

Good Club Guide For A Swim Meet Announcer

Welcome

You have either been appointed, or are considering, a role as a Swim Meet Announcer. We wish you a fulfilling and enjoyable experience in your role. We greatly appreciate the time and commitment that you are giving to support the development of aquatics.

How this resource will help you

This resource is intended to assist you in your role by providing:

- A guide to your roles and responsibilities as a Swim Meet Announcer.
- Templates and resources to save you time.
- Top tips and good practice advice from experienced volunteers.
- Useful links and information about additional learning opportunities.

Role of the Swim Meet Announcer

The Swim Meet Announcer plays an important role in ensuring competitors, volunteers and spectators have a high quality experience at a swim meet. This is done by providing accurate and effective information about the event in a friendly, motivating and enthusiastic way. The Announcer provides structure and control to a swim meet by ensuring everyone is aware of safety requirements relating to the venue and providing up-to-date information on what is happening in and around the pool. The Swim Meet Announcer reports to the Swim Meet Director and is directed by the Referee as required.

Duties of the Swim Meet Announcer

- To provide timely announcements and effective and accurate information in an enthusiastic and motivating way
- To ensure structure and control at a swim meet.
- To provide safety information regarding the competition and venue.
- To introduce the policies and protocols for warm up, reporting to marshalling areas, presentation areas and outcomes from any protests.
- To inform competitors, volunteers and spectators of what is happening in and around poolside and on event presentations taking place.
- To keep competitors, volunteers and spectators up-to-date with any changes to the published event programme.
- To work effectively as part of a Meet Management team to deliver a high quality swim meet.
- To comply with the requirements of the ASA Safety Laws Prompt Card for the Announcer as defined in the ASA Handbook.

Skills and qualities required

- Have the ability to provide verbal information in a clear and concise manner.
- Enthusiastic with a good knowledge of and interest in the sport.

- Be a confident public speaker.
- Have the ability to observe and report on action taking place in the pool.
- Have the ability to receive and report on information provided.

Level of commitment required

This will vary depending upon the length and time of the swim meet. Some advance preparation may assist with the smooth running of the meet, and you should ensure that you have all the necessary information and equipment ready.

Term of office

This will vary depending on the event. You should establish the expectations before taking on the role.

Getting started

There are a number of key roles who you may work alongside at a swim meet. These include:

Meet or Executive Director

Responsible for the overall running of the whole event. This person will guide you on your role and will be your point of contact and person you take instructions from.

Technical Director

Responsible for all technical officials and ensuring the competition is run in a fair manner.

Chief Recorder

Responsible for maintaining accurate results.

Starter

Responsible for the control of the event from the time the Referee turns the event over to the Starter through to the time the event starts.

Medal Ceremonies Coordinator

Responsible for distributing awards, prizes and certificates.

Field of Play Manager, Competitive Marshals or Stewards

Responsible for the assembly of competitors prior to each event.

Before the Swim Meet

Here are some suggestions for planning and preparing in advance of the swim meet:

- Agree your arrival time with the Meet Director. This is usually a minimum of one hour before the meet starts.
- Prepare any information to be announced, such as safety announcements, etc.

- Agree the music requirements for the meet with the Meet Director. The Meet Director will need to ensure compliance with music license requirements.

Arrival at the Swim Meet

These are suggestions to follow when you arrive at the venue and before the swim meet commences:

- Check in with the Meet Director and the Referee. Agree the requirements/protocols for:
 - » Announcing safety information on pool depths.
 - » Playing music in line with music license restrictions.
 - »» It is always best to check on music licenses with the pool operator.
 - »» Many facilities will have the relevant licenses in place, but if they do not, it then becomes the responsibility of the event organisers.
 - » The warm up provision.
 - » The lane draws (if appropriate).
 - » Announcing point scores (and how often during the meet).
 - » Announcing trophy winners.
 - » Introducing races, announcing disqualifications, medal presentations and ceremonies.
 - » Whistle blasts being used.
 - » Announcing next heats, e.g. a 'thumbs up' from the Referee or waiting for the scoreboard to be refreshed.
 - » Assembling swimmers for races and for medal ceremonies.
 - » The scheduling/timings that the Meet Director is working to.
- Obtain a copy of the pool safety and operations procedures to announce appropriate health and safety information.
- Familiarise yourself with the venue and know where the marshalling and presentation areas are on poolside as you will need to announce these locations.
- Obtain a copy of the programme.
 - » Write your name on it so you don't lose it!
 - » Check the pronunciation of names and clubs.
 - » Make sure you have every event listed and that there are no missing pages.
 - » When you receive the start sheets, highlight the title of each event and write, next to each title, how many heats there are as some events continue overleaf.
- Check who the appointed Technical Director, Referees, Starters, Field of Play Manager and Medal Ceremonies Coordinators are and introduce yourself.
- Check the space allocated for the Announcer's area and ensure you have all the equipment you need.
- Test the microphone before the meet commences.

Prior to warm up

Welcome, health and safety announcements and warm up provision. The safety announcements may be pre-recorded, or the Executive/Meet Director will provide you with a written safety announcement. This should be announced approximately five minutes before the start of each warm up session and repeated five minutes prior to the start of the session.

Prior to the start of the meet

Example: Calling competitors

“Would all competitors for the first two/three (as guided by the Meet Director) events, please proceed to the marshalling area located at (the location).”

Check with the Meet Director ten minutes prior to start of the meet that the Technical Officials will be ready to march onto poolside in five minutes.

Five minutes prior to scheduled start:

“Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome the Referee and Technical Officials to the poolside for this (announce the session e.g. morning’s) programme.”

“On behalf of (relevant organisations) welcome to the (full title of swim meet) and (number heat/session/final session - as appropriate). The Meet Director for the (full title of swim meet) is (name). Your Referees are (names) for the men’s events and (names) for the women’s events. Your Starters are (names) for the men’s events and (names) for the women’s events.”

During the competition

General points to follow:

- Remember that your role is important in maintaining the flow and pace of the meet – keep focused and ensure your announcements are motivational and energetic to keep spectators interested.
- Be focused on the meet, it is so easy to get distracted. Avoid conversations that are not about the competition taking place.
- Should parents, coaches, swimmers, etc. approach you for information whilst you are announcing, acknowledge their presence and then direct them on to where they need to go for information.
- Take your instructions only from the Meet Director or the Referee unless otherwise agreed.
- Keep hydrated by drinking lots of water.
- Keep announcements short and to the point.
- Speak clearly and do not rush.
- Enjoy yourself – inject your own style into the position.
- Be sure of your facts; double check all information provided.

Example: Introducing events

“The first event is (full title and description of event). There are (number) heats in this event.”

At the start of the race and/or once the race is underway, if names do not appear on the scoreboard, announce the swimmers across the lanes. Depending on the speed of the race you may also announce club names.

Example: Introducing final sessions (specific to open and national level meets only)

After introducing the Referees and Starters and inviting the Technical Officials to be seated, on the signal from the Meet Director:

“Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome the finalists in the (full description of event title) event to the pool side.”

Music to be played (if appropriate) as Officials parade to their places. Once all Officials are in position the music should be stopped. Once the competitors have marched on to poolside, following the cue of the Meet Director, introduce the competitors as follows:

“In lane number (lane number) representing (name of club) is (name of competitor).”

Repeat this through all the lanes.

Example: Preparing for medal presentations

As an Announcer, you may be asked to provide warning calls to competitors in advance of medal presentations.

“Would (name of competitor and club), please report to the medal presentation area located at (location). That is (repeat the name/s).”

Example: Presentations

As the Announcer, you are required to advise spectators that a presentation is taking place and by whom the presentation is being made. The Meet Director will guide you on when the actual presentations are to take place as this may differ upon the style and level of the swim meet.

You will receive a presenter’s list from the Presentation Officer. You will need to check this carefully to establish the correct title of the presenter and the correct name(s) of competitors as well as the pronunciation. Fanfare music to be played if required.

“Ladies and gentlemen, may I draw your attention to the presentation area at (location) where we have the medallists for (full name and title of the event). These medals are to be presented by (full name and title of presenter).”

“The winner of the bronze medal in a time of (time) from (name of club) is (name of competitor).

The winner of the silver medal in a time of (time) from (name of club) is (name of competitor).

The winner of the gold medal in a time of (time) from (name of club) is (name of competitor).”

Check if any records have been set/broken. If so, announce it and publicise the fact, for example outstanding effort, congratulations, etc.

Top tips for being a great Swim Meet Announcer

- Sometimes there is a tendency to over-announce. A few pertinent announcements are much more effective than too many.
- Maintain an even pace of announcing and take cues from the Meet Director. Look for cues from the spectators, poolside officials and competitors that they understand the information being announced. Don’t be afraid to repeat an announcement if you need to.
- Be aware of the pace you use for announcing – remember to take a deep breath and relax! Talking too fast may cause confusion and misinterpretation of information, whereas talking too slowly may make for boring listening.
- If possible, observe the spectators briefly whilst you are making your announcements about any adjustments/amendments to the programme. This way you can tell if the spectators can hear you and are making the necessary amendments.
- Be careful when making announcements prior to starts, so as not to interfere with the race conditions or keep the swimmers waiting.

- Be aware of what meet you are at and the title the winners deserve, e.g. County Championship winner, Age Group winner etc., as this will help in profiling the meet and also the competitor.
- Develop your skills at announcing by offering to announce safety information or something that is already scripted as this will help you practise. Then ask if you can assist at local competitions, county competitions, regional events and open meets to gain more knowledge and experience.
- Shadow good announcers (Officials are best placed to advise you on who the good ones are!).
- Always remember to turn your microphone off when you have finished an announcement.

Commentating

Announcing and commentating are generally seen as two different roles, requiring different skill sets. This resource focuses on announcing. An effective commentator is someone who can really add value to what the spectators see by providing information such as split times being consistent with an event record, a National Qualifying Time in prospect, etc. Ex-swimmers or coaches are often recruited as commentators as they are likely to have an understanding of times, strokes and racing and are able to add value in this way.

If you are announcing at a swim meet and there is also a commentator, careful planning needs to take place to ensure that you complement each other and that you are able to get information across when needed, e.g. the name of finalists.

Ending the Swim Meet

Example:

If at the conclusion of the last event of the meet/session there are still medals to be presented, or on the instructions of the Technical/Meet Director, the following announcement can be made:

“Thank you ladies and gentleman for your attendance. We hope that you have enjoyed this (morning’s session) competition.”

For competitions with finals sessions:

“May we remind you that the next session/finals will commence at (time).with a (duration of time e.g. 30 minute) warm up.”

“On behalf of the Referees, we thank the Technical Officials for their expertise and attendance. All Technical Officials are now invited to leave the poolside. Thank you.”

After the Meet

Reflect on your own performance as an Announcer; make a note of things you would do differently next time and consider areas for improvement.

Moving on from your role

When you decide that it’s time to move on, it’s important to think about how you will ensure that all your knowledge and experience is passed on to the person taking over from you.

Here are some suggestions to help ensure a smooth transition, and to ensure that the person taking over from you has the information and resources they need:

- Try to give as much notice as you can that you are moving on, in order to allow the competition organisers to recruit or elect another Swim Meet Announcer.
- Where possible, try to build up or be part of a small team of Swim Meet Announcers in the club or local area in order to share workloads, ensure others can take over when you move on and are able to offer training to new volunteers.
- Assist in developing an up-to-date role description and advert for the post based on your experience, and think of any people that may be interested.
- Think about the type of information you would like to receive if you were to volunteer for this position again, and the format you would like to receive it in, e.g. an e-mail, paper file, face-to-face hand over meeting, shadowing at a swim meet, etc.
- Prepare an information pack for the new Swim Meet Announcer to assist them in their role, including a list of any outstanding work/issues, a list of key contacts and any top tips that may help.
- Offer to mentor the new Swim Meet Announcer for an agreed period of time.

Summary

We hope you have found this guide informative. We wish you a great experience in your role and thank you once again for all the time and commitment you are giving to the sport.

swim21

swim21 is the ASA's quality mark for the development of effective, ethical and sustainable clubs. The opportunity to gain swim21 accreditation is available to all ASA affiliated clubs, across any of the aquatic disciplines, regardless of size or activity delivered. swim21 is about creating the best possible aquatic experience for all and raising the quality of aquatic provision across all areas. The swim21 programme enhances club management, strengthens the structures and unites the club with shared goals to ensure the best environment is available for all swimmers.

To find out more about swim21 and the associated benefits, please visit <http://www.swimming.org/asa/clubs-and-members/swim21-accreditation/>.

Equality and diversity

Is your club as inclusive as it could be? Does your club truly reflect the local demographics? Aquatic sports can and should be made accessible to everyone, to the greatest extent possible. Opening your club to everyone will aid with sustainability, add new dimensions to the club's social element, and you may even find talent, in many different forms, where you least expect it. Read more about the ASA's commitment to equality and diversity and find further support for clubs at this link:

<http://www.swimming.org/asa/about-us/equality/>.

Further information

The ASA accepts no liability for any errors or omissions in this resource. Further, whilst it is hoped that volunteers will find this resource useful, no liability arising out of its use can be accepted by the ASA or the club. This resource is not a contract of employment and the role you undertake as a volunteer will not create an employment relationship between you and the club or the ASA.

ASA Volunteering Hub

Did you know that the ASA has a dedicated hub for volunteers? To access this hub, go to www.swimming.org/volunteering or email us at volunteering@swimming.org.

Acknowledgements

The ASA Volunteer Engagement Team are grateful for the contributions of both staff and volunteers who supported the creation of this resource. The knowledge and experience of those involved is vital to ensuring these materials are as beneficial as possible.

Useful links

The ASA

www.swimming.org/asa

ASA Events

nationalevents@swimming.org