

2025 RSL Annual Referee Meeting Talking Points

- Thank you for coming and volunteering your time
- Administrative tasks:
 - Please type your full name and team in the chat so we can record attendance for training credit
 - Please fill out the Google Form we emailed so that we can have your emails to send the Zoom meeting recording and any other future communication (e.g. finals)
- All referee/admin referees need to attend/listen to this recording (even if they are USA Swimming and/or VHSL certified) - please share with your team if they are not here now
- I see many people here that have been mentors for me and will continue to be...there is always something new to learn and always room for improvement
- Click on the icon to raise your hand if you are a new referee
- Stay positive, keep it fun...this is summer swim, not the Olympics...help grow the love of the sport...help parents want to stay involved...
- Tonight we will do a quick review of the referee training but the main purpose of tonight will be to get everyone on the same page with rule changes and the goals of being a referee in the RSL and to provide mentoring and a Q&A session for new referees...I want this to be a place where experienced referees can share their experiences, tips and tricks with new referees
- Our goal is to grow the love of swimming...the RSL is the introduction into the sport of swimming for many kids and our goal should be getting kids in the pool more than winning
- Referees may expel anyone from a meet who is disruptive/verbally abusive, etc. If you do not feel comfortable confronting someone, it may be beneficial to involve the RSL reps from each team to help resolve the situation. It is also appropriate to call in law enforcement if there is any concern about your personal safety or the safety of those at the meet.
- Our number one job is to have a safe, fair and equitable meet as well as an efficient meet

RSL Division & Finals Updates

- For 2025 we stayed 4 divisions of 6 teams each except Patriot who has 7 this year (it will rotate each season, next year it will be Battlefield)
- The first meet is Wed 6/11 and will be exhibition meets except for the Patriot Division - they will not have an exhibition meets this season
- All dual season meets need to be completed by Friday 7/18
- EEPs for finals will be due on Sunday 7/20 at 6pm
- Finals will begin on Friday 7/25 at JRSSC and complete on Sunday 7/27
 - Friday 7/25 National (late afternoon)
 - Saturday 7/26 AM - Patriot
 - Saturday 7/26 PM - American
 - Sunday 7/27 - Battlefield
 - Set up will be on Friday and tear down will be on Sunday
 - All meets will use the same set up
 - We will be using 10 lanes
- Finals will be 3 sessions: 10 & under, combined, 11 & over
- Finals will be broken out into A/B/C groups for events - SwimTopia is still now set up for this to happen automatically with minimal manual updates - we will no longer have separate A/B/C events (we still had A/B for relay events last year - this year they will be one event with the non-scoring B relays marked as exhibition)

Time Drops

- Time Drops is now league wide (Hampton Oaks used this last year) - get informed and be sure to practice ahead of your first home meet - learn at your away meet if you don't have a home meet this week (note: if two buttons fail, no RSL record can be broken)
- Helpful links on RSL Resources page
- <https://help.swimtopia.com/hc/en-us/articles/4408980022299-Time-Drops-Integration-Overview-Setup>

RSL Website Highlights

- Resources: <https://rsl.swimtopia.com/resources>
- Training Info: <https://rsl.swimtopia.com/training>
- Please take time before your first meet to review these pages and to print out anything you will need for your meet

RSL Rule Updates:

- Highlighted in red
- SafeSport - 3.3 has been added
- TimeDrops - 6.1.7 updated
- DQ Slips - 6.1.9 updated
- Distribution of meet program - 7.5.2.2 updated to include Admin Referee
- Personnel required updates - 9.0 updated
- Training requirements updated - 10.2.2
- Signing of the scoresheet at end of meet removed - 10.4.8 not noted (submitted rules change request) & 10.11.8
- Head timer changes - 10.9.1 & 10.9.2 & 10.9.7
- Lane timer changes - 10.10.4
- Data clerk position removal - 10.11.4
- Triple Winner review & signing removed - 10.11.6.1
- Time Drops operator position added - 10.15
- Finals EEP changes - 12.4.3
- Finals rules clarification - 12.5.3.4 & 12.6
- 8.1 & 8.2 marked in red as an update but I don't see any changes compared to 2024 (submitted rules clarification)
- RSL Rules only note where we deviate from the USA Swimming Rules - if there is no RSL Rule, defaults to USA Swimming Rule

USA Swimming Rule Updates:

- USA Swimming Mini Rulebooks are no longer provided – refer to it online
- https://www.usaswimming.org/docs/default-source/governance/governance-lsc-website/rules_policies/rulebooks/2025-rulebook.pdf

Tips for preparing for a meet

- Set up a binder or whatever is helpful for you so that you have a quick reference and copies of everything at the pool (put in page protectors since it could get wet!)
- Remember to **not** wear white over blue - wear something so you'll be easily found - white over blue can be intimidating - do not wear Team gear either - you are a neutral party

- Go through the checklist on the RSL Resource Page
- Know the rules (RSL & USA Swimming), review the rules (RSL & USA Swimming)
- Make sure the word gets out about no photography behind the blocks - coordinate with the RSL rep to communicate this as well as your volunteer coordinator and maybe your head timer as well to mention in the timers meeting

Tips for running a meet

- Make sure you share the layout of your pool with coaches and officials - it should note who will stand where and what way to rotate – maybe event share it as part of the information your RSL rep shares with the other RSL rep
- Admin referees are now a required position for the visiting team - this helps to speed up the meet with the DQs or to help with training/mentoring of volunteers on either team
- You can referee from any part of the pool as long as the starter can see you – keeps the meet going and you can spend more time with the stroke & turn if needed
- Use a runner to assist with delivering the DQ slips to the scorekeeper
- Anyone challenging a call, needs to come to you with the rule that backs up the challenge - if they don't have it, ask them to come back when they have it so you can keep the meet moving
- Make sure blocks are out of the pool before the finish/flip turn for safety reason (if needed)
- Go over with your starter when you change ends of the pool & if/when stroke & turn need to rotate – knowing this in advance is helpful for keeping the meeting moving efficiently
- Go over what to do for a false start – who goes into the pool to stop a swimmer – review this ahead of time with both coaches (home & away)
- Accident form & possible head injury (head hitting the wall at finish/flip turn) –review with S&T and involve your RSL rep
- You need to stick around until the end of the home meet in case there are any questions – you no longer need to sign the final results

Additional tips for your meeting with stroke & turn before the meet

- If you are unsure raise your hand any way, you don't have to make the call - you can't make the call if you don't raise your hand
- Talk about relays – discuss the take off slips & judging positioning based on number of volunteers
 - Advice on the relay take off slip – cross off the turns you are not watching to reduce confusion
 - Mark the “X's and then go back and add the “O”'s and sign after
- Use backstroke flags on opposite end as 15 meter mark if not clearly marked at your pool
- Remind them what is legal vs DQ when a swimmer stands on the bottom of the pool and/or hangs on a lane line
- Remind the 2nd session stroke & turn judges stay around until the end of the meet – any relay dual confirmations needs to be signed by both stroke & turn judges

What questions would new referees not think to ask that you can answer?

- What to do if you don't have enough officials
- What to do when someone misses their event
- What to do when a storm rolls in – can't delay the meet before 7:30pm, when can you stop a meet (event 48), when do you have to continue a meet, etc.

What trips up a new referee?

What have been some of your weirdest situations/calls?

What are some mistakes you made in your first year? Remember that if you make a mistake, admit it, fix the problem and move on

Be sure to network – ask if you can shadow the referee and/or admin referee at an away meet – ask questions, reach out

Any final thoughts?

We will be sharing the recording of this meeting. Please be sure to fill out the Google form in addition to the officials training link on the training page.

Thank you again

Administrative task reminder:

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Feedback: