



Officials Committee Q1 Meeting

February 3, 2024

7:00 a.m. MT/9:00 a.m. ET

USA Swimming Mission: USA Swimming is the National Governing Body for the sport of swimming. We administer competitive swimming in accordance with the Olympic & Amateur Sports Act. We provide programs and services for our members, supporters, affiliates and the interested public. We value these members of the swimming community, and the staff and volunteers who serve them. We are committed to excellence and the improvement of our sport. We are committed to providing a safe and positive environment for all members.

Officials Committee Mission: To conduct programs to recruit, educate, train and certify a diverse team of USA Swimming officials to provide the highest quality and consistent officiating for athletes at all levels of swimming.

USA Swimming Priority Results:

1. USA Swimmers achieve sustained competitive success at the Olympic Games and other high-level international competitions.
2. Members have and use resources for sustainable success.
3. There is growth in swimming participation and interest.
4. USA Swimming is recognized as the “Best in Class” National Governing Body.

Type of Meeting: Officials Committee Quarterly Meeting – Q1 2024 (*Virtual*)

Meeting Facilitator(s): Dana Covington (Chair) and Anne Lawley (Committee Member)

ROLL CALL

Present: Dana Covington (Chair), Jason Johnson, Anne Lawley, Trish Martin, Curtis Myers, Jack Swanson, Hannah Cousins (Athlete), Colin Gibbons (Athlete), Dylan Nelsen (Athlete), Kathleen Scandary (ex officio), Judy Sharkey (ex officio), Jay Thomas (ex officio), Dean Ekeren (Staff), Macie McNichols (Staff)

Not Present: Harper Freeman (Athlete), Mike Murphy, Marianne Walling

Guests: Larry Alexander, Kathy Fish, Clark Hammond, Kevin Hogan, Rich McMillen, Mickey Smythe

MINUTES

I. Call to Order: Dana Covington called the meeting to order at 7:03 a.m. Mountain Time (MT).

II. November 8, 2023 NOC Meeting Minutes – Motion to approve. **Approved.**

III. USA Swimming Updates

Updates from Headquarters (*Dean Ekeren*)

- Announcement of Board approval for 2024 Winter Championships sites.
- 2024 Toyota U.S. Open Championships – Greensboro, NC.
- 2024 Speedo Winter Junior Championships East – Greensboro, NC.
- 2024 Speedo Winter Junior Championships West – Austin, TX.

Championship Officials (*Dana Covington*)

- Announcement of 2024 Winter Championships Meet Referees.
- 2024 Toyota U.S. Open Championships – Anissa Kanzari
- 2024 Speedo Winter Junior Championships East – Kenneth Chung
- 2024 Speedo Winter Junior Championships West – Phil Barnes



IV. Upcoming Education

Dana Covington announced the 2024 Officials Education plans, including the Hot August Nights series and session around USA Swimming's Annual Business Meeting.

V. Possible Legislation

- Dana Covington introduced four items to the Officials Committee for possible legislative updates pertaining to USA Swimming officials.
 - (1) Starter & Stand-Up Command
 - The Officials Committee discussed changing the "Stand Up" command. Jason Johnson proposed using international terminology ("Stand Down") when calling swimmers down from the starting position. Jay Thomas stated that "stand" is not in World Aquatics' rulebook. He will contact the chair of World Aquatics' Technical Swimming Committee for further guidance before suggesting terminology changes.
 - (2) Alternating Kick
 - Kathleen Scandary to work with Derek Paul and Jay Thomas to define alternating kick and add the new definition to the glossary of USA Swimming's Rulebook.
 - (3) Minimum Officials
 - Several concerns were raised regarding its implementation in the proposed format. Dana Covington will track and handle this item.
 - (4) Senior Referee & Administrative Referee
 - Dana Covington proposed adding the Senior Referee and Administrative Referee positions to the 2024 USA Swimming HoD Legislation ballot, as both positions are included in the USA Swimming Rulebook, but neither is listed in the *Officials Certification Standards for Utilization by LSC Officials (R9)*.
 - Trish Martin stated that the first step would be to define the deck positions so that they may be loaded into the Officials Tracking System (OTS). Then, added to the glossary in the USA Swimming Rulebook.
 - Kathleen Scandary then stated that the Referee positions should be defined. Derek Paul seconded and reiterated this point.
 - Jack Swanson suggested putting forward definitions but waiting for data on the R9 changes before proposing additional legislative items. He proposed re-evaluating this topic for 2025 HoD. Dana Covington asked how to collect data. Jack Swanson suggested surveying LSC Officials Chairs, coaches. Jason Johnson agreed with Jack Swanson.

Conclusion: The Officials Committee will move forward to define terminology to add to the USA Swimming Rulebook. Dana Covington and Kathleen Scandary to take on task to submit to Rules & Regs. Not needed before April 1, 2024. (*Dana Covington*)

VI. Ex Officio Updates

- Updates from World Aquatics (*Jay Thomas*)
 - There will likely be no technical rule changes through the Paris 2024 Summer Olympics, unless safety related. Furthermore, there will likely be no technical rule changes before the World Aquatics Championships 2025 in Singapore.
- Rules & Regs (*Derek Paul*)
 - Rules & Regs a resource for USA Swimming Committees. Minor change to Standards of Certification document (to align CJ renewal process). Approval from Board needed before the document can be widely distributed.
- YMCA (*Judy Sharkey*)
 - YMCA Committee meeting early next month (March 2024). Plans to update YMCA-USA Swimming Officiating Reciprocity document to meet standards set by R9 and how Y-Certifications fit into the standards.



- Derek Paul noted that the R9 language states that USA Swimming Officials are both “Trained and Certified”. Under YMCA reciprocity, YMCA Officials are “Certified” but not “Trained”. He suggested keeping both terms in mind when updating the reciprocity document.
- Dana Covington proposed that YMCA Officials watch USA Swimming’s officials online training modules.
- Program & Events (*Kathleen Scandary*)
 - Assisted with rule changes. Updated the USA Swimming Disqualification Report (DQ Slip) to include new stroke rules. Breaststroke section to be updated before being sent to print.

VII. Committee Business – Working Group Updates

Presentation Order*

- Updates from the Chair
 - *Dana Covington*
- LSC Liaison
 - *Working Group Lead: Curtis Myers*
 - Note: Kathy Fish presented for Curtis Myers.
- Communications & Social Media
 - *Working Group Lead: Anne Lawley*
- Athlete Group Updates
 - *Working Group Leads: Athletes & Jack Swanson*
 - Note: Colin Gibbons & Jack Swanson presented their work.
- Officials Education
 - *Working Group Lead: Jason Johnson*
- Officials Tracking System
 - *Working Group Lead: Marianne Walling*
 - Note: Rich McMillen presented for Marianne Walling.
- Officials Education/Testing
 - *Working Group Lead: Jack Swanson*
- Evaluating & Mentoring
 - *Working Group Lead: Trish Martin*

**See Appendix A for details regarding each position’s overview, working group members, lead updates, accomplishments, and goals for the coming year.*

VIII. Newsletters

- Dana Covington asked for Committee to establish NOC schedule for USA Swimming’s Officials Newsletters moving forward.

IX. Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 1 at 5:00 p.m. MT

Adjournment – 10:00 a.m. Mountain Time (MT)



APPENDIX A

LSC Liaison: Curtis Myers

NOC LSC OC Liaison group goals 2024

1. Increase the perceived “helpfulness of information provided on the USA swimming website. “Where to find” links in handbook for OCs. 17% is “always helpful in survey to 25%. 66% overall to 70%
2. Info regarding training/education (cooperate with Jason Johnson) increase survey response from 12% always helpful to 20% and 54% usually helpful to 65%
3. To the question of “Do you have access to all the information you need to support growth, development, advancement as an official?” Increase from 63% to 75%

Focus:

- communication to OC's
- Officials Excellence Award/Pettigrew
- LSC OC handbook with task group (Scott Powell, Kathy Fish and Harper Freeman athlete.
- personal contact with OC's over the year or so reaching all 59.
- most of the survey responses deal with website information issues. LSC Liaison OC handbook should help immensely.

Curtis Myers
NOC LSC OC Liaison

Communications & Social Media: Anne Lawley

Kevin Hogan will be joining us to cover for me when I step out.

Last Survey-

- Increased use of FB. **CONCERN** – using FB as an “official” communicating strategy. It is a SOCIAL platform. Many are not on FB. OK with posting things like meet applications being open that are of general interest. I think we need a FB policy – what are we posting vs communicating to LSC OCs and trusting them to disseminate as they see fit, or communicating to ALL officials rather than hoping



people see it on FB? OTS updates? R-9? Material changed on the website?
Other?

- Expanded content in Newsletter – Officials representing us in International competition, new in February – first time national ASSIGNED officials

Ongoing –

- Moderate OC Quarterly calls
- Post to FB as requested.
- Bi-monthly newsletter (even months). This takes MUCH more effort than you would think. Deep appreciation to those of you that are prompt!!!!
- Officials Excellence Award – transitioning to Curtis before next round of voting. This will occur no later than June. These are sent to the winning LSC OC for presentation in odd months and appear in the next month's Newsletter. LSCs have indicated that they want it to be a surprise, so this window allows them a month (no one had ever reported seeing it in SW!!!!).
- Swimming World – OE paired with 450 word article titled "Official Word". They are in turmoil, trying to figure out how to adjust to digital world and Swim Swam.
 - Used to publish monthly in odd months, which is where OE winner first appeared. This matched up perfectly for our 6 OE winners.
 - Sold last year and went to Quarterly with no notice to us (we were the least of their concerns!). We submitted for January issue which didn't get printed until March.
 - Possibly sold again, and have now gone to NINE issues a year, including a January issue that we were not told about. We were notified 3 days before the next deadline (March issue). We need at least 10 days to get USA to approve the "Official Word" article once it is written. Expectations in the fall were that R-9 would be passed in December and that would be the next topic. We know what happened with that. They will not run OE without an accompanying article.
 - Subcommittee will come up with plan on how best to proceed for 2024

Subcommittee –

- R-9 Q&A/FAQ
 - Gathering questions from those submitted both before the call and during the chat. They seem to fall into 2 camps – either variations on a theme, or something unique to the individual LSC. I will include anything that was asked multiple times, as clearly this was not well understood.
 - Plan for 2024 Swimming World
 - Web site clean up
 - Once again this was highlighted as an issue from EXPERIENCED officials in the most recent survey.
 - Parameters on type of resources we will have – web site needs major reconstruction with input from Officials.
-



Officials Education: Jason Johnson

NOC EDUCATION

NOC MEMBER	Jason Johnson
WORKING GROUP MEMBERS	Julie Floyd – official Jason Shibata – official Anissa Kanzari – official Ken Galica – official Hannah Cousins – student athlete
RESPONSIBILITY	“PROVIDING EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT TO HELP OFFICIALS CONTINUE IN THEIR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT”
FUNCTIONS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CREATE A SURVEY FOR EACH NEWSLETTER 2. COORDINATE AN EDUCATIONAL PIECE FOR EACH NEWSLETTER 3. DEVELOP A WORKING SCHEDULE, IDENTIFY EXPORT PRESENTERS, CREATE PRESENTATIONS AND DOCUMENTS FOR THE “HOT AUGUST NIGHTS” PROGRAM 4. ASSIST OTHER WORK GROUPS WITH PRESENTATION TECHNOLOGY
GOALS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CREATE AN EXIT SURVEY FOR THE OLYMPIC TRIALS 2. UTILIZE THE ZOOM PLATFORM TO PRODUCE AND RECORD SUPPLEMENTARY VIDEOS TO ENHANCE THE TRAINING PODS BEING RELEASED BY USAS. 3. UPDATE THE STROKE BRIEFING DOCUMENT.

Officials Tracking System: Marianne Walling

National Certification Review – Rich McMillen, Peter LaGow, Phil Lakota, Marianne Walling

OQM – Jacki Allender, Lisa Olack, Marianne Walling

Misc. Projects and Reporting- Lisa Vetterlein

Chair - Marianne Walling

2023

- 200 OQMs applied for
 - 193 were held
 - 3 denied
 - Change in format and late submission
 - 2 withdrawn
- Over 600 mentors participated (not all unique) 393M-271F
 - Still have a gender gap in mentor assignments



- Over 2100 evaluations were loaded into the holding tank
 - Not all evaluations were loaded
- 2173 nationally certified
 - About 300 expired in December
 - Working in renewals
- Applications were down to 1200 from March – December
 - Push was made pre-OTS shutdown
 - Expect to see applications normalize in 2024
- Working group discussed process and does not see a need to change for immediate future

2024

- Continued operation
- Readiness for reentry of Data into OTS
 - Developed a working plan that will be tweaked once we know how much USA Swimming will be able to work with information that exists outside OTS
 - Concern over data integrity as time progresses
 - May require shutdown on the certification side for a period of time to allow for data transfer
 - OQMs will not be shutdown
 - Duplicate systems until we are sure all is operational
 - Retain holding tank and spreadsheets for historical review
- Survey goals are in original plan for OTS
 - Many items will eventually be available through reporting
 - Instead of tracking on an OTS spreadsheet, tracking should be able to accomplished in the system with reporting, i.e. X number of unique officials in assigned roles over a given period of time
 - Later development
 - One item discussed with Patrick earlier was the current system is NOT integrate email. So, where LSC OCs previously received emails about testing being complete, or officials once an application was reviewed, they will instead need to look at a report of officials page. As the development proceeds, we can revisit ways to easily access information.
- OTS
 - Major concerns = communication
 - testing pre- release to avoid major hiccups
 - release notes and communication need to be at the forefront
 - working with USA Swimming on overcommunicating
 - Training for LSC OCs as OTS development continues



- Possibly just during LSC OC calls or short webinars
 - Training for mentors on how to use OTS to their advantage
 - Need reporting and evaluator portions up to do this
- National Meet opportunities
 - new project
 - tracking officials for national meets including invites, declines and withdrawals
 - started with Knoxville 2024

Officials Education/Testing: Jack Swanson

Evaluating & Mentoring: Trish Martin

Working Group Zone assignments: Trish Martin SZ, Marianne Walling CZ, Jamie Cahn EZ, Anne Lawley WZ, Edgar Caraballo DEI

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES	KEY PROJECTS	KEY ACTIONS AND TASKS	RESPONSIBILITY	DUE DATE
Maintain Strong List of Qualified National Evaluators	Annual N3 Evaluator Recertification	Review N3 certification, national meet attendance, LSC involvement for all N3 mentors	Working Group	June 30
	Quarterly N3 Evaluator application review	Vet applications and make recommendations on advancement or action plans	Working Group	April 2
	Increase number of qualified N3 Mentors with emphasis on expanding diversity of list with more women and other underrepresented populations	Identify officials requiring assignments to advance	Trish	Ongoing
			Trish	Ongoing
	Communicate N3i nomination opportunities to LSC OCs	Working Group	June 1	
Increase number of qualified N2 Mentors	Provide article/blurb for bimonthly newsletter	Working Group	September 1	



	Provide performance feedback to mentors	Confirm requirements for appointment are optimal Provide training Revise ETE questionnaire		
Optimize National Evaluation Requirements and Resources	Document availability and organization	Review documents and revise as necessary to mesh with R9 and OTS changes Determine potential need for N2 MR certification to support LSCs Clean up unnecessary documents from website	Working Group Working Group Working Group	June 1 June 1 As possible
Educate Mentors to Improve Skills and Increase Consistency	ABM Workshop	Develop programs to hone in on mentoring specific positions Identify trainers Develop content	Working Group	September 1



**USA Swimming Officials Committee
2024 Working Group Goals/Progress**

Working Group:

Process:

- Review Survey Results
- Review Initial thoughts from Officials Committee meeting
- Develop Goals & strategies to accomplish goals
- Measurables: How can we measure our success? Do we have a baseline to measure progress?
- Action: Assign Responsibility and due dates

Due Dates:

- Update every meeting



**USA Swimming Officials Committee
2024 Working Group Goals/Progress**

Survey GOAL	MEASUREABLE	STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY	DUE
<p>*Increase the transparency and knowledge of how National Meet officials are selected.</p> <p>*Increase the number of unique officials assigned at 3*^ National Meets</p>	<p>*Increase by 10% the officials that in the next survey say they are “Very or Somewhat familiar (currently 70%) with process to select National Meet Officials”.</p> <p>*Decrease the % of individual comments 2027 survey regarding transparency of Nat Meet selection by 5%</p> <p>*Increase by 5% the number of unique officials assigned at a National (3*^) meet. (Currently 210 unique assigned officials for 632 opportunities. 2019 – 2023)</p> <p>*Decrease the % of individual comments 2027 survey regarding transparency of Nat Meet selection by 5%</p> <p>Identify/Track how many officials are not invited to National Meets that apply (3*^)</p>	<p>STRATEGY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop criteria Share with National MRs Transparent communication Present at NOC OC meeting Present at LSC OC meeting Publish in Newsletter Post process on USA Swimming Website <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop criteria guidelines for National MRs to follow. 25% of National Assigned Team members in each position are new in that position at that level of deck. Share at LSC OC call Share at officials’ briefings Publish baseline in Newsletter 	<p>Dana Dana/Kath Dana Dana Dana Dana Dana/Macie</p> <p>Dana</p> <p>Dana/MRs Dana/Anne</p>	<p>DUE</p> <p>Feb 2024/ ongoing</p> <p>April 2024 May 2024 June 2024 June 2024</p> <p>Feb 2024 ongoing</p> <p>March 2024</p>
<p>Personal Goals</p> <p>*Understand “thirst” for National Deck</p> <p>Help NOC members feel valued as committee members. Help NOC members initiate and engage in projects that meet our mission.</p> <p>Empower NOC members to make decisions/produce work and be accountable to each other.</p> <p>Partner with USAS staff to provide training opportunities for officials across the nation.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track how many officials apply/invited/withdraw from National Meets 	<p>Dana/ Lisa V</p>	<p>ongoing</p>



2020-2023 NOC accomplishments in response to 2019 survey

Theme	Suggestion/Request (# of comments related to the Theme)	Action
Communication	Newsletter/Info more often (15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newsletter bi-monthly • Increased Facebook engagement
	Engagement with LSC (4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSC liaison position developed for NOC member. • Direct email communication with LSC OCs • LSC OC training in person 2019 • LSC OC training in person 2023
Culture	“Transparency” “Good ‘ol boys” “Criteria for selecting Assigned Nats” (46)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk of Stars ladder developed, published and shared. • National MRs announced in newsletter/FB and USAS Website • 2020 – 2023: • Unique officials at Jr/PSS/Nats: 2020: 245, 2021: 296, 2022: 329, 2023: 246 • 194 unique officials <i>assigned</i> to position at Jr/PSS/Nats • 24 unique MRs
	Criteria for selecting Evaluators & Retaining Evaluator creds/ Increase N3 evaluators (20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N3 Evaluator nomination criteria and maintenance requirements developed, published and disseminated via emails, newsletters, training and website. • NEW officials earned N3 evaluator status: 45 • N3 evaluators removed from list: 47: 36 retired, 6 passed away, 5 did not maintain N3e requirements. • Evaluators in positions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2019: CJ 114, SR 55, DR 76, AR 42 ○ 2023: CJ 116, SR 53, DR 70, AR 52
	Consistent Evaluation criteria (6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Templates developed and published with mandatory training for all N3 evaluators/ optional for N2 evaluators. • Training webinars posted to website
	Celebrate volunteerism (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officials (LSC) Excellence award every 2 months. • Newsletter highlights: 1st timers at National meets • Newsletter/FB: AQUA Travel highlights
Training	Provide more training in person & web-based (12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Evaluation Template virtual training • Walk of Stars Virtual and in person • Summer Mentoring Series virtual • New Deck Referee 2023 in person • Hot August Nights virtual DR training
	LSC training Standardization (14)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently working: • ST online training • LSC standardization of training requirements
	Recruitment/Engagement (15)	2023 goal