

SCS Officials Policies and Procedures

Definition/Mission:

Southern California Swimming (SCS), a local swimming committee (LSC) of USA Swimming, governs competitive swimming in Southern California and Southern Nevada as defined by USA Swimming. SCS Officials Policies and Procedures are intended to maintain a high level of consistency in officiating and to provide programming and oversight of recruitment, education, training, mentoring and certification of SCS officials.

Officials Program Overview

The members of the Officials Committee shall be appointed by the Officials Committee Chair/Officials Executive Committee and shall consist of, at a minimum, the Officials Committee Chair(s) and Officials Representatives of each of the six (6) Geographic Committees and a sufficient number of athletes so as to constitute at least twenty percent (20%) of the voting membership of the Committee. Athlete Representatives shall be selected by the Athletes' Committee. The Official's Committee shall consist of both Dry (Administrative) and Wet (deck) side Officials. The most recent past LSC Officials Committee Chair(s) may serve as an ex-officio member of the committee. Additional members may be appointed as necessary to conduct the business of the committee.

The Officials Committee shall establish and publish the requirements to become an official in SCS. The SCS minimum standards shall at least meet the minimum standards established by the USA Swimming Officials Committee, for those positions with national standards. The certification criteria shall be accessible to all officials.

The Officials Committee shall maintain a roster of all currently certified officials. Officials may request not to be included in any list published on the SCS website which may include their name, certification level, phone number, and email address.

At least once a year the Officials Committee shall conduct an instructional clinic required to retain certification. If a clinic cannot be scheduled in any given year, an alternate method of recertification must be provided for SCS officials to recertify for that year. The schedule shall be publicized within the LSC and clinics announced at least thirty days in advance of occurrence. The Committee shall maintain a list of all clinic attendees for the purpose of verifying certifications for at least two years.

The minimum standards for being an Official in Good Standing may be changed by governing bodies, from time to time, therefore all officials should stay aware of the requirements.

Individuals interested in becoming an SCS Official may apprentice at one meet (4 sessions) without registering with USA Swimming or completing the appropriate background check, APT, and other testing. If they wish to continue training, they must register and complete the background check, APT, Concussion, CANRA and USA Swimming Stroke & Turn tests.

The Officials Committee may designate certain championship meets at which apprentices shall not serve.

The 5 Pillars

1) Officials Recruiting

The Official Recruiting Program should promote an inflow of new officials by engaging all existing officials and teams to participate in extending a consistent invitation to parents to become officials. A combined effort by teams, coaches and officials is needed to provide parents the opportunity to learn and give back to the sport of swimming by becoming an official.

The Officials Committee will endeavor to communicate how rewarding it is to support the sport of swimming through being a USA Swimming certified official by:

- a) Each geographical committee official's representative presenting the opportunity and need for officials at geographic committee meetings.
- b) Creating and distributing an SCS flyer about officiating on a regular basis to meet hosts for distribution to parents at meets.
- c) Teams and coaches should regularly provide parents information on becoming officials and provide the names of potential officials to the geographical officials committee representative.

2) **Officials Training**

The goal of the Official Training Program is to ensure that all officials apply the rules with consistent interpretation and provide SCS swimmers competitions that are fair and equitable to everyone involved. SCS Officials are expected to meet the highest standards of Integrity, consistency, fairness, and professionalism.

- a) Membership in USA Swimming
 - All deck officials, administrative officials, and the meet director at ANY sanctioned Southern California Swimming meet, shall be current non-athlete members of USA Swimming and adhere to all requirements related to background, athlete protection, and concussion protocol training.
- b) When joining USA Swimming, the official needs to apply as either an athlete or non-athlete member. Most officials are non-athlete members. Note: A US Masters swimmer training with a USA Swimming club would register as an athlete member for insurance purpose (may designate athlete and Official on the registration).
- c) An electronic version of the rulebook can be obtained from a PDF file posted on the USA Swimming website.
 - USA Swimming's URL is www.usaswimming.org
 - Hover over the "About" tab and select the Rules & Policies link.
 - Locate the current rule book (or mini rule book) link and click that link.
 - Once the document is loaded to your browser, print Article 101. That article contains the technical rules for the strokes and relays.
- d) The Officials Committee will work to send out periodic links to various videos, rule interpretations, and informational material from the USA Swimming website each quarter.

Stroke & Turn Judge Training

The primary function of all officials is to ensure "fair and equitable competition." A Stroke & Turn Judge performs this function by ensuring that all competitors comply with the technical rules of the event in which they are competing. SCS and USA Swimming have adopted the philosophy that all competitors, regardless of age (from the 5-year-old to the national champion), must conform to the technical rules.

- To begin training, an individual should reach out to the Meet Referee a particular meet and request the opportunity to train at his/her meet. Meet Referees should strive to use at least one official certified in the last 6 months, if available, to ensure new officials are not left on the sideline and continue working and honing their skills.

Training for Other Positions

SCS offers officials the opportunity to continue training for positions such as starter, deck referee, administrative official, administrative referee and meet referee.

USA Swimming offers 3 levels of certification: local (N1), National (N2), and National Championship (N3). Typically, two meets will be offered each year for evaluation and promotion to the National and National Championship level.

3) **Officials Certification**

The Official Certification Program shall provide a clear and concise certification criterion, so officials understand the requirements and necessary steps to advance through each certification level. The Officials Committee will provide certification criteria for: Meet Referees, Deck Referees, Administrative Officials, Starters, Stroke and

Turn Judges, Timing System (CTS) operators. If considered necessary, the Officials Committee may designate other positions as requiring certifications.

4) Officials Education

The Officials Committee shall:

- a) Disseminate all educational material received from USA Swimming in a timely manner. Provide an opportunity through special meetings or online videos, to further each official's skill set.
- b) Hold a yearly clinic, either in-person or via virtual meeting, to provide the opportunity for the general membership to openly discuss and ask questions to more effectively bring a common understanding on how to interpret and apply the rules, regulations, and procedures.
- c) Require testing at the highest level of certification if a clinic was not conducted or if an official misses the meeting.
- d) Hold regular meetings monthly, unless extenuating circumstances occur, to provide information or for the committee to vote on agenda items.
 - If the general official membership wishes to bring a topic to the Committee, member(s) should provide that information to their Geographical Officials Committee representative to add to the agenda.
- e) Provide a newsletter to distribute information to the members, either by email and/or by posting on the SCS website officials' section.
- f) Endeavor to secure feedback from host teams and coaches as to the level of service being provided and be willing to adjust when necessary to improve that level of service.
 - The Officials Committee Geographical representatives will reach out to coaches at the end of each season for feedback on the quality and level of professionalism and service provided by the officials.

5) Officials Evaluator/Mentor Program

The Executive Officials Committee, the Geographic Representatives, and the general officials' membership shall ensure that all new officials feel welcome and are given the opportunity to work meets and advance as they meet the certification standards.

The Officials Committee shall:

- a) Create and utilize a tracking form for new officials so that they can track each meet worked and, once ready to request certification, turn the form into the Geo Chair for consideration.
- b) Create criteria for an experienced official to be designated as a Certified Evaluator for a particular position. The evaluator shall serve not only to evaluate an official, but to mentor them and provide pointers to improve a new official's understanding of the rules, regulations, and procedures to ensure fair and equitable competition. Today, we use the word mentor for anyone who is a positive, guiding influence in another person's life.
 - A Certified Evaluator shall perform evaluations for the position they are certified for and shall submit evaluations to the Officials Committee.
 - An evaluation is not a guarantee of certification. All other factors stated in the Certification Criteria must be met prior to being certified.
 - Evaluations shall be performed using the designated forms to ensure all aspects of a position are being demonstrated by the official. Evaluation forms will be used to ensure all evaluations are objective and not being performed in a subjective manner.
 - Maintain a certification criteria document that will be periodically adjusted to meet new rule and regulations or any changes to the certification process that USA Swimming passes to all LSCs for adoption. That certification document is not included in this policy statement document and can be found on the Southern California Swimming website at socialswim.org.

Certification steps:

An official wishing to be evaluated for certification must request a Senior Referee or Certified Evaluator complete the evaluation. The evaluation is then submitted to the Officials Committee.

- The official's history in OTS will be reviewed to determine that all testing, number of sessions worked, and other requirements set forth in the Certification Criteria are met.
- The evaluation along with the Officials history will be presented at a closed Officials Committee meeting for review and approval unless there are circumstances to prevent certification of the official.
- The Geo Representative and/or Executive Chair will inform the applicant within one week of the closed Officials Committee meeting with either confirmation of certification or reason for additional training.

Geographic Officials Representatives shall:

- a) Maintain communication with all new recruits to ensure they are on track with gaining certification and are being asked to work meets.
- b) Present an opportunity and open door for an official to contact a point person so that the LSC is aware that an official is interested in working at higher level meets.
- c) Identify those individuals and provide an informational and mentored pathway for those officials in conjunction with the Officials Executive Committee.

Additional Responsibilities

ADMINISTRATION OF MEETS

Each certified official shall, when assigned, carry out his/her duties in accordance with current rules and regulations of USA Swimming and current procedures of Southern California Swimming.

- a) The meet host is responsible for obtaining the officials for their meet (e.g., Meet Referee and Administrative Referee). The Meet Host may defer the staffing of other officials to someone else, which may be the Meet Referee and/or the Administrative Referee respectively.
 - Officials in SCS are independent contractors and may accept or decline meets as they see fit. At no point should an SCS official be made to feel they are required to work a particular meet.
 - SCS officials should not solicit meets by contacting Meet Directors, Meet Hosts, Team Reps. Or any coaches associated with the host team.
- b) For LSC Championship meets such as JAG, WAG, JO, and other SCS meets such as Kevin Perry, Grand Challenge, SCI, LAI and SMOC, the host must submit the names of the Meet Referee and Administrative Referee they wish to use, to the LSC Officials Chair, BEFORE contacting any officials to work these meets, to ensure that the requested officials meet the criteria for the meet.
- c) If there is an application to officiate, submitted to the LSC Officials Chair, the Meet Referee may consider those officials who applied.

Administrative Referee

An SCS Administrative Referee shall have all the duties and authority of the Administrative Referee as described in the USA Swimming Rules and Regulations to maintain the "dry side" portion of a swim meet. The Administrative Referee in conjunction with the Meet Referee shall ensure that USA Swimming and SCS policies and procedures are followed in the running of a sanctioned swim meet. The Administrative Referee supervises the "dry side" of a meet (Timing system operator, Administrative Officials, Seeding, Results, and Announcing).

Administrative Official

An SCS Administrative Official shall have all the duties and authority of the Administrative Official as described in the USA Swimming Rules and Regulations to maintain the "dry side" portion of a timed final swim meet of 300 or less swimmers per session. The Administrative Official in conjunction with the Meet Referee shall ensure that USA Swimming and SCS policies and procedures are followed in the running of a sanctioned swim meet.

Meet Referee

An SCS Meet Referee shall have all the duties and authority of the Referee (as described in the *USA Swimming Rules and Regulations*).

- a) The Meet Referee must be aware of what is taking place throughout the meet to ensure all procedures are being followed in a consistent manner and that the competition is being conducted fairly by all officials.
- b) A Meet Referee must uphold the integrity of a meet and question officials calls when appropriate (ex: an official makes the same call over and over, on the same lane).
- c) Meet Referees are required to update OTS on the USA Swimming Website within 2 weeks from the completion of the meet worked.
- d) If there is an incident/occurrence at a meet, the Meet Referee in conjunction with the Administrative Referee must ensure the proper documentation is submitted in a timely manner.
- e) Meet Referee should act as a mentor by using at least 1 official that was certified in the last 6 months for appropriate level meets.

Deck Referee

Deck Referees have the authority relative to start, stroke, turn, and finish. They have control of the swimmers from the time they are on the starting block until they finish the race.

Starter

Starters have authority relative to the start of the race and may also work as stroke and turn judges after the start.

Stroke and Turn Judges

Stroke and Turn Judges shall perform their duties as assigned by the Meet Referee including observing swimmers during races to ensure the technical rules of swimming are being followed. Stroke and Turn Judges must signal their observation of an infraction by extending an arm above their head and reporting the infraction to the Deck Referee.

STAFFING MEETS

Minimum Deck Staffing for SCS sanctioned meets

- 4 or less lanes: 3 deck officials
- 5 – 6 lanes: 4 deck officials
- 7 – 8 lanes: 5 deck officials
- 9 – 10 lanes: 6 deck officials
- Double ended meets: 8 deck officials

Deck staffing may change during freestyle events if both ends of the course are covered appropriately.

SCS Officials Travel Reimbursement

The SCS Officials Zone or National Meet Travel Stipend is intended to assist with an official's travel expenses to work a national level competition. Officials' reimbursement will be distributed subject to the rules set forth in the SCS Officials Travel Reimbursement Policy (separate document). When the yearly allocation is exhausted no additional allocations will be made for meets held in that competition year.

To receive travel assistance from SCS, an official must meet certain minimum eligibility requirements as set forth in the policy.