

The “Professional” Stroke & Turn Official -or- The Eyes of the Referee

The “Professional” Stroke & Turn Official should:

- **Know the Rules** and the official interpretations
- **Read and understand** the information in the Meet Announcement prior to the meet or session beginning
- **Attend the Officials Briefing to:**
 - Sign-in on the assignment sheet
 - Review the technical rules
 - Listen to and review protocols for the meet
 - Listen to and review jurisdiction for the meet
 - Be given an assignment by the Meet Referee or the Chief Judge team
 - Cover relief rotation
 - Discuss any other specific instructions or duties for the meet
 - Meet team members, including the Chief Judge for your assigned location
- **Develop your own “mental check list”** of things to do before, during, and after the duty session
- **Before the session:**
 - Know when and where the stroke briefing will take place
 - Locate where officials should sign-in
 - Be prompt to the meeting and dress appropriately and professionally
 - Be attentive during the stroke briefing
 - Have a positive attitude regardless of the assignment
 - Turn off (or if absolutely necessary – mute) cell phone. If you will need access to your cell phone for a compelling reason during the meet, let the Meet Referee and Chief Judge know before the meet so that plans can be made.
 - Be ready and in position 5-10 minutes before the session starts or as requested by either the Meet Referee or Team Lead Chief Judge
- **Before each event:**
 - Visualize the stroke
 - Run through the rule requirements of a legal stroke and any transitions
 - Recall the best and recommended ways to observe the stroke and the turns. Always use “benefit of doubt” observation protocol
- **Before each race:**
 - Do not block the strobe at the start
 - Follow the meet protocol for each stroke
 - Stand in the correct location, 15m mark, flags, etc. if walking stroke
- **After the start:**
 - Walk briskly to the edge of the pool if working the start end as a Turn Judge
 - Observe swimmers until they depart your jurisdiction (usually heads up)
 - If walking stroke:
 - determine if all heads broke the surface prior to or at the 15m mark for non-breaststroke events
 - Walk wall-to-wall, if possible, or as instructed
 - Give equal observation to all lanes in your jurisdiction, even the empty ones
 - Raise hand promptly to signal a possible disqualification if an infraction is observed (unless utilizing FINA protocols)
 - Keep the hand raised until it is acknowledged by a Chief Judge or Referee
 - Do not discuss the infraction with another official or any other individual, including a coach, before reporting it to the designated official. (Do not discuss it afterwards unless asked to by the Deck Referee)
 - Immediately communicate the lane number to the Chief Judge or Deck Referee (if a Turn Judge covering more than one lane or a Stroke Judge)
 - Visualize the infraction before communicating it to the Chief Judge or Deck Referee

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- Describe what you observed
- Watch all lanes while reporting the disqualification, unless relieved by a reserve judge
- Retract a call if there is any doubt, by simply stating, “No call”
- Check to make sure the DQ slip is correct before PRINTING your name on the slip
- **Relays:**
 - During relay exchanges, observe the toes departing from the platform and then look for the touching fingers
 - Do not raise a hand for an early relay take-off when dual confirmation is being used
 - Circle the lane and swimmer number on the take-off slip for a good exchange, and X for an early take-off
- **After each event:**
 - Reset to the correct position for the next stroke or event
 - Transition between heats for relief, not during a race
 - When being relieved, return promptly as directed in the pre-session briefing
 - Take a break OFF DECK or in the designated officials’ break area. Do not congregate with other officials on deck
- **If assigned to invigilate controlled warm-up:**
 - Coordinate with the assigned partner to observe the pool and politely enforce compliance with warm-up rules
 - Open pace lanes at the designated time and racing start lanes as requested (open additional sprint lanes if demand warrants). Coordinate with the Announcer and Marshalls
 - Review deck set-up in general – notify Meet Referee of deficiencies or safety issues
- **Other Important Items:**
 - Consider your body language when on duty and at all other times when you are accessible. Always assume you are “on camera”
 - Be alert, attentive, focused, calm, professional, and approachable
 - Always be “friendly” and helpful to coaches, swimmers, and other officials
 - Avoid coaching, cheering or fraternizing with coaches or swimmers
 - Questions should be directed to the appropriate official. Do not engage in discussions regarding a disqualification
 - Take discussions and emotional issues off-deck
 - Do not abuse your credentials. If you are not working the meet, you are a spectator and should act as such
 - Maintain a sense of humor
- **Remember, Professional Stroke & Turn Officials:**
 - Make sure the BENEFIT OF DOUBT GOES TO THE SWIMMER - ALWAYS
 - Adapt to meet conditions and needs, and help out wherever requested
 - Use common sense
 - Don’t read more into the rules than is written
 - Observe the swims but do not scrutinize
 - Exhibit confidence
 - Dress professionally and neatly in the designated uniform
 - Are willing to learn, and frequently work as a Stroke and Turn Judge
 - Never take advantage of credentials to gain deck access when not working in an official capacity
 - Self-evaluate after all shifts, sessions and meets and ask, “What can I do better?”
 - Enjoy the volunteer work, and opportunity to work with coaches, officials, and most importantly, swimmers of all levels

Please refer to the Certification Requirements for Stroke & Turn for information on N2 and N3 evaluations, certification, and recertification.

<https://www.usaswimming.org/officials/national-certification-evaluation>

