

# Report on Sessions Attended at United States Aquatic Sports 2011 National Convention

*---Completed by Ron Zolno on September 22, 2011---*

Two Rules & Regulations Committee Meetings (Wednesday, September 14, 2011 and Thursday, September 15, 2011), and the portion of the HOD when these rules were considered for approval, amendment and rejection (Saturday, September 17, 2011)

A variety of proposals were considered, discussed and amended. (This information is available on the USA Swimming website.) The following summaries key items:

- Technical/Stroke Rules
  - None
- Logistic Issues
  - An empty lane is NOT required when combining events in a single heat.
    - 102.7.2
  - In long course, the requirement for a mid-point line in backstroke and medley swimming has been eliminated.
    - 103.15.3
  - Any qualified individual can measure and certify the length of a competition course – there is no residency requirement.
    - 104.2.2C(4)(a)
  - A lengthy and very specific rule prohibiting bullying was approved.
    - 305.6
  - Filing a KNOWINGLY false allegation of sexual misconduct is prohibited.
    - 306.3
- Open Water
  - A number of rules were instituted last year on an emergency basis in reaction to the unfortunate incident in Dubai.
  - By defined procedure, these rules were placed before the HOD for amendment and approval, and were approved.

Your Convention GPS (Wednesday, September 14, 2011)

This is a meeting for first time National Convention attendees. It should be mandatory for our athlete attendees, but is of limited value to anyone who has been active in the swim community for a number of years. The primary focus was:

- To explain how the hierarchy of USA Swimming is organized.

- To provide a primer on key terminology and abbreviations.
- To interest people in attending a broad range of meetings/activities.

#### Times & Recognition Committee (Thursday, September 15, 2011) – Discussion of Deck Pass at the end of the session

This meeting overlapped with another meeting I attended (Burning Issues for Officials), however, I was interested in the Deck Pass presentation that was held at the end of this session.

Deck Pass is an online program that swimmers can use to track their times and goals, and exchange information with fellow swimmers and other friends. In turn, coaches can use it to “reward” their swimmers by rewarding them with virtual badges based on hard work, achieving certain results, etc. There are currently over 2,000 badges available in the Deck Pass virtual world. In addition, coach’s have a home page that they can use to track their certification needs, etc. (For example, an indication that your CPR certification needs to be renewed.)

I asked if Deck Pass currently was available for officials, and it is not, and would probably not be until the third or fourth generation. However, based on feedback they received at Convention, they will try to work it into the next version of the website. When available, it will allow officials to easily track their registration, certification, etc.

#### Get Parliamentary Skills (Thursday, September 15, 2011)

Dan McAllen provided a short primer on parliamentary rules and how they impact our role as delegates at Convention. This was definitely a worthwhile session, especially for those who are new to the process.

#### Burning Issues for Officials (Friday, September 16, 2011)

A broad variety of issues were covered in this informal session led by Clark Hammond (Chair, Officials’ Committee) and Dan McAllen (Chair, Rules and Regulations Committee). A summary of some of the key discussions follows:

- Recruiting and Retention of Officials
  - Most ideas discussed are retreads of ideas we have had for years (e.g., make presentations to parents’ groups, pay officials’ fees, etc.).
  - However, there was one clarification – apprentices can be on deck shadowing officials without having to be USA Swimming members, and they do not need to have completed the Athlete Protection course

and background check. Further, our insurance coverage WOULD apply to this individual. However, this apprentice needs to be directly overseen by an active and certified USA Swimming official.

- Legality of Re-submerging
  - In the free, back and fly, once the swimmer has come to the surface of the water, they cannot re-submerge (until the next turn), even if they are still within the first 15 meters of the swim (either after the start or any turn).
- Hand/Arm Movement in Breaststroke Prior to Initiating the Butterfly Kick
  - The initiation of the hand/arm stroke must be a PURPOSEFUL ACT OF THE SWIMMER, not an artifact of the water moving the swimmer.
  - Moving only the fingers or thumbs is NOT in and of itself the start of the hand/arm movement.
- Club tattoos
  - Temporary club tattoos are NOT advertising and are permissible.
- Evaluator Consistency
  - There was some discussion about the written evaluations. Clearer evaluation write-up requirements are being developed.
- Zone Workshop
  - There will be a Zone workshop next April-May.
  - Details will follow.
- Meet Photographers
  - There was a lengthy discussion about photographers working on deck, especially relative to the issue of Athlete Protection.
  - By rule, the use of equipment that CAN take photographs (e.g., camera, cell phone, etc.) is not allowed in locker rooms, rest rooms, etc.
  - In addition, many LSCs/teams further restrict photographers to set areas (e.g., sides of the pool, turn end), to avoid inappropriate photographs (e.g., shots of the backsides of 10-year old swimmers).
  - Further, I recommended that the Meet Referee introduce him/herself to on-deck photographers to gain a comfort level with them.
- Listing Officials' Information Online
  - Most LSCs are currently listing officials' information on their websites, either through an opt-in program or an opt-out program (which is what we do).
  - One specific suggestion was to provide an opt-out box on the annual application form.
- Deck Referees Making Calls
  - All agree that Deck Referees (and Meet Referees) should NOT make any technical calls unless the infraction is egregious.
  - If they do make calls, it serves to "unbalance" the deck.
- Deck Referee vs. Meet Referee
  - Many LSCs have separate certifications for Deck Referee vs. Meet Referee.

- I think we should consider doing this, because the experience and capability associated with being a Meet Ref goes significantly beyond being a Deck Ref.

Championship Evaluation Committee – Meet Evaluations (Friday, September 16, 2011)

The meet evaluations for the last 4 national meets were presented:

- 2010 ConocoPhillips National SC Championships/December 2-4/Columbus OH
- 2010 Speedo Junior Short Course National Championship/ December 9-11/Atlanta GA
- 2011 ConocoPhillips National Championships/August 2-6/Palo Alto CA
- 2011 Speedo Junior National Championships/August 8-12/Palo Alto CA

Obviously, these meets are larger and more demanding than meets typically held in our LSC. However, reviewing these assessments to get a general idea of what swimmers, coaches and officials are concerned about can be a valuable learning exercise when holding a key meet (e.g., Sectionals, TAGS, A Champs, etc.), especially for a relatively inexperienced team/venue/Meet Director/Meet Ref. (I have a set of these assessments. I can provide a copy to interested parties, upon request.)

As a professional researcher, I volunteered to help the committee with their ongoing evaluation process, and expect that I will be hearing from them. (Note: I received kudos and thanks during the Officials' Committee Meeting for helping them with some ongoing research needs.)

Two Southern Zone Meetings (Thursday, September 15, 2011 and Friday, September 16, 2011)

- Gloria Schuldt was elected as Zone Officials Chair.
- Tim Bauer was elected as Zone Director - Coach.
- We were informed that the Athlete Protection Training is now available online. (NOTE: I have completed mine. It takes under an hour.)
- Southern Zone athletes who competed in international competition were recognized.
- According to Suzanne Heath, there will be a series of zone-based workshops in 2012. The Southern Zone workshop will be conducted May 4-6, 2012. LSCs may send up to 4 delegates to this workshop.
  - The exact structure and subject areas for this workshop will be delineated this fall.
- A number of changes were made to the Zones meet layout, including:

- Zones will include events specifically restricted to swimmers with disabilities – 50 Free, 100 Free, 200 Free.
- Swimmers who have achieved ANY Junior National qualifying time will NOT be allowed to swim at Zones.
- The 2013 Zone age group meet will be held in Greenville, South Carolina from July 30 to August 3, 2013, with Open Water on Sunday, August 4, 2013.
- The 2012 Zone Senior Meet will be held at the Hall of Fame pool in Ft Lauderdale from August 7 to August 11, 2012.
- The 2012 Southern Zone/Western Sectionals will be held:
  - March 1-4, 2012 at Texas A&M University.
  - July 31-August 4, 2012 at Conroe ISD in Conroe TX.
- The qualifications for Scholastic All American are being changed.
  - The academic requirements will be unchanged.
  - The swim time requirements will be tightened up.

Two National House of Delegates Meetings (Friday, September 16, 2011 and Saturday, September 17, 2011)

Besides the rules and regulations that were discussed and approved/denied (which are discussed above), the following areas were included in the HOD meetings:

- Presentation memorializing those in the USA Swimming community who have died in the last year.
- President's report discussing the condition of swimming in the United States and USA Swimming.
- A variety of awards.
- Membership and credentials reports.
- OIOC election. (Only election that happened at the HOD meeting this year.)
- USA Swimming Foundation report, and presentation and approval of the 2012 budget.
- Delegates wore light blue t-shirts provided by the Swim Foundation on Saturday to support the Make A Splash movement.

Banquet Reception/Aquatic Awards Banquet (Saturday, September 17, 2011)

The Awards Banquet was held on Saturday evening – with speeches and awards aplenty. To me, the primary advantage of attending this event is to get an understanding of the size and scope of US Aquatic Sports.