conjunction with the referee, determines when a false start has occurred.

The starter is also responsible for making sure that the starting equipment is in working order prior to the start of a session, and may instruct the timers in their duties.

An individual must be certified as a stroke and turn official for a minimum of one year before he can train as a starter.

CLERK OF COURSE

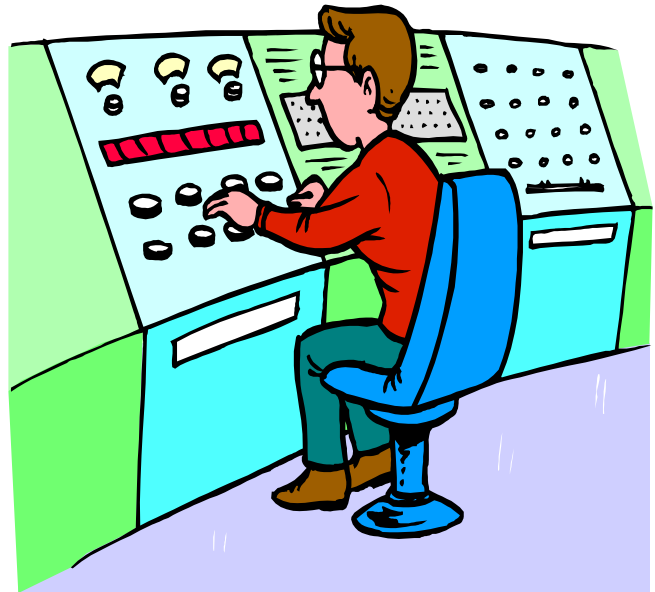
If you enjoy lots of contact with the swimmers and have good organizational skills, the clerk of course position may be for you.

The clerk of course is not used at all meets; but when used, can greatly contribute to a well-run meet. The clerk of course may check swimmers into the meet, scratch swimmers that are absent or do not intend to swim an event, and seed swimmers according to their entry times. The clerk of course may also shepherd swimmers from a staging area to the starting blocks.

Training involves a clinic and apprenticeship.



TIMING EQUIPMENT OPERATOR



If you like to work with electronic equipment, this may be your niche. In Virginia, Timing Equipment Operators often are referred to as CTS operators because the timing console that is most commonly used is produced by Colorado Timing Systems (CTS).

The Timing Equipment Operator is responsible for the setup and operation of the timing console, touch pads, starting systems, and scoreboard. The timing console stores the times obtained from the touch pads and backup buttons, and this information is passed on to the Timing Judge and Recorder.

Training involves attending a clinic, followed by an apprenticeship.

TIMING JUDGE

While some swimmers compete for the top places in a race, most swimmers are competing for a best time. The timing judge, in consultation with the referee, is responsible for determining the swimmer's time for a race.



While the time from the touch pad is usually the official time, sometimes the swimmer misses the pad, or the pad malfunctions. In these cases, the timing judge determines the swimmers time by using the backup times obtained with the buttons or stop watches.

Training involves attending a clinic, followed by an apprenticeship.

RECORDER

If you know your way around a computer, you may be a natural for recorder.

The swimmers' times are automatically downloaded from the CTS unit to a computer running Hy-Tek Meet Manager™ software, where they are matched to the individual swimmer's name. The recorder is responsible for bringing all this information together, for posting the results of races, and for printing labels for the awards.

Training involves attending a clinic, followed by an apprenticeship.



ANNOUNCER



Announcers are increasingly being used at many swim meets, and are a necessity at meets with a prelims/finals format. Announcers keep the swimmers and spectators informed as to what events are being swum, who has qualified for finals, and introduce the swimmers during finals sessions.

Training isn't required, but guidance and scripts are provided at meets.

REFEREE

The referee has the overall authority and responsibility for seeing that the competition complies with all the USA Swimming rules and regulations. The referee resolves all questions related to the conduct of the swim meet and reviews any disqualifications.



To train as a referee, an individual must first have been certified as a starter for a minimum of one year, and must be recommended for advancement by the regional officials chairperson.

I'D LIKE TO HELP, BUT....

I don't know how to.... No problem! Training clinics and material, as well as on-the-job training are provided.

It always looks like there's already enough people to help.... Looks can be deceiving. A typical session may use up to 100 timers, and ideally will have 11-12 stroke & turn judges, 2 starters, 2 referees, and at least 1 of every other listed official. With the exception of some Championship meets, we almost never turn away additional help.

It looks like a good-old-boys network. I always see the same faces and I'll never be able to break in.... Simply not true. Everyone is welcome on deck.

I always see the same faces working and I'm afraid that once I start I'll always be working.... Believe it or not, many people enjoy working at swim meets and would rather be on deck than in the stands. Remember also, the more people that are available to officiate, the less we have to rely on any particular person.

There aren't any officiating jobs that interest me.... No problem; officiating isn't for everyone. There are, however, many other responsibilities at a swim meet that may be right for you including meet director, runners (collect timing cards from timers and deliver to admin area), concessions,

Now is the time to get involved. If you have questions or wish to take the first step to becoming involved, contact your team officials chairperson or your regional officials chairperson.

CONTACTS

Team Officials Chairperson

Name:

Phone:

E-mail:

Regional Officials Chairperson

Name:

Phone:

E-mail:

For further information on officiating:

<http://www.usa-swimming.org/>

<http://www.virginiawimming.com/>

This booklet was adapted from a similar booklet used by Pacific Swimming, and that booklet was originally adapted from *Parent's Introduction to Officiating* by Pauline Neal and Lisa Hubbell for the USA Swimming National Officials Committee.