



# OPEN WATER SWIMMING

## OFFICIALS

### TRAINING MANUAL

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The original version of this training manual was adapted from a document authored by Bill Ford of Swimming New South Wales – Australia. Swimming New South Wales was instrumental in developing procedures and general practices that are used world-wide during the conduct of Open Water Swimming events. The use of this training manual will assist USA Swimming officials who wish to increase their expertise and add “Open Water Swimming” to their swimming credentials. This manual covers the duties of all Open Water Swimming officials excluding the Referee. There is a separate manual which deals specifically with the duties and responsibilities of the Open Water Referee.

Our thanks and appreciation go out to Bill, Swimming New South Wales and Swimming Australia for allowing us to use their document as a basis for this manual.

## OPEN WATER SWIMMING TRAINING MANUAL

Open Water Swimming is to Swimming what the Marathon is to Track and Field: An endurance event where athletes attempt to be first over a given course while contending with climatic and other conditions during the race. The Open Water Marathon (10K) Swim is the newest Olympic aquatic sport which was contested for the first time at the 2008 Summer Olympic Games in Beijing, China.

Open Water Swimming is not new, only the promotion, and organization and officiating of the sport that are relatively new!

The goal of this training manual is to assist our officials at all levels of competition. Officiating Open Water events is very different than pool events. An Open Water Swimming Official will find that “*Murphy’s Law*” is alive and well. Often times what determines the success of an event is dependent on an official’s ability to overcome adversity based on knowledge of the Rules, their application, understanding their assigned position and responsibilities and the roles and responsibilities of other positions on the officiating team. Open Water swimmers and coaches have respect for officials who are calm under pressure and demonstrate a consistent and fair application of the Rules.

Open Water Swimming is typically defined as any competition that takes place in rivers, lakes or oceans or other non-pool bodies of water; however, open water events have been contested pools in those areas where a “typical” open water event has proven to be impractical. There are as many types of open water events as there are waves in the ocean. The venues and characteristics of the conditions not only vary depending on the body of water chosen – but often vary significantly as the race progresses through time.

### **RULES**

Rules for Open Water Swimming are found in Part Seven of the USA Swimming Rule book. Part 7 describes differences in the Open Water swimming rules from other portions of the rule book. When there is not a rule specified in Part 7, the rules in Part 1 and Part 2 are applicable. In a section, where a rule is stated (ie. 701.8) that specific rule governs the procedures in that section. Where no rule is listed, procedures and best practices have been summarized that are currently in use at all major Open Water competitions.

### **Required Officials for Open Water Events (701.9)**

There should be no fewer than the following Officials assigned to work an event:

Referee	Assistant Referee
Administrative Referee	Announcer
Safety Officer	Medical Officer
Course Officer	Clerk of Course
Starter	Chief Timer with 3 timers
Chief Finish Judge with 2 finish judges	Recorder
Race Judge (one per competitor in escorted races)	
Turn Judge (one at each change in course direction)	

Note: The Host Organizing Committee normally makes these appointments. Information regarding their duties is included in this manual for information.

## **GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR OFFICIALS PARTICIPATING IN OPEN WATER COMPETITION:**

All Officials should:

- ▲ To be at the venue ***at least*** one and one half (1½ ) hours before the start time of the event;
- ▲ Check in with the Referee;
- ▲ Review a copy of the meet letter and event time line;
- ▲ Confirm officiating assignment and receive any special instructions;
- ▲ Familiarize themselves with the Course and any other special features of the venue;
- ▲ Meet with the other officials and attend the pre-race briefings at the designated time.
- ▲ Be prepared to assist with the course set up or with the registration of swimmers.

Open Water Swims are typically “outdoor” events. All officials should be prepared for all anticipated-and unanticipated climatic conditions. Suitable clothing that provides protection from the elements should be worn. Items such as sunscreen and headwear should also be brought by the officials. Be prepared for anything....a chair or umbrella in the trunk may make the all difference in the official’s Open Water experience. An official may be assigned duty sitting on a rock or the beach for an extended period of time. The official should consider bringing some water and a snack in the event that hospitality is not provided. Be prepared for anything – heat, sun, cold, wind, rain, hunger, thirst. The official should pack a small bag with the essentials. Consider these support items a personal survival kit. The event Organizing Committee may do a great job providing food and beverages, shade and shelter....but if they don’t...the official will be prepared for whatever challenges may arise.



### **TIMERS:**

Sufficient Timers will be assigned, one of whom will be designated Chief, to ensure that all swimmers are timed and that a finish time is recorded when each swimmer finishes his/her race. The Referee – in partnership with the organizing committee, will determine the requirements for timing at the event.

### ***What equipment is needed?***

- 🕒 A stopwatch capable of running continuously for 10 hours or more with lap split and memory recall (minimum 300 laps) functionality. Some stopwatches have printout capability which is highly desirable.

✎ Pencils

📄 Clipboard and a “Place/Time Form”.

### **What to do?**

- 🕒 Be assigned as instructed by the Referee or the Chief Timer;
- 🕒 Start the stopwatch at the starting signal (Pistol shot, light flash, or smoke from the starting pistol, horn, predetermined position of a starting device/signal [flag], whistle or other briefed starting signal);
- 🕒 Time each swimmer as he/she crosses the finish line or rounds a buoy or other object as instructed by the Referee/ Chief Timekeeper (times are taken by using the “lap split” function of the stopwatch);
- 🕒 If the stopwatch does not have an built-in printer; record the times of swimmers in the manner prescribed (usually this involves calling the times to a scribe who records the time on a “Place/Time Form” that is passed to the Recorder) [see example below] If the stopwatch has a built-in printer, the times printout can be given directly to the Chief Timer.

### **Timekeepers’/(Scribe) Place/Time Sheet (or Printout from Stopwatch\*).**

Position Number	Time Lap 1
1	27.45
2	28.47
3	29.49
4	30.53
5	30.57
6	30.59
7	31.01
8	31.40
9	31.12
10	31.58
11	32.05
12	32.07
13	32.32
14	32.48
15	32.49
16	32.51
17	32.55
18	32.55

19	33.02
20	33.11

\* If using a stopwatch with a built-in printer, the timer can assist the Recorders by handwriting a swimmer's number in the margin against the time recorded, BUT, only do this where time permits

- 🕒 Forward recorded times to the Recorder;
- 🕒 Ensure that the stopwatch is running by constantly checking it throughout the race;
- 🕒 If the stopwatch fails or is accidentally stopped prior to the finish of the race to immediately advise the Chief Timer;
- 🕒 If able, to restart the stopped stopwatch using the "elapsed time" method (restarting the stopwatch on the command of the Chief Timer usually at the full minute and recording the "elapsed" time so that the elapsed time can be added to any times recorded from the restarted stopwatch);
- 🕒 Don't stop the stopwatch until instructed by the Chief Timer or the Referee;
- 🕒 All Timers must have an unobstructed view of the finish;
- 🕒 Record an accurate finish time for each swimmer as they finish;



## **CHIEF TIMER'S DUTIES: (701.20)**

In addition to the above the Chief Timer shall:

- 🕒 Assign at least three Timers to their positions for the start and the finish (701.20.1);
- 🕒 Brief the Timers on their duties and the details of their assignment (701.20.2);
- 🕒 Ensure that a time check is made to allow all persons to synchronize their watches with the official race clock, if applicable, at least fifteen (15) minutes before start time; and (701.20.3)
- 🕒 Arrange for the use of automatic or semi-automatic timing devices in addition to watches, if desired (701.20.4).

**The main differences between timekeeping at an Open Water Swimming Event and a "Pool" Event are:**

- ⤴ The stopwatch is not stopped the instant that any part of the swimmer's body touches the finish (you use the lap split function);
- ⤴ Timers time all swimmers with one stopwatch being used as the primary time and the others as backup to the primary stopwatch. Where a stopwatch is used that has an built-in printer, the first swimmer number is recorded against the first time printed and then the last swimmer number in the group. These swimmers' numbers are provided by the Finish Judge or Turn Judge (in the event split times are recorded). Timers do not act as Finish Judges under any circumstance.
- ⤴ The "lap split" function of the stopwatch is extensively used.
- ⤴ The Timers are not are not assigned to a lane.
- ⤴ The finish may be a fixed vertical touch pad, a line suspended above the water surface, a projected line between the shore and a buoy, or a banner stretched between two posts.
- ⤴ Times are not provided to the swimmers or their representatives until after the Recorders have completed their duties and the Referee has checked and confirmed the result.
- ⤴ There are no records in Open Water Swimming. Even where an identical course is used. No two events will have identical climatic conditions and that will affect the finish times race-to-race.

## **JUDGES:**

In Open Water Swimming there are three types of Judges:



- ① **Finish Judges**
- ② **Race Judges**
- ③ **Turn Judges**

### **FINISH JUDGES: (701.22)**

For Open Water Swimming Events, Finish Judges are always required regardless of the type of timing system in use. Failure of electronic and/or video finishing devices is frequent and a manual judging system is required.

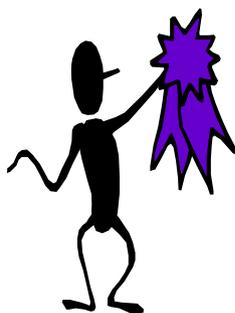
A minimum of three (3) Finish Judges should be assigned, one of whom shall be appointed Chief Finish Judge. (701.9)

As at the “Pool”, the most important duty of the Finish Judge is to place all swimmers in the correct order of finish. The difference between the “Pool” and Open Water Swimming is that swimmers are placed by swimmer number as opposed to lane numbers. There are times where swimmers arrive at the finish line in such numbers in a short period of time that a complete accurate placing is not possible. By integrating all finish judge observations with a video replay of the finish, timely and accurate place results will be possible. Videotaping of race finish is *always* recommended by one or more video cameras.

#### ***What to bring?***

-  Pencils;
-  Clipboard
-  “Finish/Turn Judges Placement Sheet”

#### ***What to do?***



-  Be positioned in line with and where he/she can have a clear view of the finish (701.22.1). The finish may be a fixed vertical touchpad, a line suspended above the water, a projected line between the shore and a buoy, etc.;
-  Record the finish place of each swimmer (701.22.2)
-  Each Finish Judge records each swimmer’s place in the manner prescribed, that is, by recording the swimmers’ numbers in lap order/relative finish order on the placement sheet. If the Finish Judge is unsure of the finish order of any swimmer or group of

swimmers, that fact should be notated on the placement sheet so those results can be verified by video replay.

- ✍ When recording the swimmers' order, the finish judge should not murmur or speak out aloud as this may distract or influence the other Finish Judges. (Note: As swimmers approach, Referees or spotters *MAY* radio cap color/competitor number or other information in order to assist the finish judges in identifying the competitors as they arrive in the finish area. Example: The Referee may radio "The lead pack contains number 56 in a green cap, 46 in a red cap and 22 wearing no cap." This is not intended to influence the Finish Judges placement – only to help in identification during placement.)
- ✍ When asked, pass the signed and dated record of relative placing to the Chief Finish Judge.

#### Finish/Turn Judges' Placement Sheet

Place	Swimmers' Number
1	5
2	10
3	14
4	18
5	2
6	7
7	17
8	8
9	9
10	13
11	3
12	6
13	12
14	4
15	11
16	19
17	21
18	15
19	20

Finish Judges are **NOT PERMITTED** to act as timekeepers in the same event. (701.9)

## **CHIEF FINISH JUDGE: (701.21)**

In addition to the above, the Chief Finish Judge shall:



- ✍ Assign each Finish Judges to a position (701.21.1);
- ✍ Brief Finish Judges on their duties and the details of their assignment; and (701.21.2)
- ✍ After the race, collect the signed results sheets from each Finish Judge and determine the order of finish and deliver the results to the Referee or his or her designee (701.21.3).
- ✍ Notifies the Referee of any swimmer or group of swimmers whose finish placing should be verified by the use of video or other method.



## **ASSISTANT REFEREES/RACE JUDGES: (701.11, 701.18)**

Assistant Referees are Referees assigned in addition to the Referee to monitor groups of swimmers or parts of swimming packs. They may caution swimmers (yellow flag) or disqualify swimmers (red flag) for violations of the rules. In a pool swimming event, the Deck Referees must watch the pool constantly during the race. In Open Water Swimming, a Referee/Assistant Referee must keep 100% of their attention on their assigned swimmers during the race. In this respect, Open Water Referees/Race Judges must have the ability to concentrate on their swimmers for 1-6 hours at a time!

Assistant Referees are typically assigned in unescorted races where the only vessels on course are official craft operating in support of the race. Swimmers either do not receive food and water (5K or less) or receive sustenance in one or more feed zones manned by coaches, trainers, and/or host organizing committee supplied volunteers.

Race Judges duties are similar to Assistant Referees –differences being that a Race Judge is assigned one swimmer to watch in an “escorted” swim, and that a Race Judge cannot issue a caution or disqualification. Most races over 10KM in distance are designated “escorted”

swims – each swimmer is required to have an escort craft. Depending on the event, each escort craft may be assigned a Race Judge. Race Judges are assigned by random draw; the judge is either embarked on the escort craft or supervises one or more athletes from a separate vessel. In the event that there are not enough Race Judges for each athlete, a Race Judge may be deployed on a vessel and monitor the competitors periodically through the race.

There is a great responsibility on Assistant Referees and Race Judges as they are act on behalf of the Referee. The Referee cannot possibly cover the whole course and cannot watch the entire field at the same time. The Referee should brief the Assistant Referees or Race Judges as to the exact judging procedures to be used during the race.

### ***What to bring?***

-  Appropriate clothing suitable for all climatic conditions that may be encountered.
-  Clipboard, writing paper/note pad, pencils, stopwatch, wristwatch, whistle, Red and Yellow flags, whiteboard, markers and a copy of the appropriate Open Water Swimming Rules and any local rules that apply.
-  Race entry list and race number assignment as provided by the Administrative Referee. This document lists all athletes, their team or country, and their assigned race number. If possible, this listing should be laminated or otherwise protected against the elements.
-  Sufficient refreshments to last for the duration of the event that depending on the distance being contested could be up to two (2) hours after the first swimmer in the men's and women's respective events finishes.

### ***What to do?***

## **ASSISTANT REFEREE: (701.11)**

-  Shall perform all duties assigned by the Referee.

## **RACE JUDGE: (701.18)**

In addition to the above, the Race Judge shall:

-  Be positioned in the escort boat so as to be able to observe his or her appointed swimmer at all times to ensure compliance with the rules of competition and that any violations are recorded and reported to the Referee (701.18.1);
-  Have the authority to order a swimmer from the water upon expiration of the time limit or when so ordered by the Referee (701.18.2);
-  Ensure that the assigned swimmer does not take unfair advantage or commit unsportsmanlike impedance of another swimmer and, if the situation requires, instruct the swimmer to maintain clearance from any other swimmer (701.18.3);

- ☞ Immediately inform the Referee if the assigned swimmer withdraws from the event and shall record the completed distance and the time of the withdrawal; and (701.18.4)
- ☞ Report observation of rules violations to the Referee immediately. In unescorted races, the Referee may assign Race Judges to monitor specific areas of the competition such as the feed station (701.18.5).

The whistle should be used sparingly. The nature of open water swimming is that swimmers swim in close proximity with each other. There is frequent inadvertent contact. Through experience, the Referee will gain an understanding of when the pack/line/group of swimmers are swimming too close and are interfering with each other or may soon be in a position where intentional contact may ensue. In these cases, the swimmers should be signalled to move apart.

In some cases, just the act of moving the officiating boat closer to the swimmers or placing the whistle in the mouth is enough to signal the swimmers to move apart. Other times it is necessary to blow the whistle while pointing to swimmers and giving a signal to move apart. There currently are no standard arm signals to move apart. A motion similar to a baseball umpires safe signal is generally accepted as the signal to move apart. Consider briefing the swimmers of any signal that the Referee plans to use during the race.

During escorted swims, it may be most appropriate to relay information to the swimmer through the swimmers Coach or Handler on the escort craft. Where the Handler or the swimmer disregards the Referee/Race Judge's instruction, use the whistle to get the swimmers attention and convey your instructions directly to the athlete. If the whistle is over-used the athletes may be confused and it will lose its effectiveness.



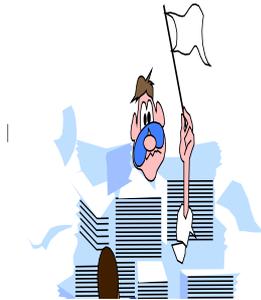
### **TURN JUDGES: (701.19)**

Turn Judges shall:

- ☞ Be positioned so as to ensure that all swimmers comply with the turn and other change-of-course procedures (701.19.1);
- ☞ Record any violation of the turn procedures and indicate to the Referee any infraction at the time it is observed (701.19.2).

The Turn Judge ensures that the swimmers are on course and execute the course change in accordance with the race instructions and as briefed in the pre-race briefing. The judge observes the swimmers as they approach and pass the judges assigned position. Records are kept of those who fail to execute the alteration in the course in the prescribed manner. All infractions are recorded and immediately reported to the Referee. There may be radio communications between the turn judges post and the Referee and the Admin. Referee.

Courses in oceans, lakes, rivers, or rowing courses usually have one of the following course characteristics, or a mix of them:



- Parallels the beach,
- Go out to or around a fixed point such as a pier or
- Circles a closed course marked by buoys.
- Follows a course that is a combination of any of the above.
- Point-to-point

In an “out and back” course configuration, positioning of Turn Judge will be the furthest point from the start where the swimmers turn to return to the finish. There may be gateways that have to be swum through on the way to the turn point. A triangular course would have a minimum of two turn points (alterations in the course). Unless the turn point or alteration in the course is close to the shore the Turn Judge will usually be positioned in a craft anchored or loitering just off the turn point from where they have an uninterrupted view.



When positioning the Turn Judge craft, pay careful attention to the wind, current and tides. These external forces can move the boat and potentially place it in a position where it interferes with the course. The Race Referee will instruct each Turn Judge as to the desired positioning of the vessel. The Turn Judge must work with the Boat Captain to ensure safe and correct positioning of the assigned vessel per the Referee’s instructions.

**What to bring?**

Exactly the same as the Race Judge.



Appropriate clothing suitable for all climatic conditions that may be encountered;



Clipboard, writing paper/note pad, pencils wristwatch, whistle and a copy of the appropriate Open Water Swimming Rules and any local rules that apply; and



Race entry list and race number assignment – provided by the Administrative Referee that lists all athletes, their team or country, and their assigned race number.



Sufficient refreshments to last for the duration of the event that depending on the distance being contested could be up to two (2) hours after the first swimmer in the men’s and women’s respective events finishes. This could be up to 9 hours or more after the Start. Remember not all craft have toilet facilities and it can be a long time between comfort stops!

### **What to do?**



May be required to record the swimmers’ numbers as they round the buoy and keep track of the total number of swimmers that pass the turn point.



Signal the Referee/Race Judge at the time of infringement by radio or signal the offending swimmer as directed by the Referee.



At the completion of the race, turn in any documentation to the Administrative Referee.

## **THE STARTER: (701.17)**

The Starter’s duties for Open Water Swimming events are usually completed within the first 15 minutes of the day! Sometimes the meet organizing committee schedules events with “wave” starts or schedules multiple events in a staggered start.

With that said, it is very common for Starters to be assigned multiple duties during an open water swimming event. Starters frequently also serve as a Finish Judge, Timer, Assistant Announcer, Recorder, or Course Officer. The Starter may also be on the water with one of the Referees assisting and learning how to be an Assistant Referee, Race Judge, or Turn Judge. The Starter may also ride with the Referee to get practical knowledge for advancement to Referee.





### ***What to bring?***

- © Wristwatch, two flags (of different colors); Bring a starting device (Horn, Starting Pistol or a Whistle as a last resort), clipboard note paper/writing pad and pencil.

### ***The Start: (701.2.4)***

Under USA Swimming rules, a variety of different starts are permitted.

An open water swimming event may start with the swimmers standing or treading water in a depth sufficient for them to start swimming on the start signal (701.2.4A(1)).

Races may be started from a beach or shore where the athletes line up and run into the water from the shore on the Starter's signal (701.2.4A(2)). Races may start from a fixed platform – the swimmers' positions on the platform are determined by random draw and they commence racing on the start signal (701.2.4A(3)). In all starts, the start signal shall be both audible and visible. For fixed platform starts, the Starter shall give the command, "Take Your Mark," at which time the swimmers will assume a starting position with at least one foot at the front of the starting platform. When all swimmers are stationary, the Starter shall give the starting signal (701.2.4B). Verify with the Referee and Course Officer that the water depths meet the requirements of (103.2.3).

From the beginning of the check-in and registration process, the Clerk of the Course and announcer must keep the swimmers, coaches, and officials informed of the time remaining to the start. These announcements should be made at suitable intervals to meet the milestones leading up to the start. (close of registration, final race instructions, the Start). During the last five minutes prior to the start, announcements should be made at one minute intervals.

The starting lines can vary greatly depending on the race. The start line shall be clearly defined by either overhead apparatus or by removable equipment at water level (701.4.1). If the start is out of the water, the line may be drawn in the sand or may be identified as an imaginary line between two cones or flags or a rope line stretched over the starting area. In water starts may similarly be identified by imaginary lines between two points or actual rope lines (with or without floats) stretched between two buoys or boats in the water. The start line may also be defined by a line stretched over the water. If an actual line is placed in the water, it is recommended that the swimmers line up on the course side of the line so as to minimize the risks of entanglement after the start. (702.4)

For out of water dive starts from a waterfront bulkhead, jetty or floating pontoon, ensure that the water depth has been surveyed and that the depth complies with the minimums required under rule 103.2.3. Additionally, the Course Officer and Referee shall have the start area inspected for hidden underwater obstacles or obstructions. If there is any doubt as to the condition of the start area, an in-water or beach start shall be used (702.4.2). If the total number of competitors exceeds a safe number (which will be determined by the Referee with consultation with the Safety Office, Course Officer and Meet Director) the race may be started in waves. In all National Championship level competition, Men's and Women's races are started separately. The men's will always start first. The appropriate time interval between the men's start and women's start will depend on course design. A 5-10 minute stagger usually works well on a 2.5K loop course.



### **ADMINISTRATIVE REFEREE: (701.12)**

The Administrative Referee reports directly to the Head Race Referee, and shall be responsible for all administrative matters assigned by the Referee (701.12). The Administrative Referee leads the "Land-side" officiating team. The Clerk of Course, Recorders, Timing Judges, Finish Judges and Announcer all report to the Administrative Referee. The Administrative Referee works with the Meet Director and Organizing Committee to coordinate the efforts of volunteers that assist in check-in and registration.

The Administrative Referee is responsible to the Referee for providing the Referee, Assistant Referees, Turn Judges, Finish Judges and the Safety Officer with the final list of competitors and their assigned race numbers. At all points of the competition, the Administrative Referee must be able to ascertain exactly what the total number of athletes are on course as well as exactly which athletes are on course.

#### ***What to bring?***



All required paper documents needed for the conduct of the event. Careful coordination with the Meet Director, Clerk of Course, Head Finish Judge, and Head Timing Judge to ensure that all required equipment is brought to the venue. A recommended list of supplies can be found in the appendix.

During the competition, the Administrative Referee is responsible for maintaining a Race Log. The Race Log records the following: Note: All time references use time of day.

- Number of athletes starting the race.
- Start time of the race.

- For competitors who withdraw from the race; the competitor number, time of withdrawal and reason for withdrawal.
- For cautions or disqualifications received from the Referees; the competitor number, time of the caution or disqualification, and any pertinent information relayed by the Referees.
- Significant changes in weather conditions.
- The finish time of the lead athlete in a race. This time is used to compute the time limit for the event.
- Any additional items as directed by the Referee.

The Administrative Referee works closely with the Announcer during the event. A Pre-race script should be provided to the Announcer which outlines time sensitive announcements that are made during the countdown to the event. During the race, all announcements regarding Cautions, Disqualifications or Withdrawals must be coordinated and approved by the Administrative Referee.

### **CLERK OF COURSE: (701.16)**

The Clerk of Course reports to the Administrative Referee and is charged with coordinating registration and check-in of the participants. Depending on the number of swimmers it may be necessary to appoint Assistant Clerks of Course. Sufficient volunteers and Clerks of Course should be assigned so that check-in of all participants can be accomplished in approximately one hour.

The Clerk of Course interfaces with the Administrative Referee and registration volunteers, as well as athletes and coaches. Familiarity with the meet information, course and start and finish area are important. Often times the Clerks of Course are the athletes and coaches first contact with officials at the event. The Clerks can dispense important information regarding the competition that was provided to them by the Administrative Referee.

#### ***What to bring?***



pencils, pens, marker pens (wide felt tip) and wristwatch.

#### ***What to do?***

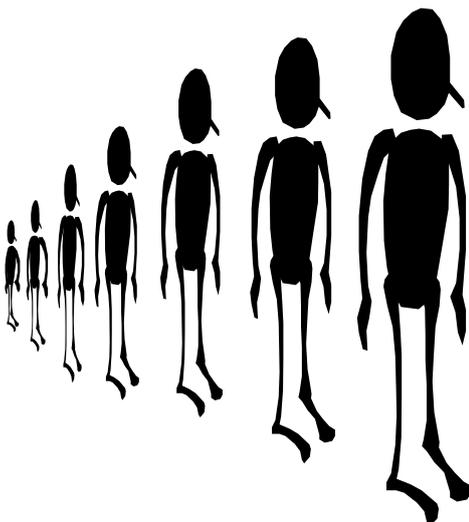
Report to the Administrative Referee and:



Find out the total number of swimmers entered and ascertain the time registration officially opens (this time is usually published in the Meet Information and is usually 1 hour before the advertised start time);



In some instances, swimmer numbers will have been issued prior to the competition. In some meets there are no race-day entries. The Administrative Referee should have received the entry list from the Meet Director before race day. For events where Late Entries/Race-day entries are permitted, be sure the numbering scheme is continued from the last competitor number that was assigned to pre-race entries.



 Assemble and instruct the competitors prior to the competition and ensure proper reception for the competitors at the finish (701.16.1).

 Be certain all swimmers are present, in the assembly area, at the required time prior to the start (701.16.3). When registration is closed, tally the number of entries for each event, and provide the list of athletes not checked in to the Computer Operator.

 The Administrative Referee directs the Computer operator to produce the final roster of athletes for each event and provide copies to all officials and the Announcer.

 In escorted swims, the swimmers number must be clearly displayed on the escort craft. This numbering should be highly visible with both sides of the bow displaying the swimmer's number. It is your responsibility to ensure that the escort safety craft has the correct swimmer number.

 **All withdrawals are handled by the Administrative Referee or their designee.** Any athlete wishing to withdraw must be directed to the Administrative Referee. The Clerk of Course and Administrative Referee will jointly track any withdrawals prior the Start of the event(s).



 Swimmer numbers may be randomly assigned (within the block of numbers reserved for the event) if the entries are closed before race-day or assigned on a "first come first served" basis for events with race-day registration. It is strongly recommended that their issue be **unique and sequential**, there should not be any non-sequential numbering nor are concurrent sets of numbers to be used under any circumstances.

 The meet host will provide the Registration, Ready/Assembly area near the Start and Finish lines and dedicated secure storage areas for swimmers' equipment that will be left on the beach.

 Ensure that each competitor is correctly marked with his/her race number and that all swimmers have trimmed fingernails and are not wearing any jewelry including watches (701.16.2). Swimmer numbers are applied to the upper arms, the backs of shoulders and in some races- the backs of hands. Swimmers should be repeatedly reminded to keep these areas free of sunscreen and rubdown oil. The numbers should be large so that the Referee, Race and Finish Judges and any Swimmer Support Personnel can easily identify the swimmer. As the

coordinator of all Landside Operations, The Administrative Referee should ensure that the Meet Director has planned for adequate security to protect any clothing left in the start area. If the start and finish location are in different areas, work with the Meet Director to ensure all athlete clothing is taken to the finish.



Keep competitors and officials informed of the time remaining before the start at suitable intervals and at one-minute intervals for the last five minutes (701.16.4).



The Administrative Referee supervises the entire crew of Landside officials to ensure pre and post-race operations go smoothly.



### **RECORDERS: (701.23)**

Recorders are integral parts of the officiating team. The recorder shall record withdrawals from the competition, enter results on official forms, and maintain the record for team awards as appropriate (701.23). The Chief Recorder works with the Administrative Referee and the Meet Director before the event to establish:

- (a) the method of recording/scoring to be used (it could be electronic or hard copy depending on the facilities available);
- (b) the anticipated number of swimmers (both male and female); and

- (c) whether the meet is strictly advanced entry or race day entry or a mixture of both. This will identify how much advanced work can be done.
- (d) Most Open Water events accept both pre and race day entries.
- (e) The most popular vendors of meet management programs incorporate Open Water swimming scoring functionality. Determine the software that will be used and make contact with the individual scheduled to operate it.

If the meet is strictly race-day entries, the Recorder should plan on arriving at the venue at the same time as the Meet Director and the Organizing Committee. *It is strongly recommended that a **unique sequential swimmer number** is recorded against each swimmer's name.* This should be done in conjunction with the Clerk of Course (Marshal) when each swimmer personally registers for his/her race. In some events this is not possible due to issue of competitor numbers prior to registration.

In the case of both pre-entry and race-day entry – the Organizing Committee should arrange to have a list of numbers starting with the next swimmer number from the pre-entries, i.e. pre-entry has 186 swimmers entered, then the number list should start from 187 for the race-day entries.

If the number of swimmers is fairly small (less than 100) and the meet is pre-entered, consider keeping the number assignments for each sex to a block of numbers. Example 45 women and 40 men entered. Assign women numbers 1-45 – assign men numbers 50-90. This grouping will help Referees and finish judges during the meet. It may also help when breaking out the scoring after the event.



### ***What to bring?***

— Pens, pencils, pencil sharpener, tape, writing/note pad, table weights (to keep papers in place), paper spike, clips, staples and stapler, scissors or a paper cutter, ruler and a calculator

Depending on the facilities at the venue, arrange with the Organizing Committee for a folding table with chairs for use after the event. Check with the Organizing Committee to ascertain what type of area and covering has been allocated for Recording prior to the day of the event and what equipment they will be supplying.

### **What to do?**

In conjunction with the Clerk of Course (Marshal) issue to and record a **unique sequential number** for each swimmer as he/she registers. Registering is the same as reporting to the Marshalling Area at a “Pool” Meet and having your presence noted in preparation for your race.



The importance of **unique sequential numbering** cannot be over stressed. Prior to the start of the race the Referee will ask for the exact number of swimmers who have registered. With this information he/she will inform the Assistant Referee, swimmer support and Medical personnel. If two swimmers are issued with the same number, during the race and at the finish the Recorders will have no way of determining whose times have been recorded. If someone fails to complete the race and leaves the venue without reporting to the Recorders there is no way of knowing until someone asks “Have you seen so and so?”. This type of situation can lead to an unnecessary search and rescue event to find the missing swimmer. *Be assured this is not a pleasant task.* Nor are the ramifications of knowing that the event may have a “lost swimmer”. **Extreme care must be exercised.**

It is strongly recommended that concurrent sets of identical numbers never be used for men and women even if they are separately swum. The same numbers being used for both groups will cause confusion for all Officials at some stage of the race.

Only the Recorders record the numbers issued.

The numbers are unique and sequential unless otherwise dictated.

No one is allowed to leave with recording material.

The only time when the number of swimmers registered does not equal the number in the water for the start is when someone withdraws after registration/check-in but prior to the start. If this occurs then all relevant personnel must be informed. These include the Referee and Assistant Referees, and the Computer Operator. All athletes must be accounted for!

The swimmer numbers are recorded on the Swimmers’ entry card. From the entry cards the Master Control/Results Sheets are prepared. While the Results Sheet is primarily for recording results (lap times and finish times and finish order). Its preparation is a secondary check that each swimmer has been issued with a **unique sequential number**.

Withdrawals before the Start and during the competition are received by the Recorders who relay this information if before the Start to the Clerk of the Course and if after the Start to the

Referee, the Safety Officer, Swimmer Support Personnel and Computer Operator. It is important that at any time throughout the event that the Recorders are able to supply the Referee with an update of exactly how many swimmers are still in the water at any given time – even after some of the swimmers have completed the event.

- ⌚ Depending on the configuration of the course, Recorders may receive lap times or turn buoy times (course positional times at a predetermined point i.e. halfway) at various times throughout the race. At the Finish, Recorders will receive the final time for each swimmer. This may be a printout from a stopwatch with an inbuilt printer or a time sheet with elapsed times and swimmers' position number recorded by a scribe who is working with a Timekeeper.
- ⌚ The times recorded on the Master Control/Results Sheet are received from either the Chief Timekeeper, or Timekeeper's scribe, or the runner. Depending on the type of timing system used, the exact format of these sheets may vary.

**Timers/(Scribe) Time Sheet**

<b>Position Number</b>	<b>Time Lap 1</b>
1	27.45
2	28.47
3	29.49
4	30.53
5	30.57
6	30.59
7	31.21
8	31.00
9	31.12
10	31.58
11	32.05
12	32.07
13	32.32
14	32.48
15	32.49
16	32.51
17	32.55
18	32.55
19	33.02

As the swimmers cross the start/finish line or round a predetermined point the Timers record each swimmer's time by the split lap function, with a scribe recording the called times. Finish Judges or Turn Judges record the order of the swimmers by swimmers' numbers. Where a stopwatch is used that has an inbuilt printer the first swimmer number is recorded against the first time printed and then the last swimmer number in the group. The Finish / Turn Judge's placement sheet and the

scribe's time sheet with the Timekeeper's times are forwarded to the Chief Recorder whose team will merge the place finishes with the finish times and resolve any discrepancies.

**Finish Judges' Placement Sheet**

Place	Swimmers' Number
1	5
2	10
3	14
4	18
5	2
6	7
7	17
8	8
9	9
10	13
11	3
12	6
13	12
14	4
15	11
16	19
17	21
18	15
19	20

The appropriate times are recorded against the relevant swimmer's number (see example below):

## Master Results Sheet

Swimmer Number	Name	Club	Lap 1	Finish	Place	Age	Sex
1	Ben Edwards	Bankstown	33.22	1.06.34	1st	18	M
2	Elizabeth Richards	Liverpool	30.57	1.02.11	1st	15	F
3	William Cross	Nu Swim	32.05	1.03.29	1st	23	M
4	Fred Zion	Wizards	32.48	1.04.04	1st	13	M
5	Albert Lyons	Novocastrian	27.45	59.03	1st	16	M
6	Erin Smith	Mt Pritchard	32.07	1.03.31	1st	28	F
7	Keryn Brown	Warringah	30.59	1.02.19	1st	14	F
8	Samantha Mitchell	Penrith	31.00	1.03.26	2nd	15	F
9	Malcolm Jones	Canberra	31.12	1.03.27	2nd	14	M
10	Warren Price	Canberra	28.47	59.26	1st	17	M
11	Danny Kruse	Carlisle	32.49	1.04.06	2nd	13	M
12	Sharon Rowan	Carlisle	32.32	1.03.52	1st	18	F
13	Gabby Wahhab	Warringah	31.58	1.03.28	1st	13	M
14	Brendan Lambert-Barker	Mt Pritchard	29.49	1.00.23	1st	15	M
15	Rebecca Childes	Liverpool	32.55	1.04.24	3rd	14	F
16	Mark Latoure	Penrith	38.05	1.16.28	3rd	30	M
17	Hans Hildebrandt	Bankstown	31.21	1.02.13	1st	14	M
18	Sarah Archer	NU Swim	30.53	1.02.10	1st	16	F
19	Prue Davies	Wizards	32.51	1.04.11	2nd	13	F

After all lap times have been recorded on the Master Results Sheet, the places as determined by the times are checked against the Finish Judges' finish places. Where the Judges' places and the finish times agree the places are recorded in the Place Column remembering to separate the Men's and Women's events and Age Groups where the competition dictates.

If there is a discrepancy between the Judges' orders of finish and the times recorded by the Timekeepers the matter is referred to the Referee for his/her determination. Video replay can be extremely helpful in resolving discrepancies. Once the Referee has determined the result the Chief Recorder will complete the Place Column prior to the posting of Results.

6. If team or age group scoring is indicated by the Meet Information, the Recorders are tasked to tabulate those results.

### **RECORDER - COMPUTER OPERATOR:**

Most modern electronic meet management computer programs are capable of scoring Open Water Swimming events. Ensure that the Meet Management Computer operator has a

complete operating knowledge of the program being used. Prior to the event, ensure that the appropriate scoring process has been determined (age group, team, etc.) Ensure a plan is in place to determine these awards.

### **COURSE OFFICER: (701.15)**

The Course Officer is an extremely important assignment. This person must have an intimate knowledge of the venue and its features. These features will have an impact as to the setup of the event. Adverse weather (it may be subject to wind, sudden storms, flooding from rivers and streams, etc.) can cause major problems. Tides, currents, prevailing winds and rips are all conditions of which the Course Officer must be aware. The Course Officer works in close liaison with the Safety Officer and the Referee to ensure a safe course of the proper distance is maintained.

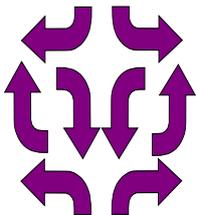
As soon as it is decided to host an Open Water Swimming event, the Organizing Committee must appoint the Course Officer. The first duty for the Course Officer is to obtain a survey of the Course.

#### ***How is this done?***

The course officer should use nautical charts, maps, and computer based satellite imaging tools (Google Earth) to work with the Organizing Committee to come up with a course which meets safety and competitive standards.

The Course Officer should carefully plot the course on a chart and prepares a detailed course plan to present to the Referee for approval. The Course Officer's job is not done with planning. The Course Officer must be prepared to supervise course setup on race day. He must be prepared for all contingencies.

#### ***What to bring?***



- ☞ Suitable clothing for an extended exposure to the elements for planned and unplanned weather conditions. The course officer will probably be on the water longer than any other official.
- ☞ Detailed plans of the course for the Referee to use in his/her briefing and small copies in sufficient quantities for each Swimmer, their Handlers, all on-water Officials and enough to distribute between the Safety and Swimmer Support personnel.

#### ***What to do?***

The Course officer shall:

- ☞ Be responsible for the accuracy of the survey establishing the distance of the course (701.15.1);
- ☞ Prior to the commencement of competition, inspect with the Referee and Safety Officer the course to ensure that all points are correctly marked and all equipment has been correctly installed and is in working order (701.15.2);

☞ Ensure that Turn Judges are in position prior to the start of the competition and report this to the Assistant Referee; and (701.15.3)

☞ Serve as pilot in the lead boat when one is used (701.15.4).



☞ Be at the venue when it opens. Unless the course was set up the day before the race, there is a lot to be done before the first swimmer arrives and one hour may be insufficient – remember “Murphy’s Law” will crop up when least wanted. NOTE: Be cautious when setting the course the night before an event. Large buoys can be great targets for theft and vandalism. Consider securing the anchors and floating them with milk jugs and secure the large turn buoys the morning of the race.

☞ Check that the start and finish areas are correctly marked and that all equipment has been correctly installed and where applicable is in working order.

☞ Ensure that course alterations are clearly marked (buoys, cans or other moored craft that is used to define turning points or alterations of the course) and able to be manned prior to the start of the event (it may be a condition of usage that these are not installed until the day of the event).



☞ After course setup is complete, inspect the course with the Referee and the Safety Officer.

☞ The Course Officer is responsible for coordinating boat operations. This responsibility includes assigning officials to the appropriate boats, coordinating with the Referee to brief the boat Captains prior to the race. Inform the Referee, immediately before the start of the event that the Turn Judges are in position. There are cases where the Turn Judges may be deployed after the start. Be sure to have transportation and backup transportation for these officials.

The Course Officer is frequently the first official at the water, and will likely be the last to leave. The setup and teardown of the course is under the Course Officers area of responsibility. Before any equipment is removed from the course seek the Referee’s permission has been received.

***Additionally, the Course Officer must be aware of the following:***

Open water courses can be created in virtually any type of body of water. The course can be a straight line, circular, oblong or square or out and back. The venue should be carefully selected and examined with the safety of all participants in mind.

Once a venue has been selected, the Course Officer and Safety Officer should become intimately familiar with every characteristic of the course. Use all available resources to gain knowledge of weather patterns, tides, currents, marine life, etc. Ensure that the Meet Director has researched the need to obtain permitting for the event and that those permits have been obtained.

## **SAFETY OFFICER: (701.13)**

The Safety Officer is an extremely important assignment. In the era of “Risk Management” this assignment should not be overlooked nor trivialised. It is vitally important to the success of the event and for the well-being of all Swimmers, Coaches, Officials and the Organizing Committee. This is a key role for a key person.

### ***What to look for in a Safety Officer?***

Look for an individual who:

- 👍 Has specialized skills in recognizing risks and dangers.
- 👍 Can make suggestions to keep risks to an absolute minimum.
- 👍 Can make an objective recommendation to the Referee regarding the “Go – No Go” decision before and during the event.
- 👍 Can adapt to rapidly changing situations regarding the event.

Individuals with experience in Police, Fire Rescue or Beach Patrol/Ocean Rescue, Coast Guard or who occupy safety officer roles at their place of employment, may be good candidates for Safety Officer.

In conjunction with the Course Officer, the Safety Officer should carefully inspect the proposed course. The Safety Officer should also study and evaluate the Emergency Action Plan for the event. Items for consideration for the Safety Officer include:

### **Lake Venue Considerations:**

- ∞ What is the source of the water? Underground spring, runoff, or river fed? If a river - is it fast or slow flowing? Does the river originate in an alpine area? This will determine the water temperature. Is there a dam further upstream? You may need to contact the Water Management Authority to ensure that no discharge is scheduled a few days before the swim. Where are the ingress and egress points on the shoreline?
- ∞ Is there a discharge point from the lake? If there is, what is the discharge rate and what current are caused by this discharge?
- ∞ Is the venue subject to sudden flash flooding? What happens to the excess water? Does it overflow or is there an underground channel? This might be indicated by a whirlpool at some point in the lake.
- ∞ What is the depth of the lake? If it is shallow, then the temperature may be reasonably constant. If the lake is deep, there may be thermo-clines with frigid water at the lower levels. What will be the effect of 50 to 100 swimmers and their support craft on the water layers? Will the frigid water come to the surface?
- ∞ What is the condition of the lake’s bottom? Is it sandy, muddy, or rocky? Are there any sinkholes? Are there weeds and reeds? Each of these bottom types can create safety issues for the event.

- ∞ How do the swimmers access the venue? Is there safe access to the start and finish areas? Are there additional safe landing areas for swimmers throughout the venue?
- ∞ Is there an access ramp for operations and safety boats?
- ∞ What is the quality of the water? Has the Organizing Committee obtained a clearance from the Health Department? Is it possible to get race day updates as to water quality?
- ∞ Are there any submerged obstacles such as trees, rock outcrops, motor vehicles, traps, or underwater pipes or cables? Could there be a submerged fence line.
- ∞ What is the evacuation plan for the removal of all swimmers from the course? If a sudden electrical storm occurs, are there safe areas on the perimeter of the venue where swimmers and on water volunteers can take shelter. How are injured swimmers evacuated to the nearest medical facilities? Will there be local medical services available at the venue?
- ∞ Is the whole course visible at all times? Is an elevated position available to monitor the complete course at all times? If the swimmers round a natural obstacle such as an island in the middle of the course and they cannot be seen, Can an observer be stationed so that swimmer progress can be monitored at all times?
- ∞ Are there other users of the venue that need to be considered? Commercial, Recreational? Have all potential conflicts been researched and addressed?
- ∞ Is the course adequately defined? Do the markers, buoys or fixed turning points stand out or do they blend into the background? What can be done to ensure a contrast?

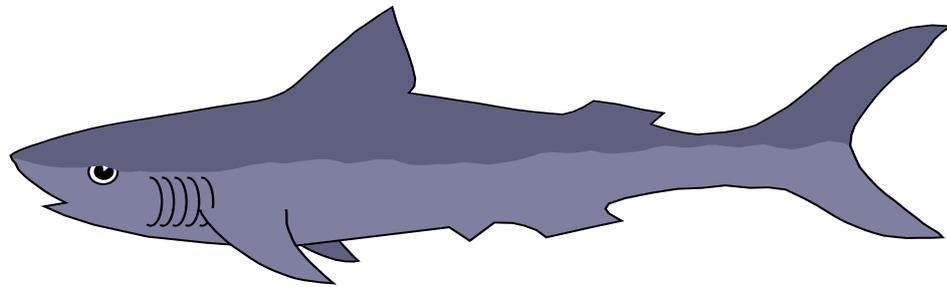
The concerns seem limitless and the Safety Officer, Course Officer and Referee need to be fully aware of all considerations.

### **Beach Venue Considerations?**

- ∞ Usually access does not pose a problem however; consideration must be given to possible beach and surf conditions which may make ingress and egress to the water dangerous.
- ∞ Ensure that the Organizing Committee has obtained the required permission to launch and recover watercraft (Surfboards, Kayaks, Jet Skis, and Boats) from the venue area.
- ∞ What have been the climatic conditions in the week leading up to the day of the event? A storm thousands of miles away could mean huge swells, large waves and strong winds. What is the weather forecast before, during, and after the event?
- ∞ Are current tide charts available for the day of the event? Is the tide coming in, going out – large or small, all of these can have significant impact for the event.
- ∞ Looking at the beach itself, are there channels, rips, sinkholes, reefs, shallows, sand bars? Is it a patrolled beach? If so, approach the local Ocean Rescue department

for assistance. Ocean Rescue and Life Guard departments often enjoy supporting open water events.

- ∞ Has the Coast Guard been contacted? The Coast Guard often has detailed charts with known obstacles. The Coast Guard can also assist in events that transit commercial shipping areas. Advance notice is important.
- ∞ Is the beach subject to unusual numbers of Jellyfish? The time of the year and the prevailing wind may dictate relocation, postponement or even cancellation of the event. The Safety Officer, working in conjunction with the local authorities, can determine the likelihood of large numbers of Jellyfish. Ensure that participants know if Jellyfish are present. Some swimmers can have severe reactions to stings.
- ∞ Virtually every salt water venue is home to a variety of marine life – some of which can be harmful to the participants. Dangerous marine life spotted on or near the course may warrant abandonment of the race. Ensure that the abandonment signal and abandonment procedures are briefed to all participants during the final race instructions.



- ∞ In an ideal situation, the course should be located in an area where all non-participating vessels are excluded. Advanced coordination with the local Marine Patrol or Coast Guard may make this a possibility for the event.

It is difficult to predict all the eventualities. The Referee, Course Officer and Safety Officer should assess the venue, think of all as many possible adverse scenarios, and make sure that the Emergency Action Plan and meet operations plans adequately address these possibilities.

### ***What to do?***

The Safety Officer shall:

- \* Be responsible to the Referee for all aspects of safety related to the conduct of the competition (701.13.1);
- \* Ensure that each escort craft is suitable (701.13.2);
- \* Check that the entire course and especially the start and finish areas are safe and free of all obstructions (701.13.3);
- \* Ensure that a sufficient number of powered craft are available during the competition to provide safety backup for the escort boats (701.13.4);

- \* When applicable, provide to all swimmers a tide and/or current charts indicating the time of tide changes on the course and showing the relationship between tides or current and swimmers' progress along the course; and (701.13.5)
- \* In conjunction with the Medical Officer, advise the Referee if conditions are unsuitable for staging the competition and/or make recommendations for modification of the course or the manner in which the competition is conducted (701.13.6)

***In addition to the Rules, please note that the Safety Officer:***

- \* Coordinates with the Course Officer on all aspects of the course. Checks the tidal conditions/rates of water flow and be satisfied that the course is safe for the conduct of the event.
- \* Checks with the Course Officer that suitable warnings of the event have been passed to all other craft using, or likely to use, any portion of the course.
- \* Briefs Swimmers, Handlers, Race Judges and escort safety craft crews on all or any potential safety hazards and the action to be taken should any happen.
- \* Ensures that all planned safety and emergency services are in place prior to the start of the race.
- \* After consultation with the Medical Officer, confirms to the Referee that all safety requirements have been met.
- \* Inspects the swimmers' escort safety craft to ensure that it is suitable for the purpose intended. The size, type and style of the vessels will vary depending on availability and the characteristics of the course. It is highly desirable to have "prop guards" fitted to vessels.

Kayaks/canoes/surfboards/skis can be of use as close-in escort in open stretches of rough water but must always be backed up by a suitable larger craft.

**MEDICAL OFFICER: (701.14)**

The Organizing Committee is responsible to ensure that a qualified person is appointed to look after the initial needs of the injured swimmer.

This person could be a Medical Doctor, Paramedic, Nurse, or suitably trained first responder.

The Medical Officer shall:



- Be responsible to the Referee for all medical aspects related to the competition and swimmers (701.14.1);
- Inform the local medical facilities of the nature of the competition and ensure that any casualties can be evacuated them at the earliest opportunity (701.14.2);
- Advise the Referee in conjunction with the Safety Officer, if conditions are unsuitable for staging the

competition and/or make recommendations for the modification of the course or the manner in which the competition is conducted (701.14.3).

***Dependent on the level of Competition, the Medical Officer's duties shall include:***

Checking that the **water quality** for the designated course is safe and suitable for staging the event and to confirm that there are no other factors which would render the venue undesirable.

Any swimmer who is, in the opinion of the Medical Officer, medically unfit to take part shall be reported to the Referee and Organizing Committee.

Provide an explanation of the race medical plan for officials, escort safety craft crews and swimmers' representatives. This plan should include swimmer recovery/casualty evacuation procedures.

Provide a detailed explanation of the medical plan together with relevant procedures required for its activation for Medical, First Aid and Paramedic Teams.

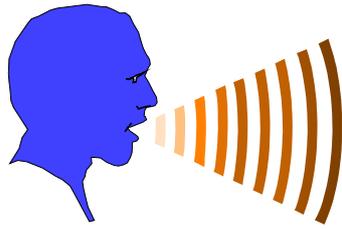
Ensure that all swimmers, that finish the race or withdraw from the race appear not to need further medical supervision.

**Submitting a detailed report on all medical aspects** of the event together with any recommendations for the planning and execution of medical plans in future events.

**The Medical Officer should review the Emergency Action Plan with the Organizing Committee and Referee well in advance of the event.**

- Sufficient personnel and equipment to execute the plan.
- A timetable and personnel roster for the pre-race examination of all swimmers. (Usually limited to Ultra-Long Distance Races >25K)
- A main medical receiving site at which there should be sufficient medical equipment and trained personnel to ensure the basic medical needs of a swimmer until onward transportation or evacuation can be accomplished.
- Detailed plan for evacuation of serious urgent medical cases to designated hospitals or medical centers.
- Sufficient means of communication to establish and maintain contact between the Medical Officer and on water race officials and between emergency responders..
- Detailed planning for the treatment of either hyperthermic or hypothermic symptoms.
- Sufficient land, water or airborne transportation to ensure the rapid movement of any casualties from the water or escort safety craft to a medical team.

## **THE ANNOUNCER:**



The Announcer shall keep the athletes, coaches and spectators apprised of the time progress to significant milestones leading up to the race. In addition, the announcer should:

- 1 Welcome Swimmers and spectators.
- 2 Outline Open Water Swimming for the spectators' benefit.
- 3 Introduce Principals:  
Race Officials,  
Organizers,  
Sponsors,  
Elected Officials, etc..
- 4 Describe the course, the event, when to start day's other events, conditions.
- 5 Explain safety measures:  
head count,  
paddlers,  
escorts,  
lifeguards,  
doctor,  
retirement procedures.
- 6 Announce notables present:  
Olympic Swimmers,  
World Record Holders etc..
- 7 Keep an eye on the finish area and announce accordingly.
- 8 Announce results and advise where they are posted.