



Meet Director's Handbook

Revised April 15, 2013

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The Meet Director's Role

This Handbook is designed as a reference for Meet Directors in North Carolina Swimming (NCS). Users must remember that the rules and policies of USA Swimming and North Carolina Swimming constantly change as we strive to improve our sport. It is up to the Meet Director as well as the Meet Referee to be aware of and communicate these changes. The USA Swimming Rules and Regulations and the NCS Rules are our primary references. They, rather than this handbook, are the controlling documents.

Few will ever contribute more to the overall success of swimming programs than Meet Directors. The Meet Director's primary goal is to host a well organized and efficiently run meet, providing the swimmers an excellent competitive environment. Swim meets can be a significant fund raising source for the host club however; they should be designed with the swimmers' best interest in mind. Excessively long, unorganized meets are not conducive to quality swimming. The Meet Director is the organizer who directs and inspires the many volunteers who will be required to run a successful meet. It is best that the Meet Director not be directly involved with any one activity or committee but have enough involvement to understand and appreciate the amount of work involved and the problems that may arise in any area. Good communication between the Meet Director, committee chairs and the Meet Referee should be on-going and is essential to the success of the meet.

Meet Directors are responsible for organizing a meet that complies with *USA Swimming and North Carolina Swimming Rules*. They must insure that their meet follows the technical rules and administrative procedures proscribed in *USA Swimming and NCS Rules and Regulations*. These references are available on-line.

Meet Directors must be a non-athlete member of USA Swimming and pass a Level 1 background check. They are also required to take and pass the Athlete Protection Course. It is highly recommended that they attend a Meet Director's Clinic which is held at the North Carolina House of Delegates and have attended at least one previous meet while being mentored by an experienced Meet Director.

The Meet Director is generally appointed by the meet host and should be assigned at least 6 months prior to the meet. The specific duties of a Meet Director may vary by team and by the level of meet involved. The Meet Director's major responsibilities may include:

- Securing the facility
- Preparing the meet announcement
- Obtaining the meet sanction/approval
- Organizing committees/chairs and volunteers
- Ordering awards
- Arranging for personnel, equipment, and supplies necessary for meet operation
- Preparing warm-up procedures
- Processing of entries, printing of programs
- Preparing and distributing summary of results
- Filing NCS meet financial report and any Report of Occurrence forms (now on line at [usaswimming.org/member resources/programs & services/insurance & risk management](http://usaswimming.org/member/resources/programs%20&%20services/insurance%20&%20risk%20management))

When the warm-ups begin, the Meet Referee takes complete control of the competition. Meet Directors must be available to answer questions, resolve problems, and keep the dry-side of the meet operating efficiently. They must keep a cool head, an open ear, and a gracious smile, remembering that most participants at swim meets - swimmers, coaches, officials, and spectators - are sincere.

Pre-Meet Responsibilities

Planning for a meet should begin months in advance of the actual meet date.

1. Secure facility for the approved scheduled dates.
 - a. Equipment
 - i. Tables, chairs, timing system, lane lines, backstroke flags, recall rope, starting blocks
 - b. Rooms
 - i. Locker rooms, hospitality, concessions, vendors, any other meeting rooms
 - ii. Areas inside and outside that may be needed, tents
 - c. Parking for spectators and volunteers
 - i. Disabled parking
 - ii. Bus parking
 - d. Time to set up and take down
 - e. Safety concerns
 - i. Diving boards, slippery areas, electrical overloads, first aid, lifeguards, facility emergency plan
 - f. Some contracts may require security during the meet or permits for tents, concessions, parking
 - g. Keep in mind facility concerns for the disabled swimmer, if applicable
 - i. Entrances accommodate wheel chairs; ramps
 - ii. Elevator access
 - iii. Locker room accessibility
 1. Showers, bathroom stalls
 - iv. Deck area
 - h. Does pool comply with USA Swimming Article 104.2.2C(4)
2. Contact potential sponsors.
3. Start a log and record your activities, important names, phone numbers, and dates. This can be your report to the person who has your job next year.
4. Select USA Swimming Certified Meet Referee who will be responsible for the actual conduct of the meet and who should be consulted during the planning process. Contact the NCS official's chair for assistance in obtaining a meet referee
5. Prepare the Meet Announcement (see the recommended meet announcement template and checklist available on the NCS website).
 - a. All meets must be sanctioned and are governed by USA Rules and Regulations, NCS Rules and Regulations, and the meet announcement. The sanction number must appear on all announcements. Meet announcements should not be mailed to invited teams until the sanction is approved.
 - b. If swimmers outside the USA are planning to compete in your meet, please contact the NC Swimming registrar to prepare the invitation for International Athletes and Teams. Allow a few weeks to have the proper paperwork completed for international swimmers.
 - c. Please refer to North Carolina Swimming Rules and Regulations, [Article 202](#), for entry fee limits.
 - d. Insure the Meet Referee is involved from the beginning and concurs with the final document prior to submittal for sanctioning.
 - e. Submit the meet announcement to sanctions@ncswim.org and the meet referee in word document form
 - i. Minimum 60 days prior to the first day of the meet for all open meets
 - ii. Minimum 30 days prior to the first day of the meet for closed meets (intra-squad, dual, tri, closed league)
 - iii. For NCS Approved meets, the sanctioning chair will submit to the NCS Membership/Registration Coordinator for approval. There is no action on the part of the host team other than requesting and identifying the meet to be approved on the

- meet announcement. Submit Meet Announcement at least 30 days prior to the first day of the meet.
- iv. Be certain all information is correct prior to submission. Once submitted and approved, it cannot be changed or altered.
 - f. At the same time as the submission of the meet announcement, the sanction application and appropriate fee (see NCS Rules, [Article 207.8](#)) should be sent to the treasurer or paid on-line at www.ncswim.org via PayPal.
 - g. If the sanction committee provides comments, respond to the comments in a timely manner. The sanction should be issued shortly after all comments have been resolved.
 - h. After the sanction is granted and the sanction number is received, the meet announcement will be posted on the NCS website. A team manager event file will also be posted if provided. You may also send the meet announcement to appropriate teams.
 - i. **NOTE:** If a meet needs to be cancelled, send an email to sanctions@ncswim.org by the deadline for submittal of the meet announcement. Failure to submit a meet announcement or cancel the meet by the deadline will result in a fine in accordance with NCS Rules and Regulations.
6. Select Meet Management Team (committee chairs)
 - a. Entries, Electronic Timing Operator, Announcer, Hy-tek, Head Timer, Clerk of Course, Awards, Hospitality, Concessions, Runners, Meet Marshal(s), Heat Sheet Sales, Admission
 - b. Schedule and conduct regular meetings to discuss progress and potential issues
 7. Arrange to have properly working equipment.
 - a. Check all components of the Automatic Timing System-pads, buttons, horn, strobe
 - b. Insure good batteries are installed in the required number of watches
 - c. Public Address System
 8. Check that necessary supplies will be on hand.
 - a. Spectator seating, tables & chairs (for awards, computer, hospitality, etc.), umbrellas, tents, tarps, floor mats for slippery areas
 - b. Clip Boards, extra reams of paper (include colored paper, pink and blue, for re-seeds), pens/pencils, pencil sharpener, tape (scotch, masking, duct), stapler & staples, paperclips, rubber bands, scissors, watches, DQ slips, relay entry forms, relay take off slips, event files, lap counters, tool kit, first aid kit, boxes/bags for awards, event call board, extension cords, surge protectors
 9. Order Awards
 - a. Awards may not use either the USA Swimming Logo or the NCS Modified Logo without written permission.
 10. Contact vendors for concessions, food, apparel, etc.
 11. Arrange for First Aid area and supplies, if not provided by facility.
 12. Arrange for housekeeping/janitorial services, if not provided by facility.
 13. Receive the entries. Log the date and time received for each team. Notify any teams refused entry.
 14. Check the entries:
 - a. Verify all entered swimmers are current members of USA Swimming by submitting a Meet Backup report of swimmers entered (alpha by team) to the Registrar **at least 5 days prior to the start of the meet**. Make certain that UNATTACHED swimmers are properly identified. E-mail or call the NCS Registrar if you have eligibility questions. The Registrar will reply to the Meet Director with a Recon report, highlighting any registration issues. Any swimmer that is not a member of USA Swimming must be removed from the meet until confirmation of membership is received from the registrar.
 - b. Confirm the entry fee is correct for the number of swimmers entered.
 - c. Insure no swimmer is entered in too many events.
 - d. Insure that all entry time standards are met, as stated in the meet announcement.
 - e. Insure that you have not accepted more swimmers than your meet can accommodate. Verify, if applicable, that you meet the "Four/Eight Hour Rule" requirements. Create a time line, using Hy-tek or by other means. If swimmers need to be eliminated from the meet, the host team shall:

- i. Clearly outline in the meet announcement submitted for sanctioning, the process that will be followed in determining which swimmers are excluded or denied entry and any reimbursement applicable
 - ii. Notify swimmers/teams of their exclusion from the meet within 2 days of the final meet entry deadline
- f. Knowingly entering swimmers in ways not prescribed in the sanction or altering the meet format may disqualify the meet sanction. Care should be made in the entry process through a systematic review and by independent checking by more than one person (Meet Referee would be a highly recommended).
- g. Once the entry deadline has passed and, more importantly, once the meet has begun, no entries should be accepted or altered without the Meet Referee's approval.
- 15. Prepare the Heat Sheet:
 - a. Seed all pre-seeded events
 - b. List entries (fastest to slowest) in deck seeded events.
 - c. Check the total event entries against the team tally made when entries were received to insure that all swimmers are properly entered.
 - d. Be certain to print additional heat sheets for officials, coaches, timers, and other workers. Eliminate the ads in these copies if possible.
- 16. Prepare the Program. Include:
 - a. A list of all participating teams
 - b. The order of events
 - c. The heat sheet pages with the seeding or entry list for deck seeded events
 - d. Appropriate time standards -- "A" Times for "B" Meets, Region and National Time Standards for "A" Meets, etc.
 - e. Include any facility/host specific rules and/or requirements
 - f. Sponsor ads
- 17. Prepare warm-up procedures and lane assignments.
- 18. Verify that hospitality plans for meals, snacks, and beverages will accommodate all of the coaches, officials, and other workers expected.
- 19. Meet with the full meet committee at the pool and plan locations for:
 - a. Clerk of Course, automatic timing console, Hy-tek (recorder/scorer), announcer, posting of heat sheets and results, hospitality, concessions, lost & found, first aid, awards, security, other activities
- 20. Install
 - a. Backstroke flags & recall ropes
 - b. Lane lines with 15m markers
 - c. Public address system
 - d. Starting blocks
 - e. Starting area (stand or table if available)
 - f. Automatic timing system
 - g. Display board
 - h. Computer
- 21. Double check any computers, networking and wireless equipment and connections being used at the venue. Be clear of passwords and networking logins, if applicable. Have all applicable printers installed on computers.
- 22. Prepare coaches packets including heat sheets, warm-up assignments, outline of coaches meeting and other pertinent materials.
- 23. Prepare cash boxes and make sure there is adequate change for concessions and heat sheet sales. Determine who will be responsible for collecting cash and making sure adequate change is provided.
- 24. Prepare and facilitate a coaches meeting with the meet referee to review meet specifics, discuss any changes to the meet and answer questions.
- 25. Provide for the removal of ladders and diving boards.
- 26. Check all supplies and equipment.

27. Be aware, the best of planning can't predict the weather so be prepared and proactive to adjust and alert all teams in case of inclement weather. HAVE A PLAN!

During the Meet

1. Have on hand
 - a. Master entry forms, list of contacts for each team, record of entries received, record of payment received, copy of heat sheet, meet announcement, USA Swimming Rules and Regulations, NCS Rules and Regulations
2. Confer with the meet referee for any last minute items.
3. Insure the meet marshals are in place for warm-ups (including any continuous warm-up facilities).
4. Insure that all coaches and officials display their credentials while on deck.
5. Insure that all teams have a copy of the warm-up schedule, procedures, and lane assignments and that copies of the assignments are prominently posted around the facility.
6. Be prepared to assist the meet referee. Remember that the meet referee is in complete charge of the competition once the warm-ups begin.
7. If any incidents occur during the meet, complete and submit a Report of Occurrence on-line at [usaswimming.org/member/resources/programs & services/insurance & risk management](http://usaswimming.org/member/resources/programs%20and%20services/insurance%20and%20risk%20management). Once you receive the acknowledgement via email, forward it to the meet referee and the NCS safety coordinator at safetychair@ncswim.org)

Post Meet Responsibilities

1. Complete required meet reports as prescribed below:
 - a. Meet Results – E-mail a backup of the meet within fifteen (15) days (preferably the day following the meet) to all participants and to meet.results@ncswim.org. Failure to do so is an automatic \$100 fine.
 - b. Financial Statement – E-mail/mail, within thirty (30) days, including all required fees with the original statement to the Treasurer. See NC Swimming Rules and Regulations **Article 211.4** for required fees.
 - c. Timeline Report – The Meet Referee shall report the actual timeline for each session to the Treasurer within one week of the last day of the meet.
 - d. Report of Occurrence – Complete and submit the on-line report at [usaswimming.org/member/resources/programs & services/insurance & risk management](http://usaswimming.org/member/resources/programs%20and%20services/insurance%20and%20risk%20management). Once you receive the acknowledgement via email, forward it to the meet referee and the NCS safety coordinator at safetychair@ncswim.org)
2. Safeguard all financial records and meet documents including timing tapes, lane timing sheets, relay forms, and DQ slips so that they will be available for review by NCS, if required. These items should be kept for one year.
3. Prepare final report to your club on the meet.

The Four Hour Rule

USA Swimming Rules and Regulations **Section 205.3.1(F)** and North Carolina Swimming Rules and Regulations (**Article 210.1.1 D and E; 210.5.3A**) require that:

"With the exception of championship meets the program in all other age group competition events for swimmers 12 years and younger shall be completed in four (4) hours or less for a timed finals session or in a total of eight (8) hours or less per day for a preliminaries and finals meet."

Additionally, North Carolina Swimming may impose fines against meet hosts who violate this "four hour" rule.

The hardest thing that a Meet Director has to do is send entries back and tell a team that there is no more room in the meet. You will be told over and over that, "We are here for the good of the swimmers and our swimmers need to swim in your meet!" Take this argument to heart and remember that you do no one a favor -- either the 300 properly entered in your meet or those you turn away -- if accepting them transforms the meet into a nightmare with six or even eight hour sessions.

What can you do? Refer these teams to the Technical Planning Chair or to the Senior/Age Group Chair who may help them find a spot in another meet. We all do not like to be the bearer of bad news, but remember that you can help minimize problems by notifying both the scheduling chair and the affected teams the instant you find your meet is over subscribed.

Remember, if your meet announcement says that you will limit your meet then you must do so. Your entrants count on it and North Carolina Swimming expects it as a condition of your sanction. Help keep swimming fun!

Scratches and Check-in

Check-in procedures, scratch rules and the penalties for violating these rules are stated in the *NCS General Rules 204.3 and 204.4* and the particular meet announcement. The purpose of the check-in procedures is to determine which swimmers will be competing in an event, so that the entries can be seeded in the most efficient manner with the minimum number of heats.

Advance preparations for the check-in process should include obtaining the necessary supplies, paper work, tables and chairs as needed. Signs and/or chalkboards for information and posting of deadlines should also be set up in advance. An appropriate location should be selected that is easily accessible to the swimmers and coaches but also avoids crowding and interference with the meet. If you have an announcer, make sure he/she is aware of all deadlines, special procedures, locations for check-in, etc.

Membership/Registration Verification Procedure

NOTE: The following section does not apply to approved or observed meets.

As Meet Director for a sanctioned event, you must:

1. Verify that all participants are USA Swimming members as follows:
 - a. Insure all swimmers entered in the meet are registered by providing a meet database to the Registration Chair **at least 5 days before your meet begins**. A list of those swimmers entered that are not USA Swimming members or whose ID may be incorrect will be issued by the Registrar. Any issues must be resolved prior to meet start or allowing the swimmer to swim. According to **Article 210.5.2** of the NCS Rules, "The Senior Vice-Chair shall impose a \$100 fine for each swim for an athlete in a sanctioned meet that is not properly registered with USA Swimming. The fine shall be levied against the member club/individual who submitted the entry."
 - b. Insure that if an unattached swimmer is included on a club entry he/she is properly listed as UN. Do not use the club code. If the swimmer is not from North Carolina follow UN with the two-letter code of the LSC (i.e. UN-VA, UN-GA, and UN-SC). This will enable the Age Group Top Times Chair to identify these swimmers.
 - c. The registrar will send to the meet director and the meet referee a report listing all certified coaches and officials in the LSC.

- d. Have all coaches and officials working on deck wear their current USA Swimming coach or non-athlete membership card at all times while on deck. Coaches and/or officials failing to do so should be barred from the deck.
- e. Call or email the Registrar if there are any questions.

NCS Safety Program

To ensure the security and well-being of our athletes, coaches, volunteers, and spectators, NCS has developed guidelines for providing a safe environment for practices and competitions. These guidelines are in addition to all USA Swimming rules and guidelines for athlete safety and protection and are intended to reinforce those rules and guidelines. These guidelines may be found on the NCS website.

Warm-Up Procedures

Each meet is unique, and each Meet Director must set forth procedures that best suit the needs of the particular meet and facility. Please remember that **CONTROL** and **SUPERVISION** are the key words for safe warm-ups. Meet Marshals must actively supervise the warm-ups to insure that proper procedures are followed. The announcer may help in facilitating the transition from general to specific warm-up.

1. General Warm-Up Period
 - a. Allocate the first 30-45 minutes to general warm-up in all lanes
 - b. No diving off the blocks or the edge of the pool should be permitted
 - c. No sprint or pace work
 - d. Entry into pool at the starting end of the pool only
2. Specific Warm-Up Period
 - a. Last 15-45 minutes of the pre-meet warm-up period
 - b. **Push/Pace Lanes**-push off one or two lengths from starting end. Circle swim only. No diving permitted.
 - c. **Diving Lanes**-sprint lanes for diving from blocks or for backstroke starts. One length of the pool only.
 - d. **General Warm-up Lanes**-No diving. Circle swim only.
 - e. Additional lanes for push/pace and/or diving may be opened according to need.

	10-lane pool	8-lane pool	6-lane pool
Push/Pace Lanes	Lanes 1 & 10	Lanes 1 & 8	Lanes 1 & 6
Diving Lanes	Lanes 2 & 9	Lanes 2 & 7	Lanes 2 & 5
General Warm-up Lanes	Lanes 3 through 8	Lanes 3 through 6	Lanes 3 & 4

3. Dual, Tri, & Quad Meet Example
 - a. Each team shall be assigned warm-up lanes by the host team. Each team should follow the warm-up guidelines in their specific lanes.

Meet Marshal

Per USA Swimming Rules, **Article 102.19 MARSHALS** — shall wear identifying attire and enforce warm-up procedures and maintain order in the swimming venue. The Marshal shall have full authority to warn or order to cease and desist, and, with the concurrence of the Referee, to remove, or have removed from the swimming

venue anyone behaving in an unsafe manner or using profane or abusive language, or whose actions are disrupting the orderly conduct of the meet.

Clerk of Course

Per USA Swimming Rules, **Article 102.20 CLERK OF COURSE** — The Clerk of Course shall be provided with a list of the names of all swimmers in all events including relay swimmers in the order in which they will swim. If manual seeding is used, the Clerk of Course shall assign heats and lanes. A Clerk of Course may be used to organize swimmers and escort them to the blocks for their assigned heats.

Announcer

Per USA Swimming Rules, **Article 102.21 ANNOUNCER** — the announcer shall make any announcements requested by the Referee, the Clerk of Course, or meet management.

Timing

Per USA Swimming Rules, **Article 102.17 TIMING PERSONNEL AND THEIR DUTIES:**

- **.1 Chief Timer** — The Chief Timer shall:
 - ✓ (A) Assure the assignment of Lane Timers to lanes and the designation of one timer on each lane to be the Head Lane Timer.
 - ✓ (B) On the starting signal, start a watch(es) on every race. The time of this watch shall be used if a Lane Timer's watch fails.
 - ✓ (C) Be responsible for delivering all manual watch times, including those of disqualified swimmers, to the Timing Judge.
- **.2 Head Lane Timer** — The Head Lane Timer shall:
 - ✓ (A) Determine whether the swimmer or relay team is present and in the correct lane, heat and event, and record the names and order of relay swimmers prior to the start of the race, and determine that the relay swimmers are swimming in the order listed.
 - ✓ (B) Determine and record manual watch times or the absence of a swimmer or the relay team seeded in that lane.
 - ✓ (C) Assign one timer to time relay splits and initial distance times if requested by the Chief Timer.
 - ✓ (D) Report and indicate on the timing recording form if the swimmer has delayed in touching or has missed the touch pad at the finish, or if there is reason to believe the semiautomatic or manual times may be inaccurate.
- **.3 Lane Timers** — Officials assigned as Lane Timers may simultaneously operate two dissimilar devices (one watch and one button) but not two similar devices (two watches or two buttons). It is not within the Lane Timer's jurisdiction to judge if the swimmer's touch conforms to the applicable finish rules or if a relay take-off infraction has occurred unless assigned concurrent responsibility as a Lane Timer and Turn Judge or Relay Take-off Judge. Each timer shall:
 - ✓ (A) Be in position at the start to have an unobstructed view and shall start the watch at the instant of observing the visual starting signal. If the visual starting signal is not observed, the watch shall be started upon hearing the starting signal.
 - ✓ (B) Stand directly over the assigned lane at the finish to observe a touch above, at, or below the surface of the water and stop the watch and/or push the semi-automatic system button when any part of the swimmer's body touches the wall.
 - ✓ (C) Report the watch time to the Head Lane Timer or the designated recorder, report if a late or missed pad touch is observed; and, if requested, present the watch for inspection. Lane Timers shall not clear their watches until a command to "clear watches" is given or the Referee signals that the next heat is ready to start.
- **.4 Timing Equipment Operator** — The Timing Equipment Operator shall be responsible for the automatic or semi-automatic timing equipment, including the electronic starting system and scoreboard (if used), and shall advise the Referee or Administrative Official of any system problems that might affect the

accuracy of times or whenever the touchpad is observed to have failed to record the finish when the swimmer completed the race. The timing equipment should be placed so that the operator is able to observe the finish of each race.

TIMELINES

90-180 days prior to the meet

- Secure facility
- Contact sponsors
- Start a log
- Select a Meet Referee
- Prepare Meet Announcement

60-90 days prior to the meet

- Submit Meet Announcement for open meets
- Submit sanction application and appropriate fees for open meets
- Select Meet Management Team
- Arrange for equipment needed for meet
- Arrange for janitorial services, if needed
- Check supplies including first aid
- Order awards
- Contact vendors

30-60 days prior to the meet

- Submit Meet Announcement for closed and/or approved meets
- Submit sanction application and appropriate fees for closed and/or approved meets

1-10 days prior to the meet

- Receive and check entries
- Prepare heat sheet, programs, warm-up procedures, coaches packets, cash boxes
- Check all supplies
- Meet with Meet Management Team
- Prepare facility with all equipment
- Weather plan

Additional Resources

- Visit www.usaswimming.org for the following:
 - [USA Swimming Meet Director's Handbook](#) (Member Resources/Swim Clubs/Business and Administration/Running a Swim Meet)
 - [USA Swimming Guidelines for Meets Marshals](#) (Member Resources/Officials/Education and Training/Education and Training Resources)
 - [USA Swimming Safeguard Checklist: Marshals](#) (Member Resources/Officials/Education and Training/Education and Training Resources)
 - [USA Swimming Officials Manual](#) (Member Resources/Officials/Education and Training/Education and Training Resources):
 - ✓ *Clerk of Course*, Chapter 6
 - ✓ *Marshal*, Chapter 7
 - ✓ *Announcer*, Chapter 8
 - ✓ *Timing*, Chapter 9