Friday evening registration and open forum:

Large group of officials chairs and/or appointed representatives met in the foyer area of the Minnesota room at 5 PM for registration as well as meet and greet, initiating or renewing acquaintances. An open forum was led by Jim Holcomb including discussion of issues to address over the weekend. Of note currently, the new Futures meets may be used for advancement to N2 or N3 but will not qualify as having attended a National OQM meet for the 5 year requirement for certification for N3. Note, this may change in the future as USA Swimming gathers information on how these new meets go. The Pro Series meets will be available as having attended a qualifying meet for N3 certification. Officials chairs were asked to pass this information along to their constituent LSC’s. The new USA Swimming Officiating DVD’s are out on the website and were given to each attendee on a flash-drive to take back and share with their LSC. Permission to incorporate the DVD into the LSC website was given. There may eventually be a new starter video coming out but there is no current guideline for this release and discussion ensued as to whether we really need a new starter video at all. A reminder was given that, as of May 1, 2015, mixed relays are part of the accepted events for USA Swimming. Two boys and two girls within the proper age group is the guideline. At the San Antonio meeting for coordination of USA and YMCA rules, part 2 of the AO test was eliminated so that it is easier to qualify to work both types of meets for USA Swimming officials. Further discussion regarding AO vs. AR will occur during the weekend discussions.

Saturday meeting.

Rules and Interpretations Update- Dan McAllen. Brief review of Breast stroke rules regarding fly kick. A single fly kick consists of one up and one down motion of feet. Brief review of hands issue. Incidental overlapping of thumbs and/or fingers is ok. Consensus of a new starter video was “no”. Review of proposed legislative changes was reviewed. Encouraged to review on website: go to headers, click “about”, click rules & regs, the legislative proposals will be found there. Concerns include 1) a change in the glossary definition of “deck changing”. Suggest not to over-react to this on deck. Instead, use the opportunity to talk to coach and have them educate their swimmers. No punitive action unless there are significant repeat offenders. 2) eliminate timing judges. In this regard, backup times will be recorded but there will be no ‘adjustments’ made. Note, currently we are the only country in the world that adjusts times for the final times entered into SWIMS. 3) no individual who has been sanctioned or is being investigated for doping, drug use, etc will be able to coach, train, manage athletes. 4) Can’t be on deck if under investigation.

Dan’s job involves overseeing 15 championship meets including 2 Nat’l champs; 2 Jr Nat’l champs, 6 Pro series, 3 Futures ( these are new and are intended to be developmental meets for athletes. These are good meets for swimmers and officials who wish to break into the national scene ).

Concern raised that there are too many meets stacked on top of each other at the national level (echoed at the local level)

It was reiterated that you can advance to N2 or N3 as an official at Futures meets but those meest will not count as an N3 National Championship attended meet within the last 5 years as requirement for certification.

FINA update- Carol Zaleski. FINA founded in 1908 in London. Carol became the first female on the committee in 1988. The committee conducts international competition including the Olympics and is responsible for promoting the development of the sport. Eventually moved away from the AAU organization and the Olympic organization which led to the development of USA Swimming in this country.

Organizational plan includes General Congress (meets every 4 years); Technical Congress (meets every 4 years and has a congress for each sport discipline); FINA Bureau (24 members); Technical Committees (one for each discipline); specialized committees; Commissions; Judicial Panels.

There are 5 continental organizations in FINA.

FINA has schools for officials, starters, ref’s, etc. Info for these schools is found on FINA website.

Interplay between YMCA and USA Officiatng- Joel Black. The YMCA changed directions a few years ago from a youth oriented organization which promoted competition to a health club, family oriented concept (eg “every one swims, everyone wins”)

Now YMCA is trying to move back to more youth competition. For example, National YMCA competitions now include gymnastics and swimming. There are now some YMCA swim teams. YMCA officials need to belong to USA Swimming if they crossover but USA Swimming officials currently do not need to be YMCA members to crossover….this will probably change in the future.

Currently, YMCA and USA technical rules are very close to each other.

There are 2 fast track ways to become a YMCA official if you are already a USA official. Officiating in YMCA has level 1 and level 2 officiating certifications. Note: some LSC’s are doing dual certification for their officials so they obtain both USA and YMCA certification.

Open water officiating- Sandy Drake. Differences from pool type meets include ever-changing conditions compared to a pool as well as no timing. Instead, order of finish determines winners. Clinics for officials primarily focus on trying to “avoid the unavoidable”. Clinics include day 1 in classroom reviewing what to look for before, during and after the race(s). This includes the all important safety plan, coordination with local organizations, technical meetings and officials meetings. The safety plan incorporates venue/ conditions, medical onsite and offsite, technical issues and meeting which all athletes, coaches and officials must attend. Officials meetings include pre-race responsibilities e.g. check-in, nail inspection, use of chips, numbering. Final briefing occurs 15 minutes before start and is conducted by the race referee. Start briefing includes turns, especially the 1st buoy turn, pack racing, boat positioning and feeding station for longer swims. Finish includes finish judge, turn judge, referee who observes the approach and finish. The ISO (independent safety officer) is required for the meet.

There will be a formal open water officials clinic in Fort Meyer FL in 2016 for those interested.

There are currently 2 western zone sanction chairs for open water USA sanctions.

Administrative Officials redux-Lucy Duncan. Intention is to assure times going into SWIMS database are accurate, names present for relays, etc. This function will remain valuable even if time adjustments eventually go away. General consensus is that there has been a significant reduction in erroneous times going in to SWIMS.

Discussion ensued regarding the difference between Admin Official and Admin Ref. Some were in favor of a track wherein an AO could become certified as an AR without the “wet deck” training. This caused a fair amount of discussion, particularly after one Officials Chair announced that he certified 2 of his long term AO (previously computer operator and hytek persons) as AR’s. Discussion and debate of whether an AR may or must fill in if the deck referee becomes disabled or is unavailable in the middle of a meet also took place.

Discussion also ensued regarding recertification requirements of AO’s as well as a track to become a N2 or N3 AO.

It was felt that, when there is an AR at a mee,t they take the place of the AO from the standpoint of referee report but that the AO(s) may still be used during the meet to do other delegated duties.

Breakout meeting discussion included consensus that there is no formal USA Swimming recommendation to go from AO to AR without first having wet deck training including S & T and Starter training, and ref training and deck time.

Standards, training, advancement and mentoring- Melissa Hellervik-Bing. There is a power-point of her presentation available

If an OQM meet, is there N2 or N3 evaluations available?

Generally an N2 certification implies that the individual is ready to officiate sectionals, Futures, Pro Series meets.

Generally an N3 qualifying meet has a fair number of swimmers that will qualify for Jr Nationals or Nationals and will have both pre-lims and finals with day before scratch-box.

Typically an N2 qualifying meet is the typical Age Group meet.

Recommendations discussed on how officials chair submits the application for the qualifying meet to Gina Mensay. The LSC chair submits the app for sanction # the after the qualifying app is received, USA Swimming puts the meet in for a qualifying #.

Take home message from the national committee: whenever you have the opportunity to “train people up” you should do it. Especially for DR,AR,Starters.

LSC officials chairs can designate LSC officials to do evaluations for N2 in all positions and S & T for N3 only. Need to be same level evaluating, need N3 S & T if evaluating for S & T N3.

Discussion then covered choosing N2 evaluators and mentors. Successful mentors will generally: be successful deck mentors to apprentice S & T individuals; be active in LSC and championship meets; know rules ,jurisdictions and protocols; have the characteristics of patience, thoughtfulness, good communication skills, values other officials, evidence that apprentices respond to their teaching; have experience at higher level meets; model the skills from the N3 skills document.

Recommend that officials chairs view the mentoring officials webnar. This link is found on the Education & Training page of USA website.

Suggestions for inviting and working with N3 evaluators was discussed. Suggestions include: invite several months in advance, consider reimbursing travel and accomodations, communicate often leading up to event, have meet referee share requests for evaluation with evaluator and send them copies of those requests.

The National Committee standards for N3 evaluators include: performs appropriately at National meets, mentors positions at N2 level for N3 initial certs as well as N3 initial to N3 final cert., mentees have advanced and performed well, excels at mentoring and possesses beneficial characteristics as an evaluator.

Role of the LSC Chair and LSC Committee-Jamie Cahn.

Role of Chair: role model especially when on deck; good listener- needs to do this really well; teacher/student-chair is both of these sometimes at the same time; communicator- gives good, positive feedback to all officials; an ambassador/ promoter of the sport.

Also serves as a recruiter for new officials and new meet staff; functions to retain officials and staff often by providing recognition of jobs well done; is an evaluator; is an arbiter and above all, again a listener.

Discussion ensued with ideas like: recognition budget in LSC, LSC awards. There is info on the USA website regarding volunteer recognition. Other ideas like additional nameplates for different certifications; recognition/ tracking of sessions worked with mention in a regular newsletter, etc.

Officials Committee roles: can assist communication from chair as evaluators, newsletters, OTS assistance, Training and Education both online and in person.

Briefly reviewed the purpose of the National Officials Committee whose primary goal is to lead to fair, equitable and consistent at all USA Swimming sanctioned meets regardless of level of meet.

Opportunities for this committee include the Bi-annual National LSC Officials Chairs meeting and the LSC Officials Chairs conference call quarterly on the 1st Wednesday of each calendar quarter. The general feeling was that these calls were very helpful. The following are the next few dates for the calls: 7/1/15, 10/7/15, 1/6/16, and 4/6/16. All calls occur at 8 PM ET.

Request was made to all chairs to consider sending a file or files to the file share site for any education or training seminars they may have developed. Those can be forwarded to USA Swimming for inclusion in education for officials.

Chairs were again asked to distribute, share, place on local LSC site the new Officiating DVD which was given to them at registration on a flash drive.

Suggested Golden Rule for Chairs: 1) make every meet special; 2) provide an atmosphere that gives the athletes the best opportunity for “long-term” success for whatever level they are at.

There will be be a USA Swimming National Officials Workshop in Dallas TX October 23 and 24, 2015. It is intended for an ‘up-and-coming official’ , one from each LSC, and will be held at the Dallas Marriott South.

Sunday Meeting

Update on Officials Tracking System (OTS)- Bob Griffiths….the inventor of OTS. A number of prioritized issues were discussed including possibly including tracking both YMCA and NCAA officials sessions, certifications, etc. Cleaning up name discrepancies within the OTS is a primary target as well as maintaining an accurate e-mail address listing.

The issue of tracking apprentice officials and some of the difficulties with that was also discussed. Also obtaining tracking reports regarding Admin Officials was reviewed.

The meeting officially adjourned around 9:50 AM

Respectfully submitted by Jim Cherewatenko, Officials Committee Member, MT LSC