

## **ERRORS WITHIN MEET RESULTS**

Jan Cartmill, July 16, 2006

Hosting a Sanctioned Meet has been likened to a wet snowball rolling downhill. The further it goes along, the larger it gets. This is especially true when there are unnecessary errors in the original meet database. These errors can and almost always result in many more hours of labor within the MS Office trying to correct the meet databases so they can be loaded without problem into SWIMS (the USA National Times Database) and MS TMO.

In my role of uploading MS Sanctioned, Observed and Approved meet results to SWIMS, I have recently encountered some issues which need to be discussed and resolved. Remember that the SWIMS software is specifically designed to catch items that may have been omitted (relay names, for example). It is not designed to detect rule violations.

### **Here are some of the issues I've encountered:**

- In a meet on June 16, 2006, 2 relays were made up of 4 swimmers who were UNATTACHED—these swims were noted to be “exhibition.”
- In a meet on June 23, 2006, 2 additional relays entered by the same coach of the same group of unattached athletes swam—these swims were also noted to be “exhibition.” It thus appears that this unattached coach does not know that unattached relays are not allowed in USA Swimming sanctioned meets. See USA Rule 102.4.1 (page 24).
- In a meet on June 16, 2006, 1 relay was composed of 3 athletes from a team plus 1 “unattached” athlete. The unattached athlete is a member of another FINA who is competing unattached this summer so that she can compete with her home country in some international events later this summer. This swim was noted to be “exhibition.”
- Also in the same meet another relay was composed of 3 11-12 year old athletes and a fourth athlete from another age group. The event was said to be the 11-12 200 Free Relay. This swim was noted to be “exhibition.”
- In a meet on July 7, 2006, athletes were allowed to swim in events outside their age group. (See USA Rule 205.2.4. which requires swimmers to swim in their own age groups except in very limited exceptions). For example, several 13 & O events had results for swimmers who are 10, 11 or 12. When I asked the meet host why these athletes were allowed to do this, the meet host replied: *“Since our meet was not full we let some of the younger swimmers swim as exhibition for times or for the experience. I hope we didn't do something wrong? I thought this was ok if they were exhibition.”*

**The problem(s):**

- All of the above instances create problems for SWIMS and TMO. SWIMS accepts times from events that are swum as exhibition. As I understand it, swims may be designated as exhibition swims to prevent them from being used for awards or scoring. The purpose of exhibition swims is not to allow the violation of USA Swimming Rules. Exhibition swims are considered to be legal (i.e. "official") times within SWIMS and it is expected that the USA Swimming rules have been followed.
- Unattached relays are illegal swims per article 102.4.1 and swimmers may not compete in age group events which do not correspond to their age (except in a few specific situations) as per article 205.2.4.
- I have deleted the results for these particular swims so that they will not be uploaded into SWIMS. Nor will they be loaded into TMO. This creates potential problems (i.e. phone calls, emails, etc.) as parents usually expect to see the results from their athletes' performances in all events.
- It is possible that illegal swims that I do not detect will be loaded directly into SWIMS and will be eligible for records and USA Top 16 if they are fast enough. Wouldn't it be embarrassing to discover that MS had a time on the USA Swimming Top 16 list from an illegal swim?
- Meet results are sent to me and to the MS website by meet hosts at the same time; therefore, the MS website results do not, in some cases, correspond to the results that are loaded into SWIMS. Again, this creates phone calls and emails.
- Coaches and team administrators load meet results from the website and use them for proofs for meets (state, sectional, etc). In some cases, these times may not be found in SWIMS or in the SMQTDB.

**Possible Solutions:**

- Ask the referees to review exception reports from Meet Manager (e.g., Relay Ages, Incorrect Ages, Event/Athlete, Sex/Age Mismatches) AND all relays at the conclusion of the meet. Correct any errors or omissions.
- Communicate in a timely manner. Sometimes the work of the meet director and/or the meet referee is not completely finished when the meet is over. Please respond quickly if you are called with questions about meet results – others are depending on these results getting into SWIMS and/or TMO for entries into other meets.
- Possibly delay sending meet results to Gary Strickler until they've been checked out and uploaded to SWIMS.
- Other solutions.