

**SWIMMING NEW SOUTH WALES  
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ORGANISING  
AN OPEN WATER SWIMMING EVENT.**

ALL LICENCES ISSUED BY THE REGULATED AUTHORITY FOR THE CONDUCTING OF AN OPEN WATER SWIMMING EVENT REQUIRE THAT ALL COMPETITORS WEAR AN ORANGE DAY-GLO SWIMMING CAP OR ANOTHER COLOUR APPROVED FOR THE EVENT THROUGH-OUT THE RACE. **ALL ORGANISING BODIES SHALL ENFORCE THIS RULE.**

**Swimming New South Wales has available for hire an Open Water Equipment Kit complete with trailer. This kit has just about everything needed to run a successful Open Water Event and is continually being updated.**

**The Cost:- \$110 complete – you must arrange pick-up and return.**

**Requirements to have approval from Swimming New South Wales to have your event included as part of The Marathon Series you must not later than 14 days prior to your event being held inform Swimming NSW the name of the Referee, Starter, Water Safety & First Aid Groups. Results and completed Risk Assessment Form forwarded within 7 days after your event.**

The following recommendations were formulated to assist those individuals, Clubs or Districts who wish to organise their own (or host for someone else) open water swimming event. Please remember that these are suggestions only and that you may need to vary some or all of the points to suit your own needs. THESE ARE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE EVENT ONLY. YOU STILL NEED TO COMPLY WITH SWIMMING NSW SWIMMING RULES.

Nothing should remain STATIC and every time you have a swim hold a debrief with your helpers within the following two weeks to review, discuss and critically examine the conduct of the swim. There will always be a suggestion or observation that will be of benefit for your next swim.

The very first thing your Club needs to do is form a Committee. This Committee should comprise of, if possible, a Meet Director, Secretary, Publicity Officer, Technical Co-ordinator, Social Organiser, Equipment Officer, experienced Swimmer, local Safety and First Aid/medical groups. This Committee would then look at and decide on the following, which will ensure that all decisions being made are the best and most workable.

- 1. VENUE:** Your venue should be carefully selected, as the primary concern for all open water events must be the safety of the competitors. The injury to or loss of one competitor is too great to even contemplate.

Any expanse of Open Water will suffice, be it a lake, dam, river, rowing course or an ocean. The course can be a straight line, circular, or in and out. As this venue is of your choice you should have an intimate knowledge of its features or enlist the services of someone local who has the knowledge and experience to assist you.. These will have an impact as to the spectacle of the event adverse weather (it may be subject to wind, sudden storms, flooding from catchment area etc) can cause major problems.

- 2. DATE:** Choose your Date for the event carefully so as to not conflict with other major fixtures that involve the competitors that you want for your event. AND then select another for the following year. Reasons for this action are:

- \* You can announce the following year's event on the day
- \* You may have to apply for Licences to hold the event
- \* First in first served - don't let anyone capitalise on the success of your event
- \* Advanced planning overcomes the dreaded RUSH!!!!!!!!!!!!

- 3. LICENCES:** If you use an inland water course or the ocean up to 3 km off shore in New South Wales (NSW) Australia the first requirement is to obtain an event licence from the Waterways Authority (NSW). Without this licence you are subject to penalty and the police have the duty to shut your event down.

There will always be someone who has the responsibility for management of the venue, be it the Local Council, National Parks and Wildlife, the Maritime Board or a Private Land owner. You will need to write to one or more of these people to obtain the necessary licences and to find out what conditions they may impose. If it's a local council you need to cover:

- \* Closure of the venue for your exclusive use for the duration of the event. Be careful of commercial users of the venue as they have an absolute right to use the venue. You will need to have these people on side from day one. If not they can certainly stuff your event!
- \* Availability of Council Rangers on the day
- \* Ask the Council for its assistance
  - barricades for crowd control
  - advertising of the event
  - make it a community activity, Council may plan other activities in conjunction with your event
  - survey of the venue, Council may have maps with accurate distances already measured.

If you require Waterways Authority (NSW) approval (or any other Government instrumentality) enclose a copy of your Council / owner permit to hold the event. This will speed up the approval process particularly if the Officer can rely on another person's prior approval of the event. Don't forget to pay the appropriate fees.

**4. CONTACT COMMUNITY SERVICES:**

The following are a must:

- \* Police
- \* Hospital
- \* Ambulance
- \* A Doctor to be at the event
- \* Ultimate controllers of your venue:

**5. OTHER HELPERS:**

Unless you have a very big membership base you cannot do every thing yourself. Is there a Surf Club, Canoe Club, Sea Scouts, Army, Navy or Air Force, Rowing Club, Rescue Squad or similar organisations in your area that will lend a hand. Community involvement is the best, as it becomes a community activity.

See if you can attend their next meeting and provide a written request for help and a personal presentation. If they experience your enthusiasm they may just get caught up in the excitement as well. Lots of hard work but all worthwhile.

**6. ENTRY FORMS AND MAILING LISTS:**

Prepare your entry form and send it to the competitors by way of direct mail, through their Club or District. The wider you cast your net the greater the strike rate. Your initial competitors become the mailing list for the following year. It is always advisable to let the competitors know that you will be establishing a mailing list for future events but confidentiality will be maintained, i.e. you will not allow anyone else access to the mailing list.

If you have access to a Website – use it and include details on Entry Form. Email is another way of contacting competitors and include this also on Entry Form.

The entry fee is up to you, but remember you must cover your costs

**7. AWARDS / TROPHIES:**

This is up to your State Body/ District/ Club etc. to decide

**8. FINISH PLACE MARKERS:**

These may only be needed if you are not able to use Time Keepers with Print-out Stop-watches and Finish Judges. If you need some form of marker to indicate finishing order of the swimmers. You can use plastic disks sequentially numbered from 1 to 500, or check tickets or bar code reader if the finances will stretch that far.

**9. MEETINGS:**

Progress meetings are advisable. Start as early as you want and involve the other support group representatives. They may only need to attend one or two briefings. Don't forget your own helpers who will assist with the administration:

- \* Allocate specific tasks as soon as possible - you'll get further this way.
- \* Appoint a Liaison Officer to talk face to face with your other support groups - we make this the duty of the Chairperson.
- \* Appoint one or two persons to handle all enquiries - usually the Secretary and Treasurer.
- \* Appoint a Property Officer to handle T-Shirt sales, POS Material, swim gear etc.
- \* Jobs to be handled – Course set up, entries on the day, courier, transportation of competitors and gear if the Start/Finish Line is not at the same point, pre-entry registrations, number allocation, refreshment sales, Starter, timekeepers, finish judges, recorders, computer operators, runners, announcer, crowd controller, set up and clean up crews – ideally 25 to 30 people in all as most will be able to do two (2) jobs, i.e. one (1) before the Start and one (1) after the Start. This does not include the support groups' personnel nor the Meet Director or Referee.
- \* Trophies and awards appoint one person for this activity.

**10. SPONSORSHIP AND PUBLICITY:**

You must source this yourself, go after everybody and anybody. Make sure it is well publicised. Give this job to someone and use all those contacts that you have developed in the local newspapers, radio and television. The more public awareness of the swim, the better the event. The event will pull a huge benefit for your local community so don't be shy in using this to your advantage.

**11. PRESENTATION:**

Try and have your presentation as soon as possible after the event. If holding more than one (1) event, start events on a staggered basis so that the longer distance competitors are on the final lap when the shorter distance competitors start. This way they all finish within half to one hour of one another. Presentation then takes place after the last competitor finishes. If problems occur with results, present the major awards first and advise that the others awards etc. will be forwarded in the mail. Have special guest presenters - the Mayor, Representatives of the supporting groups, any celebrities you can snare.

If you intend to share the profits with your support groups make a big play of it and present them with the cheque at the Presentation. It's great publicity and you usually get an offer of assistance for next year's event immediately.

Follow up the day with a thank you letter from your Club. It fosters that good relationship that you've worked hard to attain.

**12. DEBRIEF:**

Within two weeks hold a debrief, be critical there is always room for improvement; nothing is set in concrete.

Book the venue for next year and get ready to start all over again.

**13. DOES AND DON'TS:**

Never take anyone for granted - always ask!!!!!!

A good manager doesn't delegate everything; all efforts require both mind and muscle. Be flexible.

Look at rain insurance but be warned – it's expensive.

Two final points:

**Good Luck**, don't be afraid to have a go and remember above all  
**MAKE THE DAY A SUCCESS.**

A Meet Director's Checklist is included as Appendix A and this may be beneficial for people organising events.

## +OWS MEET DIRECTOR'S CHECK LIST

Meet: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Venue: \_\_\_\_\_

ITEM	COMMENT	YES/NO/NA/OTHER
<b>1.</b>	<b>AQUATIC LICENCE</b>	
1.1	Has an Aquatic Licence or appropriate approvals been obtained?	_____
1.2	Obtain a copy of the Aquatic Licence from the Organising Committee.	_____
1.3	Check for Special Conditions (Swim caps/ power craft/ insurance etc).	_____
<b>2.</b>	<b>VENUE APPROVAL</b>	
2.1	Has approval for Event been received from Authority controlling venue?	_____
2.2	Obtain a copy of the Approval and check for Special Conditions.	_____
2.3	Has a water quality certificate been obtained?	_____
2.4	Contact local Police, advise of event, seek assistance for traffic control etc.	_____
2.5	Are facilities available for Drug Testing (if required)? See Drug Testing Rules for requirements.	_____
<b>3.</b>	<b>MEDICAL SUPPORT</b>	
3.1	Have arrangements been made for Medical Services – Local Hospital and Ambulance?	_____
3.2	Hospital phone number is _____ Ambulance phone number is _____	_____
3.3	Doctor in attendance – Dr's Name _____ contact no. _____	_____
3.4	Red Cross / St Johns' Ambulance personnel.	_____
3.5	Qualified First Aide personnel.	_____
3.6	Is there a Medical Kit with space blankets?	_____
3.7	Are fluids available for drinking?	_____
<b>4.</b>	<b>COMPETITOR SUPPORT SERVICES</b>	
4.1	Have adequate arrangements been made? (eg. local boat, canoe, kayak, surf club for safety)	_____
4.2	With whom? _____ contact no. _____	_____
4.3	How many assisted at the Event?	_____
<b>5.</b>	<b>ENTRIES</b>	
5.1	Check all entries for complete details, in particular, registration nos.	_____
5.2	Is there a signed waiver for each entrant?	_____

- 5.3 Check entry receipt date against closing date. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5.4 Check entry form for additional information (local rule etc.). \_\_\_\_\_
- 5.5 Check dates of birth (no under 13 years for Age /Open Championships  
no under 14 years for Open Championships over 5km). \_\_\_\_\_
- 5.6 If facility available do computer generated Program using Meet Manager Programme. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5.7 Have a supply of waiver Forms for completion  
(ensure that Event, Venue and date are shown on the waiver  
and that each **is signed**). \_\_\_\_\_

## 6. COURSE PLAN

- 6.1 Prepare large display Course Plan for Referee's use. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6.2 Have quantity of small Course plans for competitors. \_\_\_\_\_

## 7. TECHNICAL OFFICIALS

- 7.1 Appointed Referee's name \_\_\_\_\_ and contact no. \_\_\_\_\_
- 7.2 Chief Recorder's name \_\_\_\_\_ and contact no. \_\_\_\_\_
- 7.3 Contact both prior to Event and check their requirements.

## 8. EQUIPMENT FOR EVENT

- 8.1 Is there adequate shelter at Venue? \_\_\_\_\_  
If no then:
  - 8.1.1 Hire tents / marques - one for Recorders / Registration one for Medical. \_\_\_\_\_
  - 8.1.2 Turn Buoys and Course Markers, Finish Gate  
are these available and adequate? \_\_\_\_\_
- 8.2 Referee's Equipment
  - 8.2.1 Power Boat and Driver. \_\_\_\_\_
  - 8.2.2 Check that Referee has received TO's Appointment sheet  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - 8.2.3 Ask Referee if there are any special requirements. \_\_\_\_\_
  - 8.2.4 In the event that the Referee does not have a thermometer make sure that  
**YOU DO**. Your's will be the **OFFICIAL THERMOMETER**. \_\_\_\_\_
- 8.3 Recorders' Material
  - 8.3.1 Master Control / Results Sheet (suitable for number of entrants). \_\_\_\_\_
  - 8.3.2 Pencils, staplers and staples, table weights to keep papers in place,  
rubber bands, highlighters, table and chairs etc. \_\_\_\_\_
  - 8.3.3 Ask Chief Recorder if there are any other requirements. \_\_\_\_\_
- 8.4 Timekeepers & Judges Material
  - 8.4.1 Timekeepers & Judges sheets. \_\_\_\_\_

- 8.4.2 Swimming NSW Print-out stopwatches (if not – your own which must do splits) \_\_\_\_\_
- 8.4.3 8 x “AA” batteries (new - these are for the inbuilt printers) \_\_\_\_\_
- 8.4.4 Two way radio set (if available for use by Chief Finish Judge and Chief Recorder). \_\_\_\_\_
- 8.5 Starter’s Equipment
  - 8.5.1 Appropriate Starting Device (Gun and ammunition, hooter, flags [one for Referee and one for Starter] and whistle); have your own set of flags for OWS events. \_\_\_\_\_
- 8.6 Registration Table (Marshalling)
  - 8.6.1 List of Entrants (use Program). \_\_\_\_\_
  - 8.6.2 Large waterproof Black Marker Pens at least 4 (suggest fluoro marker for dark skins). \_\_\_\_\_
  - 8.6.3 Swim caps (one for each competitor). \_\_\_\_\_
  - 8.6.4 Suitable package for completed Indemnity Forms. \_\_\_\_\_
  - 8.6.5 Quantity of Pens and Pencils and at least 2 writing pads \_\_\_\_\_
- 8.7 Safety Plan
  - 8.7.1 Has an emergency plan be devised? \_\_\_\_\_
  - 8.7.2 Are communication devices available? \_\_\_\_\_
  - 8.7.3 Is the emergency plan published? \_\_\_\_\_
  - 8.7.4 Has Risk Assessment Form been completed \_\_\_\_\_
- 8.8 Presentation Materials
  - 8.8.1 Ensure that appropriate Medals are available. \_\_\_\_\_
  - 8.8.2 If possible have a dais for place getters. \_\_\_\_\_
  - 8.8.3 Arrange for guest presenters. \_\_\_\_\_
  - 8.8.4 Establish a VIP List and provide a copy to the Announcer and any Media present. \_\_\_\_\_

**9. REFRESHMENTS & FINALISATION**

- 9.1 At all Open Water Swimming Events ALL Officials, Support Personnel, swimmers and handlers are supplied with refreshments (food and drink – one each for swimmers and handlers after the Event and all others as required). **Ensure that suitable refreshments are available.**
- 9.2 When its all over clean up with help of others, ensure that full results are forwarded to State and/or National Body for Registrar and Selectors and to any other visiting Organisation if visitors are competing. If possible fax results to Wire Services for inclusion in newspapers, TV, etc.
- 9.3 Pack up and return all Equipment to Swimming NSW Office or as directed by Executive Director. Congratulations for a job well done.

If you have any suggestions for improvements on this checklist please forward them to the OWS Committee c/-  
Swimming New South Wales.