

REFEREEING

Becoming a qualified Referee is the final step in the process of becoming a fully qualified technical swimming official. It means you have been a technical official for a number of years and have passed theoretical and practical examinations for Timekeeper and Inspector of Turns, plus at least the theoretical examination for Starter and Recorder. Most officials also take the practical part of the examination for Starter and Recorder, as this will allow them to move up through the referees grading system.

All Referees are graded C-B-A according to a combination of experiences and ability. The requirements for grading are specified in **Rule SR17**.

Before applying for your referee's examination, check and make sure you can answer "**Yes**" to the following:

- Do I have an excellent knowledge of both the current FINA and Swimming New Zealand rules and their interpretation?
- Am I able to make quick and accurate decisions?
- Can I work under pressure for long period of time without panicking or losing my "**cool**"?
- Am I able to deal with people who are at times irate and upset quickly, and in a manner that is fair and cause the least amount of disruption and public awareness?
- Can I accept and act on other qualified people's recommendations and decisions?
- Am I prepared to make decisions that are hard and unpopular rather than take the easy way and give "**the benefit of doubt**" or "**take no action**"?
- Can you always be sure that you "**saw it**" and not "**thought you saw it**" when making a decision.

Answering "**No**" to one or more of these questions is not the end of your aspirations to become a Referee. However before putting in your application for examination you should feel confident that you know the rules and can in a short time with experience answer "**Yes**" to the remaining questions.

Remember as a Referee you're "**IT**". Your decision and actions have a large effect on the conduct of a swim meet and on each individual swimmer's chances and aspirations. Do "**it**" well and the meet will run smoothly and everyone will be happy (or at least almost everyone).

Remember that you are acting as a Referee to ensure fair play and that the rules are being adhered to so that no competitor gains an unfair advantage. You are not refereeing for your own ego or satisfaction.

The Examination – Theory and Practical

The examination is in two parts – an oral theory paper, which must be taken and passed before the second part which, is a practical test.

A high standard is set for both parts with a pass mark of 85% being required for the theory paper on points per question.

Theory

This examination requires an extremely good knowledge of the Swimming New Zealand rules as applied to all aspects of pool swimming and FINA facilities rules. Reading and knowledge and understanding of rules **S1** to **S14** and **SR1** to **SR17** in the Swimming New Zealand rule book is essential as are rules **SW2** to **SW13** and **Fr2** in the current FINA rule book. These rules will not be reprinted in this publication, as it is mandatory for every referee to have a personal copy of this rule with them on pool deck.

The actual examination is taken orally by the examiner and will cover not only the specific referee's questions but many of those already covered in the timekeepers, IOT's, starters and recorders examination.

The oral examination usually takes one to one and a half-hours to complete.

Practical

The practical examination usually requires you to act as referee for one complete session of a major swim meet. However if the examiner considers that because of the standard of the meet or for other reasons the test of your ability to referee has not been fairly tested you may be required to referee an additional session.

Briefly the following are the pool duties of the referee and covers the points and actions the examiner will be observing.

- Arrive at the pool at least half an hour before the meet is due to commence and report to the Meet Director and or Meet Controller.
- Check availability of officials and make changes and or replacements.
- Check blocks, backstroke flags, false start rope, 15 metre marks, starting equipment, timing equipment.
- Meet with key officials and issue any instructions that maybe necessary – signals clearing pool – disqualification's etc.
- Before the start of the first race check with the key officials that officials under their direction are present and ready to commence their duties.
- At the start of each race give clear whistle and arm signals after checking that all competitors and officials are ready. Whistle signals must be sharp and loud enough for all swimmers and pool deck officials at both ends of the pool to clearly hear them.
- Only place swimmers in the Starters control after they have all settled.
- If a break or breaks occur, consult with the Starter before deciding on the action to be taken.
- During the race watch the swimmers in the pool at all times.
- Always judge the finish of the race so that your places can be compared with the finish times when results are signed off. This is particularly important where an AOD is being used.
- During and immediately after the race has finished, check with the inspectors of turns and stroke judges for any disqualifications. This is done using a pre-arranged signal.

- If a disqualification is indicated immediately ask the Chief Recorder to hold the results. Check the disqualification slip and get clarification from the official making the recommendation if necessary. Give your decision to the Chief Recorder with a signed disqualification slip if the disqualification is accepted. Note time of occurrence.
- **NOTE!** The wording on the Disqualification Slip must be in accordance with the rules. If the wording is not correct but you agree with the verbal explanations, accept the disqualification but get the Disqualification Slip rewritten in accordance with the rules before signing it and passing to the Chief Recorder.
- At the finish of the race, clear the pool with a short sharp whistle or signal to the judge of strokes on the opposite side of the pool to perform this duty.
- Over the top starts require different procedure.
- If a protest is received, read it immediately and note the time. If it is a protest against a referee's decision or disqualification it should not be accepted. If it is in regard to another matter accept it with the \$20 fee. If as referee you cannot give a decision or feel the matter requires some research or technical decision it should be passed to the meet director handling by the Jury of Appeal. The Jury of Appeal may ask for your opinion to help reach a decision. The Jury's decision is given to you as referee before the person lodging the protest is advised. In general it is advisable to let the Jury of Appeal to adjudicate on all protests as they can spend more time to focus fully on the point to be considered. This will allow you as Referee to continue with the pool racing. If a protest is received before the race is run the swimmers in that race must be advised the race result will be held until the protest has been adjudicated on.
- At the conclusion of the meet thank all officials for the contribution. Check with the Chief Recorder for record applications that may require signing or any other matters that may require your attention.

Conclusion:

To be a good Referee you must keep up to date with rule changes and interpretations. This means reading information that is available from time to time from SNZ and publications such as 'FINA' News'. Like most things "practice makes perfect" therefore the more often you act as a referee or attend swim meets and observe and listen to senior referees the better you will become. Always remember that your main object as a referee is to ensure every competitor gets a fair and equal opportunity to achieve their goals when competing and complying with SNZ rules.

WITHDRAWAL RULE

SR12.17 Withdrawals:- Withdrawals are required only for finals. Swimmers will be deemed to have withdrawn if they do not report to the Marshall at the appropriate time prior to their heat.

A swimmer who does not withdraw from their Final will be liable to a \$15.00 fine. Finalists are deemed to include the first two reserves.

Withdrawals must be in to Control within 15 minutes of the end of the session.

The Meet Director shall determine the acceptability on all matters where medical reasons or hardship are claimed.