

# Advancing Through the Canadian Judging System L. Furniss

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Here are the basic requirements and expectations for each level of judging starting at level 1 and finishing with a FINA "A" rating:

## **Level 1**

A beginning judge must first attend all sessions of the level 1 judges' training course and complete all required tasks as assigned by the course conductor. In order to be fully certified, the candidate must practice judge the minimum number of figures and routine events as required by the province and achieve a satisfactory evaluation for each. Once certified, then the judge must remain active by judging at several meets each year and attending workshops/seminars or clinics when offered. A judge must recertify every 2 years in order to maintain the level 1 rating.

The provincial judges' committee will review annually each judge's log book and decide if the judge is ready to attend a level 2 clinic. If the judge is active and has satisfactory evaluations, then the judge will be encouraged to upgrade.

## **Level 2**

In order to upgrade to level 2, the judge must attend all sessions of the level 2 judges' training course and complete all required tasks as assigned by the course conductor. Upon completion of this course, the judge must practice judge figures and routines at higher level provincial competitions as required by the province and continue to be actively judging at other meets throughout the year. As a level 2 judge, you might be named as head judge on a panel which would include having you lead the panel discussion and be responsible for any written feedback for figures. At this level, it is expected that you would also attend extra clinics offered in the province. In order to maintain the level 2 rating, you must recertify every 2 years.

The provincial judges' committee will review annually each judge's log book and decide if the judge is ready to be invited to upgrade to level 3. If the judge is very active and has satisfactory evaluations or better, then the judge will be encouraged to upgrade and a written request from the provincial chair will be sent to the national committee (Synchro Canada Officials' Team) for approval.

### Level 3

At the fall meeting, the Synchro Canada Officials' Team (SCOT) will determine if the application of the nominee for upgrade is accepted. The SCOT certification leader will then send a letter to the nominee(s) to let them know that they are accepted and what the next steps would be.

In order to upgrade, the candidate must practice judge 1 full figures event and a minimum of 7 routine events (prelims and finals) at the Qualification meet, Espoir or the Canadian Open. You will be formally evaluated and must receive a satisfactory or better evaluation in figures, and at least a 65% overall in routines with the majority of events 60% or better. When you are at the meet, there will also be a written exam for which you must receive 85%. Once all these criteria have been met, then you will be certified as a level 3 judge. Note that once certified, your first year assignments will most likely be as an alternate on the panels.

As a level 3, you will be assigned a national level competition (the Qualification meet or Espoir) at least once every 2 years. You will be formally evaluated at these meets and be expected to maintain the same overall %age requirements as above or show improvement. You are also expected to continue to be active in your province by judging, taking part in clinics either as a participant or as a presenter. The more you can do within your province, the better are your chances for moving up to the next level.

To recertify as a level 3 judge, you need to write an exam as determined by the SCOT certification leader, which is usually every 4 years or when FINA makes rule changes. Your goal as a recertified level 3 is to aim for 70% on both figures and routines.

### Level 4

To move to a level 4 judge, you will be invited by the national SCOT certification and evaluation leaders, based on your activity level as well as having at least 2 consecutive years of formal evaluations which are close to 75% or better in both figures and routines. Once invited, you will need to write an exam at the Qualification meet, Espoir or the Canadian Open and receive 90% or better. You will also be assigned figures and routine events by the SCOT panels' leader and must receive 75% or better on the formal evaluations for figures and routines with the majority of events with 70% or better. Note that you can only practice judge if you attend the Canadian Open.

**Level 4** - continued

Once you are fully certified as a level 4, then you will be assigned to judge at national competitions, usually each year. The first time you are selected to judge at the Canadian Open, you will most likely be used as the alternate.

To recertify as a level 4 judge, you need to write an exam as determined by the SCOT certification leader, which is usually every 4 years or when FINA makes rule changes. Your goal as a recertified level 4 is to aim for 80% on both figures and routines.

**To move on to international judging, FINA has stipulated that each federation is only allowed to have 5 "G" level judges, 5 B's and 5 A's.**

**Level 5** International Trainee

When there are openings on the FINA "G" judge list for Canada, then the Synchro Canada International Officials Team will ask the SCOT committee for a certain number of level 4 candidates who might be considered to be trained as a level 5. These candidates must be very knowledgeable, extremely active at the national and provincial levels and have 4 or more very strong formal evaluations . Those candidates will then be asked to submit a resume to the international officials team(SCIOT). If any of these candidates are selected for further consideration, then they will be given a written assignment plus have an oral interview with the SCIOT panel consisting of the Canadian FINA representative, Canadian international officials' leader, a past Olympic judge and the Chief Operating Officer for Synchro Canada. Some of the criteria for selection by the committee are, synchro knowledge, experience, leadership skills, stress management, interpersonal and communication skills, flexibility and willingness to learn etc.....

Once this process is complete, then the SCIOT panel will decide if any of the candidates will be accepted as a level 5 trainee. If chosen, then the trainee can be selected to judge and travel with an experienced level 5 judge to international meets. These meets are usually ones that Canadian clubs are attending.

### **FINA G**

A level 5 judge must attend a FINA judges' school and write an exam.

Note: Usually a judges' school is offered on each continent and Synchro Canada will hopefully assist with funding.

As soon as the judge has been successful and passed the exam, then Synchro Canada can request that FINA add their name(s) to the FINA "G" list.

To maintain the FINA "G" rating, the judge must have 4 positive evaluations at 4 international meets over 4 consecutive years, attend judges' school and pass an exam every 4 years.

### **FINA B**

The FINA technical committee will meet annually and determine if any G judges are ready to be upgraded to FINA "B". Their decision is based on good evaluations and an overall lack of bias from 4 international meets, over 4 year consecutive years. These meets must be a variety of junior and senior level competitions.

To maintain the FINA "B" rating, the judge must have 4 positive evaluations at 4 international meets over 4 consecutive years, attend judges' school and pass an exam every 4 years.

### **FINA A**

During the FINA technical committee annual meeting, they will also determine if any B judges are ready to be upgraded to FINA "A". Their decision is based on good evaluations and an overall lack of bias from 4 international meets, over 4 year consecutive years. At least 2 must be senior level meets.

To maintain the FINA "A" rating, the judge must have 4 positive evaluations at 4 international meets over 4 consecutive years and write a judges' exam every 4 years.

**\* At any time, FINA has the option of downgrading a judge due to their having several weak evaluations and/or being extremely biased. FINA now has a mandatory retirement the year you turn 65.**

#### **FINA Olympic Judge**

FINA selects 14 international "A" judges (plus 1 deck official who can be used as a judge) for the Olympics. They try to have representation from all continents and select only those who are very experienced, have judged at several high level FINA competitions and have very good evaluations. A maximum of one judge can be selected from any one country.

As you can see, it takes many years to progress through the different levels of judging. Only those who have reached the requirements at each level can expect to have the opportunity to advance through the system.

Always remember that it takes a lot of hard work and commitment to reach the highest levels in judging synchronized swimming.

#### **Here are some tips for self-improvement:**

- Always keep up to date and be in possession of the most current FINA manual.
- Attend clinics, seminars, conferences etc. as offered by the province and Synchro Canada.
- Be active and judge as often as possible.

- Be reliable and honour your judging assignments.
- Be ethical and avoid any conflicts of interest.
- Take advantage of any mentorship program that might be offered at national level meets.
- Review current routines (on DVD's, websites etc.) from different competitions, especially at the international level.
- Seek advice from the more experienced judges and be willing to learn.
- Take the initiative to be an observer or volunteer at higher level competitions such as national championships, national team trials or international meets which are held in Canada.
- List other things you could do for self-improvement.