



Technical Officials Roles and Pathways

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In NZ, volunteers are not only the 'heart' of sport but also its 'backbone'.

Over 500,000 people volunteer in NZ and they keep sport running!

Swimming events require a large number of volunteers and officials to run the event ie, Club Night, Carnival, Championship etc. Club Nights can take up to 30 volunteers/officials to run successfully whereas a National Championship can take up to 50 volunteers/officials to run.

So, if you find sitting in a grandstand all day drinking coffee and reading the local newspaper over and over again rather tiresome, what about thinking of joining the action poolside and becoming a technical official?

There are many benefits.

You will –

- Have an opportunity to make new friends (lifelong ones at that)
- Work in a dynamic team environment
- Learn new skills and knowledge
- Be able to utilize some of your existing skills and knowledge
- Be challenged in a supportive environment
- Have a mentor support you
- Have some of the best views of the swimming in action
- Be appreciated by the swimmers
- Have fun.

Technical Officials Roles

No one technical official position is more important than the other is – all positions play an equal part in securing an accurate time for each swimmer. In addition, no matter which position you fulfil you are part of a team – a team that is dedicated to gaining the very best outcome for each swimmer.

Your journey, as a technical official, could commence as a timekeeper however, it could also commence as a turn judge or starter. You need to have completed these three qualifications before progressing on to stroke judge and referee.

Timekeeper

You take the time of the swimmer assigned to your lane. All swimmers, coaches, and parents, need accurate times to see how much progress is being made. Swimmers aspire to gain a qualifying time so they can enter a meet. A stopwatch is used at some meets while at others you will also operate an electronic button. There is usually 3 timekeepers assigned to a lane. For many, timekeeping is a good place to start. However, you can start your journey further down the pathway if you so desire – see below.

Turn Judge (Inspector of Turns – IOT)

You will be assigned to a lane at either the start or turn end of the pool. If you are assigned to the start end, you will stand and observe the starts (for most strokes), turns, relay changeovers and, finishes of your swimmer. If you are assigned to the turn end, you will stand and observe the turns, relay changeovers and, the occasional finish (one-length events) of your swimmer. The rules for each stroke differ so you will need an excellent understanding of them all but, continual practice makes perfect judgements. The jurisdiction for a turn judge is the first stroke out, from a start or turn, and the last stroke in, for a turn and finish.

Starter

The starter has full control of the swimmers to start a race once the referee raises their arm to confirm this authority. The starter will only start a race when all swimmers are settled on their block and it is the responsibility of the starter and referee to ensure that all swimmers get a fair start.

Stroke Judge (Judge of Stroke – JOS)

Stroke judges walk down the sides of the pool to ensure that the rules relating to the stroke being swum are adhered to. You will assist the turn judges and at times the referee.

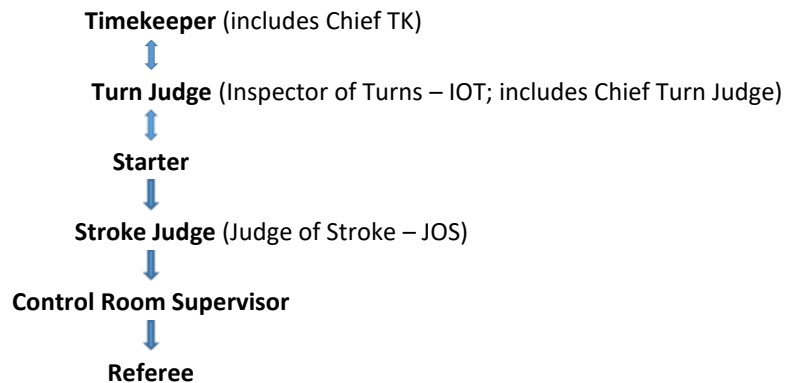
Control Room Supervisor (CRS)

In consultation with the Referee, you are responsible for the processing and publication of the official results for each event. This role is part of the training required to become a National Referee. However, it is prudent that training commences at the Regional level.

Referee

Referees have full control over all technical officials and swimmers. The referee must enforce all rules, regulations and, special conditions applicable to the event. The referee is the only person who can disqualify a swimmer through an observation either of their own or, on a recommendation from one of the supporting technical officials, listed below.

Technical Officials Pathway



Qualifications for Technical Officials

At each stage of officiating, there is a verbal and practical assessment. You will be supplied with relevant information, both written and in some cases, video and you will be assigned a mentor. You will qualify as a Regional Official to start with and then progress to become a National Official. After commencing your training and officiating within your Club, you will be encouraged to officiate at meets within your own Region and, other Regions. A qualification will enable you to officiate at all Swimming NZ National events leading to International events.

Dress Code

Club Events

- All officials from Turn Judge (IOT) upwards are requested to wear a black shirt or, the Swimming Counties Manukau regional shirt and, black pants/skirt.

Swimming Counties Manukau (Regional) Events

- All officials are requested to wear the Swimming Counties Manukau regional shirt or, their Club shirt and black trousers/skirt.

Swimming NZ Events

- All officials are must wear either the Swimming Counties Manukau regional shirt or, the black Swimming NZ shirt with black trousers/skirt. **For finals sessions women must wear black long trousers or a skirt and, men must wear long black trousers.**

Supporting Roles

Announcer

You are the voice of the meet. Your aim is to ensure there is effective communication to all present by announcing general information, introducing the swimmers for each race and, announcing results if required. You will also have the opportunity of creating an ambience for the meet through music and/or commentary.

Recorder

Your role will include checking times and results for discrepancies, recording any disqualifications and checking for new records.

Marshall (including Clerk of the Course)

You will ensure that the swimmers are assembled in their correct event, heat and lane prior to each race.

Automatic Officiating Device Operator (AOD)

When used at events your role is to operate the automatic timing equipment that utilizes touch pads, backup timing buttons and automatic printout of results.

As you can see, there are many roles and qualified people required to successfully run a swim meet at all levels. Remember, we are all there to ensure all swimmers gain a fair and accurate time for their effort.

Interested?

Then, your first step is to contact your Swimming Club's President or Technical Delegate. They will inform you of your next steps and provide you with a mentor.

Resources

- Written material including FINA swimming rules and, a Swimming NZ Guide for Technical Officials – <https://countiesmanukau.swimming.org.nz/>
- Enthusiastic mentors who are willing to support you along your journey
- FINA videos that cover all strokes visually - www.swimming.org.nz/video-resources

Websites

- Swimming Counties Manukau - <https://countiesmanukau.swimming.org.nz/>
- Swimming NZ, the governing body for swimming in NZ – <https://swimming.org.nz/>
- FINA, the governing body for swimming worldwide – www.fina.org

'Remember, it's always a team effort!'