

**Special Olympics Pennsylvania Area M**

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# **Special Olympics Aquatics Competition Volunteer Training Manual**

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"Let me win. But if I cannot win,  
let me be brave in the attempt."

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## General Competition Information

The following are general guidelines for competition volunteers. Detailed training for each position is documented after this section.

- Competition volunteers should report by 8:30 AM on the day of the Games.
- Parking is available on the field at the entrance to the Messiah College campus. Unfortunately, parking is not available near the Track and Field events and Olympic Village (the Starry Field lot or on the road close to the covered bridge). These areas must be kept clear to provide a safe unloading/loading area for athletes on buses. Aquatic volunteers can request parking passes to park near the pool facilities.
- Lunch is provided to all volunteers. However, please try to be understanding about when the lunch arrives. Other volunteers are responsible for distribution of lunches to all competition areas.
- Water will be available at all competition areas. If water is not available at your competition area, there will be water available at the Sports Medicine tables in Olympic Village and at the pool. However, it may be a good idea for you to bring a water bottle or something similar along to the Games.
- If you have a problem that you are unable to solve, please try to contact one of the Aquatics Competition Directors. If you cannot locate one of these people, you can go to the announcer / timing table in pool or the ribbon-writing table in the wrestling room. These Information areas have direct contact with all Management Team members.
- If you are able to help set up on the morning of the games, please do! Anytime after 6:00 AM, you may show up. If you don't know what to do to help, please contact one of the Competition Directors, or anyone else from the Management Team.
- If you are able to help clean up after the games, please do! After Closing Ceremonies there is plenty to do! If you don't know what to do to help, please contact one of the Competition Directors, or anyone else from the Management Team.
- Competition volunteers assigned to positions at the pool should report directly to the pool and check in with one of the Aquatics Competition Directors.

## **At the Pool**

### **General Instructions for Pool Volunteers**

*Volunteers assigned to positions at the pool should report directly to the pool the day of the games. The Aquatics Competition Directors will get all equipment and distribute it where necessary. At the end of the day, all equipment should be returned to the Aquatics Competition Directors.*

### **Stager**

Stagers are responsible for organizing athletes by heat and lane. They are to ensure the athletes are in proper order and that the buddies have their athlete's time card for that event. The Stagers are responsible for the athletes until the escorts to take them into the pool area.

1. Using the heat sheets, announce the event including the stroke, distance, and age group(s). If required, announce the participating athlete name to get them into the staging area located in the wrestling room.
2. Take one heat at a time, have the athletes and their buddies sit in the appropriate seats for their lane. **DO NOT COMBINE HEATS OR CHANGE LANE ASSIGNMENTS WITHOUT APPROVAL OF ONE OF THE AQUATICS COMPETITION DIRECTORS.**
3. Give each buddy the time card for that event and instruct them to give it to the lane timers when their athlete reaches the starting block. If a time card does not exist, complete one so that every athlete has a time card for their event.
4. Seat the next heat in the row of chairs behind the previous heat using the procedure outlined in steps 2 and 3 above.
5. Explain to the buddies that the escorts will take them into the pool and bring them back to the wrestling room.
6. When the escorts take the first row of athletes into the pool, have all the athletes and their buddies move up one row. You can now seat another heat repeating the steps outlined above.

**DO NOT COMBINE HEATS OR CHANGE LANE ASSIGNMENTS WITHOUT APPROVAL OF ONE OF THE AQUATICS COMPETITION DIRECTORS.**

Walk-on athletes (those not printed on the heat sheets) and athletes who missed their assigned heat should not be "inserted" with other heats. One of the Aquatics Competition Directors will place the athlete in an appropriate heat if time permits.

Do not have more heats called than rows of chairs available to seat the athletes.

Assist anyone with questions or problems as much as possible.

## **At the Pool**

### **General Instructions for Pool Volunteers**

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### **Escort**

Escorts are responsible for taking the athletes and their buddies from the staging area to the pool and bringing them back to the wrestling room after they complete their event.

1. Wait at the staging area. The Stagers will tell you when a heat is completely seated.
2. When the pool ready area (the bench across the back wall of the pool) is empty of swimmers, escort the swimmers from the staging area to the pool ready area. Make sure all the athletes and their buddies follow you into the pool area and sit under the appropriate lane numbers.
3. When the swimmers in the prior heat are called to the starting blocks, escort your heat to the chairs for their proper lane assignments.
4. When your heat is swimming, please stay out of the way of the timers and officials. You must remain quiet on the start, however, after the start, cheer loudly for your athlete throughout the race.
5. At the completion of a race, direct the athletes and their buddies back to the wrestling room to await presentation of their awards.
6. Return to the staging area as quickly as possible to assist with the next heat.

Keep track of all the athletes in your heat from the time you leave the staging area to returning to the wrestling room.

Do not let your athletes wander off or get out of order.

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### **Announcer**

The Announcer shall call all the events and keep the athletes, buddies, volunteers, and spectators appropriately informed about the conduct and progress of the meet.

1. Assist with the opening ceremonies as directed by the Aquatics Competition Directors.
2. Using the announcer's heat sheet, announce the event including the distance, stroke and age group(s). Then announce the swimmer's name and lane assignment.
3. Make other appropriate announcements that help with the progress of the meet as directed by the Aquatics Competition Directors.

Do not let anyone make announcements unless directed by the Aquatics Competition Directors.

Cheer for the athletes during their races. However, don't use the PA system to cheer.

## **At the Pool**

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### **Starter**

Starters are responsible for beginning the race after ensuring participants are in line and are ready to compete.

1. Make sure the starting system has been fully charged and is ready.
2. Ensure participants are ready. Check with the escort to verify when the participants for the heat are in their assigned lanes and ready.
3. Blow your whistle to call the athletes to the blocks. Athletes wishing to start in the water should enter it at this time. The timers will also reset their watches.
4. Repeat a short description of the event (number of lengths and stroke, for example: "2 lengths of the pool freestyle").
5. Give the command, "Timers and Judges ready." Briefly look at all the timers for them to signal that they need more time.
6. Give the command, "Swimmers, take your mark". Do not hold athletes too long after this command.
7. When all the athletes are motionless, discharge the sounding device to start the race.

If any athlete is off balance during the above steps, stop the sequence and begin again.

At the end of the day, return the starting system to the Aquatics Competition Directors.

## **At the Pool**

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### **Official**

The Officials are to ensure that a fair race is swum and that no athlete had an unfair advantage during the race. They are responsible from the start of the race until all of the athletes complete the race. The Officials are also responsible for dropping the False Start Rope into the pool when the starter has sounded a false start.

1. Make sure the False Start Rope is fasten in a method that it can be easily lowered into the pool if a false start occurs. If the Starter signals a false start, drop the False Start Rope if necessary.
2. From the start of the race, examine the swimming strokes, the turns, and the finish to make sure it conforms to the swimming rules.
3. Raise one hand above your head to signal an infraction of the rules. Inform the starter of the infraction and then write the disqualification on the athlete's time card.

If you have any questions concerning how to enforce a swimming rule, discuss it with one of the Aquatics Competition Directors.

When in doubt, it is better to error on the side of the athlete.

## At the Pool

### **General Instructions for Pool Volunteers**

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### **Timer**

Timers, using a stopwatch, are responsible for recording the time for a particular athlete in an assigned lane. The Pool Coordinator will assign a timer to each lane. Prior to the competition, the timer must learn how to start, stop and reset the stopwatch and how to read the stopwatch to the hundredth of a second.

1. Each timer must know his or her lane assignment and if there is an athlete in the lane for the current race. If you do not have a swimmer in your lane, still participate in the start of the race so that you can be a back-up timer if another timer needs assistance.
2. Prior to the start of the race, get the athlete's time card from their buddy. Verify that it is for the correct event and athlete.
3. Do not clear your watch from the previous race until the Starter blows the whistle to call the athletes to the starting blocks.
4. The Starter will ask, "Timers and Judges ready." If you are still working on the previous race or are having problems with your watch, signal the Starter to wait until you are ready.
5. The Starter will say, "Swimmers, take your mark". The Starter will discharge the sounding device (starting system) to start the race.
6. When you see the light flash in the starting system, start your watch. **DO NOT WAIT FOR THE SOUND TO START YOUR WATCH.**
7. Stop the watch when the swimmer touches the wall at the completion of the race. Also, press the plunger to stop the automatic timing system.
8. Record the times (in 0:00.00 - minutes:seconds.tenths/hundredths) from all watches in that lane on the athlete's time card and give it to the Runner when they come by to collect the cards.

Throughout each race, cheer for the athletes and congratulate them when they have finished and are out of the pool. However, don't let cheering interfering with getting an accurate time for the athlete in your lane.

If you have continued problems with your watch, see an Aquatics Competition Director for a replacement.

At the end of the day, return your watch and clip board to the Aquatics Competition Directors.

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### **Finishing Judge**

The Finishing Judge is responsible for determine the order of finish of the athletes in each heat.

1. Wait at the finish line.
2. As a race is completed, record the complete order of finish by lane numbers on the finish cards.
3. Give the completed finish card to the Runner.
4. Return to the finish line to begin again.

If you do not get to see clearly the order of finish, do not guess. Note it on the finish card that the order of finish was not determined.

Throughout each race, cheer for the athletes and congratulate them when they have finished and are out of the pool.

## **At the Pool**

### **General Instructions for Pool Volunteers**

*Volunteers assigned to positions at the pool should report directly to the pool the day of the games. The Pool Coordinators will get all equipment and distribute it where necessary. At the end of the day, all equipment should be returned to the Pool Coordinators.*

### **Runner**

Runners are responsible for taking completed time cards from the Timers and finish cards from the Finish Judges to the Timing System Operator.

1. Wait on the side of the pool at the finish end on the opposite side of the pool from the starter.
2. When a race is completed, collect the athlete's time cards from the Timers when they are completed from all the lanes that had swimmers. Also pick-up the finish cards from the Finishing Judges.
3. Take the time cards to the Timing System Operator that is next to the Announcer.
4. Return to the finish end of the pool to begin again.

Throughout each race, cheer for the athletes and congratulate them when they have finished and are out of the pool.

## **At the Pool**

### **General Instructions for Pool Volunteers**

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### **Recorder**

Recorders are responsible for recording the athletes' times for each race in the Meet Manager software system. Recorders also determine the order of finish for each event in accordance with the judging procedures.

1. Get the time cards and finishing cards from the runners for each competed event.
2. Establish the official time as follows: If the electronic system functioned properly, then that is the official time. If the timing system has problems, use the watch times. If there are two times on the time card, average the two times and write it on the time cards. If there are three watch times listed on the time card, then use the middle time (do not average). Any disqualification should be marked with "DQ," not a time.
3. If watch times are used, record the official time (in 0:00.00 - minutes:seconds.tenths/hundredths) in Meet Manger. Note any scratches and disqualifications in Meet Manager.
4. Using Meet Manager, determine the order of finish based on the official time. Score the event when it is completed.
5. Verify the official order of finish to the finish cards.
6. When the event is completed, print the awards ribbon labels and give them to the Ribbon-writers at the Ribbon-writers table.

**If you have any questions or need an official resolution of a time or order of finish, contact one of the Aquatics Competition Directors immediately.**

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### **Ribbon-writers**

Ribbon-writers are responsible for preparing the correct place ribbons for each race.

1. Place the athlete's event label on the back of the correct place ribbon. For disqualifications, the athlete should be awarded a participation ribbon.
2. Give the ribbons to the Presenters.

**If you have any questions or need an official resolution of a time or order of finish, contact one of the Aquatics Competition Directors immediately.**

**Give any ribbons back to the Aquatics Competition Directors at the end of the day.**

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### **Presenters**

Presenters are responsible for awarding the place ribbons to the athletes for each of the events that they participate.

1. Get the ribbons from the Ribbon-writers.
2. Have the Awards Assistant Presenters round up the athletes for that event.
3. Using the Awards script, present the ribbons in reverse order of finish (Participant ribbons are presented first).
4. Prepare for the next race.

**Make every attempt to present all the ribbons to the athletes of an event together. If an athlete is not present when the ribbons are presented, hold that ribbon and present it as soon as possible.**

**Give any un-presented ribbons back to the Aquatics Competition Directors at the end of the day.**

### **Awards (Assistant Presenters)**

The Assistance Awards Presenters are responsible for gathering up the athletes to receive their ribbons.

1. As directed by the Presenters, use the ribbons to gather up the athletes for the awards presentation.
2. Assist the Presenters with the awards presentation.
3. Congratulate the athletes after they receive their awards.
4. Prepare for the next race.