

USA Swimming Situation Resolutions – Referee/Admin Referee

The following situations have been reviewed by the USA Swimming Officials and Rules Committee

1. After swimming the 7th preliminary heat of a 100-yard backstroke event, a coach approaches the referee and questions the placement of the far end backstroke flags. Upon checking it is found that the flags are set for short course meters. There have been three DQ's for non-continuous turning motion. What do you do? Do you reset the flags for the remainder of the event? What about the three DQ's? What if a coach comes to you and asks for a re-swim for a swimmer that did not DQ stating that the swimmer's time was affected by the erroneous flag placement?

Recommended Resolution: The referee should evaluate the situation in view of keeping conditions fair for all competitors. The specific solution will depend on the conditions and the information gained through review. The solution could include leaving the flags in place until the next session and then allowing re-swims for those competitors affected by the flags. One thing to keep in mind is that the swimmers warmed up using the misplaced flags.

Applicable Rules 102.13.4, 102.10.9

2. Three stroke and turn judges are positioned at each end of a 100-yard breaststroke event. During Heat 2 the stroke and turn judge having jurisdiction over lanes 1-2 disqualifies the swimmer in lane 2 for a scissors kick. Subsequent calls are made for the same violation by the same judge in heats 3 and 4. This particular official was recently certified as a stroke and turn judge. Should you do anything? What should you do if you subsequently determine that the scissors kick call being made by this judge was, in fact, a legal kick?

Recommended Resolution: A number of questions need to be asked. Are the other judges making similar calls at the same frequency? If not, it would be a good idea to have someone observe the official during subsequent races. This is where a chief judge can be of great benefit. If the referee finds that the scissors kick being called was actually a legal kick, the referee should overrule the disqualifications.

Applicable Rules 102.13.1, 102.13.4

3. At a championship meet with the men and women swimming in separate courses, the 1650-yard freestyle is after the 200-yard freestyle with no break. A coach requests that a swimmer who is in the final heat of 200-yard freestyle and the first heat of the 1650 be moved to another 1650 heat to give the swimmer a break between swims. What should be done?

Recommended Resolution: Changing the seeding of the 1650-yard freestyle would be against the Rules. The meet announcement should have clearly stated the order of events so the coach should have realized the possibility of this situation arising. The referee could find a timing system problem or have an issue with counters/timers that might delay the start of the 1650 a minute or two.

Applicable Rules 102.5

USA Swimming Situation Resolutions – Referee/Admin Referee

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4. The first heat at a championship meet of the 1650-yard freestyle (the final event of the day) has just finished when the Administrative Referee approaches and states that he just noticed that the starting system cable is plugged into the wrong slot and all the times for the morning session are too fast. Most coaches and swimmers have already checked their seeding for the evening session and left the building. What needs to be done? What if the seeding for the evening session changes? Can any times be used for NTV?

Recommended Resolution: The system should be changed to have the equipment connected correctly. Since all heats for the morning sessions with the exception of the 1650 were timed in the same manner, the seeding should not change. Those times can be adjusted based on a timing system malfunction. The remaining heats of the 1650 should be run with the correct configuration..

Applicable Rules 102.16.5D, 102.16.5F, 102.13.6

5. The meet announcement of a championship meet states that the fastest heat of the 13-14 and 15&over men and women 1650 yard freestyles will be swum during finals with all other heats being swum during the morning prelims. The evening before the 1650-yard freestyle, the Meet Committee notifies the Meet Director that they had previously voted to swim only two heats of the 1650-yard freestyle during finals—one heat of men and one heat of women with the age groups combined. The Meet Director thereupon notifies the coaches of the swimmers involved and effects the change directed by the Committee. Only some of the coaches were aware of the Committees vote. Was the situation handled properly? What, if anything, should have been done differently? Should the Meet Referee have played a role in this decision? Should a meet jury have been convened to rule on this issue?

Recommended Resolution: The Meet Committee has no authority to change the order of events as stated in the meet announcement. The authority to change the order or arrangement of heats lies only with the Meet Referee and only to the extent of consolidating heats. The change should not have been made.

Applicable Rules 102.8.1

6. During the 1500-meter event on Sunday afternoon at an outdoor facility, lightning is observed near the end of the 4th of 5 heats. Two swimmers have already finished the race; three are on the last length, and the remaining three swimmers all have more than one length to complete. What should occur?

Recommended Resolution: Whenever lightning is observed in the area, the pool should be cleared as quickly as possible. Any swims completed should be counted as official. If the three swimmers in the last length complete their swims as part of clearing the pool and the times are recorded, those times should be counted as well. Any swimmer not completing the race due to the weather should be offered a re-swim. The scheduling of the re-swim as well as any heats that were yet to be competed is the responsibility of the referee. It is highly recommended that the referee consult with the coaches of the affected swimmers regarding the rescheduling of heats.

Applicable Rules 102.8.4B

USA Swimming Situation Resolutions – Referee/Admin Referee

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7. A preliminary heat of a 100-yard butterfly event is started. Immediately after the start, the swimmer in lane 8 pulls up, stops and exits the water. After the race the referee checks to see what happened and the swimmer states that she thought she heard a recall. The referee checks with the starter and other officials to see if they heard anything. No other official heard any recall or other noise going off at the start. What is the ruling? Would the answer be different if this occurred during finals?

Recommended Resolution: The referee performed an appropriate investigation into the incident and having found no corroboration of a recall or any other sound that could be construed as a recall, the swimmer would be disqualified for not completing the race. The decision would be the same if the situation occurred during finals.

Applicable Rules 102.13.1, 102.13.3

8. The 8th heat of a 200-yard freestyle event is swum during preliminaries and lane 3 is empty. After the heat the swimmer from lane 3 approaches the referee and asks if he can swim the event in an upcoming heat. He indicates that he had reported to his lane but had been so focused on the upcoming race that he had blocked out the long whistle and simply failed to step up. Should the swimmer be allowed to swim the event? Would the answer be different if timers' actions kept the swimmer from swimming? What if the decision is to allow the swimmer to swim but there are no more empty lanes? Would the answer be the same if this occurred during finals?

Recommended Resolution: This is a situation where "level-appropriate decision-making" might be utilized. If this was an un-scored meet, the Referee might find an open lane for that swimmer to compete and get a time (particularly if this was a young or inexperienced athlete). If, however, there were some other factors (timers telling them it was the wrong heat, deck crowding, etc.), that prevented the swimmer from getting to the blocks on time, the Referee has the discretion to find any place for that swimmer to compete and place. If there were no empty lanes, running another heat or splitting a heat might be an option. If this occurred during Finals (and before the Finals were actually swum), the Referee has the discretion to replace an alternate that has already been called to the blocks and reported to the starting area, if there are extenuating circumstances.

Applicable Rules 102.13.1

USA Swimming Situation Resolutions – Referee/Admin Referee

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9. During the warm-up period for a preliminary session a coach contacts the referee and indicates that one of his swimmers in a 100-yard freestyle event is not listed in the program. He further states that the entry was submitted on time and he had not been told of any problem. What actions should the referee take? What is the role of the Meet Director? If it is confirmed that the swimmer was properly entered but the entry was erroneously missed what should be done? Would the action be different if the swimmer should have been seeded in one of the fastest three heats?

Recommended Resolution: The Meet Referee should go find the Meet Director and ask to see the original meet entries for that team. If, in fact, the swimmer was properly entered on the entry form but, due to a “*scribner’s error*,” was left out of the program, the Meet Referee should 1) see if there is an open lane in the first heats and offer the swimmer the opportunity to swim in one of those lanes; or, 2) re-seed the entire event – particularly if the swimmer should have been in the top heats. Remember to publish the re-seed (“pink paper”) with RE-SEED clearly marked – pass them out to coaches, have the announcer mention that the event has been re-seeded and where to get/find the new heat sheets, and put the re-seeds up all around the pool.

Applicable Rules 102.13.1

10. After having disqualified several swimmers in prelims for false starts, the referee and starter learn that someone behind the starter has been taking flash pictures. What should the referee do?

Recommended Resolution: First, the referee should politely stop the photographer. Second, the referee should check with any and all sources of relevant information to determine whether the swimmers involved reacted to the flash because they were expecting a strobe. If the referee believes that the photographic flash may have affected one or more swimmers, he may permit the swimmers to swim the event again. This is a decision which must be determined on site.

If this occurred in the championship final, the same solution can be applied. The affected swimmer, and perhaps all of the swimmers in the championship heat, may be offered a re-swim. The times from the original finals heat of those not re-swimming can be combined with the times from the re-swim heat for those that choose to re-swim to determine the championship order of finish.

Applicable Rules Articles 102.10.9 and 102.13.3

11. A coach approaches the referee prior to the woman’s 100-yard breaststroke. The coach indicates that the stroke and turn judge with jurisdiction over lanes 7-8 had previously disqualified his swimmer in lane 7 for a breaststroke infraction in the 200 yard IM—a questionable call in the coach’s opinion. The coach asks that the judge be moved to a different lane stating that the swimmer would be “psyched out” by his presence at the end of the lane. What should be done?

Recommended Resolution: We cannot assign officials on the pool deck to fit the wishes of a single swimmer or coach. Presuming that the referee was involved in the previous call and supported it, there is no reason to change the assignment of officials.

Applicable Rules 102.13.1

USA Swimming Situation Resolutions – Referee/Admin Referee

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12. In a preliminary session of a championship meet, a swim-off is required in a 100-yard butterfly event for eighth place. When should the swim-off occur and how is this decision made? Should the other coaches and swimmers be informed when the swim-off will be contested?

Recommended Resolution: USA Swimming Rules require that the swim-off “. . . must be held not more than 45 minutes after the last heat of any event in which one of the swimmers is competing . . .” The Deck Referee, after consultation with the affected coaches, determines the time for the swim-off. If the swim-off is to be held before the end of the preliminary session, the Referee should determine a time to hold the swim-off, and announce or have announced that there will be a break in preliminaries to hold the swim-off at the designated time.

Applicable Rules: 102.5.2

13. Immediately after a heat of women’s 200-yard breaststroke is contested the coach of the swimmer in lane 7 approaches the meet referee complaining that her swimmer received an unfair start. The coach indicates that her swimmer did not hear the “Take your mark” command and was standing with both feet 6” from the front of the block when the starting signal was given. It turns out that neither the deck referee nor the starter had checked the position of the swimmers’ feet and, indeed, both recalled that the swimmer in lane 7 left the blocks well after the other swimmers. What should happen? Is the answer different if it was the 1650-yard freestyle? Should the referee and/or starter have recalled the start?

Recommended Resolution: Obviously the Referee/Starter did not give all swimmers in the heat a fair start. The only question here is how to fix it. We can assume that if one swimmer did not get a fair start, others in the heat could have also been affected. Best bet is to carefully question the swimmers in the heat to determine if they were able to hear the start and felt that they got a fair start. Those who feel that they got an unfair start should be given the opportunity to re-swim the heat. Make sure that you inform them that if they elect to re-swim, they must take their new time, even if it is slower than their original swim. Determine where in the order of events you can fit the re-swim and announce or have announced that the re-swim will take place at the specified point in the meet. The same procedure should be followed even if this is a 1650-yard freestyle, or worse, even if this were the final of an event.

Applicable Rules 102.14.4C, 102.14.4D, 102.11.1

14. An event is announced and the swimmers are on the blocks. A coach approaches the referee and tells him that the swimmer in Lane 3 is ineligible to swim for one or more reasons. What action should the referee take?

Recommended Resolution: Tell the coach that the request needs to be made in writing including objective evidence as to the basis of the protest. Since there is little time to determine the actual eligibility of the swimmer, start the heat and announce that the race is being run “under protest”.

Applicable Rules 102.11.4, 102.11.3

USA Swimming Situation Resolutions – Referee/Admin Referee

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15. In a championship meet there is a swim-off for 16th place in the 10 & under 100-meter butterfly. In the swim-off the two swimmers tie again. The referee decides to swim two consolation final heats and a championship final heat in the 100-meter butterfly that evening. Is this decision correct?

Recommended Resolution: The referee's decision is incorrect. USA Swimming Rules require ("shall") swim-offs to qualify for the disputed place or places in the final. As long as both competitors wish to compete for the last spot in the consolation heat, a swim-off is the only method of resolution available to the referee. Though this decision seems like a fair and just solution, it is also illegal since our Rules do not allow the addition of heats, only consolidation. Adding an extra consolation heat is inappropriate. A second swim-off should have been held within 45 minutes of the first swim-off.

Applicable Rules 102.5.2, 102.8.1

16. A coach approaches the administrative referee at an LSC championship to get a time for the leadoff swimmer in his team's 800-yard freestyle relay. The timing judge verifies the swimmer had earned a 200-yard US Open time using the automatic pad time. However, the team was disqualified because the fourth swimmer failed to compete. Is the time achieved by the lead off swimmer an official time? Can it be used to obtain an NTV?

Recommended Resolution: Yes it is. As long as the leadoff swimmer finished his/her leg legally, subsequent actions by other members of the relay cannot affect the leadoff swimmer's time.

Applicable Rules 102.16.4A(1)(c), 102.16.4A(1)(d)

17. During a finals session of an LSC senior championship, the women's 100-yard freestyle championship final is about a minute away. A swimmer from that heat approaches the referee indicating that her goggles just broke and asks for time to go to her swim bag and get an extra pair of goggles. What should the referee do?

Recommended Resolution: Getting replacement goggles from her bag should not take long and the referee should be accommodating as long as the delay is not excessive.

Applicable Rules 102.13.1

18. A swimmer is a "no-show" for the final of an event in a meet being swum under the National Championship scratch rule, but was in the venue's warm-up pool at the time. The fastest heat of relays is the last event of the session; however the slower heats had been swum at the beginning of prelims. Is the swimmer eligible to compete in the relay?

Recommended Resolution: According to National Championship scratch rules, any swimmer qualifying for a final race in an individual event who fails to compete . . . shall be barred from further competition for the remainder of the meet. The swimmer would not be eligible to compete in the relay.

Applicable Rules 207.7.9 D(1)

USA Swimming Situation Resolutions – Referee/Admin Referee

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19. The preliminaries for women's 200-yard individual medley have just been completed and the meet referee is in the process of notifying a coach about a disqualification in the event. After discussing the DQ, the coach states that he had told his swimmer to scratch from finals of an earlier event thinking that she would qualify for finals in the 200-yard individual medley. He asks if he can rescind her scratch. Should the referee allow the scratch to be rescinded? How should the coach have handled this situation?

Recommended Resolution: The referee should not allow the scratch to be rescinded. Presuming that the National Championship scratch procedures are being used, the coach made the error. The coach should have advised the swimmer to *declare* that he/she may not intend to compete in the earlier event rather than actually scratching. In that way, the swimmer has the option to compete in the earlier event depending on the outcome of the 200-yard individual medley. However, if the Meet Entry is silent as to the scratch procedures being used for the meet, all bets are off and the Referee has wide latitude in determining a fair resolution for this situation. Also, it is good preventative officiating for the admin referee to ask the swimmer at the time of the scratch if he/she is swimming another event and to ensure that the options are understood.

Applicable Rules 207.7.9 E(2), 102.13.1

20. It is the second day of a scored meet and the 500-yard freestyle is to be contested. The meet announcement stipulates a check-in time of 8:30 AM. It also states that swimmers that are not checked-in may not compete in the event. It is 9:00 AM and a swimmer approaches the clerk of course indicating he/she forgot to sign-in and ask if he/she could still swim. What should occur and why? Under what conditions would the swimmer be allowed to compete in the event?

Recommended Resolution: The meet information should be followed. It was stated that the swimmer must check in to swim, and the swimmer failed to do so. The swimmer should be told that he/she would not be permitted to swim. If the swimmer was prevented from checking in due to some situation beyond his/her control, the referee may allow the swimmer to compete. Examples of these situations include changes in the meet announcement that were not fully communicated or an emergency road closure that prevented the swimmer from getting to the pool on time. However, if this was an un-scored meet and there were open lanes in the first heats, the Referee might consider offering the swimmer the opportunity to swim in those first heats. "Level-appropriate decision-making."

Applicable Rules 102.3, 102.13.1

USA Swimming Situation Resolutions – Referee/Admin Referee

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21. Nine swimmers are seeded into the senior 400-meter freestyle. It is being swum slowest to fastest in an 8-lane pool. As a result of the number of athletes who report for the first heat, it is apparent that the two heats can be combined. The Referee calls for the second heat to report, combines both heats, and starts the race. The coach of a swimmer in the second heat then protests on the basis of “inconsistent application of policy and the elemental unfairness to swimmers to be called to the blocks five minutes earlier than they were expecting to swim.” Did the coach have a valid concern? Was the matter handled properly?

Recommended Resolution: First, did the coach have a valid concern? Yes. He/she was trying to prepare the swimmer to perform to the best of the swimmer’s capabilities and that extra five minutes may have been built into the swimmer’s warm-up. Second, was the matter handled properly? It depends on the timeline process being used. The referee does have the authority to combine heats, but this should be done only to improve conditions for the swimmers. The referee would have been better off if he or she contacted all affected coaches about the change to combine the heats so that they could prepare their swimmers accordingly.

Applicable Rules 102.8.1

22. A swimmer who checked in for the 200-yard Individual Medley does not report to the block to swim. The coach of the swimmer is informed that, based on the meet announcement, the athlete is barred from their next event. The coach thereupon informs the referee, for the first time, that the swimmer has a sore shoulder and was medically unable to swim the butterfly in the IM, but still wants to swim her next event, the 50-yard freestyle. What is the proper response?

Recommended Resolution: The meet information states that a swimmer who misses an event, for which he/she has previously checked in, will be barred from their next event. The referee does have the discretion to allow the swimmer to compete in the freestyle if the referee feels that the swimmer was medically unable to compete in the IM, but this is a slippery slope. The swimmer and/or coach should have notified the referee before the event that the swimmer would be unable to swim. In this case, it is recommended that the coach be notified that the swimmer will not be permitted to swim the 50-yard freestyle.

Applicable Rules 102.3, 207.7.9C, 207.7.9 E(1)

23. At a distance-only meet, no touch pads or buttons are available or in use. Consistent with apparent past practice, one watch is being operated per lane by a timer recruited for each heat. Should there be any concerns? Should anything else be done to insure times are obtained for all swimmers?

Recommended Resolution: The major concern is that a swimmer will not receive a time and no swimmer shall be required to re-swim a race due to unrecorded or inaccurate times. Each lane should have a minimum of two (2) manual watches operated by a separate timer.

Applicable Rules 102.16.2 A (3), 102.16.1 C, 102.16.4 D, 102.12.3

USA Swimming Situation Resolutions – Referee/Admin Referee

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24. During heat #6 of the men's 50-meter freestyle, the electronic timing system fails to operate. It is NOT started before the race finishes, therefore only watch times are available. The equipment operator suggests substituting the watch times for the pad times that would normally be available. Is this appropriate? How could a timing adjustment be done given that there are no button or pad times available for that heat?

Recommended Resolution: It would not be appropriate to substitute the unadjusted watch times for the electronic times for one heat. The referee should immediately investigate the timing error to make sure the problem is fixed prior to proceeding. The manual times should be adjusted according to USA Swimming Rules & Regulations, unless timing software automatically adjusts for this discrepancy.

Applicable Rules 102.16.5 D, 102.16.5 F, 102.13.6

25. In an 8&U 25-yard backstroke heat where only the manual back-up watch times are available, the watch times for one lane are 24.20 and 25.08. Even the slower time (25.08) would put the swimmer in the first place for that heat. However, none of the three "order-of finish" ("sweeps") reports have that swimmer finishing any earlier than third. How might that information be used in determining an official time?

Recommended Resolution: As soon as the referee has determined that a timing error, has occurred, the adjusted time for this lane should be correlated with the order-of-finish data. The official time may be determined by using the appropriate adjustment calculation. If there is still no correlation, then the adjusted time may be reported with a (JD) judges decision placed next to his official place as determined by place judging.

Applicable Rules 102.16.6 C, 102.16.6 D, 102.16.6 A, 102.16.5 E, 102.13.6

26. At a scored trials and finals meet, the Meet Director (without advising the referees) permits a 15 year old to swim in the preliminary heat of the comparable 13-14 event since an error had been made in processing the meet entries and heat sheets had been prepared that way. The intent was to then move the time to the 15-18 event before the results were announced and the finals seeded. Unfortunately, the Meet Director forgot to do so and it turns out the time is fast enough for the athlete to make finals as a 15-18 year old, but not as a 13-14 year-old, so the swimmer's name is not announced and the swimmer and coach are unaware that the event switch has not occurred. The mistake is discovered just prior to the finals session. Who should swim in the finals heat? What implications does the decision have for scoring of the meet? Did the Meet Director handle this properly? How else might the problem have been handled?

Recommended Resolution: If the situation is not specifically covered by the meet information then it is the referee's decision. The Meet Director should have conferred with the referee prior to the initial placement of the swimmer into this heat. The decision may have implications for team or individual scoring of points for this meet. Ideally the 15-year-old who should have actually qualified to swim in finals should be allowed to do so. The other affected swimmers and their coaches should be notified of the change. A swimmer should not be penalized for administrative mistakes.

Applicable Rules 102.13.1, 102.8.3, 102.8.1, 102.8.2, 102.23, 205.2.4

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27. On the last day at a major championship meet where time trials are scheduled to commence at the end of preliminaries each day, time trials will only consist of five (5) heats that should only take 10 minutes to contest. The preliminary session concludes with several heats of the 1500-yard freestyle. A coach approaches the referee and asks if time trials could be run before the 1500-yard freestyle heats thereby allowing the time trial swimmers to not wait around for 60 minutes before they swim. How should the referee respond?

Recommended Resolution: The time trials should be run at the end of the session as stated in the meet announcements. The referee would need to have written change delivered to each affected swimmer and/or their coach in order to change the time or date of an event.

Applicable Rules 102.8.1, 102.8.3

28. A swimmer acts in an inappropriate manner during finals (offensive language that is overheard by many people after being informed of a DQ.) The swimmer is informed by the referee that he is barred from the remainder of the meet as a result of his outburst. The coach of the athlete protests the decision and a meet jury is convened in the middle of finals. The jury calls for the meet officials who observed the alleged behavior to give first-hand testimony. The meet is stopped for several minutes, impacting swimmers who had warmed up with the expectation of swimming in the next few minutes. Was the situation handled appropriately? How could it have been handled differently?

Recommended Resolution: The referee has the discretion to impose a penalty for unsportsmanlike behavior. The meet jury has the ability to speak with the involved parties in order to clarify the situation. If it is possible to have one official at a time meet with the jury (substituting another official) such that the meet is not disrupted. The referee may have been able to avoid this if he had conferred with the coach proactively prior to his final imposition of disqualification although this would depend on the circumstances at the time.

Applicable Rules 102.10.3, 102.11.2, 102.11.3, 304.3.12

29. After the consolation final of the third event on the last (Sunday) evening of an LSC-wide championship meet, a violent electrical storm arrives and one hour later shows no signs of abating. The facility manager announces that the pool is closed for the night. Monday is a school day and workday; some teams are 200 miles and more from their homes. What should/can be done?

Recommended Resolution: It is at the discretion of the Meet Referee to postpone a meet and, with approval of the Meet Committee, may cancel or reschedule a meet for unusual or severe weather. A decision to cancel shall be final. The meet may be rescheduled at the discretion of the Meet Referee, the Meet Committee and, in this case, the LSC. However, the Meet Referee must call a meeting of the coaches to advise all of them about the final decision.

Applicable Rules 102.8.4 B, 102.8.4 C

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30. Several minutes after the Administrative Referee informed a coach that his swimmer was disqualified in the 200 IM for a one hand touch at the end of the breaststroke, the coach approaches the Deck Referee and asks if she is sure of the heat and lane because his swimmer is adamant that he did not commit the infraction. The referee follows up with the turn judge and he indicates that he is sure of the heat and lane since the other lane over which he had jurisdiction was empty. The referee relates this to the coach and swimmer. The swimmer states that the turn judge was wrong since one of his long time rivals was swimming in the lane. The referee checks with the table and finds that indeed there was a swimmer in the lane. What should occur at this point? What if subsequently the turn judge states that he did not mean to indicate the lane was entirely devoid of a swimmer, just that the swimmer he disqualified was so far ahead of the other swimmer that he was able to give that swimmer his complete attention, as if the lane were empty?

Recommended Resolution: The referee should discuss the situation again with the turn judge to make sure the judge saw the correct lane and heat and what his observation of the turn was. If the referee feels that the turn judge made the correct call in the correct lane then the call should be sustained. He may overturn it if he/she personally saw the infraction or if the interpretation of the rule for the breaststroke turn by the turn official is incorrect. The call may also be overturned if the turn judge did not raise their hand or if there is uncertainty regarding the correct lane or heat.

Applicable Rules 102.13.1, 101.1.5, 101.5.3 B(3)

31. A coach approaches the administrative referee at a senior championship complaining that the scratch table would not accept a scratch from finals from one of his athletes since it was submitted two minutes after the posted deadline for scratches. The final seeding for the event in question had not yet been posted? What should the referee do?

Recommended Resolution: If USA Swimming Championships scratch rules are in effect, then a swimmer who scratches after the heats have been seeded would be barred from further competition that day (except in the case of illness or injury). In this case, the seeding for the event is not complete, the results have not been posted, and the referee may allow this scratch, re-seed the Finals, and post the heats.

Applicable Rules 102.13.1, 207.7.9C, 207.7.9D, 207.7.9E(2)

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32. The Meet Referee at a scored championship meet receives a note on Sunday morning stating that an athlete competing in the meet is not entitled to represent the club with which they currently registered since the athlete represented another club in USA Swimming competition less than 120 days ago. The swimmer had swum both individual and relay events on Friday and Saturday and the coach planned to use the swimmer in a relay on Sunday. What should the meet referee do? What if the 120th day was Saturday? What if the 120th day was Sunday? When does the 120-day clock start and stop?

Recommended Resolution: The 120-day clock starts on the first day following the last day that the swimmer competed in a USA Swimming/LSC-sanctioned meet (other than for a closed meet—see definition in Glossary) for his/her former team. On the 121st day, the swimmer may represent his/her new team; however nothing prevents the swimmer from competing in the intervening time unattached to any team. Team representation impacts eligibility only for relay events; for individual events, there are no eligibility issues only that points scored by unattached swimmers do not accrue to any one team. So, regardless of the outcome in this situation, the results achieved by the swimmer in *individual* events will not change other than possibly the accrual of points to the swimmer's current team.

The protest needs to include objective evidence that can substantiate the claim. The referee can also call registration to help with the specifics of the situation. The Meet Referee needs to investigate what can be done on short notice and may find appropriate and compelling evidence to either substantiate or refute the claim. However, the most likely scenario is that the information required is not available at the meet -- especially on the morning of the final day -- and cannot be obtained before completing the meet. The Meet Referee then will need to preserve all of the relevant information, announce that the events involving the swimmer are being swum "under protest," and move on with the meet. All questions involving the swimmer's eligibility can be appealed, so final resolution can take days, weeks, or months.

Applicable Rules 203.3, 102.11.3, 102.11.6, 207.7.7C, 207.7.7D

33. The timing judge at a long course senior championships notices that there are no final results printing for the first few heats of the ladies 100-meter breaststroke. She subsequently finds that the timing console is set for 200-meter events. What should the timing judge do?

Recommended Resolution: The first thing to do is ensure that the timing console is set for 100-meter events for subsequent heats. Thereafter, it largely depends on the type of timing console and the timing software being used. More up-to-date consoles/firmware will have saved the pad data (no buttons) by an internally generated race number. In most cases, the data can be retrieved by printout or via the data link, in which case they could be used to determine official times. If an older console is used or the equipment operator pushed all of the wrong buttons and no data is saved, the back-up watch times would be adjusted and used.

Applicable Rules 102.16.5D, 102.16.5F, 102.16 Table 2

USA Swimming Situation Resolutions – Referee/Admin Referee

The following situations have been reviewed by the USA Swimming Officials and Rules Committee

34. A visiting nationally-known college coach is in attendance at an LSC Junior Olympic meet to observe some local swimmers. He is videotaping several events. A stroke disqualification is called in an event, and it is accepted by the referee but eventually protested in writing by another coach. The college coach tells the disqualified swimmer's coach that he has the swim on tape and it probably will show that there was no DQ. The protesting coach demands that the referee review the tape and change his decision. What should the referee do?

Recommended Resolution: The disqualification should stand, disallowing the protest. A Technical Jury cannot adjudicate judgment decisions -- only the referee may adjudicate judgment decisions. In addition, USA Swimming has not approved any videotape devices or the use of them to resolve such protests. The referee may view the tape for educational purposes; however, there is no obligation to do so

Applicable Rules 207.7.8, 102.13.1

35. In a B/C championship meet using dual confirmation relay take-off judging, the relay take-off judge on a lane does not call an early take-off infraction while several side judges do. Additionally, the deck referee calls the early take off on the third swimmer in the lane in question, but without raising a hand. Is there a valid disqualification?

Recommended Resolution: The referee may disqualify a swimmer(s) for any violations of the rules that he personally observes and shall at the same time raise one hand overhead with open palm. If he does not make such a signal there shall be no penalty. The DQ is invalid as the referee did not raise his/her hand overhead.

Applicable Rules 102.13.2

36. A "splasher" who is preparing for the next heat, accidentally stops the electronic timing system while a race is in progress. May he swim in his heat or should he be disqualified?

Recommended Resolution: This is a judgement decision which may vary and can only be made on site. It must be determined if the swimmer is "interfering with the competition" by depriving another swimmer of a valid time. Normally, a warning is given to the swimmer to try to prevent a problem in the future.

Applicable Rules 102.10.8

USA Swimming Situation Resolutions – Referee/Admin Referee

The following situations have been reviewed by the USA Swimming Officials and Rules Committee

37. At a Junior Olympics a swimmer is disqualified by a turn judge at the turn end of the pool. The disqualification is verified by a chief judge and a deck referee and it is sent to the recording room. The results are posted and announced without the disqualification being listed, placing the disqualified swimmer in seventh place for finals. No one notices the omission. Thirty minutes prior to the evening finals, the coach of the ninth place swimmer complains to the referee. What should the referee do?

Recommended Resolution: An error by meet management obviously occurred. The scorers did not eliminate the disqualified swimmer as the rules require in determining the order of finish. This rule clearly stipulates that disqualified swimmers may not receive awards or scores points from disqualified swims. To overlook this would violate the "fair and equitable" criteria established in the prologue to Part One of the rulebook. The referee or a designated official is required to make "every reasonable effort" to advise a swimmer or his/her coach about the disqualification. It would be inappropriate to withhold from the legitimate (9th place) swimmer a place in the finals because of an official's error in recording.

Applicable Rules 102.10.13, 102.10.2

38. In a large LSC invitational meet where the relays are swum as timed finals with the two fastest seeded heats swimming at night in the finals, the team 14th fastest on the psych sheet asks the referee if they may swim in the morning as their plane reservations require that they be at the airport by 7:00 p.m. What should the meet referee do?

Recommended Resolution: Allowing this request would require modification of the seeding rules and should not be done for one team unless the same option has been given to all. However, a proactive Administrative Referee would seek out the coach of the fastest relay team swimming in the morning and offer a switch to an evening swim. More often than not, the offer will be gladly accepted.

Applicable Rules 102.5.4A

39. At a Junior Olympics meet, a 13-14 age group swimmer wears a "Bud Lite" cap during a preliminary event. The referee instructs the swimmer that the cap is inappropriate, to which the swimmer replies, "But Budweiser is an Olympic sponsor. Why can't I wear my cap?" What should the referee's response be?

Recommended Resolution: USA Swimming Rules are quite specific about the prohibition of any visible marque or insignia in the form of advertising (other than the trademark on technical equipment or clothing). Offenders may be barred from competition, until they comply with this rule. Additionally, advertising for products involving alcohol are also prohibited.

Applicable Rules 102.9.3A, 102.9.3B

USA Swimming Situation Resolutions – Referee/Admin Referee

The following situations have been reviewed by the USA Swimming Officials and Rules Committee

40. Immediately after the start of a 50 meter freestyle heat, a swimmer in the next heat quickly jumps in and out of the pool to get wet. What should the deck referee do?

Recommended Resolution: The swimmer should be disqualified. USA Swimming Rules state that any swimmer not entered in a race who enters the pool or course in the area in which said race is being conducted before all swimmers therein have completed the race shall be barred from the next individual event in which he is entered on that day or the next meet day, whichever is first.

Applicable Rule: 102.10.7

41. A swimmer misses her heat because she states that the timer told her that it was Heat #4 instead of her heat (Heat #5, the final heat of the event). The coach files a written protest. What should the referee do?

Recommended Resolution: If the Meet Referee determines that the head lane timer did misinform the swimmer, she may choose to allow swimmer to swim in a later heat. However, the head lane timer has the responsibility to see if the correct swimmer is present and in the correct lane when the heat is preparing to move to the starting blocks.

Applicable Rules 102.13.1, 102.16.3B(1)

42. The backstroke flags break and fall into the pool during the 200-meter backstroke event. The stroke judges on each side of the pool quickly pull the flags clear of the lanes before they physically interfere with any swimmer. The coach of the second place finisher in the heat files a written protest, saying that his swimmer was at a disadvantage because he couldn't properly judge the distance to the end of the course. What should the referee do?

Recommended Resolution: The protest should be upheld and the swimmers offered a re-swim.

Applicable Rules 102.10.9

43. You are the referee at an AA preliminary/finals championship meet. You and a group of judges go to a local restaurant between preliminaries and finals. Two people order beer with their sandwiches. What do you do as the referee?

Recommended Resolution: This is not covered by the rules but the "unwritten" code of professional officiating suggests that the referee should ask that they not order the beers. If the officials have the beer, they should not be used at the finals session.

Applicable Rules Common sense, courtesy and professionalism.

USA Swimming Situation Resolutions – Referee/Admin Referee

The following situations have been reviewed by the USA Swimming Officials and Rules Committee

44. It is the last heat of the 13-14 boys 400 individual medley. During the backstroke leg of this event, the recall rope is accidentally dropped. Two swimmers make contact with the fallen rope before it is raised. The other swimmers in the heat are unaware of the problem and continue the race. What do you do and why?

Recommended Resolution: Generally, only the two swimmers who made contact with the rope would be allowed to re-swim the event because of interference. Still, the other swimmers, although not touched by the rope, may have been distracted by the commotion caused by its fall. If the referee feels that all swimmers may have been affected, he could give the option of re-swimming to the entire heat. Those who elect to re-swim the event would be awarded their new time (their original times would be superseded); those electing not to reswim would retain their original times.

Applicable Rules 102.10.9

45. Just before the call to the blocks of the 100 backstroke, a rival competitor goes to the deck referee and complains that the swimmer in the lane next to him is wearing "stick-um" on his feet. What should the referee do?

Recommended Resolution: "Stick-um" is not currently an illegal aid under our rules. The referee, however, has sufficient authority to ask the swimmer to wipe his/her feet.

Applicable Rules 102.13.1, 102.10.10

46. Prior to the 100 butterfly, a coach informs the referee that his swimmer has a broken "pinky" finger and asks if the swimmer may swim with the last three fingers of the hand taped. What should the referee do?

Recommended Resolution: If he determines that taping together of the fingers is to prevent further injury to the swimmer and not to "help his speed," the referee has the authority to allow the request.

Applicable Rules 102.10.10, 102.13.1

USA Swimming Situation Resolutions – Referee/Admin Referee

The following situations have been reviewed by the USA Swimming Officials and Rules Committee

47. A coach comes to you as the referee and says that the young lady who was in Heat 5, Lane 7 of the 13-14 Girls 100 Breast was an 11-12 year old of a different name. What do you do?

Recommended Resolution: You should investigate the allegation to determine: a) Is this correct? b) Was it a deliberate or unintentional act? The head lane timer has the responsibility to determine if the correct swimmer is in his lane for that heat of the event. If the official failed to do this and the swimmer inadvertently swam in the wrong lane/heat, you may excuse the swimmer inasmuch as the athlete may not be penalized for an official's error. If, however, you determine that this was a deliberate (knowing) switch of swimmers, the referee may disqualify any swimmer for unsportsmanlike conduct. The Rules also mandate the disqualification of any swimmer not entered in a race who enters the pool or course and further stipulates that the swimmer will be barred from the next individual event in which he/she is entered that day or the next.

Applicable Rules 102.16.3B(1), 102.10.3, 102.10.7

48. The first day of a meet is Friday, July 31, and only the 13 & older 400 IM and 1500 are being swum. August 1 is Mary's 13th birthday. What is her age for the meet? She does not swim on the 31st – does that matter?

Recommended Resolution: Regardless of the fact that she does not swim on the 31st, Mary competes in the meet as a 12-year-old since that is her age on the first day that the meet starts.

Applicable Rules Article 205.2.2

49. The blocks at the local recreation pool are 30" above the surface of the water. A faulty circulation system allows the pool to drop 2" below the lip edge of the gutter. A swimmer's coach requests an NTV for a time made in the 50 free. Is the time reportable?

Recommended Resolution: Yes. Whether to conduct the competition or not under these circumstances is a pure judgment call; therefore, the swimmer gets the time if competition is permitted.

Applicable Rules 102.13.1

50. The Starter and Deck Referee confirms that the 50-meter sprinter in Lane #5 false started. The deck referee walks to Lane #4 and tells the swimmer that he/she is disqualified for a false start, at which time Lane #4's coach screams, yells and verbally abuses the Deck Referee as the Meet Referee returns to the deck from the timing room. What does the Meet Referee do?

Recommended Resolution: The Meet Referee needs to find out what is going on and correct the error against the swimmer first. Then a private conversation with the abusive coach should also be initiated to advise that, while he/she has the right of complaint, the coach should register the complaint in a civil manner. Depending on the severity of the verbal abuse, this could fall under the provisions of the USA Swimming Code of Conduct.

Applicable Rules 102.13.1, 304.3.12

USA Swimming Situation Resolutions – Referee/Admin Referee

The following situations have been reviewed by the USA Swimming Officials and Rules Committee

51. A coach reports that a swimmer who just stepped on the blocks for Heat 6 has a cut on his/her foot that seems to be bleeding. What should the referee do?

Recommended Resolution: The referee should direct the starter to have the swimmers step down and relax. He/she should then check to satisfy himself/herself that the swimmer does, in fact, have a cut that is openly bleeding. The referee should then call for the swimmer's coach and the facility personnel. The latter should provide first aid or otherwise implement the local health policy pertaining to blood pathogens (to include disinfecting the block).

Applicable Rules: 102.13.1

52. At the officials' briefing, the Meet Referee assigns a senior referee as the far end turn judge in Lane #8 for nine (9) heats of the 1500 meter Free, to which the senior referee replies, "Let one of the younger turn judges do it." As Meet Referee, what do you do?

Recommended Resolution: Thank the senior referee for his services, which are not needed for this meet. The Meet Referee has full authority over all officials and shall assign them and instruct them.

Applicable Rules: 102.13.1

53. A swimmer does a spectacular time in 50-meter freestyle and has created quite a buzz around the competition. A coach approaches the meet referee privately and suggests that people might be making too big a deal over the swim since everyone knows that the pool has a reputation for having a favorable current in the center lanes. What should the meet referee do? Is there a way to find out if the coach is correct?

Recommended Resolution: There is not much a referee can do in this situation. The referee can test the assertion by putting food coloring or soluble dye into the pool in the center lanes and observing if there is an appreciable current. The referee can request that the re-circulation system be shut off or reduced in volume. However, if the pool manager refuses to do so, citing health or safety concerns, short of stopping the meet, there is nothing more that the referee can do at that instant. The situation should be written up subsequently by the referee and submitted to the LSC official(s) responsible for issuing sanctions and approving bids for meets.

Applicable Rules: 103.6, Part One Introduction ¶4

USA Swimming Situation Resolutions – Referee/Admin Referee

The following situations have been reviewed by the USA Swimming Officials and Rules Committee

54. A coach indicates to the timing judge that in several close races it appeared the swimmer in lane #5 had won but the pad times in lane 4 were faster. What might be done to test the validity of this concern?

Recommended Resolution: By the time that the coach brings it to the attention of the Timing Judge, the situation may have already been discovered by the routine comparison of primary and back-up times. If not, the Timing Judge should review again the primary and back-up times as well as the order of finish taken by the starter or other official to ascertain if there may be any validity to the coach's assertion. If there does appear to be cause for concern, the Timing Judge should bring the situation to the attention of the referee. The referee then needs to determine what steps are needed to rectify the situation including replacement of the touch pads in lanes 4 and 5.

Applicable Rules: 102.16.4D, 102.16.5C, 102.16.5D

55. Immediately after the start of a 1000-yard freestyle, a coach asks the referee if his swimmer had been charged with a false start. The referee and starter had already consulted and found that they had each independently confirmed a false start for that swimmer. The coach wants to stop his swimmer from completing the event so as to save energy for a subsequent event. What should the coach be told at that point?

Recommended Resolution: The coach should be told nothing until the race is completed. Not only is this the correct action by the wording of the rule, it is the sensible defensive refereeing position to take. If the coach is told and then attempts to stop his swimmer, he will almost certainly distract one or more of the other swimmers and may actually interfere with or foul a swimmer creating a much bigger problem.

Applicable Rules: 102.14.5B

56. At a local invitational preliminary/final meet, the 1500-meter freestyle is a timed final event. The meet information sheet states that the 1500 will be a positive check-in event, i.e., in order to be seeded a swimmer must check in by a certain time. There are 25 male swimmers in the men's event, 24 of who check in prior to the posted scratch deadline. After the event is seeded, the coach of the 25th swimmer declares to the referee that his swimmer did not scratch and he wishes to swim in an open lane in the first heat. What should the referee do?

Recommended Resolution: The USA Swimming Rules and Regulations do not specify check-in and/or scratch procedures except for the National Championships (207.7.9, 207.7.10). Meet information stipulated that one must check in to be seeded. The 25th swimmer did not scratch the event which he legally entered. Therefore it is recommended that the referee should seed the event with four heats and the 25th swimmer should be placed in an open lane in the first heat. Had the meet information sheet stated that one had to check-in to swim, as is common at many local meets, then the swimmer should not be allowed to compete in the event.

Applicable Rules: 102.3, 207.7.9, 207.7.10

USA Swimming Situation Resolutions – Referee/Admin Referee

The following situations have been reviewed by the USA Swimming Officials and Rules Committee

57. A swimmer is a “no-show” with no extenuating circumstances for the final of an event in a meet being swum under the National Championship scratch rule. Is the swimmer eligible to swim in time trials the following day?

Recommended Resolution: Typically, time trials are swum under a separate sanction from the championship meet and the only eligibility requirement is that the swimmer is “entered in the [championship] meet.” Under this scenario, the swimmer while barred from further competition in the championship meet is still “entered” in the meet and, as such, would be eligible for time trials the next day.

Applicable Rules: 207.7.9D(1), 207.8.3B

58. It's the LSC's Long Course Age Group Championships (Trials & Finals) being held at one of our country's most venerable universities. The older (circa 1964) pool is too shallow to start a race from one end and the university is too cheap to buy a second set of touchpads. So all 50-meter races require moving the touchpads from one end of the pool to the other. In the 11-12 Girls' 50m Butterfly, Karen and Tasha tie for 8th thus requiring a swim-off to see who gets into Finals. In the meantime, the pads are already back at the start end of the pool for the 13-14 100m butterfly. The swim-off is arranged for the end of Trials, but the Meet Referee decides to use six (6) timers at the far end of the pool and four (4) place judges instead of moving the pads again (to save time since the community swimmers are pushing to get into the pool). The swim-off is a great race with both girls swimming best times and making Zone cuts. But the finish is too close to call. The place judges are split on the winner of the swim-off and the median times show Tasha won by .02 seconds. Karen's coach immediately protests and asks for a new swim-off. What do you do?

Recommended Resolution: Another (ugh!) swim-off shall be conducted. Swim-offs shall be timed and judged in the same manner as the original event unless a subsequent timing system malfunction requires that an adjustment be made. Since the pads were not used for the swim-off, the heat was not “timed and judged in the same manner as the original event.”

Applicable Rules: 102.5.2

59. Two 8-year-old swimmers are disqualified because the one seeded in Heat 2 arrived early and swam in Heat 1 (in the correct lane). The second swimmer then swam in Heat 2 (also in the correct lane). Should the disqualifications stand?

Recommended Resolution: The disqualifications should be overruled. It is the responsibility of the head lane timer to determine if each swimmer is in the proper lane. Therefore, the swimmers should not be penalized.

Applicable Rules: 102.16.3B(1)

USA Swimming Situation Resolutions – Referee/Admin Referee

The following situations have been reviewed by the USA Swimming Officials and Rules Committee

- 60.** The Meet Referee is standing at a position about 30 feet down the pool sideline from the starter. She hears what she believes to be a double beep (echo) on the start and observes Lanes #2, #3 and #7 stop momentarily on their entry into the water, while the other swimmers continue. There is no recall by the starter or deck referee. What should the meet referee do?

Recommended Resolution: While this situation is not expressly covered by the Rules and Regulations, the referee has the authority to intercede in a competition at any stage, to ensure that the racing conditions are observed. Since there was an obvious effect on several swimmers at the start of the race, the Meet Referee should immediately consult with the Deck Referee and allow the swimmers in the heat a chance to re-swim for a new official time, if they desire.

Applicable Rules: 102.13.4

- 61.** It is discovered after the fact that a swimmer has competed in more than the allowed number of events. What action should be taken?

Recommended Resolution: This is a judgment decision which may vary and can only be made on site. If they believe the swimmer deliberately violated the rules, the meet committee has the authority to take action under the broad outlines of USA Swimming Rules and Regulations Article 401.1. If it was an honest error, it is recommended that all races after the allowable number be declared non-events for the swimmer.

Applicable Rules: 401.1, 102.2

- 62.** At a 1-day senior meet in an 8-lane pool with morning preliminaries and evening finals, a swimmer places second in the 100 backstroke, eighth in the 100 butterfly, third in the 200 breaststroke and first in the 200 individual medley, in that order, accumulating 23 points for high point trophy. A rival coach files a written protest citing the fact that the Meet Entry stated that only three events per day can be counted. What would you do?

Recommended Resolution: Only the swimmer's first three events, in the order swum, should count. The swimmer does not have the option to choose which of the events may count for the evening's Finals swims. However, all four (4) times from the morning's swims belong to the swimmer and may be used for future meet entries or NTV submissions.

Applicable Rules: 102.2.2, 102.10.4

USA Swimming Situation Resolutions – Referee/Admin Referee

The following situations have been reviewed by the USA Swimming Officials and Rules Committee

- 63.** A swim meet has preliminaries scheduled at 9:00 a.m. and finals scheduled at 4:00 p.m. Time trials are scheduled in the same facility at 1:30 p.m. A swimmer competes in three preliminary events. He qualifies for the finals in one. He then enters the time trials for the two events in which he did not make the finals. He has then swum six events for the day, just as if he made finals in all three events. Is this legal?

Recommended Resolution: USA Swimming Rules and Regulations reads, "In a preliminaries and finals meet a swimmer may compete in not more than three (3) individual events per day." The preliminary in which the swimmer qualified, plus the final in that event, counts as one event. The two preliminaries count as his other two events, so he has filled his quota of three. Had he made the other two finals and swum them, he would still have competed in only three events. Therefore, the swimmer should not have swum in the time trial events. If the time trials had been run in another facility, he could have entered and competed without incident.

Applicable Rules: 102.2.2, 102.2.6

- 64.** To save time during a prolonged meet, the referee combines a female preliminary race with a male preliminary race. Two days later, a parent protests to the meet director and demands revision of final results. What action should be taken?

Recommended Resolution: No action should be taken since USA Swimming Rules and Regulations Article 102.11.4 requires that, "All other competition-related protests, including protests concerning eligibility and representation, must be made to the Referee and submitted in writing within 30 minutes after the race in which the alleged infraction occurred." Note: USA Swimming Rules and Regulations also states, "At the Meet Referee's discretion, events may be combined by age, sex, distance and/or stroke provided there is at least one empty lane between such combined events."

Applicable Rules: 102.11.4, 102.8.2

- 65.** In the meet information it states that a team is only allowed to have two relays, but one team has three. The slowest relay (C) is a 13-14 year old relay trying to break a state and maybe a national record. The race is swum and the time for the C relay sets a state age group record by over two seconds and missed a national age group record by 0.3 seconds. The relay also places 4th overall and finishes ahead of that team's B relay. About a half-hour after the event is swum, a coach goes to the referee and says that the C relay should be disqualified because, in the meet information, it says a team may only have two relays. The coach of the relay in question suggests that they take away the points and disqualify the B relay and not the C. What should the referee do?

Recommended Resolution: According to *USA Swimming Rules and Regulations*, all protests regarding eligibility not made prior to the swim must be made within 30 minutes of the race in question and must be in writing. The referee should advise the coach of this rule. Presuming the coach submits the protest in writing within 30 minutes, the C relay should not be included in the results as far as placement but the time achieved would be valid for the records. If the protest is made more than 30 minutes after the race, the protest should not have been allowed.

Applicable Rules: 102.2.1, 102.10.14, 102.11.4

USA Swimming Situation Resolutions – Referee/Admin Referee

The following situations have been reviewed by the USA Swimming Officials and Rules Committee

66. A swimmer starts her race in lane 4 and halfway through the race she realizes that she is in the wrong lane and had accidentally switched lanes with the swimmer in lane 5 prior to the start. At the end of the race, the swimmer in lane 5 wins but the swimmer in lane 4 protests saying that she did not swim in the correct lane and that they should re-swim the race. What should be done?

Recommended Resolution: There should be no re-swim. USA Swimming Rules & Regulations states that the swimmer must start and finish in the same lane but it is not the responsibility of the swimmer to start in the correct lane. That is the head timer's responsibility. Of course, we would like to believe that the swimmers will try their best to get to their assigned lane.

Applicable Rules: 102.10.4, 102.16.3B(1)

67. In a 25-yard pool, there are no colored floats or any other indication as to where the 15-meter marks are in the pool. After the start of a 50-yard backstroke race, a swimmer swam underwater and her head broke the surface of the water beyond the point where the lane lines changed to solid red at the turn end of the pool. The stroke judge raised his hand, indicating a disqualification. The coach questioned the call with the referee. The coach stated that since there were no markings to indicate 15 meters, there was no way of knowing where the swimmer's head had to break the surface of the water. The referee let the disqualification stand. She stated that the swimmer obviously surfaced much more than 15 meters from the end of the pool since the solid red lane floats that cover the last five yards of the course at the turn end begin 20 yards from the start end of the pool. Should the call have been upheld?

Recommended Resolution: This is an opportunity for a referee to do some preventative work. The referee should always know if there are any portions of the facility, which do not meet the standards indicated in that section of the rulebook. Before the meet starts, the referee should try to get the lane lines marked appropriately (another potential use of duct tape?). If that is not possible, then no calls should be made for a 15-meter violation.

Applicable Rules: 101.3.2, 102.13.1, 102.13.4, 103.13.2

68. It is a requirement of an LSC that a swimmer needs to swim at two LSC meets to qualify for its zone team. Having swum in one LSC meet and thinking that sectionals would qualify as the second, he does not enter the last LSC meet of the season before the zone championship meet. Upon finding out that sectionals will not count as an LSC meet, his coach explains the situation to the meet referee and asks if the swimmer can deck enter at the meet. The meet referee agrees to the deck entry. Subsequently, another coach protests the decision on the basis that the meet announcement had an entry cut-off date and stated that no deck entries were permitted. Should the protest be upheld?

Recommended Resolution: The protest should be upheld and the swimmer should not be permitted to swim. The referee cannot change the entry provisions because of sympathy for a swimmer in a difficult situation.

Applicable Rules: 102.8.3

USA Swimming Situation Resolutions – Referee/Admin Referee

The following situations have been reviewed by the USA Swimming Officials and Rules Committee

69. The lifeguards at a venue are dealing with the meet as well as another pool that is used for recreational swimmers. The lifeguards are blowing their whistles on a regular basis to help maintain order at the facility and that has, from time to time, been confused for the referee's whistles signaling the preparations for another heat. What should the referee do?

Recommended Resolution: The safety of all at the meet is the primary concern of all so we need to work around what the lifeguards have to do. The meet referee should discuss our protocols with the person in charge of the pool and the lifeguards. When USA Swimming first began using whistles to prepare for the next heat, it was recommended that referee's short whistles be at least five in number so as to avoid confusion with the three blasts that Red Cross lifeguards use to indicate an emergency. For the long whistle, it is recommended that the referee make sure that the blast is of significant length and loudness to reduce confusion with any whistling done by the lifeguards. Additionally, both the referee and starter need to be cognizant of the presence of life guard whistles and be observant of a swimmer who may have reacted to one of the lifeguard's blasts.

Applicable Rules: Introduction to Part One Technical Rules, 102.13.4

70. At an eight-and-under meet, there are three swimmers seeded into the first heat of the girl's 50-yard freestyle (after scratches). When the deck referee blows the short whistles only the swimmer in lane 4 steps up. Not wanting to have her swim by herself, the deck referee decides to move her to lane 8 of heat two (based on the heat sheets it is empty). When the swimmer gets to lane 8, she finds that there is a swimmer already there (added by the administrative staff due to an error in loading the entries). What should the deck referee do?

Recommended Resolution: This is an example of a communications problem. Any changes in the composition or consolidation of heats made by the administrative staff needs to be communicated to the deck referee for that event as well as, if possible, the starter and chief judges. In turn, any change in the heats that the deck referee would like to make should be communicated to the administrative staff. This communication would prevent this type of situation from occurring. In the given situation, the referee can do one of two things: let the swimmer from heat one swim alone in lane 4 or, with concurrence of the meet referee, move the swimmers from lanes 1 and 8 of heat two into the first heat.

Applicable Rules: 102.8.1

USA Swimming Situation Resolutions – Referee/Admin Referee

The following situations have been reviewed by the USA Swimming Officials and Rules Committee

71. At a prelim/finals JO meet, an 11-12 swimmer from an out of town team entered and swam without his coach present. The swimmer qualified 16th (consolation final) but his parents did not know the procedures for prelims/finals meets and had planned only to be at the morning session. The swimmer did not scratch from finals and was a “no show” at finals. The swimmer returned the next morning for the next day’s prelims (having traveled two hours to get to the meet). The swimmer was not aware that he had qualified for finals. What can be done?

Recommended Resolution: If a swimmer is at a meet without his own coach, the swimmer should be assigned to a coach at the meet in order to compete. Although the swimmer or his coach must be responsible for all meet rules and procedures, consider the novice nature of a swimmer appearing for the first time at a championship meet with a prelims/finals format. You could allow the swimmer to participate in the prelims as an exhibition swimmer without opportunity to qualify for finals, score points.

Applicable Rules: 202.3.2, 207.7.9E(3)

72. During a long course 50-meter freestyle event, the swimmer seeded in heat 5, lane 3 is not there. Thinking that the next heat is hers, the swimmer from heat 6, lane 3 swims in heat 5. The no-show swimmer sees her name on the scoreboard and realizes she should be in that event and asks the chief judge to advise her what to do. The chief judge sends the swimmer to the referee. What should the referee do?

Recommended Resolution: First, the time of the swimmer that swam the race is legal although the admin needs to make sure that the time is attributed to the proper person. As for the swimmer who missed her heat, a lot will depend on what the local practice is for this type of situation. At a National Championship meet, the swimmer would be “barred from all further individual and relay events of that day.” If that procedure is not in place for this meet, then a number of possibilities could occur depending on local practice, level of meet, etc, including allowing the swimmer to swim in a subsequent heat or even a subsequent event.

Applicable Rules: 102.16.3B(1), 102.10.14

73. In the situation described above, if either swimmer’s time bettered a current record, would the time be allowed to stand as a record?

Recommended Resolution: Yes. Presuming each time was obtained using level-appropriate timing equipment, the times would stand as records.

Applicable Rules: 102.10.14, 102.16.4C(1)

USA Swimming Situation Resolutions – Referee/Admin Referee

The following situations have been reviewed by the USA Swimming Officials and Rules Committee

74. After the relay results are posted, the winning team approaches the meet referee stating that they do not deserve the medal because their third swimmer left early and they have it on film. What do you do?

Recommended Resolution: First, check with the administrative referee to determine if a DQ was called but just not recorded in the results. If there was, the results should be amended accordingly. If there was no DQ, the results must stand as is. We do not review video to make calls. If the challenge to the results was made by another team, we would not allow it as relay take-offs are judgment calls.

Applicable Rules: 102.10.1, 102.15.6A, 102.15.6B

75. You are the referee at a C meet and the first event is about to start. You receive the heat sheet and see that there are three swimmers in the first heat. The heat goes off without a problem and in getting ready for the next heat; you see that the heat sheet shows only three swimmers for heat 2 as well. You then realize that the events were not reseeded after scratches were entered. What do you do?

Recommended Resolution: There are two main issues. One is that you always want full heats, if possible, to provide the best competitive environment. Second, running many extra heats will extend the time of the session longer than it should be and perhaps beyond the four hours permitted. The meet needs to be re-seeded. If the first event does not have too many “holes” in it, you might let that go as is while the rest of the events are reseeded. If this is a meet for young swimmers where they get lined up in the gym or other waiting area, you may have to run a couple events before re-seeding as trying to get the swimmers re-organized may take an excessive amount of time.

Applicable Rules: 102.5.4A

76. At an age group meet, the timing system fails on the final heat of the women’s 100-yard breaststroke. When checking with the timers, it is determined that the timers in lane 6 failed to stop their watches at the finish, thinking the race was a 200 yard race. What does the referee do?

Recommended Resolution: The swimmer cannot be made to re-swim the race because no time has been obtained. For the lane where there is no pad, button or watch time, the referee could seek out the coaches of those swimmers to see if they had a watch going that recorded the swimmer’s time. If that fails, see if there was a parent who had a watch on the swimmer. The referee should also use the order of finish recorded by the starter or place judge to help validate these watch times against those from the “good” lanes. Once a watch time is obtained for all swimmers in the affected heat, the timing judge or administrative referee should perform the heat malfunction timing adjustment as prescribed in the rule book. Given that the referee had to go to unusual lengths to obtain times for the affected swimmer, it is not against the rules to allow the swimmer in lane 6 the opportunity to re-swim the race.

Applicable Rules: 102.16.4D, 102.16.5D, 102.16

USA Swimming Situation Resolutions – Referee/Admin Referee

The following situations have been reviewed by the USA Swimming Officials and Rules Committee

77. Two weeks before a B/C meet scheduled for Saturday and Sunday with three sessions each day, it is discovered that the facility had not put the Saturday morning session on their schedule and the pool was not available. As the meet referee, what do you do?

Recommended Resolution: You must have the meet host contact every team entered in the meet and advise them of the problem and the resolution. The resolution could involve simply eliminating the Saturday morning session. However, other options might be considered. How long is each of the sessions for the rest of the meet? Could the Saturday sessions be started later in the day and completed later as well? Can one of the sessions be moved to another venue? There are a number of possibilities that could be considered but whatever ends up as the decision, every team as well as all unattached swimmers must be notified of the changes being made.

Applicable Rules: 102.8.4A

78. At a dual meet, two officials from the visiting team were assigned to the turn end of the 25-yard pool. During the meet, it was noticed that the two of them were making a disproportionate number of calls. The coach of the home team complained to the meet referee about all the calls being made (without specifying any one official) and suggested that the official be a little more lenient on the younger swimmers. What should the meet referee do?

Recommended Resolution: The Referee should review the disqualifications made and discuss any concerns with the Turn Officials involved. It may be necessary to change the positions of these officials with others. Each official should observe their jurisdiction equally and fairly following the turn rules. As for the request to “be a little more lenient” on the younger swimmers, our rules apply to all swimmers regardless of age and being lenient to one swimmer does an injustice to all swimmers.

Applicable Rules: 102.13.1, 102.13.4

79. The preliminaries of a championship meet were run in an eight lane pool with a single championship final to be held at that same pool that evening. Shortly after the end of the preliminaries session, the pool is shut down due to a mechanical problem that cannot be resolved in time for finals. It was decided to move the finals to a six lane pool at the same venue. How will the final be seeded?

Recommended Resolution: There are two possible resolutions to this situation. The finals could be changed to include only the top six swimmers with the 7th and 8th place swimmers from the preliminaries slotted as alternates. This might be difficult as the coaches of the 7th and 8th place swimmers would not be happy with this solution. Alternatively, the original eight qualifiers for finals could be seeded in two heats of four each and the times combined to create the final results. The heats would be seeded as if they were preliminaries (circle seeded). The reason for the two heats of four swimmers each rather than a heat of five and a heat of three would be to have all swimmers in the “final” heat swim under the same conditions.

Applicable Rules: 102.5.3, 102.8.3

USA Swimming Situation Resolutions – Referee/Admin Referee

The following situations have been reviewed by the USA Swimming Officials and Rules Committee

- 80.** At a long course championship meet, the swimmer in lane 6 is disqualified for a false start with dual confirmation from the starter and the referee. Unfortunately there was a very minimal crew for the meet and the swimmer was never notified of the disqualification. The next day, upon seeing the results, the coach protests that the DQ should be reversed because the swimmer was not told and the rule book states that the swimmer “shall be notified of the disqualification upon completion of the race.” What should the referee do?

Recommended Resolution: There is no requirement that the swimmer be notified. The rules states that “...every reasonable effort to seek out...” should be made. The false start rule that was quoted by the coach refers to the fact that we do not recall heats for a false start. That means that the swimmer can only be notified after the race.

Applicable Rules: 102.10.2