

Survey of Officials 2016

Appendix 2 Summary of responses to open questions

Question 9**If you have any comments about the training or how it could be improved?**

1	Old exam system was less time consuming
2	To have new subjects, safeguarding etc has had same eg's for years
3	Dedicated mentor
4	Some of the mentoring sessions are so un-motivational such as the first 'shadowing' for a whole session as starter
5	Maintain consistency of the mentors, some were excellent others sadly lacking.
6	The majority of the time, the mentors were very helpful and informative.
7	Viewing example videos during workshops for all strokes and explaining the FINA rules whilst watching these. De-briefing sessions with judges on DQ reports in Galas in the breaks, to explain what was seen. Standardise the mentoring so that all new trainees experience the same rigour and content mentoring.
8	More classroom based material, after gala assessment/feedback would be helpful
9	It took such a long time and trying to get things signed off towards the end was difficult,
10	The process does seem to put people off from training
11	I think the training process is unwelcoming and trainees feel intimidated. This tone is partly set by the style of the referees and pervades throughout. The training is not interactive and involves the referee reading out what is in the book. We can all read and need examples of what to look out for in action. During training ideally the referee responsible should be free of competition duties and be free to mentor during the event. A culture of developing officials needs to be established and followed through. Lip service will not solve anything.
12	Practical implementation of rules & aim at passing exam/test
13	Training is good. Some of the way officials get treated on poolside by senior officials is not fair but other than that training is ok

Question 11**What was the main motivation for you to become a swimming official?**

1	So I could still be at competitions while I couldn't compete through injury
2	To provide additional experience to aid my swim teaching career and add further depth. I enjoyed seeing children I taught going on to taking part in Swim Gala's.
3	I wish to eventually qualify as a referee and become the youngest referee in Sussex and the South East. I want to give back to the sport over the coming years some of what I have been given but my main motivation is that I want to officiate at the Olympic games in the near future as well as some high level events.
4	To help other officials
5	After one year as poolside coach assistant at around 5 sessions a week it occurred to me that it is really useful to know the exact FINA rules and train my eye better to see the potential turn/stroke infringements, so to support our swimmers and to keep up to date with changes. Once qualified I realised the importance of the job and the integrity required. It appeals to me, but due to personal health I am not sure how much volunteering I can/will do.
6	To learn more about officiating
7	I am interested in swimming and love it.
8	Swimming was becoming v important to my son and I was not getting enough info through my club. Becoming an official put me in the middle of what was going on. I only then realised how important being an official was to the club.
9	Without enough suitably qualified officials (any sport) the competition will not run to a satisfactory level - it will not be a successful event.
10	To gain a professional qualification and to see where it may take me

Question 13**What are your motivations for volunteering as a swimming official?**

1	Learn good skills to take to uni
2	To enable competition to take place
3	Increases my knowledge for swim teaching.
4	Give something back
5	To give some of my experience back to the sport.
6	I enjoy understanding the rules around sports and enjoy doing something other than just sitting around watching.
7	Usually it is enjoyable participating in well organised events, this give a sense of contribution and achievement
8	It is a very personnel heavy sport - so much staff required to run events - unlike other sports - so I do understand the need for many volunteers.
9	Happy to give something back when time allows
10	I like to assist where I can see that it is needed to run a competition (or other event)
11	The sport cannot happen with out a team of dedicated Volunteers

Question 14**What aspects of being a swimming official do you find demotivates you?**

1	1-2 of the senior officials are quite rude and undermining
2	cost involved in officiating in terms of hoops to jump through for expenses. costs of T shirts and uniform stopwatches etc. Move to coaches payments.
3	Nothing I can think of other than the odd bit of rudeness and back handed remarks from other swimmers and coaches.
4	I don't officiate at Regional and above as at those levels it feels cliquey, and its difficult to feel appreciated. This is due to behaviours rather than words. Sussex and club level doesn't feel like that, but we need to work to ensure new officials don't get that perception.
5	When rules are applied inconsistently (e.g. in one session someone gets an instant DQ for a false start yet in another session / referee a swimmer is given a second chance). Doing all day when other qualified parents don't do session 3 because they want to get home - so they sit in the gallery and watch.
6	Current personal pressures influence availability
7	The reward far out weighs any problems.
8	The swimmers should always have a sense of fun and positivity and we as officials need to remember that sometimes - it is not an opportunity to "catch" people out, dq or intimidate them.
9	Not enough respect from Coaches (who are often paid) for officials who are giving up their time for free and without whom there would be no event. Too many events are too disorganised around what official is doing what role prior to each session.
10	At the moment neither of my daughters are swimming competitively which makes it hard to justify being away from them at weekends. When they need me less I will do more. Some refs are a bit unwelcoming.
11	1) When submitting a DQ to the referee is sometimes ignored, I cannot see the point of being there when this happens. It makes you feel like you don't know what you're doing and undermines confidence. 2) In a long course meet, as a stroke judge, coaches and swimmers stand in the way and distracts you from judging the strokes. Stricter gala etiquette should be in place so its not a battle ground. 3) On a national level, higher ranking officials should be nicer to lower ranking officials. There is an awful lot of snobbery at all levels.
12	Some referees can be rude, abrupt and not accept your point of view, be a judge is about how you interpretation of the rules and if a swimmer is not following the guide lines set by FINA not get a grilling and being shouted at when you have given up your time to volunteer. But most referees are great, its just the one or two
13	Just standing doing one job and not moving around using my qualifications (although County use you well)
14	Please see comments above about the culture that pervades in the County.
15	It's very challenging to get mentored as a J2. Vital momentum and positive energy is lost during the wait to be mentored. Very few will go on to J2S because J2 takes so long. One becomes happy to mark time where they are.
16	Poor treatment of officials, particularly at SERegion. Responses/communications from ASA/SER on Officials/queries/etc, Distance of travel to competitions, especially outside of Sussex. Little opportunity to move to next level

Question 15**How could Sussex County ASA help you continue to be motivated by volunteering?**

1	Improve competition facilities. In particular to duplicate starting equipment at both ends of 50 m pool at K2 to facilitate manual time keeping. Starting commands and signals are currently difficult for time keepers to see and hear in 50 m sprints. Also ref & starter should ensure pool is clear of previous race's swimmers before starting .
2	We shouldn't be made to feel guilty if we claim expenses for one day of a two day competition even if we do have children swimming.
3	That ALL officials accept that we are ALL volunteers and not treat others as school children. Be less 'cliquey'.
4	Lemon bon bons in the sweet tin !!!! lol
5	Encouragement to continue with various qualifications - not suggesting that this isn't already done.
6	Keep it light, fun and ensure mutual respect
7	I thought training and support was good. Personally I'm not sure that social events will help - it's just more time out of the house (that I hardly ever see anyway). The big improvement would be that if we can find a way to encourage more people to officiate and share the load. It is fun, interesting and enjoyable - more parents should try it but human nature is that few want to help - and for those who do - they don't all have the confidence or will to learn and enforce rules (which inevitable upset the child who is being DQ'd).
8	Would be nice if we could get a county official over to our local club to make a presentation to parents / volunteers and encourage them to start on the path to becoming an official. Could be combined with a timekeeping course.
9	I think that the County ASA is doing a great job.
10	Stop organising county events across half term school holiday weekends when parents and children are away. More parents would be available and the issues at the recent counties would not have materialised. Do some of the start times need to be as early in the morning as they are at present?
11	Some of the Referees can be very abrupt with their criticism of DQ reports not being filled in correctly. On a few occasions I have seen officials not filling in DQ reports due to certain referees being on duty and how they might be received/interrogated by doing so.
12	The only way to improve the quality of the food would be to get the Brighton ladies, but that's not possible because the pools won't let you!
13	Allow all officials to speak without being interrupted at briefings.
14	Change attitudes, have a clear plan to develop and keep officials and create a real team of people willing to play their part. You need more referees that are keen to become referees even if they are young and apparently therefore not experienced enough. More mentors would enable more training opportunities. I also think that Judge 1 is seen to be too tricky by trainees in the time it takes to complete. Although national guidance, I think that the timekeeper elements could be done in parallel with the other elements to speed up the time taken to complete and to make the training more varied and interesting. After all, as a J1 you do both when acting in that role.
15	Sausage or bacon sandwiches in the morning. Decaf tea bags.

Question 19

Please tell us about changes we could make to encourage you to volunteer more often at galas organised by Sussex County ASA?

1	To be more flexible with regard to relicensing,
2	Feel more welcome/respected by senior officials
3	For senior officials not to be so snobbish and look down on the less qualified. You couldn't run a meet without us!
4	I volunteer regularly anyway
5	Run them closer to home.
6	None that I am aware off I do it because I want to.
7	Reduce the amount of time waiting around
8	Avoid school holidays for the galas.
9	Bring events locally
10	I think it's always going to be difficult for people with families to find time at weekends
11	Open, Friendly, and above all be more approachable. Some referees make you feel very uncomfortable when you ask a question, but if you don't how do you learn?
12	Not keen on early morning starts!
13	Nothing you could do really!
14	Nothing I just don't have the free time at present
15	Not be so clicky.
16	Being valued
17	None for me as I go as and when I can.
18	Find me more time!
19	More encouragement in emails instead of threats that events will be cancelled. And that people are treated fairly no matter of their qualification, age or amount of experience
20	Nothing

Question 20

Is there anything else you would like to say about volunteering as a swimming official with Sussex County ASA?

1	I would like to re-licence later, am in process of selling house
2	Please be more welcoming as a group.
3	On the whole I've had a very welcoming and friendly introduction into volunteering.
4	I love it !!!
5	Really pleased I am doing this, it's something I really enjoy.
6	It can be satisfying
7	Great atmosphere and nice people on the circuit
8	"Thank you" to the dedicated officials running the ASA!
9	Generally they are a helpful bunch particularly Chris Hobbs.
10	If this survey is driven by the recent issues in getting enough officials at the recent county event then a big step forward as I mention above would be to not organise the events for school half term holiday weekends, like has been done for October where it wouldn't surprise me if you again struggle for officials
11	I think Clubs should do more to recruit new volunteers
12	Nothing.
13	Ask people to smile
14	A very enjoyable and rewarding experience
15	What I notice with people trying to get qualified is that they rarely finish the course. Starting is not a problem but they lose the will to finish.
16	I am glad I am doing it. Supporting my son the sport he loves has opened a new world for me.
17	Not here
18	Galas are mostly run very well. More information regarding information for officials could be sent out prior to competitions as a reminder for them.