

SWIMMING OFFICIALS' NEWS

A two way exchange of information with the Swimming Officials Committee



As I start writing this I'm not sure when it's going to be published. Not because of any financial cut backs but due to the FINA Technical Congress due to be held in Japan during July. The decision relates to the number of proposed rule changes that may be approved by FINA.

Do we publish now describing the 2001 ASA rule changes or do we wait until after Japan and discuss the new FINA rules as well?

Nothing to do with us you might say. I'm afraid it is. FINA has a four-year cycle of rule changes, which are dealt with at either the General Congress or the Technical Congress. The General Congress is held during an Olympic year and the Technical Congress just before the first World Championships after the Olympics. Hence Japan 2001.

Still nothing to do with us I can hear you saying. Wrong! Everything to do with us. We now have several events held in England during the year under FINA Rules and it is also ASA policy to make our rules complement FINA Rules wherever practical.

So what are the likely rule changes?

Perm any number from any number seems to be the answer. Any member Federation, in our case the Amateur Swimming Federation of Great Britain Ltd. can propose rule changes. Each one is listed and there can be several proposals around the same subject. At the time of publishing the agenda for the meeting it is not possible to guarantee which rules are to be accepted.

Our representatives at the meeting are Craig Hunter and David Sparkes so we look to them to vote for the best proposals.

To give you an indication, there are proposed rule changes to the two start rule, Breaststroke, Backstroke, Butterfly, Timing conditions plus several others.

Since the Congress is in July and this is being written in May I think I had better to stick to the 2001 ASA Law and Rule changes.

So what has changed in ASA Law and Rules?

Fortunately not a lot from a Swimming Officials aspect. The General Competition Laws have been split into General Laws and General Competition Laws to make them easier to read and understand.

Changes to the Racing Technical Rules are, in most cases, designed to provide a clearer understanding. Many of these changes have been made in response to your letters, so thank you to all

of you who have brought problems to our attention.

504 has been changed to allow Semi-AOE to be used at an event without full AOE available. Please remember it is manual timing, with placing done by the judges (plus a little help from the referee) and the times adjusted, if necessary, in the traditional manner for manual timing (**507**).

The old rule prevented the use of Semi-AOE as a stand-alone unit. As there are now relatively cheap timing units available clubs want to use them as well as hand held timers.

512.8.6 answers a question we have been asked many times. Following a false start in a team event who is allowed to start at the next attempt? It is now clearly stated that it can be any member of the team that lined up for the first start.

513.2 is another problem reported to us. Could a swimmer stand in the freestyle leg of a medley race? In the 2000 rules this was not specifically addressed. FINA clearly said YES. ASA rules now also clearly say **YES**.

517.1 deals with the anomaly created by Masters in a backstroke event. The question asked of SOC was "in an open Backstroke event could a swimmer who is 25 or over (A Masters swimmer) hold on with one hand. The correct answer could have been argued several ways. Now it is clear, **NO**, it must be a masters race if the concession is to be allowed.

That's, job done.

Well not quite.

There is the subject "Technical Rules of Disability Swimming". These are a new set of rules introduced by the ASA in 2001 specifically for use at races solely for swimmers with disabilities.

These rules are printed in the main 2001 handbook but we have not included them in the "Extracts" for 2001.

If you are asked to officiate at one of these events please say yes. There may be almost 8 pages of rules but only those below concern most officials.

1105.5 THE TIMEKEEPERS, not withstanding anything in their duties set out elsewhere in ASA Laws and Technical Rules, shall;

1105.5.1 consult with a technical advisor before reporting to the referee any failure to comply with ASA Technical Rules of Racing as modified by these Disability Technical Rules;

1105.5.2 in individual event of 400 metres and longer except medley events,

1105.5.2.1 for swimmers with a hearing impairment use a visual signal to indicate to his swimmer that he has two lengths plus 5 metres to swim to the finish;

1105.5.2.2 for swimmers requiring a tapper, notify the tapper that the swimmer has two lengths plus 15 metres to swim to the finish. It shall then be the responsibility of the tapper to indicate this to the swimmer.

1105.5.3 check that the goggles or opaque covering of Class 11 swimmers without prosthesis are in place at the start and remain in place at the finish.

1105.6 THE PLACING, TURNING AND STROKE JUDGES, not withstanding anything in their duties set out elsewhere in ASA Laws and Technical Rules, shall consult with a technical advisor before reporting to the referee any failure to comply with the ASA Technical Rules of Racing as modified by these Disability Technical Rules.

I expect referees to brief officials on the simple extra requirements at these events.

Technical Advisors and Classifiers are being trained by the Disability Committee. There may be opportunities in the future if you wish to be considered for training.

Just to make sure you are not confused I would like to mention the position concerning swimmers with disabilities competing in traditional ASA events.

Currently there is a "Certificate of Permanent Disability" issued by the Medical Committee. In addition there will soon be a "Functional Ability Card" issued under the control of the Disability Committee. This will be held by swimmers who compete in both Traditional and Disability events and to be used in Traditional events.

It will list the exemptions for compliance with ASA Rules and should be presented to the referee and used in the same manner as the existing Certificate of Permanent Disability.

I hope that is clear. The ASA wishes to encourage disability swimming so please be tolerant while we get the process up and running.

Lets move on from rules for now.

The Internet.

britishswimming.org/sports/officials

Stick the www bit in front and that is where you will find information for officials.

**What more do you want?
Let us know and we will see
what we can do,**

Those of you who were invited to the World Championships Trials at Manchester were part of our run up to the Commonwealth Games. New ideas are being tried and tested concerning the presentation of a swimming event and you, the official, are part of the show.

With your clipboard in your left hand and your thumb up, marching I hope to a tune that allows it, you are testing the ideas for next year.

There was a time when officials wore whites, no longer is that the case. Shirts have long since changed to the colour of the sponsor and trousers are probably next. Ladies be warned, it may be trousers for all of us. Blue ones for a start, they could be red white and blue checks by the Games commence.

If you get invited to an ASA/ASFGB event at Manchester please make sure you go along with the intention of enjoying it and taking a full part in the theatre we are trying to create. No false smiles please, just genuine ones and I say again, enjoy it.

Manchester, like Sheffield is fully equipped with two Ares timing units. Do you remember the problems I showed you in the last edition of SON? Those of you who find themselves in the back room at Manchester be warned, you too may have to decide which is the primary and which the back up time.

The mailbox has been quite busy again. Here is a selection of the comments received.

This first one is from Brian Eeles following on from the last edition.

Dear Chris,
re your last paragraph in SON, I feel I must take issue with your statement that neither answer is covered by the rules.

My point was that the official answer given was contrary to ASA Racing Technical Rules 507.1., 507.3.1. and 507.3.7 and so is the statement that any swimmer could be offered a reswim etc.

My solution does comply with the rules except my penultimate paragraph which deals with the only part not covered by ASA law and it offers a logical way for the referee to deal with the disadvantaged swimmer. The position of "no time swimmers" was once addressed by SOC at the behest of the ASA Swimming Committee. Recommendations were made but nothing ever found its way into law.

What prompted me to write in the first place was the thought that we had an answer to a referee question that was contrary to ASA Law - how many candidates were marked down because of this?

Brian

I am going to let Brian have the word on this subject but I will answer his final question. The answer I hope is none since the markers are allowed, and expected, to comment on any answer they feel deserve marks even if it is not in the model answer.

Just to make SOC feel good here is a letter from Sue Prasad.

Hello Chris,

Thanks for sending me the above mentioned publication, yes, just like you said it is the first time I have received one of these.

I am very impressed with the details shown and the use of such interesting topics.

KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK - it is appreciated at the grass roots of swimming.

I went on line to try and obtain the back issues especially the one about the referees exam info in it but couldn't find anything. please can you help either by posting them or showing me where I can find them on the web site.

I am currently a National TK, Judge and Starter, and I am hoping to take my Referees exam this year.

Look forward to hearing from you, many thanks,

Sue

Getting back to Richard Emery's letter in the last edition here is a follow up from Bob Moys.

Dear Chris

May I express my wholehearted support for Richard Emery's contentions regarding Referee's Decisions. I see no reason why a RD should not be used for a record. The poor swimmer has already lost his true time - why should he lose a record as well! Also why not an RD on manual timing? No time is no use to man or beast, and we know that his time must no worse than that of the swimmer from whose time the RD time is obtained.

The reference to freestyle in a relay also gives me an opportunity to ride one of my hobby horses. The definition is in the wrong place. You want to know what freestyle is, in connection with a relay event, not in connection with freestyle event - so put the definition in the relay section. Incidentally, when is a stroke not breaststroke or butterfly? Could breaststroke arms, and dolphin legs not be freestyle in a relay? Is it perhaps time to drop freestyle as a stroke in relays and have front crawl instead? I know that this comes from FINA Law - is it time for us to propose to FINA that it is changed?

Regards

Bob

FINA Swimming List 12

Applications are invited from experienced swimming officials who are members of the ASA, SASA or WASA who wish to be considered for nomination to the next FINA Swimming List (12).

List 12 is expected to run from 1 January 2003 to 31 December 2006 with nominations required to be sent to FINA late 2001. Candidates should be either qualified Referees or Starters and have considerable experience officiating a major events.

Applications are also invited for nomination to the ASFGB Pre-FINA training list that will commence on 1st January 2002.

Further information may be obtained from the Secretary of the ASFGB Swimming Officials Group.

Closing date for applications 31 July 2001.

Chris Bostock
Hon. Sec ASFGB Swimming Officials Group.

The question of no time was also mentioned by Brian and has been a problem for several years. FINA Rules used to be quite clear, you couldn't invent a time. ASA Rules have always tried to agree with FINA and our rules state the same.

However with the introduction of BAGCATS the problem of how many points to award a swimmer without a time needs to be addressed. Until the rule is changed SOC advises referees to award the same number of points as the swimmer who is placed immediately behind the swimmer with no time. If the disadvantaged swimmer is placed last we have a problem, but we are working on it. Please send us your suggestion on how it should be resolved?

It has been a good time for letters so I am printing as many as I can fit in.

From Barbara Milns.

Hi, Please can I take a little of your time for some advice. The following is a real event that has taken place. I would value your views.

One Start Rule in operation. Swimmers under Referees control. The starter says take your marks. Swimmer topples into the water.

Starter/Referee immediately says stand down swimmers. Swimmers getting off block.

Starter inadvertently presses starting signal.

Referee excludes swimmer from race.

Proceeds to swim race.

Protest received regarding disqualification on the grounds mistake by an official expunges the mistake of the swimmer.

Please can you advise what you feel should happen in such a case. Given the referee had already stood the swimmers down before the mistake by the starter of sounding the starting signal. Is it an issue that is protestable?

I know you are a busy person but your views on this would be much appreciated

Best Wishes B.

Well all I can give an opinion, a, because only ASA Committee can give a ruling and b, because not being there it is not possible to ascertain all the facts.

The rules clearly state that the referee has the authority "if an error by an official follows a fault by a competitor, to expunge the fault by the competitor". The magic word is AUTHORITY. The referee is not required to expunge the competitor's error but he may if he considers it right to do so.

In this instance if the referee considered that the starting sequence had finished and control was in his hands then there would be no reason not to disqualify the competitor.

The second question was "is it an issue that is protestable"? I think yes. You cannot protest on a decision of fact by the referee but you can protest that the referee has misinterpreted the laws or rules (**Law 105.4**). Don't ask me who would have won though. Without hearing all sides of the story it would be wrong to make a judgement.

Here is an extract from a letter from Eddie Lyne,

Medley freestyle. There may or may not be a problem with the wording of the rule but has any one recently questioned the principle - why shouldn't a swimmer be allowed to swim backstroke, breaststroke or butterfly in the freestyle leg of a Medley? I assume there must have been an original reason to exclude them but I don't see any necessity to differentiate this leg from a freestyle race per se!

The short answer is I don't know. FINA have it in their rules and I rely entirely on the statement that we follow FINA as close as possible. What I can say, it is irrelevant how badly the swimmer swims the stroke, if you can identify it as backstroke, breaststroke or butterfly then it is disqualifiable.

ASA Swimming Officials Committee.

Applications are invited from members of the ASA for the post of Secretary to the above sub-Committee of the ASA Swimming Committee.

Full details of the work undertaken can be obtained from the retiring Secretary.

Please note that due to recent changes in ASA law, the role and responsibility may change during the year, as traditional committees are restructured and redefined.

Closing date for applications 31 July 2001

Continuing the letter theme try this one from Debby Lunt.

Dear Chris,

In the absence of any other sort of agony aunt / uncle on the ASA website, I'm giving you the short straw!! I would be interested to canvass views on the following situation, which happened at the weekend. It was a one-start-rule, designated gala.

The facts.

In M's heat (men's 50m backstroke) the race started with no apparent mishaps but after approx 12m the false start signal sounded. 2 of the 6 swimmers stopped, the others carried on. As there was no false start rope, and no further attempts to recall them, these 4 continued to the end of the race. M won the heat in 32.57s. The swimmers were then told that the race was void and they would have to swim it again - this they did, after the 2 remaining heats. This time, M registered 32.75s, again winning the heat.

At the start of the Finals session, the final for this race was swum 7 events early - which had not been announced in advance - with only 5 lanes occupied. The first reserve swam in the final in lane 6 - lane 5 was empty.

The problems!

Had M been credited with his first time, he would have qualified for the final (and could have won a junior championship medal)

As it was, his second time placed him as equal second reserve but he was not offered a swim-off for the empty lane in the final.

The result

One extremely cross child!! His only recompense being that he did swim 2 NQTs almost back to back and has the boys race in a couple of weeks!!

Clearly the two problems are quite separate - although the second shows that there were some major administrative problems with the gala, it is the first that I would like opinions for though it is obviously too late now to make a complaint. The fact that the referee at the gala made one particular blunder the following day beside which my problem pales into insignificance (!!) is not entirely irrelevant, I feel! Does the ASA have plans for periodic retesting of all officials??

The questions arising

Was this the correct course of action?? Given that the swimmers who completed the race put their all into it, should they have had to swim it again about 3 minutes later? Does the rule about 'any fault by an official expunges an earlier fault made by a swimmer' not have an unwritten extension of 'swimmers should not be penalised by a fault made by an official when no faults have been made by the swimmers'!! Should they have been

offered a choice to swim again if they felt they had been distracted by the swimmers pulling up or to not swim again and go with their existing time?

What would have happened if one or more of those 4 had improved their times. Would the swimmers in the later heats who were then knocked out of the final have had grounds for complaint?

Should I have registered a formal complaint (or is it protest - I can never remember) on the day? Given the behaviour of the ref the following day, I think all this would have got me (as a parent, not a coach or official) is a black eye!! but at least I'll know if the situation ever arises again!

Debby.

Obviously there was a problem. A decision was made at the time and since there was not a protest it stands.

Therefore without any intention of trying to apportion blame let's look at some of the possible solutions the referee could have considered.

1. All the six swimmers in the race which was interrupted by a very late recall signal could have been brought together by the referee and told that of those who finished, if they wished, could keep that time. If not, they could re-swim the race after a due period of time along with the two that did not finish the race. Those that decided to swim again would lose their original time and have to rely on the time they achieved in the re-swim.

2. The coaches of the swimmers for the swim-off could have asked the referee for a suitable length of time before the re-swim.

3. To swim a final seven events before it was programmed to be swum could be done but only with the consent of all the swimmers.

4. Without looking at the Promoter's conditions it is not possible to comment on the number of swimmers in the final. The Promoter may have a condition stating that the number of swimmers in a final may be reduced to prevent a swim off.

5. The first reserve may have been correctly placed in lane 6. It could have been that Lane 5 just did not turn up and there was no time to call the second reserve especially since a swim-off had not been made.

Lots of options available. How would you have dealt with the problem?

This October we will be holding the Race Results and Referee Examinations for those people wishing to eventually become referees. The qualification of referee is not easy to achieve and many candidates have several attempts at the exams. In order to help candidates the two papers can be taken in different years and a pass banked until the other paper is passed.

This year we have changed the entry qualification for the Race Results exam. To enter in 2001 you need to be on a District list as a timekeeper and judge as published in the current handbook.

This is a year earlier than previous and is designed to encourage you to get this exam out of the way. In addition many of you will have no intention of becoming a qualified referee but because you are a qualified judge you often referee at club and local events. This exam is for you as well.

Well that's it from me. I have enjoyed being the SOC Secretary for the past four years but now it is time to hand over to another person. Please

accept my best wishes for the future and whenever you are on the poolside please remember a piece of advice I was given several years ago when newly qualified.

"In the interests of the swimmer".

Chris Bostock
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2001 SWIMMING RACE RESULT & REFEREE EXAMINATIONS

The SOC has organised the annual residential course on 8th and 9th September for those candidates intending to take either the Race Results or Referee examination paper. It will again be held at Loughborough University. The booking and course arrangements are being organised by Swimming Officials Committee member Maurice Short.

We will start at 10.00 on the Saturday and finish around 4.00pm on Sunday. The residential fee of £75.00 (same as last year) includes, Saturday lunch, dinner, bed, breakfast and Sunday lunch. We will adjourn to the bar on the Saturday evening for a pub quiz (about swimming) so it will not be until closing time that swimming is finally put to bed.

During the weekend we are running courses for those candidates who are taking one or both examination(s). The plan is to have lectures and seminars with the aim of answering your questions as well as giving you the best possible chance of passing whichever examination(s) you are entering..

If you are not sure if you intend to enter the exam this year, we will be accepting entries for the Race Results and Referee examinations at the course. The closing date is Tuesday 11th September thus enabling you to attend and then decide if you are ready for the examination.

Please note that the entry requirements for the Race Results examination now only required you to be in the current handbook. The requirements for the Referee examination remain the same as previous years.

2001 SWIMMING REFEREE CANDIDATE COURSE BOOKING FORM (Photocopies accepted)

Name					Please post to: Gp Capt. M Short
Address					20 St Mary's Avenue
					Northwood
					Middlesex
Post Code					HA6 3AZ
Club	Course entries must be received by 25th July 2001				
Telephone		Please tick subject(s)	Race Results	Referee	Both

Cost **£75.00** - Please make cheques payable to the Amateur Swimming Association.

A copy of this application form is also available on www.britishswimming.org.