

Warm-up Philosophy v. Rules

Warm-up sessions are intended to provide swimmers a safe opportunity to physically and mentally prepare themselves to compete. To best facilitate this, supervised, structured meet warm-up plans were developed by Lake Erie Swimming in the late 1980's.

For your reference, meet warm-up guidelines can be found in the LESI Safety Manual and in Section 5.7.4 A – H of the LESI Official Policy & Procedures. Reviewing them should be a priority task upon accepting the Meet Safety Director position.

Like many sets of rules, in many people's minds these become an institution in and of themselves, independent of their intent. As a USA Swimming volunteer it is essential to keep the intent of the warm-ups in mind and ALWAYS give the benefit to the swimmer when there is room to do so.

Clearly there will be times when the published rules need to be adhered to, such as when the pool is teaming with swimmers and when allowing some of the examples below to take place would create an unsafe environment.

- It has been customary that swimmers in sprint-start lanes exit at the turn end of the pool. This is practical in a short course environment or in a long course situation when the pool is teaming with swimmers. However, if a swimmer can safely cross through lanes and exit part way down a long course pool, let it go.
- Many lane marshals have the impression that swimmers may not stop to rest at the pool's end. That is inconsistent with the necessary coaching that must take place in a warm-up environment, to say nothing of the need to rest periodically. So stopping to rest must be accommodated as long as those doing so don't interfere with others who are still trying to complete a warm-up set. If those resting get in the way of those still swimming, asking them to either exit temporary or go to the shallow end and stand to the side is appropriate. If there are not too many doing it so as to get in the way, hanging on to the wall at the start end is workable too.
- Many lane marshals are under the impression that passing is not permitted in the circle swimming or pace lanes. It is!
- Philosophy notwithstanding, short of an emergency situation, hanging on the lane lines can't be permitted because of the potential damage that can occur. We use facilities owned by others and have to take care of them.
- The foregoing is presented to arm you with information about situations that have caused problems in the warm-up environment when lane marshals have not been adequately briefed. Pass it on!

