OFFICIALS CAREER PATH PLANNING

What is a career path for officials? How do I get to be a referee? How long will it take? I'm a timekeeper what can I do next? What is the role of a Marshall?

All questions that are asked on a regular basis. What are the answers?

Firstly, let me say that there is not just one path that can be followed, and there is no right path. It depends upon your interests, skills and personality as to the positions that are attractive to you. If you are happy at the level that you have achieved there should be no pressure upon you to proceed further.

At all stages of your training and development my suggestion is to discuss the future alternatives with myself or the Chief Referee of your District, he may have requirements that your training can meet. Also please remember that passing the examination generally means that you will commence learning what you don't know!

TIMEKEEPER

The role of a timekeeper is to accurately time a competitor from the start to the completion of the race with a touch at the finish.

Most officials commence as a timekeeper, they are asked to fill in as the (Club, District, or State) are short of officials and it is easy. Having started you are requested to do it again, and again until someone says why not become an official by doing the exam. You will complete a workshop which covers all of the questions in the examination.

Having successfully completed the examination and become a qualified timekeeper what do you do next?

MARSHALL

The role of the marshall is to assemble the competitors and prepare them for the starter in good time. This role is the true engine room of swimming, good marshalls can make a swim meet whilst bad ones can destroy a meet.

It requires a cheerful demeanor, good discipline and at times a loud voice.

Other roles covered in the marshalling area include Check Starter, (the final check before they swim), and Presentation Officer who ensures the place getters are ready for the award ceremony.

The workshop and examination should be undertaken after a number of meets (around ten) as the marshall in charge.

RECORDER

The role of the recorders is twofold, firstly to ensure that the listing of the finalists compiled after the heats is correct, and secondly to ensure that the final result is correctly compiled.

The actual tasks to be carried out will depend upon the type of meet, and how the times are being recorded. There are differences between recording a meet where manual timekeepers are in use, or a meet with a full AOE (timing pads) or SAT (buttons) in use.

A good recorder must know and understand all of the alternative systems that may be encountered within the District or State of which you are a member.

OFFICIALS CAREER PATH PLANNING

The workshop and examination should be undertaken after a number of meets (around ten) as a recorder at meets with differing facilities.

STARTER
The role of the starter is very straight forward, it is to ensure that ALL competitors receive a **FAIR** start. This is regardless of whether it is a one start or a two start meet.

As the starter you must be aware of the starting mechanism to be used, whether gun, hooter, or any other mechanism. All competitors should be stationery in a set position when the start signal is given.

The workshop and examination should be undertaken after a number of meets (around ten) as a starter.

JUDGE
The position of judge is not a common one now, as it has been superseded by having three timekeepers per lane. The role is to record accurately the sequence in which competitors touch the finish line.

As a judge you require excellent concentration and the ability to write quickly and legibly the lane numbers in sequence.

The workshop and examination should be undertaken after a number of meets (around ten) as a judge.

ANNOUNCER
Strictly speaking this position is not an official as it is not listed by FINA as one of the positions necessary for a meet. It is however one that is normally occupied by a qualified official who knows and understands what is required to run a swim meet.

A good clear voice able to cope with varying quality PA systems is the major skill requirement.

The workshop and examination should be undertaken after a number of meets (around ten) as a announcer.

AOE OPERATOR
Strictly speaking this position is not an official as it is not listed by FINA as one of the positions necessary for a meet.

Given the various types of AOE equipment in use the major requirement is in computer skills and in understanding of the system in use.

At this stage there is no examination for this position due to the varying nature of the equipment and software in use.

MEET MANAGER OPERATOR
Strictly speaking this position is not an official as it is not listed by FINA as one of the positions necessary for a meet.

The major skill requirement is clearly computer knowledge, together with keyboard and mouse skills.

OFFICIALS CAREER PATH PLANNING

There are many levels of Meet Manager software in use throughout Victoria, with differing requirements as not all systems have input capabilities from AOE or SAT systems. With manual input clearly a major requirement is quick and accurate keying of times for competitors.

Currently there is no workshop or examination for this position.

REFEREE

The role of a referee is generally speaking to ensure that the swim meet is run according to the rules, and secondly to ensure that all of the other officials are carrying out their roles correctly. It is NOT primarily to disqualify competitors who are not complying with the rules, other officials have this role.

Before an official will be considered for examination as a referee he (or she) will need to be qualified in the following positions; timekeeping, recording, and marshalling. They are not required to be qualified as a starter (although they probably will be), but they must have demonstrated a knowledge of the position.

They should also have knowledge of how any AOE or SAT equipment used in their area works, so that they can respond properly to any parent who ask questions during the course of a meet.

Officials should not expect to be examined for the status of referee until they have worked as a trainee (or assistant), for a period of about three seasons. During this period they should work under direct supervision of a qualified referee either on the side as a Judge of Strokes or as Referee in Charge. In the metropolitan area during this period trainee referees will spend many sessions as an Inspector of Turns. It must be noted that in general terms the Inspectors of Turns and Judges of Stroke make most of the recommendations for disqualification to the Referee in Charge and this training time is most valuable.

At the same time it is expected that trainees will be observing and discussing issues with the referees with whom they are working.

WHAT NEXT

What do I do after I am qualified as a referee?

Well you will learn that you have a lot to learn. The rules change on a regular basis, and interpretations of the rules also change from time to time.

How do I get to be an Australian Referee or a FINA Referee? Those are questions for another paper.

Geoff Hare
Chief Referee