



# OFFICIALS NEWSLETTER



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## Greetings from the Chair

*By: Trish Martin*

As the 2026 short-course season comes to a close, I hope everyone can look back with satisfaction on a job well done. Whether it was your first short-course season or your twentieth, we volunteered at thousands of meets across the country in service to the swimmers, coaches, and clubs who rely on certified officials to execute those competitions.

Now – before the long-course season is upon us – is the time to reflect on your personal goals as an official. What would you like to achieve this summer? Perhaps you are considering certification in a new position, working toward national certification, attending a higher-level meet outside your usual area, or completing your LSC recertification requirements. Taking time now to map out a plan will help set you up for success in reaching those goals.

We offer many resources at the LSC and the national levels to help you plan. Take a look at your LSC’s website or the [officials' pages](#) on the USA Swimming website for helpful documents, guidelines, and certification requirements. Do not hesitate to tap into your LSC Officials Committee and your mentors to help you build your plan. The summer goes by fast so get ready!

Also, be on the lookout for some upcoming changes to the rules and the Junior Official program.

Thanks for being officials. See you at the pool.

## Announcements

Upcoming USA Swimming Championship Meet	2026 Competition Dates	Location	Applications Open (click the link to apply)*	National Certification Requirements	Meet Referee(s)
USA Swimming Pro Swim Series	May 20-23	Sacramento, Calif.	CLOSED	Required N3ST	Kathleen Scandary
USA Swimming Pro Series	June 17-20	Indianapolis, Ind.	CLOSED	Required N3ST	Peter LaGow
<a href="#">Futures Championships</a>	July 29-August 1	Multi-Site: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Austin, Texas</li> <li>• Greensboro, N.C.</li> <li>• Knoxville, Tenn.</li> <li>• Madison, Wisc.</li> <li>• Sacramento, Calif.</li> </ul>	OPENED January 29 Open for ST alternates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Austin, Texas</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Greensboro, N.C.</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Knoxville, Tenn.</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Madison, Wis.</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Sacramento, Calif.</a></li> </ul>	Minimum N2ST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keith Lambert</li> <li>• Aimee Onoszko</li> <li>• Mike Trexler</li> <li>• Bryan Wallin</li> <li>• Sheila Lovell-Otterstrom</li> </ul>

<a href="#">Toyota National Championships</a>	July 28- August 1	Irvine, Calif.	<a href="#">OPENED January 29</a> Open for ST alternates	Required N3ST	Anissa Kanzari
<a href="#">Speedo Junior National Championships</a>	August 3-7	Irvine, Calif.	<a href="#">OPENED January 29</a> Open for ST alternates	Preferred N3ST	Marcus Stromberg
Pan Pacific Swimming Championships	August 12-15	Irvine, Calif.	Invitation Only		Trish Martin
Short Course World Championship Trials	October 28-31	Westmont, Ill.	<a href="#">OPENED April 28</a>	Required N3ST	Jamie Cahn
Toyota U.S. Open Championships	TBA	TBA	TBA - June	Required N3ST	TBA
Speedo Winter Junior Championships - East	TBA	TBA	TBA - June	Preferred N3ST	TBA
Speedo Winter Junior Championships - West	TBA	TBA	TBA - June	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 up quickly for recent meets. All applications are located on the [USA Swimming National Meet Application webpage](#).

#### General Announcements:

- The 2025 and 2026 editions of the USA Swimming Officials' Newsletter can be found on the [Newsletter Archive page](#) on the USA Swimming website (scroll down to "Officials' Newsletter" section).
- Is there an official in your LSC who you think deserves national recognition? This individual doesn't need to be a national-level official, but the individual should be someone who has made a major impact on officiating at the local level. More details of the award and a nomination link can be found [here](#) and below following the announcement of this month's recipient of the **Officials Excellence Award**.
- The **2026 USA Swimming Rulebook** has shipped! If you missed the printed copy pre-order deadline of December 1, 2025, you can purchase one through [SwimOutlet](#), with availability expected soon. Both the [full rulebook](#) and the [mini rulebook](#) are available as PDF documents.
- The next **National Officials Committee Quarterly Meeting** will be held virtually via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday, May 6, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. MT. 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 via Microsoft Teams on

Wednesday, July 1, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. MT. This is an open meeting (request the Microsoft Team link from your LSC officials chair), but only LSC officials chairs may comment or ask questions. Please contact your LSC officials chair to learn more about the items discussed at these meetings.

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## NCAA Swim and Dive Officiating

*By: Ellen Colket*

Many USA Swimming officials become involved with high school officiating as their children age up, but fewer officials graduate to collegiate-level officiating. [In this article](#), Ellen discusses why you might like to try officiating at the NCAA level and how to get started.

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## Are You Ready? Part 1 - A Guide to LSC Certification Advancement

*By: Marianne Walling and Anissa Kanzari*

In part one of a two-part series of articles exploring the question of “Are you ready?”, this article focuses on certification advancement at the LSC level. The second part of the series, to be featured in the June 2026 newsletter, will focus on advancement through the N2 and N3 levels. [Read more here](#) to help you decide if you are ready for that next certification.

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## Expansion of the Junior Official Role

*By: Trish Martin*

The Board of Directors of USA Swimming, at its April 17, 2026, meeting, approved an expansion of the junior official position. In addition to the stroke and turn junior official position, there is now an assistant administrative official (AO) position for junior officials. AO junior officials may never be the sole AO at any session and may never be the AO of record for any meet. The AO junior official must always work under the direct supervision of a certified adult AO. Junior officials, both at AO and stroke and turn, can now officiate at any session in which they are not competing.

Once the Officials Certification Standards are published, they will be posted on the USA Swimming website and sent to all the LSC officials chairs.

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## 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.

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## Asked and Answered

*By: Kevin Hogan and Trish Martin*

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

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## 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](#)

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

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## Congratulations!

**Congratulations and thank you to the following officials who recently served at their first national meet (Note - we apologize for any omissions or errors):**

Pro Swim Series – Westmont, Ill., March 4-7, 2026

Betsy Bajwa - Potomac Valley Swimming

Steve Fidanze - Illinois Swimming

Mark Kierzkowski - Illinois Swimming

Erin Rakickas - Illinois Swimming

Robert Schladenhauffen - Gulf Swimming

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## Officials' Excellence Award

**Congratulations to the April winner of the Officials' Excellence Award: Phil Barnes, Iowa Swimming.**

Phil Barnes has been an official with the Iowa Swimming LSC for more than 20 years, serving at least 15 years on various LSC committees. He currently serves as the Iowa Swimming LSC General Chair, and he has previously served twice as the Officials Committee chair and once as the Finance Committee vice-chair, sometimes serving in multiple positions simultaneously. Phil is highly regarded across the LSC where he has encouraged, educated, and mentored Iowa officials; he inspires them to officiate outside the LSC, seek national certifications, become evaluators, and mentor others. Iowa benefited from Phil's experience outside the LSC when he introduced national protocols in Iowa, including the use of chief judges and radios, which are now standard practice. Phil brought in Iowa Swimming's first national evaluators and made Iowa Officials Qualifying Meets (OQMs) regular occurrences. Phil also has been an advocate for Iowa Swimming officials at the Zone and national levels. Phil's leadership has improved the performance of our LSC officials as evidenced by the approximately 39% of Iowa Swimming Officials who hold national certifications.

Phil was born in Australia and served in the Australian Air Force. He was assigned to a Navy base in California for 2 ½ years. Upon leaving the Air Force, he was employed by Rockwell Collins in Canberra, Australia. After two years in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and five years back in Australia, he returned to Iowa, where he has been for 30 years. Phil is married and has four children and eight grandchildren.

Thank you, Phil!

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## Nominations Are Needed for the Officials' Excellence Award

**Nominations Are Needed for the Officials Excellence Award!**

The National Officials Committee will soon vote on the recipients of the next cycle of Officials Excellence Awards. Now is the time to submit a nomination for a deserving official from your LSC. Do not wait! Review the bullet points below for more information and then submit your nomination through the link below.

The Officials Excellence Award:

- National recognition for outstanding officials for LSC contribution
- Anyone can submit a nomination, although we will ask the LSC Officials Chair or LSC General Chair for input
- The nominee must be an active member of USA Swimming with current registration
- There are six awards each year, one in each issue of the Officials Newsletter
- Nominations close around April
- Nominations are held for two cycles (24 months) unless selected
- The National Officials Committee votes in May for the July through next May period (1 cycle)

Hopefully, your LSC Officials Committee is actively looking for ways to acknowledge officials and appreciate their service at the local level. This award is just one way to further acknowledge those deserving higher recognition. The link for the nomination form is [HERE](#).

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## 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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