

A Note to **New Judges** in NVSL (Maybe, some more experienced ones too)

As the NVSL Dive Chief Official, I wanted to offer you some insight and advice. Last year we had 2334 divers in NVSL – that’s the most since I’ve been keeping records from 1998. Let’s give each of these divers the opportunity to compete equitably. NVSL has a great reputation for judging “according to the standards of diving.” As new judges, each of you are now charged with maintaining that reputation of excellence.

We are ready to begin the 2022 NVSL Dive season and you have (I hope) joined us at one of the Judging Clinics. For first time judges, you will have the best seat at the pool; here are a few hints at your first time in the “seat.”

1. Be scared – be very, very scared (it’s only natural); but do your best in applying the standards of dive to EVERY diver, from both teams.
2. Don’t let other judges intimidate you; listen to your referee’s pre-meet instructions and apply the standards fairly.
3. But also rely on more experienced judges and referees for guidance on applying the standards of dive – the more you see, the better you will be able to judge how well dives are executed. Go to practices and ask the coaches for advice on judging as well.
4. Remember that both the high and low score are eliminated, but don’t always try to be in the middle – judge what you see and award the score that you believe reflects the diver’s skill set.
5. Reward performance, not effort. That’s the same as NOT judging the degree of difficulty, but judging the QUALITY of the dive. Just because a dive is “hard” does not mean it deserves more points.
6. Don’t be afraid to throw a high or a low score (base on your understanding of the standards) – every judge has the obligation to be fair. Elite divers may do poor dives and developing divers may do exceptional dives – judge quality of each dive, not the diver’s reputation.
7. Develop confidence in your scoring; be able to explain why you gave a score.
8. Finally, lose sleep over the scores you threw (I know I did). If you don’t, you are not seriously growing as a judge. At the beginning, I used to agonize over ½ points that I awarded, for any diver. Don’t necessarily take it to that extreme (or not), but do a self-evaluation of your scoring and see if it could be better. Improve your discrimination of diving standards.
9. And really, finally – have fun! This is great sport for your sons and daughters to compete in. As the NVSL Handbook states:

The Northern Virginia Swimming League was founded in 1956 to sponsor competitive swimming and diving events and activities among community swimming pools of Northern Virginia, and to develop in the children participating in this program — A love for the sport, advanced aquatic skills, teamwork, and the principles of good sportsmanship.

I look forward to seeing you all on deck.

Jim Sweeder
NVSL Dive
Chief Official