

Officials Vice President Report
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I would like to take this time to thank all of you who have worked with officials in the past four years. Special thanks go to the chairs of the officials committees, Rita Barr, Sue Johnson, Barbara McNamee, Carol Tackett, Mary Ellen Wiegand, to the zone officials chairs, and to the athletes who complete the membership of the Officials Board, and to the association officials chairs. And to all of you who judge, we couldn't do it without you.

Officials Testing Chair, Mary Ellen Wiegand reports there are 5 candidates for Level VI ratings.

Evaluation Chair, Sue Johnson reports the percentage of judges passing evaluations is higher than last year.

Following are things I have been working on this year.

- ◆ Pre-selected judges for 2004 competitions and sent out letters in December and January to judges.
- ◆ Notified meet managers of pre-selected judge's names and rooming list.
- ◆ Selected judging panels for national meets with help from members of the Officials Board. Thanks to Barbara McNamee for being in charge of panel selection at US Juniors.
- ◆ Emailed judges to verify attendance for all national meets.
- ◆ Revised "How to Become a Judge" brochure that is on the USA Synchro website.
- ◆ Judges Training Figure video is in production at this time. Discussing possibilities for new routine video.
- ◆ Approved judge's reimbursement forms as meets conclude. Calculated dispersal of funds from the extra athlete assessment for judges at US Age Groups.
- ◆ December, met with several members of the Officials Board in Colorado Springs. We worked on items from the convention agenda that were not completed at convention. We had many ideas and are in the process of reviewing and voting on the items with the full board by email. A synopsis of these items follows. Proposed Appendix G proposals will be voted on by the Officials Board and brought to the Board of Governors for approval.
 1. At convention we voted to have updates every four years with paper or other updates in between. Decided to try having "on line" training with Tobee. The first session on the difficulty of stacks, throws and lifts was completed and feedback received from the judges. The second session is about ready to be launched. Everyone is welcome to view these sessions.
 2. Discussed and clarified procedures for judges testing, when rating becomes official (after all training and testing has been completed and passed), and when it expires. Associations have interpreted this differently.
 3. Working on judges pre-selection to make sure as many judges as possible get free rooms in a given year.
 4. Discussed reimbursement policy: possibly select judges for reimbursement based on the ideal number of judges needed at a specific meet. This would mean that those judges over the ideal number and not selected would not be eligible for reimbursement. Right now US Nationals is the only meet where we have too many judges.
 5. Discussed using only internationally trained (Levels VII and VIII) judges for those meets run under FINA rules and recommending the same for Trials events.
 6. Possible revision of attendance requirements for National judges to get more at Age Group and Open.
 7. Assign a team to be in charge of wrap-up at each national meet.
 8. Establish criteria for granting petitions for Fast Track Judges Certification and exceptions from meet attendance requirements.
 9. Redefine Judge Emeritus.
- ◆ Sent letter to judges explaining the Judge Emeritus status.

APPENDIX G (Officials Certification Policy)

Proposed Changes - Convention 2004

Please feel free to offer suggestions to the Officials VP and/or any member of the Officials Board (includes your Zone Officials Chair) before convention.

Item 1 - Section 1.01 Testing Policies (page 1)

Testing Policies: add a second sentence. A judge rating is good for two years from the date of completion of all requirements for the rating.

Rationale: There is confusion and various ways of applying the procedures.

Item 2 - Section 101.C.4.d (page 3) Practice judging for Level V. We decided that whatever figures are done at respective junior or senior zone championships would satisfy this requirement.

Item 3 - Section 1.02.B.2 (page 6) needs definition.

2. If the candidate does not successfully complete the oral panel requirements within ~~the time requirement~~ two years, he/she must begin that level of testing and training again.

Housekeeping: What are the time requirements? Needs better definition.

Item 4 - Section 1.03.A.4.a (page 6) National Judges (Levels VI-F, VI-N)

- a. Attend at least one national championship each year. Attend ~~each one of the 6~~ national championships in an Olympic Quad. (~~total of 6 national championships in an Olympic Quad—Masters, Collegiate, Age Group, U.S. National, Junior, Open~~) These shall include U.S. Collegiate, U.S. Junior, U.S. Age Group, U.S. Masters and may include U.S. National and/or U.S. Open. The number of meets will be prorated for any judge not beginning at the start of the Olympic Quad.

Rationale: This will allow judges to use one meet more than once in a Quad and not make US Nationals and US Open (run under FINA rules where Level VII/VIII judges have priority) a requirement for them.

Item 5 - Section 1.03.A.5.a (page 7) USSS International Judges (Level VII-I)

- a. Attend at least one national championship each year. Attend ~~each one of the 6~~ national championships in an Olympic Quad. (~~total of 6 national championships in an Olympic Quad—Masters, Collegiate, Age Group, U.S. National, Junior, Open~~) These shall include U.S. National, U.S. Junior, U.S. Open, U.S. Age Group and may include U.S. Collegiate and/or U.S. Masters.

Rationale: This will allow judges to use one meet more than once in a Quad and encourage Level VII to be at our meets run under FINA rules.

Item 6 - Section 1.03.A.6.a (page 7) FINA and ASUA Judges (Level VIII)

- a. Attend at least one national championship each year. Attend ~~each one of the 6~~ national championships in an Olympic Quad, (~~total of 6 national championships in an Olympic Quad—Masters, Collegiate, Age Group, U.S. National, Junior, Open~~) These shall include U.S. National, U.S. Junior, U.S. Open, U.S. Age Group and may include U.S. Collegiate and/or U.S. Masters.

Rationale: This will allow judges to use one meet more than once in a Quad and encourage Level VIII to be at our meets run under FINA rules.

Item 7 - Section 1.03.B.3 (page 7) delete 2nd sentence.

3. Attendance at 2 of the 4 age groups at the U.S. Age Group Championships will satisfy the requirement. ~~Attendance at either the U.S. Junior Open or U.S. Senior Open Championships will satisfy the requirement.~~

Rationale: If the current Championships stay the same schedule and format, then this 2nd sentence needs rewording.

Item 8 - Section 1.03.B.4 (page 7)

Add the Free Routine Combination to this list of examples.

Item 9 - Section 1.04.B (page 8) delete entirely and re-letter C to B.

- ~~B. **A Written Test:** Will be sent to the retaining judge in January of the year following the annual convention in the legislative year. The test is to be taken at home and returned to the Zone Officials Chair by the indicated deadline.~~

Rationale: We do not currently do this. Updates and Esession training will take care of this.

Item 10 - Section 1.03.B.5.a. (page 7) Exceptions, add new a. and b.

- a. Judges work and family obligations shall be considered.
b. Substitutions of one championship for another shall be considered.

Rationale: Need criteria for granting exceptions.

Item 11 - Section 1.03.D (page 7) new 4

4. Evaluations will be distributed at the end of the competition.

Rationale: Some felt judges were using the results on the evaluations to rank athletes in the next round.

Item 12 - Section 1.06.A (page 9) new 5

5. At all national championships where final competition critiques are held, the Officials Vice President shall assign a team of no less than 2 Level VI-N or higher judges to moderate the critique.

Rationale: Defines the procedure

Item 13 - Section 1.05 (page 9) Judge Emeritus

~~Delete: A judge who wishes to continue contributing to the sport of synchronized swimming, but would prefer to retire from active judging, may elect to become a judge emeritus.~~

Replace with: A judge shall enter Judge Emeritus status the year following his/her 72nd birthday.

A. Stays the same

B. New 3. Member of oral panel. Renumber present 3,4,5 to 4.5.6.

- C. New 1. The Judge Emeritus will always be welcome in the official's room and meetings at all championships. The new Judge Emeritus shall be presented an award during the awards ceremony at a national championship.

Item 15 - Section 1.06 (page 9) new E

- D. A judge is considered affiliated if:
1. He/she is a paid coach, staff or administrator of a team.
 2. He/she is a volunteer coach, staff or administrator of a team.
 3. He/she has regularly scheduled attendance at team practice.
 4. He/she is a mother, father, sister, or brother of an athlete.

Rationale: We were asked to define affiliation. We want to encourage our unaffiliated judges to continue to consult with and critique our swimmers. We felt that regularly scheduled paid or volunteer coaches and other staff or administrators are affiliated with a team. We would still keep the wording in Rules, Section VII.B.3.d. as it is.

Item 16 - Section 1.09 Fast Track Judge Certification, new C and D

- C. Petitions to the Officials Board for Fast Track Judges Certification shall include a recommendation from the appropriate association and/or zone officials' chair.
- D. The Officials Board will notify the petitioner and appropriate officials' chair of the procedure for the candidate.

Rationale: Procedure for petitioning needed definition.

Item 17 - Judges Pre-selection: Below are some problems and some possible solutions. Please feel free to offer suggestions.

- A. Problem - Because of zone balance, some judges are pre-selected for 4-6 meets per year while others are selected for none.
1. Solutions
 - a. Select each judge for at least one meet before selecting judges for more than one meet. This does not apply to judges who are affiliated for several meets and continually only have the same 1 or 2 meets unaffiliated.
 - b. Do we disregard Zone designation for totally unaffiliated judges (O-Zone)?
- B. Problem - At present we reimburse a portion of the expenses for all who judge at a national competition and turn in their receipts in a timely manner. Some meets we really have too many judges, those there judge very little, and the reimbursement expense is large.
1. Solution
 - a. Determine the ideal number of judges for each competition to allow for no back to back panels where that is a problem (large events), and select only that number of judges to be reimbursed for that competition. Judging back to back is not a problem at U.S. Nationals and U.S. Masters has many small events.
 - b. Wording would be as follows
 - i. For each competition, judges shall be pre-selected to judge at least 1 preliminary event. These judges shall be allowed to submit transportation and housing expenses for reimbursement.
 - ii. Pre-selected judges shall arrive prior to the first event and stay through the final competition critique. Only one half of the competition is required for U.S. Age Group. (Perhaps for Open also, depending on format)

- iii. Each unaffiliated national judge shall receive complimentary housing a minimum of one time per year when pre-selected. Complimentary housing is not tied to zone balance.
- iv. The following numbers shall be pre-selected.

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| U.S. Collegiate | 24 |
| U.S. Junior | 24 |
| U.S. National | 20 |
| U.S. Age Group | 24 |
| U.S. Open | 24 |
| U.S. Masters | 20 |

C. Problem - We have two levels of national judge. Levels VII-I and VIII judges have additional training in the FINA rules, Level VI-N judges do not. Some of our competitions are run under FINA rules.

1. Pre-select judges as follows:
 - a. For U.S. Nationals, Level VII-I and VIII judges shall have first priority for selection with no zone balance considered. If there are fewer than 20 judges, additional judges from Level VI-N shall be selected with zone balance considered.
 - b. For U.S. Open, Level VII-I and VIII judges shall have first priority for selection with no zone balance considered. If there are fewer than 24 judges, additional judges from Level VI-N shall be selected with zone balance considered.
 - c. For all other U.S. Championships, Level VI-N, VII-I, VIII shall be selected with zone balance considered.
2. Recommend to International Relations Committee that only Levels VII-I and VIII judges be used for National Team Trials.

Item 18 - Clarification of testing procedures

Tests for all routine levels should be comprehensive tests including both figure and routine questions. All routine levels are comprehensive levels and include figure judging. Judges may go up the ladder as a figure judge only, as a routine/figure judge (comprehensive), or zigzag across from one to the other. Re-testing routine judges should only have to take one test, not two as is the present procedure.

Item 19 - Judges Exams

Schedule times for judge exams at national championships and place the time on the meet schedule. It is too difficult to administer tests all during the competition.

Item 20 - Other Items under discussion

1. Judges training - is training hindered by not using current athletes in training videos?
2. Recruiting new judges - current young coaches are interested in coaching and feel judging would hinder their ability to focus on coaching. Also, the cost is prohibitive for young people just starting their lives. We came up with no solutions.
3. Cards for judges - these would be great but previous administration of this was messy. Any suggestions?