

When to Expunge the Fault of the Swimmer for an Official's Error.

This article was prepared by Paul Jenkins and published in the January 2000 Newsletter "Off the Blocks".

I was asked a while ago why was the expunged statement moved and reworded in the rulebook. Remember back in the previous rule book it was stated "if an error by an official follows a fault by a swimmer, the fault of the swimmer is expunged". This statement was in the paragraph under the Starting heading yet was frequently used to give swimmers the benefit whenever an error by an official followed a potential infraction of a swimmer. In other words it was applied on many occasions other than starting for which it was originally intended. For this reason, the statement was removed from the starting section and inserted in the Disqualification and Withdrawal section.

The wording has also been changed to 'if an error by an official follows a fault by a competitor, the fault by the competitor may be expunged'.

This gives the Referee the option of proceeding with a disqualification in the event the error by an official is not associated with the competitors infraction. A case in point might be, if a Stroke Judge incorrectly completes the Disqualification Slip, with the wrong event number for instance, the Referee might have decided to expunge the fault of the swimmer. Now, the Referee can decide if it was only a clerical error and the correct swimmer has been identified and the disqualification can go ahead. The Referee does not have to automatically expunge the fault of the swimmer as in the past. However, if a starter inadvertently recalls for a false start, the Referee should expunge the fault of the competitor.

So, if the fault by the swimmer has no connection or association with the error by an official, the disqualification stands...