



OFFICIALS NEWSLETTER



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Greetings from the Chair

By: Trish Martin

All eyes are on the USA as we enter the 2-year lead-up to the Olympic Games in Los Angeles in 2028. USA Swimming, in partnership with NOVA Aquatics, just hosted the Pan Pacific Championships for open water and pool swimming. It is the first time since 2010 that our federation has hosted the competition. The Pan Pacific Association was established in the mid-1980s and is made up of the four founding swimming federations – Swimming Australia, Swimming Canada, the Japan Amateur Swimming Federation, and USA Swimming. These charter nations developed the concept of a biennial swimming competition to provide their national teams with first class international competition between the Olympic Games and the World Aquatics World Championships. Other federations may also be invited to the Pan Pacs competition. For the 2026 Pan Pacs Championships, athletes from seventeen other countries competed in the meets along with the charter nation teams.

In addition to sending their national teams to Irvine, the founding federations also sent officials to join the USA Swimming officials at each meet. Each federation sent a referee and a starter to the pool meet as well as to the open water meet. The Pan Pacs meets followed World Aquatics' technical rules and officiating protocols so, no matter where the officials were from, everyone knew what to do. Building positive international relationships requires athletes, coaches, and federation staffs but bonds between international officials also contribute to exceptional, expertly executed swim meets.

Thanks to all the USA Swimming officials who contributed yet another August week to being on deck to support our swimmers.

Thanks for being officials!

Trish

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 Championships - East	Dec 9-12	Indianapolis, Ind.	July 9 Closed	preferred N3ST	Kathy Fish
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 2025 and 2026 issues of the USA Swimming Officials Newsletter can be found on the [Newsletter Archive page](#) (scroll down to “Officials’ Newsletter” section) of the USA Swimming website.
- The next National Officials Committee Quarterly Meeting will be held virtually on September 16, 2026, 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 in person at the 2026 USA Swimming Annual Summit (September 23-26, 2026).

The Role of the Deck Referee in Facilitating Swim-Offs

By: Anissa Kanzari

When running a prelims/finals meet, swim-offs are sometimes needed to resolve ties before seeding finals. In this article, Anissa Kanzari discusses the factors involved in setting up swim-offs. Which referee is responsible for setting up a swim-off? Which ties need to be resolved? When must the swim-off take place? Who needs to be notified? The answers to these and other questions can be found in this [linked article](#).

A Deep Dive into “The National Scratch Rule”

By: Trish Martin

Rule 207.11.6 sets out the requirements for “the national scratch rule.” Use of the rule is required for the conduct of national championships, while all or parts of the rule are often used for other prelims/finals meets. In [this article](#), Trish Martin dives into the details of the rule and explains how it works. No-shows, declared false starts, scratching, penalties, exceptions for failure to report, and much more are covered.

The Swimming Official – 10 Points of Self-Evaluation

By: Joel Black

With the end of the long-course season, officials can now enjoy a brief respite before gearing up for the coming year of swim competition. While a break in the action provides everyone with an opportunity to refresh and refocus for the coming year, it also provides us with an opportunity to reflect on how we have conducted ourselves as officials in the past and to identify areas for growth or improvement in the future. This [linked article](#), written by Joel Black when he was the vice chair of the USA Swimming National Officials Committee, is as relevant today as it was when written in 2004. While Joel suggests reviewing these 10 points of self-evaluation after every meet, reviewing the points between seasons is a great way to get ready for the coming year.

Heard It on a Pool Deck

By: Phil Barnes

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

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

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):

- Speedo Summer Junior Championships August 3-7, 2026
 - Stephan Billotte – San Diego Imperial
 - Joshua Bruley – Potomac Valley
 - Qiang Chen – Pacific Northwest
 - James Christopher – North Carolina
 - William Dai – New Mexico
 - Bao Doan – Pacific
 - Selena Fung – New Jersey
 - Luke Havens – Wyoming
 - Mitchell Jung – Potomac Valley
 - Dustin Martinez – San Diego Imperial
 - Jett Pittman – South Texas
 - Corey Steiner – Potomac Valley
 - Jerry Tennison – Gulf
 - Phil Van Law – Colorado
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Officials' Excellence Award

Both the August and October Officials' Excellence Award recipients will be announced in the October 2026 newsletter.

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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