

Open Water Officiating



Discussion Points

- What is open water swimming?
- Primary Goals of Officials
- Officiating Positions
- Resources



What is Open Water Swimming?

Open water swimming takes place in outdoor bodies of water such as open oceans, lakes, and rivers.

Open Water swimming presents a unique set of challenges to swimmers. There are no lane lines, walls, or starting blocks to dictate what it takes to win.

The elements often play a deciding role in determining the winner of an Open Water event. The unpredictable conditions also make it possible for women and men to compete along side one another.

Many people are excited to get involved in Open Water swimming, either for a new twist on training or to take advantage of the expanding competitive opportunities.

Primary Goals of Officials

- Open Water Swimming is not new, only the promotion, and organization and officiating of the sport that are relatively new!
- SAFETY
- SAFETY
- Being an OW official can be very rewarding. No two races are alike. Depending on the venue, escorted or unescorted races, lake or ocean, we look at each race differently. It is just another exciting way to volunteer your time as an official.

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Open Water: Officiating Positions

- 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
Medical Officer (*)	Clerk of Course
Safety Officer (*)	Chief Timer with 3 Timers
Course Officer (*)	Recorder
Starter	Independent Safety Monitor (*)
Chief Finish Judge with 2 finish judges	Turn Judges
Race Judge (one per competitor in escorted races)	



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Entry Level Open Water Positions

- Timing Judges
- Finish Judges
- Turn Judges
- Assistant Referees
- Announcer
- Recorder
- Clerk Of Course
- Video Recorder
- *Feeding station at races 10K and over
- Pre Race duties: Nail Clipping, Numbering, Suit Review



Senior Open Water Positions

- Meet Referee
- Lead Referee
- Admin Referee
- Safety Officer



Training for Open Water Officials

- Training provided prior to the meet.
 - Class and safety briefings/meetings
 - Take online open water tests.
- Formal training by USA national level at National Level Championships
- Open water national certification can only be currently achieved at National Open Water Championships



Further Resources

- 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 practice
- <https://www.usaswimming.org/articles-landing-page/2017/02/05/open-water-officials-resources>
- <https://www.usaswimming.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/the-professional-ow-official.pdf>


