BRITISH Swimming

SWIMMING OFFICIALS GROUP

DECK & AOE REFEREE (Control Room Supervisor) PROTOCOL

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. At various levels of competition, it is common practice to utilise two Referees, one operating on the pool deck and one to oversee the operation of the Automatic Officiating Equipment (AOE). The working relationship between these two functions is not defined in swimming rules but has by custom and practise evolved at International events. This Protocol's purpose is to bring a similar method of operation into swimming events within British Swimming. At all levels of competition, as Officials we all have a responsibility to ensure that races are judged effectively and efficiently in order to assist in the smooth running of a Promoter's schedule. Adoption of this Protocol will assist in reducing or preventing delay.

1.2. As in all sports, there can only be one person in charge of a race, that person being the Referee as defined in FINA SW 2.1. This person operates on the deck and controls all aspects of the race. In British Swimming, the term 'AOE Referee' is often heard; in FINA language, this role most closely relates to the Control Room Supervisor, whose responsibilities are listed at SW 2.2. For the purposes of this Protocol, the Official overseeing the AOE operation is referred to as the "Control Room Supervisor" (CRS). Some of the FINA listed duties of the role may not be undertaken by the CRS, the main function of the role being to oversee the functioning of the AOE.

1.3. The various types of AOE systems available today have common features, which will enable the CRS to give the Referee an early indication of a potential AOE fault or failure. They are likely to provide a selection of information dependent upon the specification, e.g. start delay, relay exchange timing, primary (pad) time, back-up time via either operator-controlled push button or overhead camera, visual display for the operator of a preset difference between primary and back-up times. Both the Referee and CRS must be aware of the specification of the particular equipment being operated.

1.4. Normally where AOE is fitted at a facility, it is in conjunction with a scoreboard display. Scoreboards are supplied with a wide range of capability from basic numerical display of times to colour alphanumerical displays capable of displaying video images. The scoreboard display is primarily for the information of the spectators; it should not be used as a definitive source of information for a Referee. This Protocol includes a suggested display sequence, which will assist in ensuring that clear information is given to spectators and those on the pool deck alike.

2. AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

2.1. **Deck Referee** The person in charge of a race as stated is the Referee. One of the purposes of the use of the term CRS is to remove any possible doubt that there is only one Referee for a race. Whilst having responsibility to determine the result of the race the Referee has many aides to assist in the decision making process. On the deck, there are a number of Technical Officials observing the swimmers and reporting rule infringements, together with Finish Judges and Timekeepers acting as a manual back-up should the AOE fail.

2.2. **Control Room Supervisor (CRS)** The CRS is the person who is monitoring the operation of the AOE throughout the race. In conjunction with the AOE Operator, they will be able to give an indication to the Referee as to whether there is reason to consider that there has been a failure in the equipment. The Referee and CRS should establish at the outset what degree of delegated responsibility the Referee gives the CRS to allow the AOE Operator to apply manual operations.

3. WORKING RELATIONSHIP

3.1. At the outset of a race the scoreboard is, where possible, set in 'Lane Order' display. That is to say that the fixed figures on the board relate to the Lane number. At each contact of a touch pad, the scoreboard adds the position and time to the lane on the display.

3.2. Throughout a race, the Referee is monitoring not only the swimmers in the pool but also the Technical Officials around the pool. At a higher level competition there may be in excess of 20 officials around the pool. The more officials present the greater the Referee's role will be as a team supervisor, observing the officiating team for early indication of an infringement report, rather than watching the swimmers in the water. Such division of areas of observation must be dependent upon the prevailing circumstances. As the race progresses the Referee may be in a position to confirm lane disqualifications to the CRS.

3.3. During the race, the CRS is overseeing the AOE operation ensuring that all turns, relay exchanges, finishes and back-up times are correctly recorded. The CRS should give the Referee an early indication as to whether there has been a potential AOE failure.

3.4. At the end of a race the Referee will scan the poolside to ensure that all Technical Officials are in place and to ensure that all rule infringement reports have been assessed and disqualifications notified to the CRS – it is not necessary at this stage for the Referee to confer with Finish Judges. The CRS at the same time is assessing the AOE result seeking to confirm that it has operated correctly. When both the Referee and CRS have carried out their initial duty, they will confer. If the CRS confirms to the Referee that where necessary the AOE Operator has inserted disqualifications, and that the system operated correctly, the Referee will confirm the result.

3.5. At this point, the scoreboard should, if possible, be updated into 'Place Order' i.e. the fixed numbers change from being the lane number to become the place number and the range of timings running from fastest to slowest. This gives a visual indication to spectators that the result is confirmed.

3.6. It is vital for the communication between Referee and CRS to be prompt and accurate; the use of radios is considered good practice. Where visual signals are given, they should be discreet. The CRS should alert the Referee at the earliest possible opportunity of a system malfunction dependent upon the delegated powers allowed to the CRS.

3.7. If for example a primary touch does not register, the CRS should inform the Referee of all relevant information to assist in determining the race result. This to include informing the Referee of the position the back-up time would place the swimmer. It is at this stage the Referee will confer with Finish Judges in order to identify the relevant lane(s) finish position and confirm the finish order placing information to the CRS.

3.8. The CRS must be alert to where the difference between a primary time and a back-up time is greater than the pre-set tolerance built into the timing system. Such a difference may for instance be an indication of a 'soft touch' by a swimmer. If persistent on the same lane, it may indicate a fault with either the equipment or manual timekeeper technique. Such differences should be notified to the Referee, especially if use of the back-up time would alter a swimmer's position.

3.9. In circumstances where the Referee has resorted to a manual process to determine a lane(s) position, the CRS should oversee the AOE Operator's actions to ensure that only those times authorised by the Referee are altered in order to achieve the required finish order. When this process has been completed, the scoreboard should be updated to display the race details in 'Place Order'.

4. SUMMARY

4.1. For the processes described in this Protocol to operate in an efficient manner, the understanding of the working roles and relationship of the Referee and Control Room Supervisor is essential.

4.2. Where the Referee has a larger team of officials to help in the decision-making process, cognisance has to be given to all roles and working practices amended as necessary. AOE will establish the finish order of a race unless the Referee deems it to have broken down, or in some way failed. The first point of reference in making that determination should be the Control Room Supervisor. Should there be an indication of failure <u>then</u> refer to manual methods of recorded places and times.