



FLORIDA SWIMMING

DECK REFEREE

OFFICIAL'S CLINIC PACKET



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THE ROLE OF THE DECK REFEREE

The Deck Referee is responsible for managing the pool and deck during competition. In that capacity, the Deck Referee implements the Meet Referee's instructions and insures that the meet is run in accordance with the meet letter and the rules and procedures adopted by USA and Florida Swimming. The duties and responsibilities of the Deck Referee in fulfilling this role are many, perhaps too many to cover in this packet. Experience will teach you far more than you could hope to learn here. There are also several good reference materials on the USA Swimming website, including "The Professional Deck Referee", which serves as a checklist of what is expected of a Deck Referee, both locally and at the national level (Appendix A).

The USA Swimming Rulebook sets forth the authority and duties of the Referee in Articles 101.2.1A-B and 102.11. In doing so, the Rulebook does not distinguish between Meet Referee and Deck Referee. Although some of those rules are interchangeable, only those relating directly to your performance as Deck Referee will be discussed here.

The duties of a Deck Referee can be divided into three main areas: before, during, and after competition.

BEFORE COMPETITION BEGINS

Once assigned, there are several tasks a Deck Referee should perform prior to the start of the competition:

1. Be familiar with the meet letter and keep it handy. It sets forth the procedures all participants must abide by during the meet.
2. Talk to the Meet Referee. Good communication is imperative and you should be familiar with the Meet Referee's expectations. This will prevent bad precedents from being set. For example:
 - a. Pace of the meet. Are there timeline issues? When do they want heats whistled up?
 - b. When are heats closed? What should you do if swimmers are late and appear after the heat is closed?
 - c. What should be done with swimmers who miss their heats?
 - d. What type of paperwork is being maintained? Do they want separate order of finish (OOF) sheets maintained? Do they want you to close out the events?
 - e. How will the Deck Referee/Starter teams divide up the heats? Often the Meet Referee will leave this up to the teams, but it is wise to include the Meet Referee in any decision made.
3. Talk to your Starter. The working relationship with your Starter is a key to the smooth operation of the meet and it is important to cover issues that might crop up so there are no surprises. For example:
 - a. Discuss which verbal commands the Starter may give without your permission. Will the Starter be responsible for announcing the event/heat?
 - b. Discuss false start and recall protocol.
 - c. Determine where the Starter will stand during starts. They get first choice and it is important that you adopt a position where your arm is visible without their having to take their eyes off the swimmers.

- d. Discuss how swimmers with special needs will be accommodated. Always check with the Meet Referee to determine if there are such swimmers in the meet.
4. Talk to your fellow Deck Referee(s). As noted above, the teams often divide events up amongst themselves. If there are enough teams, an off-duty team might be assigned to keep the order of finish.
5. Finally, check out the pool/deck and equipment.
 - a. Is the starting system running? Perform a sound check with your starter. If necessary, conduct a test start to insure the timing system and scoreboard are operating.
 - b. Visually inspect the timing pads to make sure they are secure and centered.
 - c. Make sure the lane lines are tight and 15 meter clearly marked (if not, establish which lane marker is the furthest from the starting blocks).
 - d. Is there a problem with the backstroke flags (not the specified distance from the pool end, missing, too low)?
 - e. Finally establish where you and the starter will position yourselves during the starts.

DURING THE COMPETITION

Competition may begin when the Meet Referee has given you permission to proceed, all the timers and officials are in place, and the first heat's swimmers are present.

The Start

USA Swimming Rule, Article 102.11.3 states that the Deck Referee "Shall signal the Starter before each race that all officials are in position, that the course is clear, and that the competition can begin".

1. The Meet Referee will usually instruct the Deck Referee/Starter teams about the pace of the meet, including when to give the ready whistles. For example, this may be when the last swimmer coming in for the finish reaches the flags.
2. As Deck Referee, you are responsible for the actions of all officials on deck during the competition. Make sure they are in place before you start the race.
3. Make sure the timing system is ready. Some systems have indicators that show when the system is reset.
4. Is the next heat ready? Are swimmers missing? A good Starter will let you know if the upcoming heat has issues like missing swimmers, swimmers in the wrong lanes, questionable swim suits, bandages, etc. This is where pre-meet discussions with the Meet Referee and Starter are vital.
5. Once the Deck Referee has determined that the pool is ready for the next heat, they may initiate the start sequence in accordance with the protocol set forth by USA-S Rule 101.1.2.A:
 - a. The Deck Referee signals to the swimmers by a series of short whistles (four or more) to remove all clothing except for swimwear.

- b. Once satisfied that the swimmers are in place and ready, the Deck Referee shall blow one long whistle signaling to the swimmers that they should take their positions on the starting platforms.
 - c. For backstroke starts the first long whistle signals the swimmers to enter the water and a second, long whistle (when all heads are above water) signals the swimmers that they should return to their starting position on the wall.
 - d. Whistles should be distinct and even in tone. They need only be as loud as necessary to be heard by all lanes. Be kind to your Starter, try not to blow in their ear.
6. Once the Deck Referee is satisfied that the swimmers and officials are ready, he/she shall signal with an out-stretched arm to the Starter that the heat is under the Starter's control.
- a. The Deck Referee should turn the heat over to the Starter as soon as possible, preferably when the last swimmer is up on the blocks. It is the Starter's responsibility to make sure the swimmers are in the proper starting position.
 - b. If for some reason it is necessary to take the heat back, the Deck Referee should drop their arm. Since most Starters are focused on the blocks and may not notice this, you should also use some sort of verbal command. The protocol for taking heats back should be discussed with the Starter before the meet begins.
 - c. As Deck Referee, you are responsible for "closing" the heat. Any swimmer showing up at the blocks after the heat is closed is barred from swimming in that heat and will be considered a no show. Again, this is something you should discuss with the Meet Referee prior to the beginning of the meet.
 - 1) It is common practice to consider a heat closed when the Deck Referee extends their arm signaling the Starter that they now control the heat. In truth, there is no stated moment or signal that indicates that a heat has been closed. This is something to be discussed with the Meet Referee before the meet begins.
 - 2) At some meets the Meet Referee may adopt an "everybody swims" policy and swimmers who miss their heat will be allowed to swim in later heats if space is available.
 - 3) At other meets, it is left up to the Deck Referee's discretion. It is the Deck Referee's responsibility to determine what caused the swimmer to miss their heat and whether they should be allowed to swim.

*****Remember, whatever you do you will be setting a precedent for the remainder of the meet for that specific circumstance*****

False Starts and Recalls

Rule 101.1.3.A states that "any swimmer starting before the starting signal is given shall be disqualified if the Referee independently observes and confirms the Starter's observation that a violation has occurred".

1. Disqualification for false starts requires independent confirmation. It is important that both the Deck Referee and Starter keep the same routine for each heat regardless of whether a false start has occurred. If they observe a potential false start, the Starter should mark the offending lane on their heat sheet and show it to you. If you have marked the same lane, then the false start has been confirmed.

- a. If the swimmer enters the water after the “take your mark” command but before the starting signal has been given, the Starter should instruct the swimmers to stand and if a false start is confirmed, the offending swimmer must be removed from the blocks. If the false start is confirmed after the starting signal, the heat is allowed to continue and the swimmer should be notified at the conclusion of the race.
 - b. You should never discuss with the Starter false starts that were not dual confirmed. This could adversely affect their independence.
2. The Rules do not specify when a heat should be recalled, however it is customary to recall heats when, in the opinion of the Starter or Deck Referee, there was an unfair start.
- a. If only a few swimmers are affected by the unfair condition, it is better to let the heat continue and offer re-swims to the entire heat at the conclusion of the race (see "e" below).
- **A swimmer’s first start is usually their best.****
- b. If the entire heat is impacted, it is probably best to recall the heat and restart the race. No false start should be charged if the unfair condition impacted all of the swimmers.
 - c. Any swimmer who starts before the starting signal is given must be disqualified for that heat if the false start was independently confirmed by the Starter and Deck Referee and the cause was not the impact of the unfair condition observed.
 - d. "If the recall signal is activated inadvertently, no swimmer shall be charged with a false start" (per Section 101.3C of the rulebook).
 - e. **Re-swims should always be offered to the entire heat** as the Deck Referee and Starter cannot always determine if circumstances obviously affecting one swimmer might not also have affected others in the heat.

Managing The Deck

Once the swimmers are in the water, the Deck Referee resumes control of the heat and is responsible for managing the pool and surrounding deck. What follows is a brief list of the issues a Deck Referee must deal with during competition:

1. Is the timing system operating properly? If not notify the Meet Referee or Administrative Official immediately.
2. If the timing system did not start for the heat, immediately instruct the timing system operator to manually start the system if possible. It is much easier to do a timing adjustment if all the times are equally wrong than if there is no electronic time.
3. Make sure you have an unobstructed view of the entire pool. While Deck Referees can move about the deck during a race there is a divergence of opinion about just how far they should go.
 - a. Deck Referees need to be in position to see all lanes throughout the race. This may require them to take positions away from the Starter’s box. Typically, however, Deck Referees should not stray too far past the back stroke flags.
 - b. Sometimes moving far down the pool, especially in long course meets, gives the appearance that the Deck Referee is also serving as a side judge. While Deck Referees have the authority to make calls for infractions they personally observe, this may give the appearance that those lanes closest to the Deck Referee are being over judged.

- c. Chief Judges, coaches, and the Meet Referee will look for the Deck Referee in or near the Starter's box. You need to be readily available should they need to see you.
4. Don't allow yourself to be distracted; keep conversations with the Starter and other officials to the matters at hand.
5. Watch your deck officials. Are they in the proper position to observe swimmers in their jurisdiction? Do they follow the appropriate protocol when watching the pool and making calls? As Deck Referee you are both the leader and mentor of the officials assigned to your deck.
6. Make sure the timers are paying attention. If need be, have the head timer, Chief Judge, or Starter remind them when a heat is finishing. This is especially important for longer events.
7. Keep track of the start times of each event and the ending time of the session, unusual delays (weather, computer), no shows, order of finish, lane changes and disqualifications on your heat sheet. There should be one master Deck Referee heat sheet which is passed on to each successive team. This will become part of the permanent paperwork for the meet and will be used by the Meet Referee in preparing the Meet Report for Florida Swimming.
 - a. As the swimmers finish, record the order of finish on your heat sheet. At some meets an off duty referee/starter may be assigned to perform this task.
 - b. At some meets you will be required to close out the event by notifying the Administrative Official of any no shows, declared false starts, disqualifications and/or lane changes that occurred during the event. The Meet Referee will advise you of the protocol.
8. Crowd control is generally the province of the Meet Marshal. However, it is the Deck Referee's responsibility to make sure swimmers can get to the starting blocks unimpeded and that the timers and officials can perform their duties. As Deck Referee your primary focus should be on the pool; if it is necessary to deal with crowds get the Meet Referee involved.
9. If you must address coaches or parents always do so in a calm professional manner. The goal is to educate, not berate, and treating people courteously will go a long way from defusing potential confrontations.
 - a. Avoid discussing disqualifications with parents. If they inquire tell them that they should talk to their coach first and then the coach can address any questions about the call to you.
 - b. If necessary, ask an off-duty Deck Referee to step in and relieve you while you discuss the call with the coach.
 - c. Move the discussion out of the starting area to an area where the discussion is not likely to be overheard by others.
 - d. Listen to the coach and determine what steps you need to take to address their concerns. Once you understand their position tell them that you will consider it and get back to them.
 - e. If you did not make the call, speak with the Chief Judge and Stroke & Turn Judge who were involved. Review the rule. Once satisfied that you have all the information get back with the coach and advise him of your decision. If the coach wishes to appeal, notify the Meet Referee of the situation.

- f. On rare occasions, the coach's behavior may cross a line between reasoned yet impassioned argument to verbal abuse. Never get in an argument with a coach, especially on deck. When this happens, you should involve the Meet Referee as soon as possible.

Disqualifications

Under Article 102.11.1, Deck Referees may "...overrule any meet official on a point of rule interpretation, or on a judgment decision pertaining to an action that the Referee has personally observed". In other words, the Deck Referee is responsible for vetting the accuracy of all calls made by the Stroke & Turn Judges during their shift on deck. In doing so, the Deck Referee is acting as the swimmer's advocate, insuring that all parties have followed the proper rules and procedures in making and reporting the call. The protocol for taking and processing calls may vary depending upon the level of competition (championship vs age group), but in general the process is as follows:

1. When a Stroke & Turn Judge raises their arm signaling that they have observed a potential infraction of the rules, the Deck Referee should note on their heat sheet the jurisdiction of that Stroke & Turn Judge so you know to look for a DQ Report.
2. When you receive the Report, check it for completeness and accuracy.
 - a. Is the swimmer correctly identified? Does the event/heat/lane match the name? Do they match what is on your heat sheet? If the name does not match the event/heat/lane you must question the Stroke & Turn Judge and possibly review his/her heat sheet to see what, if anything they wrote at the time. Remember, the swimmer gets the benefit of the doubt and if you are not able to properly identify who violated the rules, the DQ must be reversed.
 - b. Is the infraction properly identified? Did the Stroke & Turn Judge cite the correct rules and check the appropriate boxes fully describing the violation? Where did it occur? What rules were violated? Don't hesitate to question the Stroke & Turn Judge about the details.
3. Once satisfied that the DQ Report properly describes the infraction and that the call is valid, the Deck Referee should sign the Report and submit it to the Administrative Official. The Deck Referee should overturn the call if:
 - a. They determine that the Stroke & Turn Judge has misapplied or misinterpreted a rule; exercised authority outside their jurisdiction, or was out of position.
 - b. The Deck Referee observed the same sequence of events and believes that no infraction occurred. Overturning a judgment call (i.e. non-simultaneous touch) made by another official should be handled delicately. Remember, the Deck Referee seldom sees the swimmer from the same position as the Stroke & Turn Judge and different angles lead to different perceptions. Additionally, Deck Referees generally can see swimmers in only one quadrant of the pool and any decision they make could lead to the appearance that not all swimmers are being judged the same.
4. USA Swimming Rules require that Deck Referee or designated official make every effort to notify the swimmer or his/her coach of the reason for the disqualification. Failure to do so, however, does not negate disqualification (102.22.2).
5. Finally, USA Swimming gives the Deck Referee the authority to "...disqualify a swimmer(s) for any violation of the rules that the Referee personally observes and, except for false starts, shall at the same time raise one hand overhead. If the Referee does not make such a signal, there

shall be no disqualification” (102.11.2). In exercising this authority, the Deck Referee must insure that all swimmers have fair, equitable, and uniform judging. Some things to consider:

- a. Deck Referees spend most of their time in one quadrant of the pool. By making calls the Deck Referee may give the appearance that the swimmers in that quadrant of the pool to are being subjected to greater scrutiny than others.
- b. Consider the infraction. Was it visible to the entire pool? Was the Stroke & Turn Judge within whose jurisdiction it occurred distracted? Was it flagrant? An obvious example would be a swimmer who turns over on their stomach as they finish the backstroke leg of the IM. The Stroke & Turn Judge may be observing swimmers in other lanes and not see this infraction.

AFTER THE COMPETITION

If you are the Deck Referee when the last heat ends, make sure that you turn you heat sheet (and the Starter’s) in to the Meet Referee. Make sure all DQ slips have been signed and turned in. Thank your Starter, Chief Judge, and Stroke & Turn Judges. Make yourself available to the Meet Referee for any issues that may have cropped up during the meet.

RADIO PROTOCOL

At some meets Deck Referees and Chief Judges (if there are any) will use radios to communicate on deck, including calling in potential disqualifications. When using radios there are some basic tenants you should follow:

1. Be clear and concise.
2. Allow the other party time to finish their statements.
3. Pause a second after pressing the transmit button before talking.
4. Do not say anything over the radio you would not want the entire pool to hear. Frankly, the less said the better.
5. The protocol in use for the meet should be covered in the briefing prior to each session's start.
6. Proper communication is especially important when discussing disqualifications. The following is the standard sequence when calls are radioed in by a Chief Judge:
 - a. When a Stroke & Turn Judge within the Chief Judge’s jurisdiction raises their arm, the Chief Judge should immediately call in that there is a potential disqualification and identify the jurisdiction (event/heat/lane/Stroke & Turn Judge position-start, turn, etc).
 - b. When the Chief Judge reaches the Stroke & Turn Judge, they should confirm the exact lane. This allows you to instruct the Chief Judge or other official at the finish to hold the swimmer pending verification of the call.
 - c. After the Chief Judge has discussed the call with the Stroke & Turn Judge, they should call it in again stating the event/heat/lane/location and the infraction.
 - d. They should then state whether they recommend acceptance of the call. You should repeat back verbatim the information and indicate whether you are accepting the call. If you are, instruct the Chief Judge to write the violation up and notify the swimmer.

- e. While you may ask for clarification (which hand touched, etc.), it is best not to discuss the call in detail over the radio. If you have questions tell the Chief Judge to come see you. If the Chief Judge did not recommend acceptance, follow the same procedure.
7. If the meet is not using Chief Judges, radios may be given to one or more Stroke & Turn Judge at each end. Protocol similar to that above should be observed; i.e., if all judges are given radios, once the swimmers have left his/her jurisdiction, the judge making the call should use the radio to call in the DQ, identifying the event/heat/lane/end and violation.

SAFETY

A key responsibility of the Deck Referee's is to insure a safe environment for all participants. If you observe an unsafe condition you must address it immediately, either personally or preferably by bringing in the Meet Referee/Meet Director. As the Deck Referee you may be called upon to close the pool due to inclement weather. This issue should be discussed with the Meet Referee before the meet begins. Some pools (municipal/YMCA) have their own policies regarding the closure of pools due to lightning. While they make the ultimate call, you need not wait for their action if you feel weather is an immediate threat. As always, keep the Meet Referee in the loop.

DECK REFEREE CERTIFICATION PROCESS

The requirements to be certified by a Deck Referee in the Florida Swimming LSC are delineated in Chapter 10.2.4 of the Florida Swimming Policy Manual. The applicant must:

1. Be at least 21 years of age;
2. Attend a Deck Referee clinic taught by a Certified Clinic Instructor;
3. Pass (80%) the then current USA Swimming Referee, Timing Judge and Clerk of Course exams;
4. Have, prior to beginning their apprenticeship:
 - a. Completed 1 year as a certified Stroke & Turn Judge and certified Starter;
 - b. Worked 15 sessions as a Stroke & Turn Judge and 4 sessions as a Starter.
5. Complete a minimum of 20 hours on deck apprentice working a minimum of 3 meets and 5 sessions. During the apprenticeship, the applicant must have been mentored on deck by at least 3 different Deck Referees.
6. Complete the Deck Referee review with their final instructor.

If the Meet Referee of the final meet apprenticed by the applicant approves, the application is then submitted to the applicant's Area Representative for final approval and certification. A copy of the Application and Apprentice Log can be found in Appendix B of this document.

Appendix

The following information and forms are the items you will need to complete your apprenticeship.

Additional copies can be downloaded and printed from the FL Swimming web site.

The “Professional” Deck Referee - or - It’s more than blowing a whistle!

The “Professional” Deck Referee should:

1. **Know the Rules** and the official interpretations published by the USA Swimming Rules Committee
2. **Coordinate with the Meet Referee and other Deck Referees to:**
 - establish how heats will be run – fly-overs, cleared pool, “chase starts”, etc.
 - establish “standard” whistle protocol for the meet and where the “on deck” referee will be located. Suggested protocol:
 - Short whistles - based on the meet pace established by the Meet Referee
 - Long “step up or in” whistle – when the swimmers are ready. (If possible, resolve any issues before the first long whistle.)
 - Second long whistle for backstroke – when the last head is up
 - Turn the heat over to the starter when all swimmers are accounted for; either on the blocks or in the lanes and there are no apparent issues behind the blocks. (This should be immediately after the last whistle in most heats). Ask the Starter to say “Relax please” or step the swimmers down if any issues can’t be promptly resolved. Remember the outstretched arm does not necessarily “close” the heat! USA Swimming rules do not specify when a heat is “closed”
 - Let the Starter decide when the swimmers are ready to start
 - manage the starting area – timers seated for starts, only starting swimmer in front of timers at the start, etc.
3. **Work with the Starters:**
 - on their preferred starting location, where you will stand and how you will turn the heat over to them
 - to decide how you will resolve common issues like “untidy” starting block areas (reduce the chaos to a minimum to set the tone for the meet)
 - on accommodation for disabled swimmers
 - on how you would like to be advised of swimmers with problems in the starting area, equipment issues, etc.
 - to verify “possible false start” procedure and protocol
4. **Work with the Chief Judges:**
 - to establish procedures to receive DQ, DFS and “No Show” slips for review and sign off
 - to establish swimmer notification procedures for all disqualifications
 - to be sure they (*and you*) understand the radio protocol
5. **Read and understand the information in the Meet Announcement**, including warm-up requirements
6. **Check with the Admin Ref after your shift to see if any ties need to be resolved. Start working on them immediately (before scratch deadline).** Consider ties for the last places in finals heats, for alternates and any others that could move into contention if there are one or more scratches from, or “no shows” in, finals. Take into account any restrictions on who can swim in finals. Find (page) the coaches involved and mediate the resolution. If a swim-off is needed, insist it be within the time required by the rules. If another method is suggested by the coaches (one defers to another, a coin toss or other method), record the result and convey it to the Administrative Referee. If scratches absolutely remove the need for resolution, inform the coaches.
7. **Keep the meet flowing**, but do not pressure starters to “pick up the pace”
8. **Try not to turn away from the pool** while a heat is in progress - avoid *any* “paperwork” until all heads are up after the start
9. **Record the start time of each event**
10. **At the end of each event, reconcile DQs, “no shows” and any adjustments with the Admin Referee or Admin Official** either with a quick discussion if the Administrator is nearby or, if the Meet Referee agrees, by radio if in a remote location. If anything “unusual” has occurred, follow up with the details to ensure accuracy
11. **Develop your own “mental check list”** of things to do before, during, and after your duty session. For example:
 - **Before the session:**
 - Check the Meet Announcement and heat sheet for any “red light” situations
 - ★ Have events been championship seeded when the meet is in Preliminary-Final format
 - ★ Transitions from slowest to fastest and fastest to slowest heats
 - ★ Breaks between events
 - ★ Deck seeded events; verify that the seeding has been distributed to the announcer, coaches, officials and timers
 - ★ Are deck seeded events followed by pre-seeded events! Do coaches, officials, and timers know?
 - ★ Any others you, or others, have experienced
 - **Before each event:**
 - Check for re-seeds. If any, are they on **colored paper**? Do the announcer, coaches, officials and timers have them? Have copies been posted conspicuously for swimmers?
 - Ensure the timing console is set to the correct distance whenever change is occurring
 - Is your Starter (and are you) ready and are CJs and Judges in place?
 - **Before each race:** (All of this should only take a second; two at most!)
 - scan the deck for officials in position and equipment problems (pads hanging, cables in lanes, people leaning on backstroke flag poles, etc.),

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- glance at the starter to see if issues have been observed
- if finals, count the swimmers while parading or being announced
- check if timing has been reset (ability to do this will depend on the system used and location of cues, if any)

• **After the start:**

- glance to see if the timing system started (consider a recall if it didn’t)
- watch for all heads up
- move a few meters down the pool (never more than 1 or 2 meters past the backstroke flags!)
- glance back at start end judges
- note start time (if it is the first heat), empty lanes and false starts
- watch swimmers and stroke judges
- in distance races – check scoreboard (if visible) for missed touches and incorrect counters (use CJ to convey corrections)
- check turn end judges
- acknowledge and note any DQ’s and process them expeditiously
- move back to start with incoming swimmers at the end of the heat
- glance at Starter to see if there may be issues with the next heat
- blow short whistles, etc.

• **After each event:**

- check all DQs have been finalized (including swimmer or coach notifications)
- reconcile DQs, DFSs, No Shows and adjustments with admin so the event can be “closed”
- check with admin for potential “swim offs” and resolve positions for finals
- take a well-earned break
- return for “next up” duties, which may include assisting the duty Deck Referee

• **Add or insert any other items you can think of!**

12. If assigned to invigilate controlled warm-up:

- Coordinate with the assigned Starter to observe the pool and enforce compliance with warm-up rules
- Open pace lanes at the designated time and racing start lanes as requested (open additional racing start/sprint lanes if demand warrants). Coordinate with the Announcer and Marshalls
- With the Starter, check starting equipment and starting platforms
- Review deck set-up in general – Quietly notify Meet Referee of deficiencies or safety issues

Other Very Important Stuff:

- Considers “body language” when “on duty” and at all other times when accessible - always assume video coverage!
- Try to face the pool when standing anywhere near it, even when not on duty
- Be alert, attentive, focused, calm, professional, and approachable
- Always be “friendly” and helpful to coaches, swimmers, and other officials; even if they are not
- Try to take all discussions and emotional issues off-deck and away from front and center
- If issues need to be resolved or discussed with coaches, CJs or STs, consider turning the heats over to the “next up” Referee
- Similarly, be ready to step in when “next up”. Watch and listen so that you don’t need to be summoned!
- Maintain your sense of humor

And that’s just the tip of the iceberg!

Remember: Professional Deck Referees:

- can adapt to meet conditions and needs
- are willing to learn
- don’t read more into the rules than is written
- find ways (within the rules) to let swimmers compete, and don’t over interpret procedural rules
- appreciate swimmers, coaches, officials and volunteers of all levels and interact with them respectfully on all occasions
- are neatly uniformed, look confident, are competent, and are never imperious
- advise the Meet Referee and Deck Referees of any non-routine decisions made. If possible, involve them in those decisions
- do the Deck Referee job well and don’t overstep those responsibilities unless asked by the Meet Referee (this doesn’t mean that you can’t help out here and there)
- self-evaluate after all shifts, sessions, and meets, and
- look forward to their next meet
- have, and generously apply, **COMMON SENSE**
- make sure the benefit of the doubt goes to the swimmer
- are willing to, and frequently, work as a **Stroke and Turn Judge**

Checklist for Deck Referee Advancement Evaluation

(Refer to the N2 and N3 National Evaluation & Certification Requirements¹) Attachment A

N2 Deck Referee – Prerequisites² for requesting an Evaluation:

- LSC-certified Deck Referee for at least 16 sessions
- certified as N2 Stroke & Turn Judge
- Can work at least 4 sessions at the OQM, with at least 3 evaluation sessions as a Deck Referee

N2 Deck Referee - Performance Requirements for an Advancing Evaluation

- Has read the Meet Announcement, absorbed Instructions from the Meet Referee and applies them
- Know the stroke, turn, starting and relay exchange rules and their interpretations
- Understands basic protocols and procedures for running events in meets; keeps to the “timeline” and meet rhythm and tempo required by the Meet Referee
- Works with other Deck Referees, Starters, Chief Judges and Stroke and Turn Judges as a “team player” during warm-up (invigilating), pre- meet and session meetings and during the meet. Arrives at all meetings on time
- Uses recommended radio protocol when conversing with CJs, ARs and the Meet Referee
- Handles DQs and the related “paperwork” promptly and appropriately
- Recognizes and records “false starts”
- Promptly closes out each event and resolves any ties for positions in finals in accordance with the rules
- Remains ready to assist other Deck Referees when necessary
- Understands the meet is for the swimmers
- Is neatly and correctly uniformed and has a calm, confident, polite and professional demeanor

N3 initial Deck Referee Evaluation (this is not a certification level) – Prerequisites² for requesting an evaluation:

- N2 Deck Referee certification and N3 Stroke & Turn certification
- Active as an official in the LSC at all levels of meets
- At least 8 sessions as a Deck Referee, recorded in OTS, since N2 certification

N3 initial Deck Referee Evaluation - Performance Requirements for a recommendation to proceed to an N3 final Evaluation

- Applies the requirements expected of the N2 Referee without reminders
- Knows and understands the Deck positions, functions and protocols used at National Championship meets
- Works very comfortably with the rest of the deck team and doesn't unnecessarily interfere in their duties
- Understands the needs of swimmers before, during and after the swim, and accommodates them within the rules and requirements established by the Meet Referee
- Understands the role and needs of the Administrative Referee, the timing system operator and the Announcer
- Controls the tempo and rhythm of the event in accordance with the Meet Referee's instructions
- Understands the different protocols used at high level meets – Replay Referee, FINA protocols, etc.
- Appropriately applies safety related procedures – invigilating, attention to the pool and general vigilance
- Comfortably uses the recommended radio protocol
- Looks and acts like a very experienced Deck Referee

N3 final Deck Referee Evaluation – Prerequisites² for requesting an evaluation:

- Worked at least 8 sessions as a Deck Referee, recorded in OTS, after receiving a “recommendation” N3 initial Deck Referee evaluation

N3 final Deck Referee Evaluation - Performance Requirements for Certification

- Very comfortably applies all of the requirements expected for N2 and N3 initial evaluations
- Fully understands and demonstrates the role of the Deck Referee at National Championships
- Regularly works lower level and LSC meets in all deck roles and helps develop and mentor officials at all levels

¹ There are other requirements that need to be met before an application for National Certification can be submitted and approved.

² Do not ask to be evaluated before the prerequisites have been satisfied.

FLORIDA SWIMMING
DECK REFEREE CERTIFICATION APPLICATION

Name of applicant: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____ Telephone: _____

Area: _____ Club: _____

Clinic Date: _____ Instructor: _____

Date Tests Completed: Referee _____

Clerk of Course _____

Timing Judge _____

APPRENTICE RECORD OF ON DECK TIME

Date	Meet	Meet Referee	On Deck Mentor	Hours

APPRENTICE PROCEDURE

On the day of the meet report to the Meet Referee:

1. Present you Official’s Certification Card.
2. You will be assigned an on deck mentor.
3. As apprentice you are limited in your authority. Your mentor will explain.
4. At the conclusion of the session your mentor and meet referee will sign the form.

CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR DECK REFEREE

1. Attend a clinic.
2. Complete the online tests for Referee, Timing Judge, and Clerk of Course.
3. Apprentice a minimum of 20 hours at 3 or more meets and be mentored on deck by at least 3 different Deck Referee Instructors. Note that apprentices may not apprentice at LSC Championships.
4. After completing items 1-3, the Meet Referee or their designee should complete the Deck Referee Review below. The Meet Referee then may, based upon their judgment, recommend certification.
5. When all requirements are met, submit the form to you Area Representative for final approval.

DECK REFEREE REVIEW

	Fair	Good	Excellent
1. Attentive to everything occurring in/around the pool			
2. Alert in observing swimmers/timers readiness to compete			
3. Knowledge of rules and procedures.			
4. Demeanor with coaches/swimmers/volunteers.			
5. Knowledge of disqualification terminology.			
6. Observation of all swimmers/officials during meet.			
7. Professional appearance.			
8. Control of the pool and during decision making			
9. Management of the officials’ team.			
10. Paperwork-notes start times, no shows, DQ’s, delays, across the boards			

Signed _____

Date _____

MEET REFEREE REVIEW

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | YES | NO |
| 1. It is my opinion that this person needs more deck time | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. It is my opinion that this person is ready for certification as a Referee | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Signed _____

Date _____