



SWIMMING CANTERBURY WEST COAST AN INTRODUCTION TO OFFICIATING AT SWIM MEETS

Let's face it, swim meets can be long and boring. Most meet sessions are about 4 hours long, and parents new to the sport can find this a bit overwhelming.

As a new swim parent, you may also find yourself occasionally wondering why the people around you seem to be speaking gibberish. Your swimmer, their coach, or a fellow swim parent starts talking, and your eyes start to glaze over with confusion... seeds, tapers, psych sheets, heats.... and what exactly is a split??

The best solution to all of the above is to volunteer to help out at the meet! You get free entry and free snacks while you work. You also get the added benefit of getting to learn more about how meets work, and you get to know more people in your local swimming community, including other children your child swims alongside - you'll learn more about the sport by watching and talking to others.

Most importantly, you'll be able to discuss the meet with your kids afterwards, talking about more than just their races. Trust me the first time you say "Hey, did you see that Sam broke 2 minutes today?" Your swimmer will not only be impressed that you're paying attention and understand swimming, but they will also get the impression that you actually enjoy being at their swim meets!!

The next time you are at a meet, take a look around you.... every adult you see (who isn't a Coach), is a volunteer. They were once a new swim parent just like you, perhaps a little unsure of where to start, how to help, or even doubtful that they wanted to be that involved.

Give it a go! There are lots of jobs to choose from, and the list below will hopefully help to dispel any mystery around some of the roles you see our swim parents filling on pool deck.

Here are just a few of the options open to anyone who has the time, desire and willingness to give a little of themselves to help the many swimmers that are working to fulfill their dreams.

TIMEKEEPERS and CHIEF TIMEKEEPER

Timekeeping is where most parents start as volunteers. The most important single statistic at a swim meet is the time a swimmer achieves during the race.

As a Timekeeper you operate various timing devices such as stopwatches or buttons that are attached to the automatic timing equipment. Timekeepers are responsible for starting their watches on the starting signal and stopping their watches or activating the push buttons when any part of the swimmer's body touches the wall at the completion of the race. The times recorded are used to determine the race results. Timekeepers write their times on the lane timesheets.

The Chief Timekeeper starts a stopwatch on every race to take the winners time or to act as a backup if a timekeeper's watch fails.

COMPUTER and AOE OPERATOR

(If you like working with electronic equipment this may be your niche)

The AOE (Automatic Officiating Equipment) Operator is responsible for the set-up and operation of the control console, touch pads, starting system and score boards (when used).

If the swim meet is seeded and the results recorded by electronic means there may be a link to a computer to process the input (entry and seeding of swimmers into the meet) and the output (final results of times swum) for meet results.

The Computer Operator is responsible for electronic data entry, seeding of swimmers, and meet results.

During the swim meet the AOE Operator and Computer Operator work with the Referee and other officials to maintain the smooth operation of the meet. This may include reporting equipment malfunctions.

MARSHALLS

The Marshalls are responsible for ensuring that all swimmers entered in each heat are present for the start of their race and lined up behind the blocks in the correct lanes, ready for their race to start.

(IOT) INSPECTORS OF TURNS

The Turn Judges observe the swimmers from the end of the lane(s) to ensure that the turns and finishes comply with the rules applicable to each stroke.

JUDGES OF STROKE

The Stroke Judges walk abreast of the swimmers, observing the swimmer's strokes to ensure compliance with the rules relating to each stroke.

STARTER

The Starter ensures that all swimmers receive a fair and equitable start. The Starter works closely with the Referee, assuming responsibility for the race start at the Referee's signal. At that time the Starter invites the swimmers to "take their marks" ensuring that no swimmer is in motion prior to the starting signal. Starters are also responsible for ensuring that the starting equipment is in proper working order prior to the start of the meet.

REFEREE

The Referee has overall authority and responsibility for the competition and ensures compliance with all the rules. The Referee resolves all questions relating to the conduct of the swim meet and

decides on disqualifications. The referee ensures that all officials are in place, timekeepers are ready, and that all swimmers are present and ready for the start of the race. When you become knowledgeable in all aspects of running a swim meet, such as Starter, Stroke Judge, Turn Judge (IOT), timekeeping and computer operation, scoring and all rules that pertain to providing fair and equitable competition for all swimmers, you can qualify to assume the duties of a Referee.

COME AND JOIN US...

As the parent of a competitive swimmer, you have the opportunity to become involved with your child and their sport in various ways.

One very instrumental way of contributing to the success of any sport is by volunteering your time and effort. All Swimming New Zealand and Swimming Canterbury West Coast Officials are volunteers and contribute greatly to the development of the sport at all levels.

So go on, don't be shy! Approach your Club committee today and let them know that you'd like to help out at the next meet.

- Club President Contact: Shona Henderson president@waitahaswimclub.org.nz
- Club Secretary Contact: Sarah Petersen secretary@waitahaswimclub.org.nz