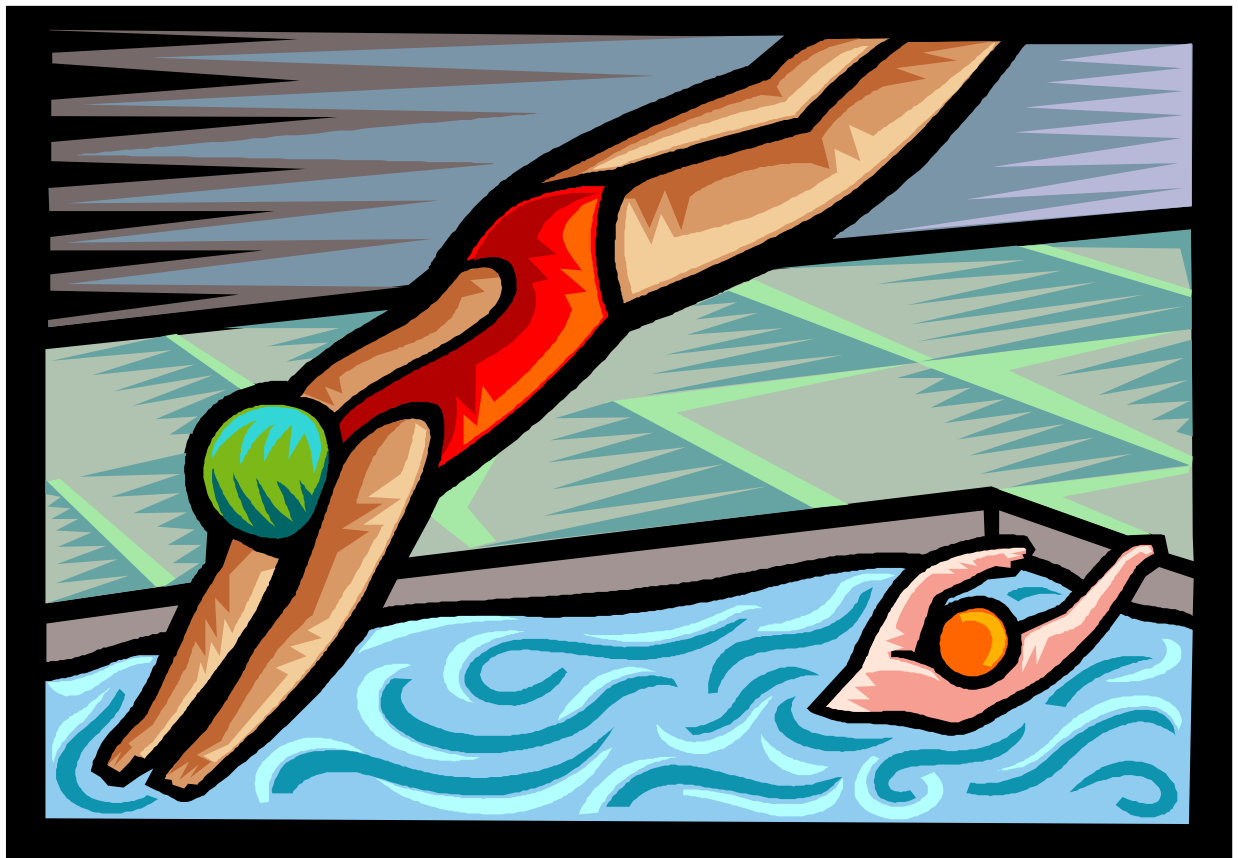


MCSL Relay Carnival

A Referee's Guide



Introduction

Note: The composition of take-off judges for Relay Carnivals has changed starting with the 2021 MCSL season. This guide has been modified to incorporate those changes.

Congratulations! You have been selected as the Referee for your division's relay meet (the "Relay Carnival"). As the Referee, you will have over 40 officials, take-off judges and timers under your responsible charge, each with a different set of responsibilities.

The Relay Carnival is the most complex meet of the season. The key to running a successful meet is proper preparation and the time to start preparing is once you have been notified that you have been selected as the Referee. This guide is intended to help you prepare for this meet.

As you read, please keep the following in mind:

- The information contained in this document serves as a guide of useful suggestions to make Relay Carnivals run more smoothly. The suggestions presented are just that, suggestions. They should not be interpreted as an edict or mandate.
- This document is not a replacement for, nor does it supersede information contained in, the MCSL Handbook or the MCSL Official's Guide. For example, all of the Referee's pre-meet responsibilities are not covered herein. Instead, this guide discusses topics that are unique to a Relay Carnival.
- The content in this document assumes the Relay Carnival is being contested in a pool with only one legal dive end (only one end with a water depth greater than 4 feet). There are Clerk and Referee charts and preformatted take-off sheets for pools with two dive ends available for download from the MCSL web site. (In pools with legal dive ends at both ends of the pool, the number of times that the timers need to rotate can be minimized given that both ends of the pool can be used for dives. However, please remember that in-water starts must still be used as indicated on the charts for appropriate events/relay legs).

Prior to the Meet

Communicate with Host Team Rep

Team Reps usually meet a week prior to the Relay Carnival to select mutually agreeable officials and to determine the warm-up schedule. Ask your team rep for this information if he or she has not already provided it to you. Also ask your team rep for the e-mail address of the team rep of the host pool.

After the officials have been named the Referee should send an e-mail to the host team rep and ask the host team rep for forward that e-mail to the other reps in the division. This e-mail allows you to introduce yourself and communicate the officials and timer/take-off briefing schedule to be followed on the day of the meet. Ask the host team rep to forward you the warm-up schedule if your team rep has not already done so and if you do not already have it, ask for the e-mail address of the Chief Judge.

In addition, also ensure that there will be two starting devices at the meet (one at each end of the pool). Having a starting device at each end of the pool prevents having to physically relocate the starting device for races that start at the other end of the pool.

Two reasons to articulate the briefing schedule in advance are:

- The most challenging aspect to the Relay Carnival is getting everyone together for their respective briefings.
- In order to have adequate time to brief everyone, it is necessary to start briefings prior to the start of the last set of warm-ups. Please remind the team reps of this so they can ensure that all officials/timers/take-off judges are present at least 5 minutes prior to the scheduled start of their briefing.

Now is also a good time to review the rules in the MCSL Handbook and the MCSL Official's Guide, especially the rules that pertain to relays and the Division Relay Meet. Rules that are specific to relays swum at a Relay Carnival are also listed in the Appendix of this guide.

Communicate with Chief Judge

It is a good idea to e-mail the Chief Judge prior to the meet in order to introduce yourself and go over the pre-meet schedule. At your option, you can delegate the Stroke and Turn Briefing to the Chief Judge if he or she is experienced and willing to do the briefing. Allowing the Chief Judge to give the briefing adds some "breathing room" to what is already a packed pre-meet schedule.

If you decide to delegate the S&T briefing to the Chief Judge, use this e-mail to ask the Chief Judge if he/she is willing to give the briefing. Most, if not all, Chief Judges assigned to Relay Carnivals are experienced Referees and should be willing to give the S&T briefing.

Download Take-off Sheets

The league no longer provides division Relay Carnival hosts take-off cards for use during Relay Carnivals. Instead, download and print pre-prepared lane and side take-off sheets. Do not use the dual meet/divisional relay take-off slips. The download link is available on the Officials page of the MCSL web site. There are two take-off sheet packages available for download: one for a majority of relay carnivals where there is only one end of the pool legal for diving and another for pools with two legal dive ends. Be sure to download the correct file.

It is recommended to print the take-off sheets on heavier stock paper. It is also recommended to print an extra copy in case a take-off sheet winds up in the water. Either you can take care of this or you can ask the host team rep to download and print the take-off sheets. Since these take-off sheets are printed on 8.5 by 11 paper, ask the host team rep if they can provide eight full-size clipboards for the take-off judges to use.

These pre-prepared relay take-off sheets are very helpful for the take-off judges and can reduce confusion during Relay Carnivals. The modified take-off sheets contain events and/or exchanges that take-off judges need to observe.

The Day of the Meet

Plan to arrive at the host pool at least an hour and fifteen minutes prior to the start time (typically 15 minutes prior to the first warm-up). This will allow plenty of time to talk to the host team rep and get organized for the meet.

The following schedule serves as a guide for tasks that need to be done prior to the start of the meet (activities listed here will be discussed in the sections that follow):

Minutes prior to start of the meet	Activity
1:00	Meet with Announcer
0:50	Meet with Starter
0:45	Meet with Chief Judge
0:40	Stroke and Turn Briefing (If the Referee gives the briefing, the Chief Judge should still attend)
0:35	Announcer calls for all timers and take-off judges to report for briefing
0:30	Combined briefing for timers and take-off judges (Chief Judge should attend if he/she is not giving the S&T briefing)
0:10	Meet with team reps and coaches
0:05	Starter timer check, all officials in position
0:02	National Anthem

Meet with the Announcer

Ensure that the meet announcer has the warm-up schedule and provide him/her with the officials' briefing schedule. Ask the announcer to announce the start and stop of each team's warm-ups (giving a warning to teams currently in the pool a few minutes prior to the end of warm-ups). Be prepared to help the announcer clear the previous warm-up teams or assign the Starter to assist. Also ask the announcer to call for briefings for officials, timers and take-off judges (people should be called to these briefings five minutes prior to the designated start time).

Print out the Clerk and Referee Chart from the MCSL Meet Management handbook (there is also a copy in the Appendix of this guide) and give a copy to the announcer. After an event concludes where the timers have to move from one end of the pool to the other, ask the announcer to make such an announcement. For example, at the conclusion of event 2, the announcer should announce: "Timers, after recording your times, please move to the deep end of the pool".

The Clerk and Referee chart is also handy because it outlines when the two breaks will occur (after events 11 and 20).

It is also a good idea to remind the announcer of the whistle protocol and to remind him/her to announce the next event after the Referee blows the short whistle chirps.

Meet with Starter

Offer a copy of the “Handy One Page Chart for Referee and Chief Judge” located in the Appendix of this document to the Starter.

In addition to the conversation that would normally occur with the Starter (false start handling, where the Starter wants to stand, etc), discuss the procedure for forward in-water starts for events 21 and 22 (two long whistles, like backstroke starts; at least one hand and foot of each swimmer should be in contact with the wall prior to the start).

The Starter has responsibility for observing relay exchanges that take place at his/her end of the pool to ensure that swimmers entering the water from the deck take no more than one step to get to their starting position (moving the second foot to the same position as the first foot is not considered as having taken a second step) and also to ensure that no individual aides another swimmer by pushing them into the water at the start of a relay leg (for all events except events 10-15 and 21-22). The Starter shall raise his/her hand if he/she observes a violation of these rules. Please make sure that the Starter understands these rules.

Also if the Starter feels comfortable doing so, ask the Starter to record order of finishes of races that finish at the Ref/Starter end of the pool. The order of finish will be used in the extremely unlikely scenario where there are no valid watch times for a lane.

Finally, if there is only one starting device present, remind the starter that the starting device will need to be moved for races that start at the other end of the pool.

Meet With Chief Judge

Also give a copy of the “Handy One Page Chart for Referee and Chief Judge” to the Chief Judge.

Meet with the Chief Judge to discuss procedures to be followed. The Chief Judge is positioned at the end of the pool opposite from where the swimmers are starting and should be positioned diagonally from the Referee. The Chief Judge is responsible for reviewing DQs with S&T Judges at his/her end of the pool as well as determining if there were any dual-confirmed early take-offs at his/her end of the pool. (Note: if both side take-off judges are "clear", then there is no violation and the Chief Judge does not need to check with the lane take-off judges.) For both S&T violations and early take-offs, the Chief Judge should bring completed DQ slips to the Referee for review.

The Chief Judge has responsibility for observing relay exchanges that take place at his/her end of the pool to ensure that swimmers entering the water from the deck take no more than one step to get to their starting position (moving the second foot to the same position as the first foot is not considered as having taken a second step) and also to ensure that no individual aides another swimmer by pushing them into the water at the start of a relay leg (during events 10-15 and 21-22). The Chief Judge shall raise his/her hand if he/she observes a violation of these rules.

The Chief Judge should record the order of finish for events that finish at the opposite end of the pool from where they started (events 1 & 2). Finally, the Chief Judge should signal the Referee with an "all

clear" signal following each event to indicate that any situations at the Chief Judge end of the pool have been dealt with and that the next race can start.

Make sure the Chief Judge (as well as yourself) has some blank DQ cards for any dual confirmed take-off violations.

Brief the Stroke and Turn Officials

Either the Referee or the Chief Judge should give the stroke briefing. Review all of the strokes and discuss the stroke order for medley relays (back, breast, fly, free) and turn/finish rules that pertain to relays.

Review the following rule which falls under the jurisdiction of the Stroke and Turn judges:

- During in-water exchanges, swimmers in the water are not permitted to push off the bottom of the pool. Note that this is not a take-off judge call.

Remind the Stroke and Turn judges that either you or the Chief Judge will take any DQs.

S&Ts should change positions even though there are three judges on each side of the pool. One recommendation is to have the S&Ts switch sides of the pool once during the meet, at the first break. This may help divide up the time the S&Ts are in or out of the sun.

Brief the Timers and Take-Off Judges

As timers and take-off judges assemble, direct the lane timers to stand by lane as a group to your right, ask the deep ("start") end side and lane take-off judges to stand as a group in front of you and ask the shallow ("turn") end side and lane take-off judges to stand to your left. This makes it easy to figure out if anyone is missing. If necessary ask the Team Reps to help locate people who are missing.

If all are present, there should be 18 lane timers (plus the head timer and assistant head timer) to your right, four deep ("start") end take-off judges in front of you and four shallow ("turn") end take-off judges to your left.

Here is a suggested outline for the briefing:

- Thank everyone
- Verify everyone is present (see paragraph above)
- Confirm that timers and take-off judges will work the entire meet. If a timer or take-off judge will not work the entire meet, their replacement should attend the briefing
- Conduct the timer briefing as you would for a dual meet (refer to the MCSL Official's Guide if needed)
- Timers start the meet at the shallow end of the pool for events 1 & 2, return to the shallow end for the 100 meter medley relays, events 10-15, and finish at the shallow end for the last two events, 21 and 22. The announcer will indicate when it is time for timers to move to the opposite end of the pool.
- Once the timer briefing has concluded, timers can be dismissed

- Brief the take-off judges
 - Go over take-off judge position and jurisdiction. There are four take-off judges on the start (deep) end and four take-off judges on the turn (shallow) end of the pool. Side take-off judges are positioned on the outside of lanes 1 and 6, respectively. Lane take-off judges are positioned between lanes 3 and 4. Each pair of side and lane take-off judges have jurisdiction over three lanes (either lanes 1-3 or lanes 4-6). Take-off judges with jurisdiction over the same lanes shall not be from the same team.
 - Take-off judges remain in place for the entire meet. Take-off judges do not change position when lane timers rotate to the other end of the pool.
 - Watch the outgoing swimmer, once the outgoing swimmer's feet lose contact with the deck or wall, look to see if the incoming swimmer has touched. If the incoming swimmer has not touched, it is an early take-off
 - Notes for in-water exchanges: the outgoing swimmer may be in motion as long as one or both feet remain in contact with the wall until the incoming swimmer has touched. If the foot or feet leave before the incoming swimmer touches, that is an early take-off. As before, watch the outgoing swimmer leave the wall and then look to see if the incoming swimmer has touched.
 - For in-water exchanges, outgoing swimmers are allowed to move to get out of the way of incoming swimmers
 - Take-off judges should not raise their hand if they observe an early take-off or make any comment or outward indication that an early take-off has occurred. Dual confirmation from the side and lane take-off judge is required to disqualify a relay team.
 - Circle the good exchanges on the take-off sheet and mark an "X" through any early-take off exchanges that are observed.
 - Inform the take-off judges that the Referee and Chief Judge will first look to side take-off judges at the conclusion of each event. Side take-off judges should give a discreet thumbs-up if exchanges were ok (the side take-off judge positioned next to the Referee/Chief Judge can just tell them whether everything was ok). If a side take-off judge noted an early take-off, the Referee/Chief Judge will approach the appropriate lane take-off judge for dual confirmation. If there are no side take-off violations, then the Referee/Chief Judge will not check with the lane take-off judges.

Introduce yourself to automation team

Introduce yourself to the automation workers (there should be one automation worker from each team in the division). Ask them to bring items to you that require your attention (for example, if a new relay record is set or if it is discovered that a swimmer is not on a team roster). Thank the automation team and let them know that you will be by to check in with them during the two scheduled breaks.

Meet with Coaches and Team Reps

There is no scratch meeting for a Relay Carnival. However, you may not have had an opportunity to work with all of the coaches or reps in your division and this meeting will serve to introduce yourself.

You should bring copies of the Clerk and Referee chart. The goal is to keep this briefing as short and crisp as possible.

Below is a suggested list of items to cover:

- Introduce yourself
- Acknowledge who will be signing off on DQs
- Poll teams for any swimmers with disabilities or anything else that the Referee should be aware of
- Ask coaches if there are any relays that will be no swims.
- Offer copies of the Clerk and Referee chart to coaches
- Have coaches remind swimmers participating in in-water exchanges to push off end wall, not the bottom

During the Meet

Here are some things to keep in mind as you are running the meet:

- Keep your eyes on the pool at all times and watch for the S&T's raised hands signaling a potential disqualification
- Record order of finish for races that finish at your end of the pool (unless the Starter has agreed to do so).
- Once you have dealt with any possible DQs or early take-offs on your end of the pool, look for a thumbs-up or thumbs-down from the Chief Judge. If the Chief Judge indicates a possible disqualification, approach the Chief Judge and ask the Chief Judge to describe the violation and to recommend whether the disqualification should be accepted. Do not start the next race unless you have the "all-clear" from the Chief Judge and all matters pertaining to the current race have been dealt with.
- Remember that both the lane and side take-off judges must sign DQ slips for dual confirmed early take-off violations. This is especially important during Relay Carnivals as the take-off sheets remain with the take-off judges; the take-off sheets do not get attached to the DQ slips.
- The DQ slip must contain the relay swimmer number (1-4) and the team name. This will be straightforward for dual confirmed early take-offs because the take-off sheet will indicate the early exchange. It also will be straightforward for stroke violations in Medley Relays (Backstroke swimmer is swimmer 1, breaststroke swimmer is 2, butterfly swimmer is 3, freestyle swimmer is 4). However, you will need to ensure the correct swimmer number is written on the DQ card for a stroke violation in a freestyle relay. The Chief Judge can fill in this information for DQs taken on his/her side of the pool.
- As in dual meets, any DQs (including take-off violations) must be acknowledged by the team's coach or designee prior to the start of the next event and then the DQ shall be immediately delivered to automation.

- Check in with the Chief Judge during the breaks. Ask him/her how they feel the meet is running. Ensure that there are no outstanding problems or situations that need to be dealt with.
- Check in with the automation team during the breaks.
- Check the posted results during the breaks and reconcile any DQs listed in the results with your notes. Notify automation of any discrepancies.
- Have fun! This is a very exciting meet!

After the Meet

- Thank all timers, take-off judges and officials.
- Verify one more time that disqualifications in the posted results agree with your notes.
- Check in one final time with the automation team and ask if there are any outstanding situations that are preventing them from determining a final score.
- Thank the host rep for all of his/her hard work.
- After the final score is announced, remain available with the host team rep as the reps from other teams sign the Relay Carnival paperwork. (As a Referee, you need to be on-hand for 30 minutes after the scoring has been completed in case a team wants to file a protest or has questions concerning the technical rules of swimming. Remaining available with the host team rep as the teams sign the paperwork is a good way to determine if a coach wants to file a protest because they will usually tell you at that time).
- If a coach approaches you to discuss a situation, be courteous and hear the coach out. Remember the coaches are being advocates for their swimmers. Don't be afraid to ask the coach to give you a minute to consult the rules – the coach will respect you for wanting to provide an accurate interpretation/resolution to the question being posed.
- If a situation arose that seems out of the norm or if a situation arose that you think may result in a protest, write down accurate notes about what happened. These notes should include a chronology of what happened, who you spoke with as well as a record of any decisions that you made and why that decision was made. Do this immediately while the situation is fresh in your mind. This way you will have an accurate accounting of the situation should you be contacted about it sometime in the future.

Acknowledgements

The league would like to thank the following officials who were the original authors of this guide: Steve Bajorek (CLM), Morgan Hurley (MW), Barb Ship (TW), and Scott Witkin (OM). We'd like to also acknowledge the following officials who reviewed drafts of this document and provided feedback: Bill Pritchard (PA) and Sam Roberts (MO).

The MCSL Clinics Committee welcomes your suggestions for improvements to this document. Please e-mail your suggestions to clinics@mcsl.org.

Appendix – Rules Pertaining to Relay Races

The following is taken from the MCSL Handbook, “MCSL Technical Rules”, as applies for Relay Carnivals.

1. No swimmer shall swim more than one leg in any relay event.
2. In relay races a swimmer other than the first swimmer shall not start until his/her teammate has concluded his/her leg.
3. Any relay team member and his/her relay team shall be disqualified from a race if a team member other than the swimmer designated to swim that leg enters the pool in the area where the race is being conducted before all swimmers of all teams have finished the race. Exception: when an in-the-water start is required or such start is approved by the Referee.
4. Each relay team member shall leave the water promptly upon finishing his/her leg, except the last member.
5. In relay exchanges, the team of a swimmer whose feet have lost touch with the deck or whose body has lost contact with the wall (for in-water relay exchanges) before his/her preceding teammate touches the wall shall be disqualified. This falls under the jurisdiction of the relay take-off judges.
6. A swimmer may not take more than one step during the forward start of his/her relay leg to get to their starting position. Moving the second foot to the same position as the first foot is not considered as having taken a second step. This rule falls under the jurisdiction of the Starter and Chief Judge for Relay Carnivals.
7. The 175 meter graduated freestyle relay shall be swum in the following order:
 - a. 2 lengths 9-10 year olds
 - b. 2 lengths 11-12 year olds
 - c. 2 lengths 13-14 year olds
 - d. 1 length 8 and under
8. The 250 meter crescendo freestyle relay shall be swum in the following order:
 - a. 1 length 8 and under
 - b. 2 lengths 11-12 year olds
 - c. 4 lengths 15-18 year olds
 - d. 2 lengths 13-14 year olds
 - e. 1 length 9-10 year olds
9. Events 10 and 11 (14 and under boys and girls graduated medley relay) requires one swimmer from each of the age groups: 8 and under, 9-10, 11-12 and 13-14. Any of the age groups may swim any stroke (relay leg), but all four age groups must be represented.
10. All 100 meter medley events shall start in the shallow end. The mixed 8 and under freestyle relay shall start in the deep end. There must be two in-water starts for each 100 meter relay. All swimmers starting their leg of a relay in the shallow end must use an in-water start.
11. For pools with no shallow end (4 feet or deeper at both ends), a “shallow” end must be designated.

Appendix – Handy Charts

CLERK AND REFEREE CHART – Swimmer and Timer Locations¹

Event #	Description	Swimmers start	Race Ends-timers stand
1	Boys 175M Graduated Free ²	Deep End-all	Shallow End
2	Girls 175M Graduated Free	Deep End-all	Shallow End
3	Mixed 15-18 200M Free	Deep End-all	Deep End
4	Mixed 13-14 200M Free	Deep End-all	Deep End
5	Mixed 8&U 100m Free	Deep end–dive #1,3 Shallow end–in water #2, 4	Deep End
6	Mixed 9-10 200M Free	Deep End-all	Deep End
7	Mixed 11-12 200M Free	Deep End-all	Deep End
8	Boys Open 200M Medley	Deep End-all	Deep End
9	Girls Open 200M Medley	Deep End-all	Deep End
10	Boys 100M Graduated Medley	Shallow end–in water #1,3 (back and fly) Deep end–dive #2,4 (Breast and Free)	Shallow end
11	Girls 100M Graduated Medley	Shallow end–in water #1,3 (back and fly) Deep end–dive #2,4 (breast and free)	Shallow end
TEN MINUTE BREAK			
12	Boys 8&U 100M Medley	Shallow end–in water #1,3 (back and fly) Deep end–dive #2,4 (breast and free)	Shallow End
13	Girls 8&U 100M Medley	Shallow end–in water #1,3 (back and fly) Deep end–dive #2,4 (breast and free)	Shallow End
14	Boys 9-10 100M Medley	Shallow end–in water #1,3 (back and fly) Deep end–dive #2,4 (breast and free)	Shallow End
15	Girls 9-10 100M Medley	Shallow end–in water #1,3 (back and fly) Deep end–dive #2,4 (breast and free)	Shallow End
16	Mixed 15-18 200M Medley	Deep End-all	Deep End
17	Boys 11-12 200M Medley	Deep End-all	Deep End
18	Girls 11-12 200M Medley	Deep End-all	Deep End
19	Boys 13-14 200M Medley	Deep End-all	Deep End
20	Girls 13-14 200M Medley	Deep End-all	Deep End
TEN MINUTE BREAK			
21	Boys 250M Crescendo Free ³	Shallow End-in water #1 Deep End-#2,3,4,5	Shallow End
22	Girls 250M Crescendo Free	Shallow End-in water #1 Deep End-#2,3,4,5	Shallow End

¹ As taken from the MCSL Meet Management Handbook (“Green Book”)

² 2 lengths 9-10s, 2 lengths 11-12s, 2 lengths 13-14s, 1 length 8&u

³ 1 length 8&u, 2 lengths 11-12s, 4 lengths 15-18s, 2 lengths 13-14s, 1 length 9-10s

Handy One Page Chart for Referee and Chief Judge⁴

Event	Distance	Swimmers	Start	Timers	Deep End TOJs	Shall End TOJs	Takeoffs occur at....
1	175	deep	deep	shallow	work deep end		deep end
2	175	deep	deep	shallow	work deep end		deep end
3	200	deep	deep	deep	work deep end		deep end
4	200	deep	deep	deep	work deep end		deep end
5	100	deep #1 and #3, shallow in water #2 and #4	deep	deep	work deep end	work shallow end	both
6	200	deep	deep	deep	work deep end		deep end
7	200	deep	deep	deep	work deep end		deep end
8	200	deep	deep	deep	work deep end		deep end
9	200	deep	deep	deep	work deep end		deep end
10	100	shallow in water #1 & 3 (back/fly), deep end #2 & 4 (breast/free)	shallow	shallow	work deep end	work shallow end	both
11	100	shallow in water #1 & 3 (back/fly), deep end #2 & 4 (breast/free)	shallow	shallow	work deep end	work shallow end	both
12	100	shallow in water #1 & 3 (back/fly), deep end #2 & 4 (breast/free)	shallow	shallow	work deep end	work shallow end	both
13	100	shallow in water #1 & 3 (back/fly), deep end #2 & 4 (breast/free)	shallow	shallow	work deep end	work shallow end	both
14	100	shallow in water #1 & 3 (back/fly), deep end #2 & 4 (breast/free)	shallow	shallow	work deep end	work shallow end	both
15	100	shallow in water #1 & 3 (back/fly), deep end #2 & 4 (breast/free)	shallow	shallow	work deep end	work shallow end	both
16	200	deep	deep	deep	work deep end		deep end
17	200	deep	deep	deep	work deep end		deep end
18	200	deep	deep	deep	work deep end		deep end
19	200	deep	deep	deep	work deep end		deep end
20	200	deep	deep	deep	work deep end		deep end
21	250	shallow in water #1, deep end 2,3,4,5	shallow	shallow	work deep end		deep end
22	250	shallow in water #1, deep end 2,3,4,5	shallow	shallow	work deep end		deep end

⁴ Chart provided courtesy of Barb Ship