

Changes to the education and training of Swimming Officials

England, Scotland and Wales currently have different approaches to the education and training of their swimming officials. The terminology used to describe an official qualified to perform the duties of a timekeeper is not standard in all the home countries. The method of qualification varies. The minimum age at which volunteers can commence training also varies. However, this is all set to change.

England, Scotland and Wales have been working towards common standards in the education and training of all Swimming Officials. This has been made possible now that all three Home Countries use FINA Technical Rules. In future such trained officials will be listed as British Swimming Officials. **Those officials who already hold a Home Country qualification will not be required to re-train and will be attributed with the equivalent qualification, where appropriate.** The terminology used for swimming officials will change to match FINA rules and International convention.

The first qualification to undergo review has been that of the Referee. Work is nearly complete to produce a British Swimming Course leading to the qualification of British Swimming Referee. This course contains theoretical instruction and specified practical experiences and is followed by a formal examination in November, after which successful candidates will undertake a final poolside practical assessment leading to qualification as a British Swimming Referee. Several months have been allocated between registration and the formal examination to enable candidates to undertake all the practical experience required to complete the course as well as the theoretical instruction.

Application Forms for 2007 need to be submitted by 31st January 2007. These together with course information can be obtained from the British Swimming website, or via email from jane.davies@swimming.org or your local swimming officials organiser from the 1st January 2007.

Work is in progress to develop the process to cover all the remaining roles of officials. In order to develop this it has been agreed to re-define the qualifications to fit the functions required. Training for these new qualifications will commence from 1st October 2007. The process for these qualifications will place a greater emphasis upon practical application through the completion of a course workbook and formal practical assessment.

Club Timekeeper: This will not be a recorded British Swimming Official qualification but it is intended as an introduction into the world of the swimming official. This will cover the practical aspects of what is required of a timekeeper by means of a short theory session followed by a practical assessment. Successful completion will not be recorded on the British Swimming database but may be recorded locally. There is no minimum recommended age for candidates to undertake this training, however, all such poolside officials do need to ensure that they are registered members of a British Swimming affiliated club or a member of the Institute of Swimming (IoS)

Judge Level 1. This is the first level of British qualification. This will encompass the role and duties of a Timekeeper, Chief Timekeeper and Inspector of Turns. The minimum age to commence training will be 15 years old. Candidates may undertake some instruction and will be required to complete a course workbook, following which a practical assessment will be undertaken. There is no formal theory examination however, during the practical assessment candidates will be required to answer oral questions. When qualified, candidates will be attributed with the qualification Judge level 1 on the British Swimming Database. In addition, such individuals, if they wish, may apply to become a Licensed Official.

Judge Level 2. This is the second level of qualification. This will encompass the role and duties in relation to all aspects of Judging and the theoretical role and duties of Starter. The minimum age to commence training will be 15 years old. Candidates may undertake some instruction and will be required to complete a course workbook, following which a practical assessment will be

undertaken. There is no formal theory examination however, during the practical assessment candidates will be required to answer oral questions. When qualified, candidates will be attributed with the qualification Judge level 2 on the British Swimming Database. In addition, such individuals, if wished, may apply to become a Licensed Official.

Starter. Candidates who wish to qualify as a Starter will be required hold the Judge Level 2 qualification and be a minimum age of 15 years. Training will consist of a prescribed number of practical experiences as a Starter before undertaking a formal practical assessment. Successful candidates will be attributed with the Starter qualification, Judge Level 2S

Referee. On application candidates for this course are required to be qualified at Judge level 2. A candidate may register to commence training aged 17 years but must be 18 years old at 30th November in the year of the course. Details of the composition of the training have been included above.

Recording of all Officials currently registered on the British Swimming Database.

All those officials currently registered with the qualification of Judge, Starter or Referee will automatically be attributed with the qualification of British Swimming Judge Level 2, Judge Level 2S and Referee respectively.

Those officials who are currently registered as a timekeeper will remain attributed with that qualification. There is no requirement to undertake any additional training unless they wish to do so, however, it should be noted that this qualification will be treated the same as the club timekeeper qualification as outlined above.

It must be emphasised that no official currently registered on the British Swimming database will lose their existing qualification and members who aim for a swimming qualification will now find a more structured system designed to assist them in achieving their aims.

Licensing of Swimming Officials

All officials who are registered as qualified Judges, Starters or Referees will receive individual notification and application forms in January 2007 when the licensing scheme announced in October 2006 will commence.

A document describing the principles and procedures is now available on the British Swimming website.

Final Reminder

All clubs, promoters and competition organisers are reminded that, for insurance purposes, all those officiating on poolside at any competition must be registered members of a British Swimming affiliated club or a member of the Institute of Swimming.