

CHAPTER 7

MARSHAL

Marshals are an important element in the conduct of a safe and efficient meet. They should be involved not only in supervision and control of the warm-up sessions, but also in several other aspects of the meet. This includes maintaining crowd control, deck access, proper competitor and spectator decorum and safe, courteous behavior in other areas of the venue such as locker rooms. USA Swimming rules require marshals to be registered members of the organization. They should be responsible individuals who can communicate instructions to swimmers, coaches and spectators without creating an adversarial atmosphere. The exercise of polite, but firm, authority by Marshals will go a long way towards assuring a pleasant, safe and efficient meet.

Marshals should operate under the supervision of the Meet Director, Meet Referee, Meet Safety Director or Head Marshal, depending on the practices and policies of the LSC. They should be instructed and assigned by the appropriate person(s) having that assigned responsibility for that meet.

Since each LSC may have its own needs and policies, the marshals should become familiar with the standard practices and rules in use in their LSC.

To indicate their authority, the marshals should be provided with an easily identifiable uniform clearly visible to all in the venue. Bright colored vests, arm bands, uniform shirts or some other brightly colored means of identification may be used.

Duties

- Marshals should arrive at the venue well in advance of the start of the warm-up session(s) and obtain their assignments and instructions from the responsible authority.
- If assigned to a position to oversee warm-ups, they should be in position before that session starts. They should remain in that position until relieved or reassigned. If a separate pool or diving well is available for warm-up/warm-down, marshals assigned to monitor that facility should remain in the appropriate positions continuously during the competition. Marshals assigned to monitor warm-ups should not also be given the responsibility for other duties such as crowd and access control
- If assigned as a deck or locker room marshal they should make periodic and timely rounds of their area to deal with unsafe or unsportsman-like behavior or situations. At least one of the marshals shall be female to cover the women's locker rooms
- Marshals should identify and report anyone who refuses to follow their instructions to the Meet Director and/or the Meet Referee for further action. At larger meets, a referee may be assigned to be available on deck during warm-ups to handle such problems.
- Marshals shall have full authority to warn or order to cease and desist and, with the concurrence of the Meet Referee, to remove or have removed from the swimming venue anyone behaving in an unsafe manner or using profane or abusive language. This action may also be applied to anyone using tobacco products in the venue or whose actions are disrupting the orderly conduct of the meet.

Warm-up Procedures

General and controlled warm-up procedures are required by United States Swimming and must be in effect at each and every USA Swimming swim meet. The details of meeting these requirements may vary somewhat in different LSCs or according to the nature of the meet. Suggested general procedures are:

- Marshals must be posted at each end of the warm-up pool(s) and should be thoroughly instructed as to the warm-up procedures established by their LSC and the meet host.
 - Typically, a general warm-up period will be scheduled first, with or without specific lane assignments for teams or age groups. During this period, the outside lanes (e.g. lanes 1 & 8 in eight lane pools, lanes 1 & 6 in 6 lane pools) may be allocated for pace or kick lanes. The use of paddles, kickboards or pull buoys is usually prohibited. Signs, cones or other devices should be placed on all of the blocks to prevent diving or racing starts. A specific period may be provided at the end of the session for sprint lanes. If the size of the meet dictates split warm-up sessions, opportunities for sprint lanes may be provided for in a period at the end of each individual session for the swimmers in that session or in a final, controlled sprint session for all swimmers following the general sessions.
 - During the general warm-up period(s) swimmers may not dive into the pool but **must enter feet first, in a cautious manner**. They may not practice backstroke starts during the warm-up period. **All entries must be from the starting end of the pool**.
 - If sprint lanes are permitted at any time during the general warm-up, it is recommended that inside lanes (e.g., lanes 2 and 7 or 2 and 5) be used.
 - Sprint lanes (one-way) must be controlled by marshals. Swimmers may start from the blocks or the deck and must exit at the far end of the pool. Swimmers should not be permitted on the blocks when a swimmer is in the water for a backstroke start.
 - LSCs should determine what penalty, if any, will be imposed on swimmers who violate warm-up safety procedures. Marshals observing such violations should bring the offenders to the Meet Referee for enforcement. Removal from part or all of the remaining warm-up period may be considered as a penalty.
- NOTE (Optional)** It is suggested that LSCs consider development of a corps of marshals trained and certified by the LSC and appropriately uniformed to staff meets held in the LSC. Perhaps such a program could be developed along lines similar to the Officials program. Such training and certification procedures could provide an esprit de corps that would stimulate volunteers and provide them with recognition which would help to reduce staffing problems.*