



Officials Committee Q3 Meeting

September 12, 2024

5:00 p.m. MT/7:00 p.m. ET

USA Swimming Mission: USA Swimming is the National Governing Body for the sport of swimming. We administer competitive swimming in accordance with the Olympic & Amateur Sports Act. We provide programs and services for our members, supporters, affiliates and the interested public. We value these members of the swimming community, and the staff and volunteers who serve them. We are committed to excellence and the improvement of our sport. We are committed to providing a safe and positive environment for all members.

Officials Committee Mission: To conduct programs to recruit, educate, train and certify a diverse team of USA Swimming officials to provide the highest quality and consistent officiating for athletes at all levels of swimming.

USA Swimming Priority Results:

1. USA Swimmers achieve sustained competitive success at the Olympic Games and other high-level international competitions.
2. Members have and use resources for sustainable success.
3. There is growth in swimming participation and interest.
4. USA Swimming is recognized as the “Best in Class” National Governing Body.

Type of Meeting: Officials Committee Quarterly Meeting – Q3 2024 (*Virtual*)

Meeting Facilitator(s): Dana Covington (Chair) and Anne Lawley (Committee Member)

ROLL CALL

Present Committee: Dana Covington (Chair), Jason Johnson, Anne Lawley, Trish Martin, Mike Murphy, Curtis Myers, Jack Swanson, Marianne Walling, Harper Freeman (Athlete), Colin Gibbons (Athlete), Dylan Nelsen (Athlete), Derek Paul (ex officio), Kathleen Scandary (ex officio), Judy Sharkey (ex officio), Jay Thomas (ex officio)

Staff: Shana Ferguson (Interim CEO, COO), Joel Shinofield (Staff), Macie McNichols (Staff)

Committee Members Not Present: Hannah Cousins (Athlete)

Guests: Larry Alexander, Jamie Cahn, Kenneth Chung, Sandy Drake, Ken Galica, Patrick Hunter, Andrea Kelley, Tom Lombardo, Tracy Meece, Cyndi Miller, Scott Reynolds, Betsy Russell, Troy Tricker

MINUTES

- I. **Call to Order:** Dana Covington called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. Mountain Time (MT).
- II. **Introduction, Mission, and Housekeeping Items**
- III. **Q2 Meeting Minutes Approval** – Motion to approve. **Approved.**
 - Anne Lawley requested that the terms “R9” and “R5” in the Q2 2024 Minutes be replaced with their legislative titles.



IV. Staff Announcements

- Macie McNichols gave an update on the USA Swimming Officials Certification Courses; the Stroke and Turn course launched April 1, 2024. The Starter and Administrative Official Courses are launching October 1, 2024. The Referee Course will launch April 1, 2025. The Education Team will be at the 2024 USA Swimming Workshop and Annual Business Meeting presented by LiveBarn (ABM) and at the Officials Track of Workshop.
- Additionally, Ms. McNichols reported on the 2025 National Events Calendar. Locations for the 2025 TYR Pro Swim Series, Futures Championships, TYR Pro Championships, and Speedo Junior National Championships have been announced. The locations for 2025 Nationals, Open Water Nationals, Toyota U.S. Open, and Speedo Winter Junior Championships will be released in the coming weeks.

V. Club Dues Investment Plan – Presented by USA Swimming Board Member and Vice Chair, Fiscal Oversight, Kenneth Chung, accompanied by Joel Shinofield.

Dana Covington invited Kenneth Chung to the September 2024 Officials Committee call to discuss proposed legislative item Resolution of the House of Delegates (1): To increase the annual club fee.

Kenneth Chung explained that USA Swimming clubs have paid \$70 to be a USA Swimming Registered Club since 1990. The Club Dues Investment Plan, known formally as *Resolution of the House of Delegates to Increase the Annual Club Fee*, proposes increasing the annual club registration fee and new club fee to \$225 and \$750, respectively. This item is set to be voted on by the House of Delegates at USA Swimming’s 2024 Annual Business Meeting presented by LiveBarn.

Mr. Chung noted that the Club Dues Investment plan offers six areas of support for member clubs, including:

- Increase LSC Club/Visits
- Age Group Excellence Programs
- USA Swimming App Functionality
- Support for home coaches at camps
- New Clubs Success addition
- Teams-in-crisis services

The proposed legislation will increase club dues beginning September 1, 2025 (Dues increase for the 2026 registration cycle). All programs will be piloted through August 2025. If adopted, full implementation will begin for the 2026 membership year.

Mr. Chung explained that he and fellow USA Swimming Board Member, Mr. Ira Klein, are the main sponsors of the proposed legislation. From there, Kenneth Chung noted that the current dues model is not sustainable for what USA Swimming clubs need today. RES-1 provides a tangible way for clubs to see what services can be offered and what coaches are looking for from USA Swimming. The proposed legislation was developed based on the needs of coaches.



Joel Shinofield added that each investment area is coupled with a committee to collaborate on the investment and ensure the efficacy of the program. It is guaranteed that the money will go to the designated area and allows for evolution of the program over time.

Following Mr. Chung's presentation, Dana Covington asked, in regard to the last program: teams in crisis, what is the definition of a large club and what defines a team in crisis? Joel Shinofield responded that high profile, large clubs may need a different approach. When in need of help, USA Swimming can then send in a mentor coach/impartial person to assist the team. It will help keep the process confidential.

Kenneth Chung added that the new club fee will be \$750 for their first three years. USA Swimming Staff may approve reductions for clubs in remote areas or based on outreach membership. Mr. Shinofield added that new club approval is a collaborative process between USA Swimming Headquarters and the LSC; it can be a sliding scale.

Mr. Chung concluded by informing the Officials Committee Members to direct any questions regarding the RES-1 legislation to him.

VI. Uniforming at National Meets

Curtis Myers, with support from Dana Covington, put forward the following motion:

MOTION: At the discretion of the Meet Referee, white shoes and white socks or black shoes and black socks may be worn with shorts during preliminary sessions at National Meets.

Trish Martin seconded the motion.

Motion to approve. **Approved.**

VII. NOC Goal Updates

- Athletes (*Athlete Members*)
 - Harper Freeman noted that the Athlete Member's Guidebook to the NOC will be done by ABM. Most athlete members of the NOC will be at ABM. Most athlete members of the NOC will become Junior Officials. He also stated that the NOC is doing a great job at including athletes in the working groups.
 - Colin Gibbons concurred with Harper Freeman's discussion points. He also noted that he is working to complete the Stroke and Turn Officials Course.
- Evaluation & Mentoring (*Trish Martin*)
 - Trish Martin's Evaluation and Mentoring Working Group will host their next quarterly meeting the week of September 16 to name N3 mentors to the October 2024 list.
 - Mrs. Martin working group has approved 12 N3i and 9 N3f applications. In addition, the working group has reviewed the National Mentor Requirements. Updates were sent out to those mentors who are expiring in December. There will be a Mentorship track at ABM.
- Education Working Group (*Jason Johnson*)
 - Jason Johnson's Officials Education Working Group developed the 2024 Hot August Nights curriculum, identified presenters, and created consistent branding and presentation slides for each session.



- Mr. Johnson surveyed those officials who attended each 2024 Hot August Nights session. Survey questions and results are reported below:
 - *Would you like to see more training sessions offered?* 648 responses: 46% x2/yr, 35% more than x2/yr, 19% x1/yr.
 - *What topics would you like covered in the future?* SR 24%, Mentoring 24%, Walk of Star 7%, Referee 22%, CJ 23% (note: multiple selections allowed).
- National Certs, OTS & OQM (*Marianne Walling*)
 - *National Certifications*: National Certifications re-opened in July 2024. Since then, there have been over 400 applications. To date, 1,200 applications have been processed. As of August 2024, there are 225 new nationally certified N2 ST and N2 AO Officials. 650 officials have expired nationally. Mrs. Walling and her working group have worked on succession planning. Additionally, she noted that there are 2,518 unique nationally certified officials.
 - *Officials Qualifying Meets*: Marianne Walling provided numbers update for OQMs: 45 OQMs in May-July, 75 OQMs in May-August. The turnaround time for processing an OQM application is under two weeks. Y2D: 174 approved, 177 requested OQMs. She also noted that they are working on a succession plan for the OQM working group.
 - *Officials Tracking System*: The 2,748 evaluations that were in the USA Swimming holding tank have been loaded into OTS. The working group's major goal is National Applications and Certifications. Early fall in OTS. In staging.
 - *National Meet Tracking*: This is an ongoing project for Marianne Walling's working group. 516 officials applied to a National Meet in 2024. The working group is reviewing acceptances, withdrawals, and declines by competition.
- Committee Chair (*Dana Covington*)
 - GOAL REVIEW: Dana Covington reviewed her goals for the committee. **Goal One: to increase transparency, to increase involvement at national level.** Update: developed criteria for how national meet referees and stroke and turn officials are selected. **Goal Two: to increase the number of unique officials assigned to national meets.** Update: developed criteria and shared with each National Meet Referee, including a rubric, succession planning, and experience, while making sure officials in positions are qualified to serve athletes at the meet. Documents/guidelines are posted on the USA Swimming website. Officiating team: Aim for - Noted 25% first time, 50 some experience, 25% experienced in position at the level of meet or higher. **Goal Three: to understand "thirst" of national deck.** Update: 2024 TYR Pro Swim Series - 15 applied with no acceptance. Keep track of who has applied, invited, withdrawn. **Goal Four: to help NOC members feel valued as Committee members.** Update: Dana Covington and Kathleen Scandary have met with each NOC member to review goals and develop working groups. **Goal Five: partner with USAS staff to provide training opportunities for officials.** Update: in-progress.
 - BLOCK PARTY: Following her goals review, Mrs. Covington introduced the Block Party Meet Type to the Committee. The Block Party is a pilot project for swim meets, with the goal of making the sanctioning process more streamlined while offering additional opportunities for developmental athletes to race and achieve times. Dana Covington reviewed the Block Party Officials FAQ document with the committee and noted that there will be a session at ABM to introduce the meet-type.



- Online Testing (*Jack Swanson*)
 - Jack Swanson's Online Testing Working Group reviewed the Officials Certification Tests, specifically questions missed by 25% or more of test takers. He noted that 45 questions were updated, many of which were included in multiple tests. The working group's work was impacted by the Universal Certification Legislation. Clerk of Course, Timing Judge, and Admin Referee tests were retired.
 - Dr. Swanson made note of the new online modules for officials and their release dates: Stroke and Turn was released in April 2024, Starter and Admin Official will be available October 1, 2024. He and his working group focused their efforts on the new modules rather than length of exams. In addition, the Online Testing working group collaborated with DEI and Disability Working Group to add additional disability related scenarios to the officials' curriculum.
 - Dr. Swanson will participate in a panel discussion at USA Swimming's 2024 ABM to discuss a SWOT analysis of LSC Officials Committees. He will also contribute to the Block Party discussion.
 - Jack Swanson's goals have included working with staff leadership to regularly review testing questions and modules to ensure clarity and compliance with USA Swimming rules.
 - Anne Lawley asked how test takers will be notified of an upcoming testing shutdown. Dr. Swanson suggested that LSC Officials Chairs distribute this information to their LSCs or utilize HQ staff to notify test takers of the deadline. Joel Shinofield confirmed the latter.
 - Marianne Walling asked if there will be a process in place to notify test takers of certification length and expirations. Joel Shinofield requested the working group work with HQ staff for new courses.
- Open Water (*Mike Murphy*)
 - Mike Murphy is working to identify up and coming Open Water Officials for World Aquatics Certification. He noted that World Aquatics' ITO selection process will be changing for the upcoming cycle. The United States has room to add additional officials to the current AQUA Open Water ITO Lists.
 - Mr. Murphy provided an update on the 2024 Open Water National Championships, where Tom Lombardo served as Meet Referee and Sandy Graham served as Admin Referee. At the Championships, the USA Swimming Open Water Achievement Award was given to Mark McCaw posthumously.
 - The Open Water Working Group is updating the Minimum Standards for Open Water Officials.
 - Jack Swanson added to the discussion by stating that, with the Keeping Athletes First initiative, there may be interest in including an Open Water module in the USA Swimming University. Joel Shinofield suggested recording a webinar to include in the coursework.
- LSC Liaison (*Curtis Myers*)
 - Curtis Myers discussed his goals as LSC Liaison, including continuing to increase communication to the LSC Officials Chairs. Dr. Myers noted that more LSC Officials Chairs are reaching out with questions, and he is distributing information to a larger group.
 - The LSC Officials Chairs Working Group was working on developing a handbook for LSC Officials Chairs but has shifted gears to developing informational webinars. The



webinars will offer information on system navigation and integration into national level for LSC Officials Chairs.

- The LSC Officials Chairs Working Group has assumed the Officials Excellence Award.
- Dr. Myers has also worked with Dana Covington to revamp the formatting of the LSC Officials Chairs Quarterly Call.
- Officials Communications (*Anne Lawley*)
 - Anne Lawley discussed her on-going working group goals, including the USA Swimming Official's Newsletter. She noted that she was experiencing challenges with approval and asked for assistance from USA Swimming Staff. Additionally, Mrs. Lawley cited a need for a USA Swimming Officials Instagram account, as not all officials are members of the Facebook account and not all are receiving the newsletter.

VIII. Ex officio Updates

- Updates from World Aquatics (*Jay Thomas*)
 - Jay Thomas made note that communication from World Aquatics regarding Pool ITO List No. 23 will be distributed shortly.
 - Mr. Thomas stated that the Paris 2024 Olympic Games went well. The United States was represented well among the Games' Pool International Technical Officials Team. Future World Aquatics Championships include the SCM Championships in December 2024, to be held in Budapest, Hungary, followed by the World Aquatics Championships in Singapore in July 2025.
 - Jay Thomas added that OKI needs a "Part 2" meeting.
- YMCA (*Judy Sharkey*)
 - Judy Sharkey explained that the YMCA's officiating clinics are held in-person. October will be their busy season.
 - Ms. Sharkey added that the YMCA reciprocity agreement with USA Swimming allows Y Level 1 Officials to become USA Swimming Stroke and Turn Officials.
- Rules & Regs (*Derek Paul*)
 - Derek Paul noted that the next House of Delegates will be held September 28, 2024. There will be an open Rules Meeting at 4:00 p.m. MT on September 26.
 - Mr. Paul reminded the committee to review and discuss proposed legislation with voting members of the HOD.
- Program & Events (*Kathleen Scandary*)
 - Kathleen Scandary has continued to support the NOC Chair and communicate with Jay Thomas on the international scene. She will be a part of ABM in 2024 by running the panel for recruitment and retention of USA Swimming officials.

IX. Other Announcements

Dana Covington held a Moment of Remembrance for Jack Yetter.

X. Adjourn

Motion to Adjourn: 6:25 p.m. Mountain Time (MT)

Next Committee Meeting: Wednesday, November 6, 2024 – 5:00-6:00 p.m. MT (via Zoom)