

Good evening all,

This note is being sent to all officials in Florida Swimming, and non-Official members of the Officials Committee.

Hope this note finds everyone well as we get started back into Short Course season, which for us in Florida also means High School season!

Florida Swimming sent a contingent of folks to Anaheim, CA this past week for the annual US Aquatic Sports Convention. There are some rule changes and interpretations that I wanted to bring everyone up to speed on, because some of them will be going into effect this time next week (September 23, 2013). Here is a summary of the change:

-The interpretation of the 4-hour rule has been updated. Measurement of the time duration applicable to this rule begins with the published meet start time of a session that offers 12 & under events and ends with the conclusion of the last 12 & under event of the day for the same gender. Our session timeline reports will be adjusted accordingly. Under NO circumstances may a meet or meet session be terminated before all individual events have been concluded as a means of complying with the rule. Relays may be eliminated only if the meet announcement clearly states the conditions under which relays will be eliminated and whether relay entry fees will be refunded. Events that are scored multi-age are impacted by the rule if the multi-age scoring involves 12 & under designations, such as 11-12, 10 & under, 12 & under, etc. Studies have shown swimming is the most popular youth sport, exceeding soccer; however, parents are reluctant to keep their children involved when they spend long days on the pool deck to watch their children compete for only a few minutes. This is compared to soccer where parents can spend an hour on the sidelines watching their children compete for that full period. Once committed, teenage swimmers stay in the sport at a 90+% rate, while around 60% of those aged 12 & under will choose another sport.

-Admin Official Requirements for Observed and Approved Meets: Admin Officials will NOT be required for observed meets for High School and College purposes. It is the responsibility of the Meet Referee to ensure that the times being entered into SWIMS are accurate and in accordance with the rules of USA Swimming. Approved meets, such as YMCA, along with regularly sanctioned meets will still require Admin Officials.

-At the turns and finish of Breaststroke and Butterfly, the hands will now be required to be separated. Fingers are allowed to overlap, but the "stacking" of hands on top of one another is no longer permitted. There are no other changes to the Breaststroke rule.

-As of Jan. 1, 2014, a new backstroke starting ledge will be permitted for starts. The ledge is comparable to the wedge or fin device now used on blocks for forward starts and hangs from the starting block by straps. The rule for use of the ledge will still require both feet to be in contact with the wall or pad, and the toes will not be allowed to curl over the top of the gutter or timing pad. Once an athlete starts, the ledge will have to be removed for turns and finishes. It is advised that a coach or teammate remove the device for the athlete after the start and place it on the deck. FINA will be releasing specifications and dimensions for those approved wedges in the coming weeks. We will pass along more information on this as it becomes available.

-APT is now ready for renewals. All 2013 expiration dates are now set to expire at the end of December and its suggested non-athlete members renew in December and not before then.

The Officials Committee is preparing for its annual meeting in early October. This meeting will be held on Saturday, October 5 at 10:00 a.m. in Howey-in-the-Hills, FL at the Mission Inn Resort and Club. The address is 10400 County Road 48, Howey-in-the-Hills, FL 34737. I will pass along the starting time of the meeting as soon as I have it. Additionally, we will be having a prep meeting on Thursday, September 26 at 8:00 p.m. You can access the September 26th meeting as follows:

Log-in online: <http://floridaswimming.entertHEMEETING.com/m/SSKAXVMW>
Dial-in Information: (949) 202-4265, Pin 4120684#

Thanks to all of you for the time and effort you put forward for the sport of swimming!

Sincerely,

Matt