



Dear Potential Official,

Each of you has either expressed an interest or been recommended as a candidate for becoming an official for USA Swimming. Thank you for your interest!!! We would love to have you join our ranks and are definitely in need of more volunteers.

To gain a sanction for a meet, the host team must have an adequate number of officials on deck. We are fortunate in that we are known for hosting good meets and for being very gracious to our visiting officials. This means that sometimes we may have an overabundance of officials to cover the pool deck. That is good because it is always best to be able to give breaks, train for advancement, and to be able to cover the deck fully. On occasion, we must rely more heavily on our home folks so we must have a good base of officials trained. Because an official is a trained position, we can't just pull one of our parent volunteers in off of the bleachers.

Every once in a while, we will have one official per 8 lanes at each end of the pool; it's not an ideal condition. One official watching 8 lanes may seem like it is great for the kids because it's obvious that one person cannot see an entire field coming at them. It's not best for our swimmers either because then when they get to another meet where they are expecting to just sail through, the potential is greater for them to be disqualified for something they could've easily fixed if they had just known. That can be extremely frustrating for the swimmers.

Our LSC has an extremely swimmer friendly environment. We are not looking to disqualify (DQ) swimmers; we are recording what we see. We treat a DQ as a learning opportunity for the swimmers, and a feedback tool for the coaches. We use chief judges as often as possible to allow them to question and follow up on disqualifications so that the Referee will know the stroke and turn judge is sure that they've seen a potential infraction of the rules.

You may be wondering why I'm going into all of this. None of us want to make it our sole purpose to disqualify swimmers. We try to convey this mindset to all incoming officials. Our job is to ensure that the "playing field" is equal; that all swimmers have the same chance to excel and move forward in their sport. If you look at it that way, instead of thinking that you are out to be the bad guy by disqualifying, it becomes a much more enjoyable position.

The positives of officiating are numerous. You learn so much more about your child's chosen sport. You become much more appreciative and aware of their mental and physical toughness. You understand more of what the coaches are trying to teach. Meets are much more interesting. You meet many parents from other teams, which makes going to their pools more interesting.

You have the best "seat" in the house. And, you don't have to have money in your pocket. You usually get fed and fed fairly well. And believe it or not, it helps your child become more responsible and autonomous at meets.

There are six basic steps to become a certified USA Swimming official. Here's how it works:

**1. Take the Stroke & Turn/Timers test** - the test is online at the USA swimming website

**The direct link for the test:**

<http://www.usaswimming.org/DesktopDefault.aspx?TabId=1510&Alias=Rainbow&Lang=en>

Make sure you enter SE (Southeastern) as your LSC

*You will need to create an account on [www.usaswimming.org](http://www.usaswimming.org).*

*The Rule Book is online.* However, any certified official has a current manual that you can borrow. That will make it easier to take the test. **I also might recommend going to the website-printing off the test, taking it and then going back in and filling in your answers.** Once you've taken and passed the test, please email a copy of the results to Clay ([clayminatra@gmail.com](mailto:clayminatra@gmail.com)) in order to track our apprentices and officials. This gives us a record of your test.

**2. Become a member of USA Swimming** - this is for on deck and meet insurance purposes.

Registration forms can be obtained from Clay ([clayminatra@gmail.com](mailto:clayminatra@gmail.com)) or picked up at the Brentwood site.(in the folder in the top, left filing cabinet – Officials' Folder) *The fee is \$70 payable to Excel Aquatics. Club Code: XCEL.* Generally, we send this in as a group at the beginning of October to have folks registered for the following year. You will be registered for the year for which the form indicates. (Excel has a policy of reimbursing you for this once you have worked your first two sessions as a **certified** official)

**3. Level 2 Background Check**

This is a requirement of all non-athlete members of USA swimming with direct contact with swimmers. Make sure you take the **LEVEL 2** background check, not Level 1. There is also a fee associated with this action.

<http://www.usaswimming.org/ViewNewsArticle.aspx?TabId=1453&itemid=3114&mid=8975>

**4. Athlete Protection Training (APT)**

You will not be able to complete this portion until you are registered with USA Swimming.

No additional fee required. The course can be found here:

<http://www.usaswimming.org/DesktopDefault.aspx?TabId=2193&Alias=Rainbow&Lang=en>

**5. Apprentice** - we will have you train on deck with a certified official who will help you become familiar with the procedure. You must have 6 apprentice sessions on deck over the course of at least two USA sanctioned meets. All apprentice sessions at an Excel hosted ("home") meet count towards your volunteer credit. All apprentice sessions worked at either "home" or "away" meets count toward official's certification.

If apprenticing at other club pools ("away" meets) please check with the Meet Referee. You should always keep a record of all sessions that you work in any meet.

**6. Attend a clinic** – You will have to attend a clinic sometime during your apprentice period. These clinics for Stroke and Turn discuss professionalism and the individual strokes to a degree and are good opportunities to ask questions in a group setting. Clinics are often, but not always, held during championship meets as to have the greatest participation and are usually held in the morning before the a.m. session, so plan to get to the meet early.

We realize this was a lot of information, but it is important to get as much to you as possible.

Becoming an official definitely gives you a much greater appreciation of your children and their abilities. You have the opportunity to work on deck with some really nice people and meets are much more enjoyable, I think, because of the opportunity to officiate. If you have any additional questions, just email me and I'll get right back to you.

Thanks for joining us – we're glad to have you!!!!!!

Contact me if you have any questions:

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