



# **OPEN WATER SWIMMING**

## **TECHNICAL OFFICIAL TRAINING NOTES**

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# TECHNICAL OFFICIAL TRAINING NOTES

## for

### OPEN WATER SWIMMING

Open Water Swimming is to swimming what the Marathon is to athletics. An endurance event where athletes attempt to be first over a given course while contending with climate and other conditions during the race.

Open Water Swimming is the earliest form of swimming that the world knows. It started when someone decided to cross an expanse of water only to find that they could not walk the entire distance. Sometime later it was decided to enclose the body of water in which swimmers competed and call the enclosure a "Pool". It appears that the wheel has turned the full circle and some swimmers are returning to unenclosed water for their competition.

All this explains that Open Water Swimming is not new, it's only the promotion, organisation and officiating that are relatively new.

Swimming New South Wales (SNSW) has been at the forefront in the encouragement and officiating of this discipline of the sport. Many SNSW innovations are now implemented practices used throughout the world. SNSW, in its quest for excellence, has recognised the need for practical Training notes that will assist in the education of those Technical Officials who wish to increase their expertise and add Open Water Swimming to their other achievements. These notes cover the duties of all Open Water Swimming Technical Officials.

These notes will also assist Technical Officials regardless of the level of competition. What determines the success of the event is dependent on your knowledge of the Rules, their application, understanding what is required in other roles and the ability to overcome unforeseen circumstances. The swimmers have respect for Technical Officials who are calm under pressure, are consistent and who deliver a fair application of the Rules.

The success of any Open Water Swimming event is dependent on the professionalism of the administrators and that of suitably qualified Technical Officials.

**OPEN WATER SWIMMING** is defined as (FINA Handbook 2017-2021):

**OWS 1.1** OPEN WATER SWIMMING shall be defined as any competition that takes place in rivers, lakes, oceans or water channels for 10km events

**OWS 1.1.1** MARATHON SWIMMING shall be defined as any 10km event in open water competitions

**OPEN WATER SWIMMING** is defined as (SNSW Handbook 2018):

**OWS1.1.1** OPEN WATER SWIMMING shall be defined as any competition that takes place in rivers, lakes, oceans or water channels, dams, or rowing courses except for 10km events

**OWS1.1.1** MARATHON SWIMMING shall be defined as any 10km event in open water competitions

# TECHNICAL OFFICIALS REQUIRED FOR AN OPEN WATER SWIMMING EVENT

The following Officials need to be appointed:

- [Referee](#)
- [Assistant Referee\(s\)](#)
- [Starter](#)
- [Chief Timekeeper plus Timekeepers](#)
- [Chief Finish Judge plus Judges](#)
- [Chief Race Judge plus Judges](#)
- [Turn Judges \(1 per alteration of course\)](#)
- [Feeding Platform Judge](#)
- [Safety Officer](#)
- [Medical Officer #](#)
- [Course Officer](#)
- [Clerk of the Course](#)
- [Chief Recorder plus Recorders](#)
- [Announcer](#)

# This position is appointed by the Organising Committee and is not a Technical Appointment.  
The responsibilities for this role are covered in these notes.

**NOTE:** No official can act in more than one role simultaneously. They may only undertake a new role after all of the obligations of their previous role have been fulfilled.

## RULES:

The following rules relate to Technical Officials required:

<b><u>FINA</u></b>	<b><u>SNSW</u></b>
OWS2	OWS3

# GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

All appointed Technical Officials are:

- To be at the venue **at least** one and one half (1½ ) hours before the advertised start time of the meet
- Report to the Referee
- Be marked present and receive a copy of the program / start list
- Be advised of assignment and receive any special instructions
- To familiarise yourself with the Course and any other special features of which you need to be aware
- To meet with the other appointed officials
- To sign the Attendance Sheet

You may be asked to assist with the course set up or with the registration and numbering of swimmers.

As Open Water Swims are conducted outdoors it is necessary for all Technical Officials to be aware of and prepared for all climate conditions. Suitable clothing that provides protection from the elements should be worn. Sunscreen and drinking water should also be brought by the Technical Officials. Chairs and umbrellas are optional. The Organising Committee will advise if food will be available on the day, otherwise it's up to you to bring sufficient to sustain yourself for the day. A few minutes taken in preparation are well worth the effort when compared to a recovery period from the effects of the sun, dehydration or cold.

## VENUE

The venue is a critical factor for the success of an Open Water event. A detailed assessment and development of a plan for the venue should be coordinated prior to the event.

Some of the considerations for the venue may include but is not restricted to:

- Water may be subject to minor currents
- Health Certificate certifying water quality
- Minimum depth - 1.40m
- Minimum temperature - 16 degrees C (60.8 degrees F)
- Maximum temperature - 31 degrees C (87.8 degrees F)
- All turns and alterations to the course shall be clearly marked and Turn Judges placed there
- Clearly defined final approach to the finish and the finish line.

# RISK MANAGEMENT AND SAFETY

Safety is the paramount issue in the organisation and conduct of any Open Water swimming event.

The first step in planning and Open Water swim is the consideration of safety factors. You should make a list of contact details of all assisting organisations prior to the event. This should be circulated to all relevant individuals involved with your meet.

Some key components of planning a safe, well-marked and patrolled Open Water course may include but is not restricted to:

- Start and Finish areas must be highly visible from both land and water
- Competition Doctor is mandatory
- Escort craft personnel must be alert to symptoms of hypothermia, heat exhaustion and heatstroke
- Trained and competent escort craft personnel
- Communications network: two-way radios with dedicated channels for Referee and Assistant Referees and shore control. Separate channels for other officials, safety personnel
- Mobile phones if necessary, with a list of phone numbers
- Effective public address system
- Announcer with knowledge of OWS and who can give progressive race results, instructions and emergency announcements.

## Safety Checklist:

- ☐ Do not allow late entries
- ☐ Conduct pre-race briefing - course description, water temperature, surf / water conditions, pinpoint hazards and currents in detail
- ☐ Establish accurate head count of swimmers before the start, at the start and verify during the race and at the finish
- ☐ Instruct swimmers and escort personnel of the system to be used to notify race officials if a swimmer withdraws
- ☐ Establish a cut-off time where swimmers may be removed from the water (events up to 10km = 30 minutes after the first finisher)
- ☐ Medical and first aid resources at the finish: massage, refreshments (sealed containers), hot water bottles, blankets etc.
- ☐ Ambulance on standby

## CHIEF REFEREE / ASSISTANT REFEREES

Open Water swimming involves competition over long distances outside the pool environment. Accredited Referees can apply for assessment for the OWS (Open Water Swimming) Extension to their Referee Accreditation.

Referees without the OWS Extension are still Referees, capable of officiating at Open Water Swimming competitions. Before attempting to do so, Referees should make themselves familiar with the Rules of Open Water Swimming available on the [FINA](#) and [SAL](#) websites and the [Open Water Rules](#) and [Resources](#) on the SNSW website.

A Chief Referee is appointed and has full control over all the other official. They will instruct the officials as to any special features or regulations related to the specific competitions. They are responsible for enforcing the Rules of FINA, SAL and SNSW Open Water Swimming and to ensure that these rules are being observed at all times.

The Chief Referee can authorise the cancellation of any event in conjunction with the Safety Officer at any time if hazardous conditions are likely to jeopardise the safety of any swimmer or official. As swimmers will be competing in an open environment, the safety of competitors assumes a much greater importance.

At least two hours prior to the start of competition, the Chief Referee should review the conditions of the meet, carry out their own Risk Assessment and test the water temperature in accordance with the Rules.

The Chief Referee is responsible for ensuring that all equipment is adequate for the running of the competition, for example:

- Turn Buoys adequately ballasted and secured properly
- The Finish Line is secured and in the optimum position for judging the finish of the race
- The course has been measured by GPS and is free of hazards
- Provisions made for swimmer safety and recovery.

Conduct a verbal pre-race briefing to all Competitors and Technical Officials.

The Chief Referee, in the Competitors' Briefing will instruct all swimmers that, should they leave the water before completing the event, they must report to the Chief Clerk of the Course at a specified position, who will then report this to the Chief Referee.

There is to be no coaching of swimmers from the time swimmers report to the Clerk of Course in the pre-race assembly area. Coaching and instructions from the swimmer's representative is permitted from the designated feeding station or from the escort safety craft.

The Chief Referee will instruct the Referees on the water to position themselves so that they have the greatest possible coverage of the swimmers in the water.

The Chief Referee will advise swimmers that the start is about to commence by a raised flag and short whistle blasts. They will then point the flag in the Starters direction to indicate that all is in readiness for a start. During the running of the event the various Referees on the water will regularly count the swimmers in the water, and report to the Chief Referee any swimmer they assist, or observe, to leave the water prior to the finish

At the conclusion of the event the Chief Referee will receive a report from the Chief Clerk of Course as to the number of swimmers who have been accounted for.

Disqualifications can only be made by the Referee/s and they will adjudicate any Protests that may arise. Written infraction reports must be given to the Referee as soon as possible. Finish Judges and Timekeepers must report their results without regard to any possible disqualification.

## **RULES:**

The following rules relate to the Referee's responsibilities and duties:

<b>FINA</b>	<b>SNSW</b>
OWS3.1	OWS4.1
OWS3.2	OWS4.2
OWS3.3	OWS4.3
OWS3.4	OWS4.4
OWS3.4	OWS4.5
OWS3.6	OWS4.6
OWS3.7	OWS4.7
OWS3.8	OWS4.8
OWS3.9	OWS4.9
OWS3.10	OWS4.10





## STARTER

The **General Requirements** apply to the Starter's appointment. As a Starter for Open Water Swimming events you will find that your appointed activity is usually completed within the first 15 minutes of the day unless the Organising Committee has events that are programmed to start at various times over the Meet. Unless there are multiple event starts - this is becoming more prevalent due to increased participation in OWS events.

Usually you will double up as a Finish Judge, relief Timekeeper for part of the event, Runner, Assistant Announcer, Recorder, Course Officer or be out on the water with one of the Referees assisting and learning how to be a Race Judge, Turn Judge or getting practical knowledge for the position of Referee.

It is most important that you contact the Organising Committee prior to Race Day and inquire what type of starting device is to be used. The Organising Committee may not supply a starting device and may expect you, as Starter, to supply your own equipment. The use of a whistle is permitted however, it's inappropriate for a State or National event.



The Starter will also need to:

- Inspect the Start Area
- Find out where the Ready Area is for the pre-race briefing (if it hasn't already been done)
- Find out if the swimmers have been issued with pre-race information
- Check with the Course Officer for the layout of the course
- If a Course Officer has not been appointed, then you may be instructed by the Referee to instruct the swimmers as to the rounding of buoys or other objects that denote the course as part of your starting instructions (you may have to inspect the course to have an understanding of its configuration)
- Ensure that the starting equipment is operative and that you are familiar with its operation
- Be advised by the Chief Recorder of the number of swimmers for the event(s)
- Check with the Referee for any special instructions.



## WHAT TO BRING:

- Whistle, wristwatch, two flags (one red, the other white); your own starting device (pistol, ammunition, electronic starting device or horn), clipboard note paper/writing pad and pencils (HB or softer)
- Experience has shown that most swimmers appreciate the use of a gun for the start together with the visual flag. This means that your ammunition must have a loud report. You can purchase crimped blanks that are extremely loud and that emit a good amount of smoke. **In NSW, to use the pistol you must be licensed for that calibre pistol.**

**If you use a pistol please ensure that you have your own personal protective equipment (PPE), such as ear plugs or muffs, wrap around protective glasses. Never point your pistol at any person whether its unloaded or not. Be aware of your ammunition, blank fire ammunition is dangerous and sometimes can cause injuries if inappropriately used.**

## WHAT TO DO:

The Starter shall:

- Be stationed in such a position as to be clearly visible to all swimmers
- On the signal of the Referee raise a distinctive flag to the vertical position
- Simultaneously bring the flag holding arm down, with arm kept straight and activate an audible signal (fire the gun, blow the whistle, sound the hooter/horn, give the command)
- If, in the opinion of the Referee, an unfair advantage has been gained at the start, the offending swimmer/s will be given a yellow or red flag in accordance with OWS6.3.

**In addition, the Starter will:**

- Explain start and false start procedures
- Line up swimmers at the starting line
- The start signal will be both audible and visual

## RULES:

The following rules relate to the Starter's responsibilities and duties:

<u>FINA</u>	<u>SNSW</u>
OWS3.11	OWS4.11

# TIMEKEEPERS

Sufficient Timekeepers shall be appointed, one of whom shall be Chief, to ensure that all swimmers are timed and that a finish time is recorded when each swimmer finishes his/her race. The **General Requirements** apply to Timekeeper appointments.



## WHAT TO BRING:

A stopwatch capable of running continuously for 10 hours or more with lap split and memory recall (minimum 300 laps) functionality and an inbuilt printer. SNSW has these available as part of its Open Water Equipment.

- Pencils - preferably HB or soft
- Clipboard and a writing pad/paper.

## WHAT TO DO:

- Be assigned as instructed by the Referee or the Chief Timekeeper
- Start your 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 word of command)
- Time each swimmer as they cross 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 your stopwatch has an inbuilt printer, times are recorded for you. If not, record the times of swimmers in the manner prescribed (usually this involves calling the times to a scribe who records the time on a time sheet or card that is passed to the Chief Recorder - see example below).

### Timekeepers'/(Scribe) 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
21	33.22
22	38.05

\* If using a stopwatch with an inbuilt printer you 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 Chief Recorder
- Ensure that your 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, immediately advise the Chief Timekeeper of the occurrence
- If able, restart the stopped stopwatch using the "elapsed time" method (restarting the stopwatch on the command of the Chief Timekeeper 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 Timekeeper or the Referee
- Ensure that you have an unobstructed view of the finish; and
- Record an accurate finish time for each swimmer as they finish.





## CHIEF TIMEKEEPER'S DUTIES

In addition to the above, the Chief Timekeeper:

- assigns all Timekeepers to their positions for the start and the finish
- conducts a time check of at least 15 minutes duration prior to the start
- advises the Timekeepers of the method of start (after consulting with the Starter)
- ensures that recorded times are forwarded to the Chief Recorder
- examines any time taken by a Timekeeper by inspection of their stopwatch or of the time recorded on the time sheet or card
- instructs the Timekeepers when to stop their stopwatches
- supervises the appointed Timekeepers and reports to the Referee on their performance and replaces any who are incapable through illness or inability to perform their assigned tasks after consultation with the Referee
- ensures that a least two (2) backup stopwatches are started on the starting signal
- These are to be used in the event of stopwatch failure or accidental stoppage.

**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)
- Timekeepers 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 inbuilt 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 as the case may be. Timekeepers do not act as Finish Judges under any circumstance
- the "lap split" function of the stopwatch is extensively used
- you are not assigned to a lane
- the finish may be a fixed vertical strike plate, a line suspended above the water surface, a projected line between the shore and a buoy
- 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; and
- there are no records in Open Water Swimming. Even where an identical course is used no two events will have identical climate conditions and these will have an impact on the times swum.

**RULES:**

The following rules relate to the Timekeeper's responsibilities and duties:

<b>FINA</b>	<b>SNSW</b>
OWS3.12	OWS4.12
OWS3.13	OWS4.13
OWS3.14	OWS4.14
OWS3.15	OWS4.15
OWS3.16	OWS4.16
OWS3.17	OWS4.17
OWS3.18	OWS4.18

# JUDGES

In Open Water Swimming there are four types of Judges:

- **Finish Judges**
- **Race Judges**
- **Turn Judges**
- **Feeding Platform Judge (when feeding platforms are used)**

Each of whom are quite different from the other, but all their duties involve watching the swimmers and each role is important for the success of the competition.

## FINISH JUDGES:

For Open Water Swimming meets, Finish Judges are always required. **General Requirements** apply to Finish Judges' appointments.

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

As at the Pool, the most important duty of the Finish Judge is to place all swimmers in their order of finish. The difference between the Pool and Open Water Swimming is that you place the swimmers by their swimmer number as opposed to lane numbers and should a Finish Judge fail to place all swimmers you do not discard the Finish Judge's placings.

## WHAT TO BRING:

- Pencils
- Clipboard
- Note pad/writing paper.

## WHAT TO DO:

- Take up your position as assigned by the Chief Finish Judge
- Position yourself so that you have an unobstructed view of the finish (that may be a fixed vertical strike plate, a line suspended above the water surface or a projected line between the shore and a buoy) and if there is an elevated position USE IT.



- Place each swimmer as they touch the finish plate or cross the finish line or rounds a buoy or other object as instructed by the Referee / Chief Finish Judge
- Record each swimmer's place in the manner prescribed, that is, by recording the swimmers' numbers in lap order/finish order on your note pad/writing paper
- When recording the swimmers' order do not murmur or speak out aloud as this may distract or influence the other Finish Judges
- Ensure that your view of the finish of the race is unobstructed by other Technical Officials, spectators or escort safety craft
- Place each swimmer by recording their swimmer number in their order of finish on your note pad/writing paper, sign and date your record
- When asked, pass your signed and dated record of relative placings to the Chief Finish Judge
- Finish Judges are **NOT PERMITTED** to act as timekeepers in the same event.

#### 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
20	22
21	1
22	16

## CHIEF FINISH JUDGE:

In addition to the above, the Chief Finish Judge:

- Assigns the Finish Judges to positions in line with the finish
- Directs the Finish Judges on their duties
- Places all swimmers in lap order and in their order of finish
- Receives the other Finish Judges' signed and dated relative records of finish and determines the order of finish records, signs and dates; and
- Forwards the determined order of finish to the Chief Recorder/Referee.

## RULES:

The following rules relate to the Finish Judges' responsibilities and duties:

<b>FINA</b>	<b>SNSW</b>
OWS3.19	OWS4.19
OWS3.20	OWS4.20
OWS3.21	OWS4.21
OWS3.22	OWS4.22
OWS3.23	OWS4.23
OWS3.24	and the Finish of the Race
OWS3.25	OWS7.1 to OWS7.7
OWS3.26	

and the Finish of the Race

OWS7.1 to OWS7.7



## **RACE JUDGES:**

Race Judges are Open Water Swimming's equivalent of the Pool's Judges of Stroke. The Race Judge always observes the appointed swimmer. Race Judges at FINA or International events are Referees and are usually FINA appointments.

When an OWS event is held that has motorised escort safety craft assigned to each swimmer, Race Judges are assigned by random draw in each escort safety craft.

At National, State and Local meets it's unlikely that individual motorised escort safety craft will be in use. There is a greater responsibility on Race Judges as they are acting on behalf of the Referee who cannot cover the whole course and once the swimmers spread out it becomes impossible to observe all swimmers at the same time throughout the Race.

### **WHAT TO BRING:**

- Appropriate clothing suitable for all climate conditions that may be encountered and if you have one, your own life preserver
- Clipboard, writing paper/note pad, pencils (HB or softer), 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
- 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:**

- Personally observe the appointed swimmer at all times during the Race
- Ensure that the Rules of the competition are complied with and any violations recorded in writing and reported to the Referee at the earliest opportunity
- Keep a complete record of the swimmer including stroke rate, times of feeding, distance covered per hour and any violations
- By personal observation ensure that the appointed swimmer does not take unfair advantage or impedes another swimmer and, if the situation requires, to intervene and instruct the offending swimmer to move away (any such intervention must be recorded, and the Referee informed as soon as possible)
- Have the power to order a swimmer from the water upon the expiration of any time limit so ordered by the Referee.

The whistle should be used sparingly. It is only used as a last resort. Usually you will be able to speak to or instruct the swimmer's Handler as to the requirement. Where the Handler or the swimmer disregards your instruction, you need to gain the swimmer's attention. The whistle will achieve this result. If you over-use the whistle no one will pay any regard to it when it is blown.

Race Judges should also be aware that many escort safety craft are small and have no toilet facilities, so care should be taken with the quantities of fluids ingested.



## **RULES:**

The following rules relate to the Race Judges' responsibilities and duties:

<b>FINA</b>	<b>SNSW</b>
OWS3.27	OWS4.24
OWS3.28	OWS4.25
OWS3.29	OWS4.26
OWS3.30	OWS4.27
	OWS4.28
	OWS4.29
	OWS4.30

## TURN JUDGES:

Sufficient Turn Judges should be appointed so that at each alteration of the course there is a Turn Judge positioned. This ensures that each swimmer executes the alteration in the course as detailed in pre-competition information and/or as given at a pre-race briefing meeting.

Turn Judge can be likened to the Pool's Inspector of Turns, with the difference being that you are not looking at a turning action or a touch in accordance with the Rules. You are ensuring that the swimmers are on course and actually executing the alteration in accordance with the instructions that are contained in the pre-competition information or as instructed at the pre-race briefing. You observe the swimmers as they approach and pass your position. Records are kept of those who fail to execute the alteration in the course in the prescribed manner and, any infringement observed is also recorded and reported to the Referee. There may be radio communications between your post and the Referee and the ChiefReorder.

Likely alterations in a course that need to be observed:

Surf, lakes, rivers, dams or rowing courses usually have one of the following configurations or a mix of them:

- Parallels the beach
- Goes out to or around a fixed point such as a pier or island
- 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" configuration it 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, you will usually be positioned in a craft anchored just off the turn point from where you have an uninterrupted view.

When positioning your craft, you need to pay careful attention to the wind, current and tides. You do not want to come to the realisation that your craft is in the middle of the course because:

- the wind has changed direction;
- there's been a turn of the tide; or
- a rip has developed that has pushed you into the swimmers' path.

## WHAT TO BRING:

Exactly the same as the Race Judge.

- Appropriate clothing suitable for all climate conditions that may be encountered and if you have one, your own life preserver
- Clipboard, writing paper/note pad, pencils (HB or softer), wristwatch, whistle and a copy of the appropriate Open Water Swimming Rules and any local rules that apply
- 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.

## WHAT TO DO:

- Be positioned to ensure all swimmers execute the alteration in course as indicated in the competition information documents and as given at the pre-race briefing and you may be required to record the swimmers' order of turn
- Record any infringement of the turn procedures on the recording sheets provided or your writing paper/note pad if none are supplied and indicate the infringement to the Referee/Race Judge at the time of infringement by blasts on a whistle (or use the radio communication if available)
- Promptly upon completion of the event, deliver the signed recording sheet to the Referee (OWS3.31 actually says "the Chief Finish Judge" but you should deliver any matter to the Referee if there is a possibility of affecting the determination of the race).

## FEEDING PLATFORM JUDGE (If necessary):

The Feeding Platform Judge (if required) is responsible for the management of the activity and the swimmers' authorised representatives present on the platform, in accordance with FINA rules.

## RULES:

The following rules relate to the Turn and Feeding Judges' responsibilities and duties:

<b>FINA</b>	<b>SNSW</b>
OWS3.31	OWS4.31
OWS3.32	OWS4.32
OWS3.33	OWS4.33
OWS3.55	OWS4.55

# SAFETY OFFICER

In these days of risk minimisation and management, the role of the Safety Officer is critical, so the appointment of this person should not be overlooked nor trivialised. It is vitally important to the success of the day and for the well-being of all swimmers, handlers, technical officials and the Organising Committee. This is a key role for a key person. The **General Requirements** apply to the Safety Officer's appointment.

An appointed Safety Officer should possess the following skills:

- Specialised skills in recognising risks and dangers
- Can minimise these to an absolute minimum
- Coordinate the combined expertise of others into a single cohesive unit
- Can plan and successfully implement the plan, and carry it out to a successful conclusion
- Will accept the challenges if and when they arise
- Remain calm and resolute to achieve a satisfactory outcome.

From the above description you can see that the role is demanding, and it might be difficult to find the right person. Someone with experience in the voluntary Emergency Services, Police, Fire or Ambulance Services, Coast Guard or who occupies a safety officer role at their place of employment may be your target. If you have anyone in your Club or Area Association that has these attributes, approach them and see if they will accept this position. If the person has a tie-in with one of the Services, you may be able to use that contact for assistance. Sometimes Emergency Services will utilise an Open Water swimming event as a training exercise. Two immediate benefits, you get to network with a specialist group of people, and they get valuable training while helping you with the event.

In conjunction with the Course Officer, the Safety Officer should carefully inspect the proposed course. The venue will alert you to some of the areas of concern. What to look for; there are so many variables that it would be impossible to cover everything.

Prior to staging any OWS event a Risk Assessment Plan should be completed. It is difficult to predict all the eventualities. It's normally a case of identifying all the possible problem areas, having a plan to eliminate or minimise and conferring with as many people who have knowledge of the venue as you can.

## **WHAT TO DO:**

The Safety Officer shall:

- Be responsible to the Referee for all aspects of safety related to the conduct of the competition
- Check that the entire course, with special regard to the start and finish areas, is safe, suitable, and free of any obstruction
- Be responsible for ensuring that sufficient powered safety craft are available during the competition so as to provide full safety backup to the escort safety crafts
- 7 days prior to the event, provide to all swimmers a tide/current chart clearly indicating the time of tide changes on the course and showing the effect of tides or current on a swimmer's progress along the course
- In conjunction with the Medical Officer advise the Referee if, in your opinion, conditions are unsuitable for staging the competition and make recommendations for the modification of the course or the manner in which the competition is conducted.

**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
- Checks, prior to the start, evacuation procedures and sites of Medical Teams
- 15 minutes prior to the start in conjunction with the Medical Officer, confirms to the Referee that, in their opinion, all safety requirements have been met
- Inspects the swimmers' escort safety craft to ensure that it is suitable for the purpose intended. Depending upon conditions appertaining to a particular course the type of escort safety craft used will vary. Ensure that prop guards have been fitted to the propeller. No prop guard = Not allowed on the water.



Inflatables (IRBs) should only be used as a last resort due to their inability to keep a constant track in windy conditions and their unsuitability to be rowed at the required pace.

While this is a fair comment you will find that the majority of Referees prefer to use IRBs due to their ability to come along side of swimmers with a minimal wash, and the closeness that can be achieved. IRBs are generally more maneuverable than larger craft. It is also easier to retrieve swimmers from the water when using an IRB.

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.

## **RULES:**

The following rules relate to the Safety Officer's responsibilities and duties:

<b>FINA</b>	<b>SNSW</b>
OWS3.34	OWS4.34
OWS3.35	OWS4.35
OWS3.36	OWS4.36
OWS3.37	OWS4.37
OWS3.38	OWS4.38



## MEDICAL OFFICER

It is the responsibility of the Organising Committee to ensure that a suitably qualified person is appointed to look after the initial needs of the injured swimmer.

This person could be a registered Medical Practitioner (Medical Doctor), Paramedic, Ambulance Officer, First Aid Officer etc. Just remember that only Doctors are permitted to prescribe drugs or treatments. Others are used primarily to provide a level of support until a Doctor can supervise any treatment. The **General Requirements** apply to the Medical Officer's appointment.

The Medical Officer shall:

- Be responsible to the Referee for all medical aspects related to the competition and swimmers
- Inform the local medical facilities of the nature of the competition and ensure that any casualties can be evacuated to medical facilities at the earliest opportunity
- In conjunction with the Safety Officer, advise the Referee if, in their opinion, conditions are unsuitable for staging the competition and make recommendations for the modification of the course or the manner in which the competition is conducted.

In addition to the Rules, the Medical Officer is responsible to the Organising Committee for the provision of adequate medical safety cover to ensure the well-being of all swimmers and provide such facilities as are required under the rules and recommendations of the Organising Committee. During the actual event the Medical Officer's primary responsibility is to the Referee and will also act in conjunction with, and liaise with, the Safety Officer.

### **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 (such as shark, crocodile or jellyfish) which would render the venue undesirable.
- Provision for final physical examination of all swimmers prior to the day of the event. Any swimmer who is, in the opinion of the Medical Officer, medically unfit to take part shall be reported to the Referee and Organising Committee.
- To compile such data on the status of the swimmers as may be requested by competent authorities (ASDA, ASC, SAL or SNSW).
- 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, at the time of finishing or in the case of withdrawal, at the point of landing are not requiring further medical supervision.

- Ensure that all swimmers, at the time of finishing or in the case of withdrawal, at the point of landing are not requiring further medical supervision
- Provide advice and assistance regarding suitable intake of refreshment or sustenance to aid recovery from the event
- 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 shall also provide a Medical Plan
- The detailed medical plan for any given event will be unique when the vast range of variables are taken into consideration, especially the variations in temperatures and climatic conditions.

It can be difficult to have a Doctor at the location. Their time is under constant demand. You might have to settle for a Doctor on standby. Just remember notification to the local Hospital and Ambulance service may be all that you can arrange.

## **RULES:**

The following rules relate to the Medical Officer's responsibilities and duties:

<b><u>FINA</u></b>	<b><u>SNSW</u></b>
OWS3.39	OWS4.39
OWS3.40	OWS4.40
OWS3.41	OWS4.41



# COURSE OFFICER

The Course Officer appointment is a crucial appointment of the Organising Committee. This person has to have an intimate knowledge of the venue and its features. Adverse weather (it may be subject to wind, sudden storms, flooding from catchment area 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.

As soon as it is decided to host an Open Water Swimming event, the Organising Committee must appoint the Course Officer. Having regard to what has been stated in the opening paragraph, this appointee must be highly organised and knowledgeable. The first duty for the Course Officer is to obtain a survey of the Course.

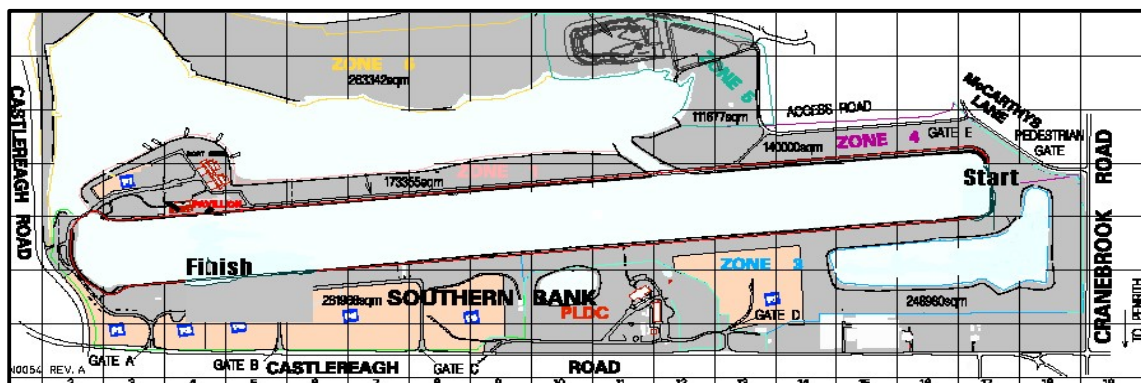
## Obtaining a Course Survey:

Contact the controlling authority of the venue. That body may have a surveyed plan of the course. For example, topographical maps can be obtained from the NSW Lands Department, maritime maps are available from the Maritime Board, Local Councils may have surveyed maps of rivers, lakes or quarries that come under their jurisdiction. The Sydney International Regatta Centre (SIRC) certainly holds surveyed maps. Surf Clubs may be able to help with areas that they patrol. An escort safety craft that has GPS (global positioning system) can be used for the accurate measurement and plotting of the course.

The **General Requirements** apply to the Course Officer's appointment.

## WHAT TO BRING:

- Suitable clothing for an extended exposure to the elements
- Detailed plans of the course for the Referee to use in their 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.



Example of a small layout plan.

## WHAT TO DO:

- Be at the venue when it opens. Unless you have set up the course the day before there is a lot to be done before the first swimmer arrives
- 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 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)
- With the Referee and the Safety Officer, inspect the course and markings prior to the start of the event
- Inform the Assistant Referee, immediately before the start of the event, that the Turn Judges are in position. This is important, as it is your responsibility to arrange transportation to the positions that need to be manned.
- Before any equipment is removed from the course, confer with the Referee.

## Some additional information of which the Course Officer should be aware:

For the course, any expanse of Open Water will suffice, be it a lake, dam, river or an ocean. The course can be a straight line, circular, oblong or square or in and out.

If you use an inland watercourse or the ocean up to 3 km offshore, then 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 down your event.

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 Landowner. 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.

## RULES:

The following rules relate to the Course Officer's responsibilities and duties:

<b>FINA</b>	<b>SNSW</b>
OWS3.42	OWS4.42
OWS3.43	OWS4.43
OWS3.44	OWS4.44
OWS3.45	OWS4.45
OWS3.46	OWS4.46
and the Venue OWS5.1 to OWS5.10	and the Venue OWS2.1 to OWS2.10

## CLERK OF THE COURSE

The Clerk of the Course is Open Water Swimming's equivalent of the Pool's Marshal / Check Starter with some added responsibilities. The Clerk of the Course (CC) also has to comply with the **General Requirements**. Depending on the number of swimmers it may be necessary to appoint more than one CC. While one hour is usually sufficient it is best to check with the Organising Committee as the Registration Time may be altered to allow for a large field and as CC you will need to be in attendance earlier than the one hour before the advertised start time.

As CC you need to liaise with the Recorders, Announcer, the Course and Safety Officers, Starter and the Referee. You need to know where the Registration and the Ready/Assembly areas are located. This information needs to be passed on to the Announcer so that suitable announcements can be made prior to the Start of the event(s).

The CC must know the exact location of the Start and Finish lines.

They must also be aware if the competition is to be an "escorted swim", that is escort safety craft provided for the swimmers' representatives and the Race Judges (one craft for each swimmer).

From the Chief Recorder you must find out the exact number of swimmers.

### WHAT TO BRING:

- Pencils, pens, marker pens (wide felt tip) and wristwatch.

### WHAT TO DO:

After reporting to the Referee, find the Chief Recorder and:

- Find out the total number of swimmers entered and when registrations can commence (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. You need to receive this list from the Chief Recorder. Where the field of swimmers is restricted, or it is a pre-entry meet, it is possible to know the exact number of entrants before the day. This does not mean that you will have the same number of swimmers registering on the day. For any late entries, obtain the last Competitor Number issued from the pre-entries and start with the next number. If someone fails to register you won't know until the closing of the event as to how many starters you will have.
- You must inform the Referee and Chief Recorder of all non-starters and exactly how many swimmers will be entering the water as soon as registration has closed. The only reason for your number not being equal to the number in the water is where someone withdraws after registration, but before the Start.

- Where escort safety craft are used, the swimmer's number must be clearly displayed on the 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 Recorders. Anyone wishing to withdraw must be directed to the Chief Recorder. The Chief Recorder is responsible for advising of any withdrawals before the Start of the event
- It is strongly recommended that swimmer numbers be **unique and sequential**. There must not be any non-sequential numbering nor are concurrent sets of numbers to be used under any circumstances.
- Ask the Meet Director to show you the Registration, Ready/Assembly area, the Start and Finish lines and dedicated secure storage areas for swimmers' equipment that is not going onto their escort safety craft
- Check with the Announcer that they are aware of the locations mentioned above. Ask the Announcer to make suitable announcements so that swimmers are aware of the exact locations
- Swimmer numbers are applied to the upper forearms and the shoulders. Swimmers should be repeatedly reminded to keep these areas free of grease. The numbers should be large so that the Referee, Race and Finish Judges and any Swimmer Support Personnel can easily read them. Legible numbers are of paramount importance because there are no designated lanes for the swimmers' use. At the time of registration swimmers should be reminded that jewellery and watches are not permitted to be worn during the race and that long fingernails need to be trimmed (OWS 3.45)
- Advise all swimmers to be in the Assembly/Ready area by the designated time. The Referee will tell you when they want to instruct the swimmers of the conditions pertaining to the event to receive the Referee's instructions
- Keep swimmers, their handlers/representatives and Officials informed of the time remaining before the start at regular intervals. The Referee will give you instructions as to what is suitable until the last five (5) minutes during which one-minute warnings are given
- You are also responsible for ensuring that all/any clothing left in the start area is taken to the finish area and kept in safekeeping
- Finally, when the swimmers have finished their event, you have to look after their wellbeing should their own attendants not be present. This may consist of having their bagged clothing for them at the finish, a chair for them to sit on, some refreshments or obtaining Medical support should the need arise.





## RULES:

The following rules relate to the Clerk of the Course's responsibilities and duties:

<b>FINA</b>	<b>SNSW</b>
OWS3.47	OWS4.47
OWS3.48	OWS4.48
OWS3.49	OWS4.49
OWS3.50	OWS4.50
OWS3.51	OWS4.51
OWS3.52	OWS4.52



## RECORDER

Recorders must comply with the **General Requirements** and it is recommended that the Chief Recorder contact the Meet Director a few days before the Meet to establish:

- The method of recording to be used (it could be either electronic or hard copy depending on the facilities available)
- NSW recommends the Meet Manager Program be used for all of the Marathon Series events
- The anticipated number of swimmers (both male and female)
- Whether it's a "pre or post" entry Meet as this will determine the amount of preparatory work that can be done
- In most of the NSW Marathon Series events the Meets are both "pre and post" entry.

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 the Course (Marshal) when each swimmer personally registers for their Race. In some events this is not possible due to issue of competitor numbers prior to registration.

In the case of both pre and post entry, the Organising Committee should arrange to have a list of numbers starting with the next swimmer number from the pre-entries.

Irrespective of whether men and women swim together (i.e. the number of all swimmers is 40 or less), the results are always determined as separate men's and women's events.



## 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 cutter, ruler and a calculator.
- If you have a folding table with chairs and have space in the boot of the car take it with you, as it may be the only flat surface available at the venue. Check with the Organising Committee to ascertain what type of area and covering has been allocated for the Recording prior to the day of the event and what equipment they will be supplying.

## WHAT TO DO:

- In conjunction with the Clerk of the Course (Marshal), issue to and record a **unique sequential number** for each swimmer as they register. 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 they will inform the Assistant Referee, Swimmer support and Medical personnel
- It is strongly recommended that you do not use and never allow sets of concurrent numbers to be used for men and women even if they are separately swum
- If sequentially numbering, never allow a number to be omitted
- No one is allowed to leave with recording material.

The only time you will not have the number of swimmers registered equal to the number in the water for the start is when someone withdraws after registration but prior to the start. If this occurs then all relevant personnel must be informed with the first being the Referee, the second being the Computer Operator so all non- starters can be entered into the Computer.

While the Results Sheet is primarily for recording results (lap times and finish times and finish order) this is also an important source document in Open Water Swimming Risk Management. Its preparation is a secondary check that each swimmer has been issued with an unique sequential number. If Meet Manager is being used, an Excel Spread Sheet can be used which can be arranged in Competitor Number Order.

Withdrawals before the Start are received by the Recorders who relay this information 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, 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 receive lap times or buoy times 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, the Timekeeper's scribe or the runner. Due to having to write quickly, it may be advisable to ask the Referee prior to the event whether or not they will require the 100<sup>th</sup>'s of a second included in the Results where scribes are being used to assist the Timekeeper. If so, the scribe records the times in the following manner (see example below).

**Timekeepers'/(Scribe) Time Sheet:**

Position Number	Time Lap 1
1	27.45
2	28.47
3	29.49
4	30.53
5	30.57
6	30.59
7	31.21
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
20	33.11
21	33.22
22	38.05

As the swimmers cross the start/finish line or round a predetermined point, the Timekeepers 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.

**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
20	22
21	1
22	16

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

**Master Control/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
20	Cooper McGeary	Penrith	33.02	1.05.11	2nd	16	M
21	Brooke Chown	Wizards	32.55	1.04.23	2nd	14	F
22	Ethan McGrath	Liverpool	33.11	1.06.33	2nd	19	M
23	John Griffiths	Nu Swim	DNS			16	M

After all lap times have been recorded on the Master Control/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' placings and the times recorded by the Timekeepers, the matter is referred to the Referee for his/her determination. Once the Referee has determined the result the Chief Recorder will complete the Place Column prior to the posting of Results.

Results are posted in the usual manner with the time of posting being recorded on the posted Results.

Where Team events have been designated, the Recorders are responsible for compiling this result. Teams consist of two male and two female swimmers and the best times of any three are totalled. The times are not averaged, the result is determined by the totality of the three times. The Team having the fastest total time is the winner. In a Teams event a minimum of four (4) swimmers from the one club must have been nominated prior to the start of the event. Each of the three (3) swimmers whose times are used to determine the result must have completed the course within the permitted time limit for the event, eg:

Swimmer One	1:51.50
Swimmer Two	2:06.53 (eliminated as the slowest of the nominated)
Swimmer Three	2:04.59
Swimmer Four	2:05.55
<b><u>Team Time</u></b>	<b><u>6:02.44</u></b>

Don't forget that you are working in seconds, minutes and hours.

## **RULES:**

The following rules relate to the Recorder's responsibilities and duties:

<b><u>FINA</u></b>	<b><u>SNSW</u></b>
OWS3.53	OWS4.53
OWS3.54	OWS4.54



# ANNOUNCER

The **General Requirements** apply to the Announcer's appointment and the Announcer shall:

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



## THE START

All Open Water swimming competitions shall start with all swimmers standing on a fixed platform or in water depth sufficient for them to commence swimming on the start signal. At the 2007 World Swimming Championships, the FINA Bureau accepted an interpretation that the word "standing" includes swimmers standing on a platform/pontoon that enables the race to start with a "dive". A dive start from a platform/pontoon was therefore permitted under the existing [FINA Rule OWS4.1 \(SNSW OWS5.1\)](#).

The Clerk of Course keeps swimmers and Officials informed of the time remaining to the Start at suitable intervals and at one-minute intervals for the last 5 minutes.

Swimmers assume their start positions behind the starting line. Sometimes a rope may be positioned between two points and the swimmers are obliged to hang on to the rope with one hand until the starting signal is given. A pontoon, wharf or jetty may be used for a dive start, but the height of these items must meet the standing platform height above water surface requirements and the depth of water must be sufficient to meet current diving requirements for the start of races/competition.

When the number of entries dictate it (40+ swimmers), then the start is segregated into a Men's and a Women's competition. The Men's event always starts before the Women's event ([FINA OWS4.3 \(SNSW OWS5.3\)](#)) with a start lapse of 10 minutes or more following the Men's start, depending on the race distance and other considerations.

The start line shall be clearly defined by either overhead apparatus or by removable equipment at water level or a projected line between two buoys or the shore and a buoy or other fixed object.

All escort safety craft are stationed prior to the Start so as not to interfere with any swimmer and, if picking up their swimmer from behind, navigate in such a way as not to manoeuvre through the field of swimmers.

### **Some further comments:**

Normally it is rare to find overhead apparatus or removable equipment at water level that denotes the start line. The use of a rope between two fixed points is becoming popular. The swimmers are instructed to hold the rope with one hand until the signal to start is given.

Usually the swimmers are between two fixed points. If some swimmers have crept a few centimetres then it's not going to mean a great deal after they have raced several kilometres. Only recall the swimmers for a false start where an unfair advantage has been gained or when instructed by the Referee.

If the Rules have not been complied with by the swimmer(s) then the Rules must be applied.

If a swimmer swims in the wrong direction from the start, as long as your instructions or those given at the pre-race briefing have been clear and unambiguous, then there is no need to recall the swimmers.

If a swimmer has started before the starting signal and the starting signal has sounded, do not recall the swimmers. You report the infraction to the Referee in the normal manner. Be sure that you have the offending swimmer's number.





## RULES:

The following rules relate to the Start of the race:

<b>FINA</b>	<b>SNSW</b>
OWS4.1	OWS5.1
OWS4.2	OWS5.2
OWS4.3	OWS5.3
OWS4.4	OWS5.4
OWS4.5	OWS5.5
OWS4.6	OWS5.6
OWS4.7	OWS5.7
OWS4.8	OWS5.8
OWS4.9	OWS5.9
OWS4.10	OWS5.10

## THE RACE

All Open Water races will be swum in the style of Freestyle. Swimmers are required to complete the whole course.

No pacing or slip streaming of the escort craft is allowed.

### **Disqualification Procedure:**

If any swimmer or swimmer's approved representative or escort safety craft takes advantage by committing any violation of the rules by making intentional contact with any swimmer, the following procedure shall apply:

- **1<sup>st</sup> Infraction:** A yellow flag and a card bearing the swimmer's number shall be raised to indicate and to inform the swimmer that they are in violation of the Rules
- **2<sup>nd</sup> Infraction:** A red flag and a card bearing the swimmers number shall be raised by the Referee to indicate and to inform the swimmer that they are in violation of the rules for the second time. The swimmer shall be disqualified. The swimmer must exit the water immediately and placed in an escort craft and will take no further part in the race.

Standing on the bottom during a race shall not disqualify a swimmer but they may not walk or jump.

Swimmers shall not receive support from any fixed or floating object and shall not intentionally touch or be touched by their escort safety craft or crew. However, rendering assistance by an official Medical Officer to a swimmer in apparent distress should always supersede official rules of disqualification through "intentional contact" with a swimmer.

No swimmer shall be permitted to use or wear any device which may be an aid to their speed, endurance or buoyancy. An approved swimsuit, goggles, a maximum of two caps nose clip and earplugs may be used.

Swimmers shall be allowed to use grease or other such substances providing these are not, in the opinion of the Chief Referee, excessive.

The pacing of a swimmer by another person entering the water is not permitted.

Feeding poles are not to exceed 5m in length when extended.

Time limits shall apply as follows:

- 15 minutes per 5km (or part thereof) up to a maximum of 120 minutes

## Emergency Abandonment:

- For races of 10km or less, the race will be restarted from the beginning
- If the race is longer than 10km and has been underway for at least three (3) hours, the final ranking will be as reported by the Chief Recorder. If under 3 hours duration, the race will be restarted from the beginning.
- If the above does not apply, a result may be declared if the lead swimmer has completed at least three quarters ( $\frac{3}{4}$ ) of the race.

## RULES:

The following rules relate to the Race:

<b>FINA</b>	<b>SNSW</b>
OWS6.1 - OWS6.18	OWS6.1 - OWS6.19



## FINISH OF THE RACE

The area leading to the finish line entrance should be clearly marked. Escort safety craft should ensure that only authorised escort safety craft enter or cross this entrance.

The finish line apparatus should, where possible, be a vertical wall at least 5 metres wide, securely fastened so it cannot be moved by wind, tide or the force of a swimmer striking the wall. The finish should be filmed and recorded.

When AOE is used for timing in accordance with [SW11](#), microchip transponders capable of recording split times are mandatory. Where these transponders are used, it is mandatory for a swimmer to wear one on each wrist throughout the race. If a swimmer loses a transponder during the race, a replacement will be issued. Any swimmer who finishes without a transponder will be disqualified.

All swimmers must touch the touchpad/vertical wall at the finish of the race. A swimmer will be disqualified if they fail to do so.

Upon leaving the water, some swimmers may require assistance. Swimmers should only be touched if they clearly display a need or ask for assistance. A member of the Medical Team should inspect the swimmer as they leave the water. A distressed swimmer should not be given access to refreshment until they have been cleared by the Medical Member.

### RULES:

The following rules relate to the Finish of the Race:

<b>FINA</b>	<b>SNSW</b>
OWS7.1	OWS7.1
OWS7.2	OWS7.2
OWS7.3	OWS7.3
OWS7.4	OWS7.4
OWS7.5	OWS7.5
OWS7.6	OWS7.6
OWS7.7	OWS7.7

