



FINA WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS
KAZAN
RUSSIA 2015

16th FINA World Championships

Water of Life

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REFEREES PLAY MOST IMPORTANT ROLE AT FINA WORLDS

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INTERVIEWS



Referees are key persons at any competition event. Their assessment defines which country gets the cherished gold medal. Elena Tsarkova, Honoured Coach of Russia, international referee of Category A that enables to work at the Olympic Games and World Championships, the referee of the 16th FINA World Championships, talked about the subtleties of the profession.

– How long have you been a referee?

– For 20 years, or even more.

– What competitions have you been a referee for?

– I worked at the 2012 Olympics in London. This is probably the best you can accomplish as a referee. I also worked at the World Championships, World Cup, and European championships.

– Should referees be sport-related?

– No, not necessarily. Referees are not always former athletes. You will find a lot of those among foreign referees. In general, anyone can be a referee after accomplishing the appropriate training programme. As for me, I have worked as a coach for a long time now.

– Objective evaluation is always a controversial issue on the referee's job. What criteria do you use when evaluating athletes?

– There are special rules that referees of all categories must be aware of and use at competitions. In fact, this is a very extensive set of rules, and it is definitely not that simple to judge.

– Do referees communicate with each other during evaluation?

– No, we are not allowed to communicate with each other, it is strictly prohibited. Each referee has to think for himself/herself.

– Are there any control activities performed by sports federations, FINA in this case?

– No, a referee is an independent entity and is not subject to control.

– Do you communicate with athletes?

– At competition of this level, no. It is not encouraged here. But I do at competitions of another level, where I act as a coach. And during the competition we may not talk to anybody: neither coaches, nor athletes.

– Can a referee judge his/her national team?

– If his/her national team is the best, the referee will judge its game. And this is what makes our work difficult. We must stay objective when evaluating our own country. If we are not, it will be noticeable. There is a dedicated system to control referees' work, including computer analysis and a special observer at all competitions.

– How do you manage not to give a go to your emotions at work?

– It is difficult, a lot of things are happening at and after competitions. You have to take your place, evaluate what you really see, and stay focused on it. Of course, each referee can make a mistake, we are all human after all.

– Did it happen to you, when you gave your evaluation and realised later that you could have done it in

another way?

– Yes, it may happen. And those are moments of worries and frustration. But we are human, too. We may let go of emotions, we do mistakes.

– Is there anything apart from the performances of athletes that can affect a referee's decision?

– There are 3 categories of international referees: For Category G one has to be a referee for at least 5 years, after which an upgrade to Category B can be possible; after another 5 years on the job one can obtain Category A. No one can affect a decision of a referee with highest qualification. And there only Category A referees here in Kazan.

– How do you cope with criticism?

– I analyse what I have done, just like anybody else. When I am confronted with criticism, I get rather preoccupied with it.

– What is your typical day?

– We have a meeting before the competition kicks off. We are urged to judge fairly, we run through the rules again, and we hold discussions with each other. Then we are getting ready to start: someone will have a coffee, someone else will sit back and relax. Then we move on to the border line. After the competition, we meet again and discuss the game. If a referee wants to express his/her opinion, has questions, or disagrees with something, it is brought on the table. But this discussion will have no impact on the results.

– What are you going to do after the World Championships in Kazan?

– I will get back to work as a coach. We, the referees, are not referees all the time, we are usually called for for certain competitions. This is what we do for our country!

Press Office of Organising Committee for 16th FINA World Championships



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