



OFFICIALS NEWSLETTER



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Greetings from the Chair

By: Trish Martin

Autumn brings cooler temperatures and colorful leaves as well as a focus on swimming governance across the country. The USA Swimming Summit meeting held in Denver last month welcomed fifty of our LSC officials chairs to a workshop focused on Officials Tracking System (OTS) Tools, LSC Standards of Officiating, Recruiting and Retention, and Difficult Discussions. LSC officials chairs also shared situations and brainstormed solutions, and everyone went home with a longer list of phone-a-friend contacts.

The USA Swimming House of Delegates (HOD) also met at Summit with many LSC Official Chairs Workshop participants voting on behalf of their LSCs or committees. Learn about the approved legislation on the [Rules and Policies](#) page of the USA Swimming website. All new technical stroke rules announced at Summit and earlier in May will be incorporated into the 2027 rulebook but are effective immediately. See the announcement below for more information.

Many officials will also be pitching in for local governance as many LSCs host HODs and Swimposia in the coming weeks. If you are involved with your LSC governance, thank you for your commitment to yet another critical aspect of swimming. You represent the voices of the 14,000 officials who serve this sport from the grassroots through the national levels. Thank you!

See you at the pool,

Trish

Rules Announcement

2027 Rulebook Order Form: Fill out this [order form](#) to request your free paper 2027 USA Swimming Rulebook. **The deadline to order is Friday, December 4.** USA Swimming rulebooks are available as PDFs on the USA Swimming [website](#) and can be purchased on Swim Outlet.

New breaststroke rule now in effect! Rule 101.2.2 has been updated to comply with recent clarification from AQUA. The new rule affects breaststroke body position. Now, swimmers are required to be “on the breast” (i.e., shoulders at or past vertical toward the breast) prior to any stroke or kick, rather than when the feet leave the wall. This rule applies to all breaststrokers of all ages in all sanctioned and approved competitions. The other three parts of the breaststroke rule 101.2 have not changed. See all the new technical rules [here](#).

National Meet Announcements

Upcoming USA Swimming Championship Meets	2026 Competition Dates	Location	Application Opens*	National Certification Requirements	Meet Referee(s)
Short Course World Championship Trials	Oct 28-31	Westmont, Ill.	April 28 Closed	required N3ST	Jamie Cahn
Toyota U.S. Open Championships	Dec 2-5	Austin, Texas	July 2 Closed	required N3ST	Traci Johnson
Speedo Winter Junior	Dec 9-12	Indianapolis,	July 9	preferred N3ST	Kathy Fish

Championships - East		Ind.	Closed		
Speedo Winter Junior Championships - West	Dec 9-12	Austin, Texas	July 16 Closed	preferred N3ST	Edgar Caraballo
TYR Pro Series Meet - Nashville	Jan 14-17, 2027	Nashville, Tenn.	OPENED August 15	preferred N3ST	Ellen Colket
TYR Pro Series Meet - Westmont	March 3-6, 2027	Westmont, Ill.	OPEN September 3	preferred N3ST	Marianne Walling
Open Water Nationals	April 2-4, 2027	Sarasota, Fla.	OPEN October 2		TBA
TYR Pro Series Meet - Ft Lauderdale	April 21-24, 2027	Ft Lauderdale, Fla.	OPEN October 21	preferred N3ST	Rich McMillen
Toyota National Championship	June 8-12, 2027	Indianapolis, Ind.	Open TBA December	required N3ST	Dana Covington
TYR Futures Championships	July 28-31, 2027	Carmel, Ind. Cary, N.C. Minneapolis, Minn. Ocala, Fla. Sacramento, Calif.	Open TBA January	Minimum N2ST	TBA
Speedo Junior National Championships	Aug 2-6, 2027	Huntsville, Ala.	Open TBA February	preferred N3ST	TBA

An application closes when a sufficient number of appropriate applicants have been obtained to fill the decks. Please mark your calendars, as applications have filled quickly for recent meets. All applications are located on the [USA Swimming National Meet Application webpage](#).

PROCESS CHANGE BEFORE OFFICIATING INVITATIONS ARE EXTENDED

The process for notifying officials accepted for a meet after the national application closes has changed. The Center for Safe Sport now requires a review of all officials, including meet referees, before they are cleared for invitation. Please be patient and expect a longer lead time during this new process.

General Announcements

- The YMCA recently revised its certification process and standards for officials. The new system is completely online and aligns with USA Swimming officials training. The USA Swimming National Officials Committee and the YMCA Officials Committee have updated their [reciprocity agreement](#) to reflect these changes. There is now a simple pathway for USA Swimming officials

to become YMCA officials and for YMCA officials to become USA Swimming officials.

- The 2025 and 2026 issues of the USA Swimming Officials Newsletter can be found on the [Newsletter Archive page](#) (scroll down to the “Officials’ Newsletter” section) of the USA Swimming website.
 - The next National Officials Committee Quarterly Meeting will be held virtually on Wednesday, November 4, at 6:00 p.m. (MT) via Microsoft Teams. The link will be available on the [Events](#) page of the USA Swimming website. This is an open meeting, but only NOC members have a voice and vote.
 - The next LSC Officials Chairs Quarterly Meeting will be held virtually on Wednesday, January 6, at 6:00 p.m. (MT) via Microsoft Teams. The meeting links will be emailed to LSC Officials Chairs and will be available on the [Events](#) page of the USA Swimming website. This is an open meeting, but only LSC Officials Chairs and NOC members may comment and ask questions.
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LSC Recertifications – Certifications Expiring 12/31/2026

By: Marianne Walling

As LSC officials chairs work through recertifications for officials expiring 12/31/2026, please note the following:

Clinic/testing requirement: Officials must have completed an online clinic, or the former certification or recertification exam, in 2024, 2025, or 2026. Disregard the expiration date listed for the clinic or exam.

Three-year window: An online clinic counts toward any certification expiring within the following three years. For example:

- Clinics or exams completed in 2024, 2025, or 2026 satisfy the requirement for 12/31/2026.
- Clinics completed in 2025, 2026, or 2027 satisfy the requirement for 12/31/2027.

Highest position: Online clinics must be taken at the official's highest certified position.

Foundations of Officiating: Required for new stroke and turn judges and administrative officials; strongly recommended for everyone else.

Session counts: Session totals on the LSC Certification page will reset to zero after recertification. This figure is a running total of sanctioned sessions worked in each position during the three years before recertification. It is a general total only: some sanctioned sessions, such as Time Trials, do not count toward recertification.

Behind the Scenes on 2-5 Star Meet Selection

By: Marianne Walling and Trish Martin

Have you ever wondered what happens between the time you submitted an application to work a national-level meet and finding out if you have been accepted or not? [In this article](#), Marianne Walling and Trish Martin walk through the application review process. An important take-away message from the

article is the need for an official to develop a strong body of work that includes obtaining N3-level certifications and gaining experience at Officials Qualifying Meets, LSC Championships, Zone, and Sectional meets.

Technical Swimming Committee Member for World Aquatics

By: Dana Covington

Dana Covington serves as a member of the World Aquatics Technical Swimming Committee (TSC). [In this article](#), Dana explains the member nomination process, the composition of the TSC, and the responsibilities of the TSC. As a member of the TSC, Dana also serves as an *ex officio* member of the USA Swimming National Officials Committee.

Heard It on a Pool Deck

By: Kevin Hogan and Trish Martin

We have all heard them – the myths, the urban legends, and the ideas that make their way from pool deck to pool deck. While some of these items might be appropriate in some well-defined circumstances, others just miss the mark. [Click here](#) to get the real scoop on things heard on a pool deck.

Asked and Answered

By: Kevin Hogan & Trish Martin

A question asked by one official is frequently a question asked by many officials. [Asked and Answered](#) endeavors to answer officiating questions that are likely to be of broad interest.

Situations and Resolutions

By: Jack Swanson

The Online Testing Working Group spent the last year updating the Stroke and Turn and Starter/Referee Situations and Resolutions, adding situations and resolutions based on recent rule changes and adding situations pertinent to officiating athletes with disabilities (thanks to the Disability Subcommittee of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee for their help!). Links to the situations and resolutions are below and are also published to the USA Swimming webpage:

- [Stroke and Turn](#)
- [Starter and Deck Referee](#)

Each newsletter, we will highlight a situation and resolution from each group. Click [here](#) to see two selected situations and resolutions

National Officials Committee Annual Pinnacle Award

Pictured left to right: Lilly King, Dana Covington, Trish Martin



The Pinnacle Award is the National Officials Committee's highest honor. It is awarded each year to the official whose robust volunteer service spans decades and who has made significant servant-leadership contributions at the LSC, national, and international levels through their officiating and work in governance. This year's Pinnacle Award winner is Dana Covington. Dana has been a volunteer official since 2008. She began as an LSC official in Sierra Nevada Swimming and quickly built and extended her skills to officiating at USA Swimming national meets including Olympic Trials.

In addition to her leadership in club and LSC governance, she was called to serve on the National Officials Committee in 2019. She chaired the National Mentoring and Evaluation Working Group, helping to upgrade and expand that program to increase the number of national mentors and trained officials for the national deck. She was appointed National Officials Committee Chair in 2023. Also in 2023, Dana was named to the World Aquatics referee list and has represented USA Swimming at multiple World Championships and AQUA World Cups. At the beginning of 2026, World Aquatics appointed Dana to the International Technical Swimming Committee. In that role, she acts as the USA Swimming liaison as well as a mentor and trainer for officials across the globe.

Despite her international responsibilities, Dana remains deeply committed to swimming here at home. She volunteers at LSC meets and national meets and remains active on the National Officials Committee, the Rules and Regulations Committee, and the International Relations Committee. Dana represents the true role model for servant leadership. For her tireless commitment, her leadership, and her service to officials, athletes, and coaches at home and around the world, it is our great privilege to honor Dana Covington as the National Officials Committee 2026 Pinnacle Award Winner.

Congratulations, Dana!

Officials' Excellence Award

Congratulations to the fall winners of the Officials' Excellence Award: Ralph Jones (Virginia Swimming) and Judith Deedy (Missouri Valley Swimming)!

Ralph Jones is one of the most recognizable



officials in Virginia Swimming (VSI). If there's a meet in the Richmond area, Ralph is likely there, sometimes splitting his time between two venues. He first certified as a stroke and turn official in 2011 and went on to certify as a chief judge, starter, deck referee, and administrative official. He holds N2 or N3 national certification in each of those positions, as well as administrative referee.

Ralph has focused his career at the LSC level, and he's as likely to work a novice mini-meet as a AAAA prelims/finals meet. He often serves as meet referee, up through VSI Age Group Championships, but he regularly works every position from timing equipment operator to stroke and turn judge. He often stays for every session, distance sessions included. A member of the VSI Officials Committee since 2017, Ralph is a role model and mentor known for his deep experience, common-sense approach, and putting swimmers first, and he keeps looking for ways to grow as an official. In recognition of his service, VSI recently awarded him a lifetime USA Swimming membership.

Thank you, Ralph!



For more than 15 years, Judith Deedy has set the standard for service and leadership in Missouri Valley Swimming (MVS). She is a respected official at every level, from local meets to Zones, Speedo Sectionals, TYR Futures, and national events, and she is known for her rules knowledge, professionalism, and commitment to athletes.

Off the deck, Judith served two terms as MVS General Chair, has held leadership roles on several club boards, and is currently Officials Committee co-chair. Long after her own children finished swimming, she continues to work as many meets as ever, showing up wherever she's needed so that athletes have fair, safe, well-run competitions. She is also a trusted mentor to new officials, and her support has

strengthened officiating development across the region. Her leadership, integrity, and advocacy for swimmers, coaches, officials, and clubs have made a lasting impact on MVS and USA Swimming.

Thank you, Judith!

Newsletter Feedback

In this newsletter, we strive to provide information that will benefit the community of USA Swimming officials. Please let us know if we are meeting that objective. Feedback, both positive and negative, is welcome, as are suggestions for future topics. [Click here](#) to provide us with your feedback and suggestions. Your comments are anonymous unless you choose to leave your name.



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