

## 1 APPENDIX ONE: OPEN WATER

### OPEN WATER

Competitions taking place in rivers, lakes, oceans or water channels are called Open Water Competitions.

**All courses used for Open Water Swimming Events must provide a safe environment for the Competition with ready access to the shore at frequent points along the course so that Athletes suffering any distress can be quickly assessed and treated.**

### OCEAN SWIMS

Ocean races have become increasingly popular. Some ocean swims can feature a mass start on the beach with a short run into the water. The course then:

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

In some races there is a final run up the beach to the finish line. All Events must start either with a dive from a fixed platform or in the water, and finish in the water (WPS Rules do not apply to beach/land starts and finishes).

In determining the type of course for an Event, the environment of the race should be a guide. If there is a strong current running along the beach, it may be best to swim wide.

If there is not access to buoy markers, a closed course may not be feasible. Whatever course is chosen, sufficient boats and personnel needed to patrol a marked course off the shoreline and provide the necessary safety support will be required. A point-to-point course may require a higher number of boats to provide the necessary level of support as the field spreads during the race, whereas a small, circuit course will require more laps but can be controlled better within a confined area.

Keep in mind that a parallel point to point course usually does not finish where it starts, while most circuit courses generally do. A parallel course will require more facilities and co-ordination between the start and finish. Safety should always be the ultimate deciding factor in choosing a course for an open water competition.

## LAKE AND RIVER SWIMS

The same course as in ocean swimming exists in lakes, rivers, dams or rowing courses:

- Parallel to a shore; or
- To and around a pier, rock, island or other identifiable landmark; or
- Around a closed course marked by buoys; or
- Point-to-point.

These types of swims are usually easier to organise than ocean Events since the variables of ocean swimming are greater. Conditions in lakes or rivers remain more constant. In a river, make sure the strength of the current and the course distance are taken into account to estimate the elapsed swimming time.

The Open Water Rules form part of the World Para Swimming Rules and Regulations and can be found in this **Appendix One: Open Water**

### **1.1 General**

- 1.1.1 The Open Water Events are for Athletes with a Physical Impairment, Vision Impairment, or Intellectual Impairment. Each Impairment group will be awarded their own set of medals.
- 1.1.2 All Athletes shall be a minimum of 14 years, the age as at 31st December in the year of the Event.
- 1.1.3 WPS recognise three Event distances; 1.5km, 3km and 5km. Each Event will have its own maximum time limit to complete the course. After expiry of the designated time limit the Referee shall instruct all Athletes still on the course to exit the

water.

Time Limits:

<b>Distance</b>	<b>Time Limit</b>
1.5km	1 hour
3km	1.5 hours
5km	2 hours

- 1.1.4 An Athlete may be removed from the water at any time for safety reasons as determined by the Referee, Technical Delegate or Safety Officer.
- 1.1.5 It is the responsibility of each Athlete, prior to the start of the Event to have a space/thermal blanket.
- 1.1.6 Sport Class S11, S12 and S1-4 Athletes, who cannot navigate the course independently, will be permitted navigational assistance (i.e., Support Staff). The use of a small non-motorised craft, surfboard or guide Athlete may be required. Authority to use any such assistance shall be requested from the Technical Delegate prior to the day of the Event.
  - 1.1.6.1 The Athlete is responsible for arranging their Support Staff and craft if required.
  - 1.1.6.2 If the Athlete is using a paddler as Support Staff, then the paddler is assigned the same number as the Athlete.
  - 1.1.6.3 Support staff shall ensure their Athlete is made aware of any disqualification or infringement the Referee gives against their Athlete.

## **1.2 Officials**

The following Technical Officials shall be appointed at Open Water Swimming Events:

- Technical Delegate for Open Water
- A Chief Referee (one (1) per race)
- Referees (two (2) minimum, additional Referees proportional to the race entries)
- Chief Timekeeper plus two (2) Timekeepers
- Chief Finish Judge plus two (2) Finish Judges
- Safety Officer
- Chief Medical Officer
- Course Officer
- Clerk of the Course
- Race Judges (one (1) per Athlete)
- Turn Judges (one (1) per alteration of Course)
- Starter
- Announcer
- Recorder

NOTE: No Technical Official can act in more than one (1) role simultaneously. They may only undertake a new role after all the obligations of their previous role have been fulfilled.

#### 1.2.1 Technical Delegate:

This position maybe held in conjunction with the Course Officer (refer to Course Officer's duties):

- 1.2.1.1 The Technical Delegate is appointed by World Para Swimming to oversee the set-up and conduct of Open Water Competitions and to ensure the World Para Swimming Rules and Regulations are upheld.

#### 1.2.2 The Chief Referee shall:

- 1.2.2.1 Have full control and authority over all Technical Officials, approve their assignments, and instruct them regarding all special features or regulations during the sessions. The Chief Referee shall enforce all Competition Rules

and shall decide all questions relating to the technical conduct of the competition, if not otherwise provided for in the World Para Swimming Rules and Regulations.

- 1.2.2.2 Have authority to intervene in the competition at any stage to ensure that World Para Swimming Rules and Regulations are observed.
  - 1.2.2.3 In case of hazardous conditions that jeopardize the safety of the Athletes or the officials, in consultation with the Safety Officer, stop the race.
  - 1.2.2.4 Adjudicate on all protests related to the competition in progress.
  - 1.2.2.5 Give a decision in cases where the Finish Judges' decision and times recorded do not agree.
  - 1.2.2.6 Signal to Athletes, by raised flag and short blasts on a whistle, that the start is imminent and when satisfied indicate by pointing the flag at the starter that the competition may commence.
  - 1.2.2.7 Disqualify any Athlete for any violation of the Rules that they personally observe or which is reported to them by other authorised officials.
  - 1.2.2.8 Ensure that all necessary officials for the conduct of the Competition are at their respective posts. He may appoint substitutes for any who are absent, incapable of acting or found to be inefficient. He may appoint additional officials if considered necessary.
  - 1.2.2.9 Receive all reports prior to the start of the race and at the conclusion of the race from the Clerk of the Course, Recorder, Course Officer and Safety Officer to ensure all Athletes are accounted for.
- 1.2.3 The Referees shall:
- 1.2.3.1 Have authority to intervene in the Competition at any stage to ensure that World Para Swimming Rules and Regulations are observed.

1.2.3.2 Disqualify any Athlete for any violation of the Rules that he personally observes.

1.2.4 The Starter shall:

1.2.4.1 Start the race in accordance with Rule 1.3 following the signal by the Chief Referee.

1.2.5 The Chief Timekeeper shall:

1.2.5.1 Assign at least two (2) Timekeepers to positions for the start and finish.

1.2.5.2 Ensure that a time check is made to allow all persons to synchronise their watches with the official running clocks fifteen (15) minutes before start time.

1.2.5.3 Collect from each Timekeeper the time recorded for each Athlete, and if necessary, inspect their watches.

1.2.5.4 Record or examine the official time for each Athlete.

1.2.6 Timekeepers shall:

1.2.6.1 Take the time of each Athlete(s) assigned. The watches must have memory and print out capability and be approved by World Para Swimming.

1.2.6.2 Start their watches at the starting signal, and only stop their watches when instructed by the Chief Timekeeper.

1.2.6.3 Promptly after each finish, record the time of each Athlete and turn it over to the Chief Timekeeper.

Note: When Automatic Officiating Equipment is used, the same number of hand timers shall be used.

1.2.7 The Chief Judge shall:

1.2.7.1 Assign each Judge to a position.

- 1.2.7.2 Record and communicate any decision received from the Referees during the competition.
  - 1.2.7.3 Collect after the race, signed results sheets from each Judge and establish the result and placing, which shall be sent directly to the Chief Referee.
  - 1.2.7.4 Confirm to each Race Judge their escort boat and instruct them in their duties.
  - 1.2.7.5 Collect after the race, signed sheets from each Race Judge of their observations during the race which shall be sent directly to the Chief Referee.
- 1.2.8 Finish Judges (two) shall:
- 1.2.8.1 Be positioned in line with the finish where they shall have at all times a clear view of the finish.
  - 1.2.8.2 Record after each finish the placing of the Athletes according to the assignment given.

Note: Finish Judges shall not act as Timekeepers in the same Event.

- 1.2.9 Race Judges shall:
- 1.2.9.1 Be positioned in an escort safety craft (where applicable); assigned by random draw prior to the start, so as to be able to observe, at all times, their assigned Athlete.
  - 1.2.9.2 Always ensure that the Competition Rules are complied with, violations being recorded in writing and reported to a Referee at the earliest opportunity.
  - 1.2.9.3 Have the power to order an Athlete from the water upon expiry of any time limit so ordered by the Chief Referee.
  - 1.2.9.4 Ensure that their appointed Athlete does not take unfair advantage, or

commit unsporting impediment on another Athlete and, if the situation requires, instruct an Athlete to maintain clearance from any other Athlete.

1.2.10 Turn Judges shall:

- 1.2.10.1 Be positioned so as to ensure all Athletes execute the alterations in course as indicated in the Competition Information Documents and as given at the pre-race briefing.
- 1.2.10.2 Record any infringements of the turn procedures on the record sheets provided, then immediately communicate the infringement to the Chief Referee.
- 1.2.10.3 Promptly upon completion of the Event deliver the signed record sheet to the Chief Referee.

1.2.11 The Safety Officer shall:

- 1.2.11.1 Be responsible to the Referee for all aspects of safety related to the conduct of the competition.
- 1.2.11.2 Check that the entire course with special regard to the start and finish areas is safe, suitable, and free of any obstruction.
- 1.2.11.3 Be responsible for ensuring that sufficient powered safety craft are available during the competition to provide full safety backup to the escort safety craft.
- 1.2.11.4 Provide prior to the Competition to all Athletes a tide/current chart clearly indicating the time of tide changes on the course and showing the effect of tides or current on an Athlete's progress along the course.
- 1.2.11.5 In conjunction with the Medical 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 way the

competition is conducted.

1.2.11.6 The Safety Officer shall monitor temperature conditions periodically during the race.

1.2.12 The Medical Officer shall:

1.2.12.1 Be responsible to the Chief Referee for all medical aspects related to the competition and Athlete.

1.2.12.2 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.

1.2.12.3 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.

1.2.13 Course Officer shall:

Note: This position may be in conjunction with the Technical Delegate (refer to Technical Delegate role).

1.2.13.1 Be responsible to World Para Swimming and LOC for the correct survey of the course.

1.2.13.2 Ensure the start and finish areas are correctly marked and all equipment has been correctly installed and, where applicable, is in working order.

1.2.13.3 Ensure all course alteration points are correctly marked and manned prior to the commencement of the competition.

1.2.13.4 With the Referee and Safety Officer, inspect the course and markings prior to the commencement of competition.

1.2.13.5 Ensure that Turn Judges are in position prior to the start of the competition

and report this to the Chief Referee.

1.2.14 The Clerk of Course shall:

- 1.2.14.1 Assemble and prepare Athletes prior to each Event and ensure proper reception facilities at the finish are available for all Athletes.
- 1.2.14.2 Ensure each Athlete is identified correctly with their race number and that all Athletes have trimmed fingernails and toenails and are not wearing any jewellery, including watches.
- 1.2.14.3 Be certain all Athletes are present, in the assembly area, at the required time prior to the start.
- 1.2.14.4 Keep Athletes and officials informed of the time remaining before the start at suitable intervals until the last five (5) minutes, during which one-minute warnings shall be given.
- 1.2.14.5 Be responsible for ensuring that all clothing and equipment left in the start area is transported to the finish area and kept in safekeeping.
- 1.2.14.6 Ensure that all Athletes leaving the water at the finish have the basic equipment required for their well-being should their own attendants not be present at that time.

1.2.15 The Recorder shall:

- 1.2.15.1 Record withdrawals from the competition, enter results on official forms, and maintain records for team awards as appropriate.

### **1.3 The Start**

All Athletes competing in the Event regardless of gender or Sport Class should be started at the same time and compete on the course simultaneously with the following exception: If the safety and manageability of such a start is in question due to number of Athletes it is recommended that two (2) separate start times be used that separate Athletes either by gender or by Sport Class. It is the responsibility of the Open Water Technical Delegate to make this decision.

- 1.3.1 All Open Water competitions shall start with all Athletes wearing an approved swim cap and standing on a fixed platform or in water depth sufficient for them to commence swimming on the start signal.
  - 1.3.1.1 When starting from a fixed platform Athletes shall be assigned a position on the platform, as determined by random draw.
- 1.3.2 Athletes may require Support Staff for the start of the Event.
- 1.3.3 The Clerk of the Course shall keep Athletes and officials informed of the time before start at suitable intervals and at one (1) minute intervals for the last five (5) minutes.
- 1.3.4 When the number of entries dictates the start shall be segregated in the Men's and Women's competitions.
  - 1.3.4.1 If the Event is divided into Sport Classes the higher Sport Classes and the Vision Impaired shall always start before the lower Sport Classes.
- 1.3.5 The start line shall be clearly defined by either overhead apparatus or by removable equipment at water level.
- 1.3.6 The Chief Referee shall indicate by a flag held upright and short blasts on a whistle when the start is imminent and indicate that the competition is under Starter's orders by pointing the flag at the Starter.
- 1.3.7 The Starter shall be positioned so as to be clearly visible to all Athletes.
  - 1.3.7.1 On the Starter command "take your marks" all Athletes shall take up their starting position. When starting from a fixed platform, some part of the body must be in contact with the platform.
  - 1.3.7.2 The Starter will give the starting signal when he considers all Athletes are ready.
- 1.3.8 The start signal shall be both audible and visual.

- 1.3.9 If in the opinion of the Referee an unfair advantage has been gained at the start the offending Athlete will be given a yellow or red flag in accordance with Rule 1.5.3.
- 1.3.10 All escort safety craft shall be stationed prior to the start so as not to interfere with any Athlete, and if picking up their Athlete from behind shall navigate in such a way as not to manoeuvre through the field of Athletes.
- 1.3.11 Although they may start together, in all other respects the men's and women's physical impairment, intellectual impairment and vision impaired Sport Classes Events shall be treated as separate Events.

#### **1.4 The Venue**

- 1.4.1 World Para Swimming Open Water Competitions shall be conducted over a one point five (1.5), three (3) or five (5) kilometre(s) course and at a venue approved by World Para Swimming.
- 1.4.2 The course shall be in water that is subject to only minor currents or tide and may be salt or fresh water.
- 1.4.3 A certificate of suitability for use of the venue shall be issued by the appropriate local health and safety authorities. In general terms the certification must relate to water purity and to physical safety from other considerations.
- 1.4.4 The minimum depth of water at any point on the course shall be 1.4 metres.
- 1.4.5 The water temperature should be a minimum of 16°C and a maximum of 31°C. It should be checked the day of the race, two (2) hours before the start, in the middle of the course and at a depth of forty (40) centimetres. This control should be done in the presence of a Commission made up of the following persons present: a Referee, a member of the LOC and one (1) coach from the teams present designated during the Technical Meeting.
- 1.4.6 All turns/alterations of course shall be clearly indicated. Directional buoys which

- are alterations of the course shall be of a different colour to guidance buoys.
- 1.4.7 A clearly marked craft or platform, containing a Turn Judge, shall be positioned at all alterations of course in such a manner as not to obstruct Athlete's visibility of the turn.
- 1.4.8 The final approach to the finish shall be clearly defined with markers of a distinctive colour and shall comprise the boundary of the course.
- 1.4.9 The finish shall be clearly defined and marked by a vertical face.

## **1.5 The Race**

- 1.5.1 All Open Water Events shall be Freestyle Events and Athletes are required to complete the whole course, respecting all designated turning buoys and course boundaries.
- 1.5.2 Race Judges shall instruct any Athlete who is, in their opinion, taking unfair advantage by pacing or slip streaming with the escort craft or Support Staff to move clear.
- 1.5.3 Disqualification Procedure
- 1.5.3.1 If in the opinion of the Chief Referee or Referees, any Athlete, or Athlete approved representative/Support Staff, or escort safety craft, takes advantage by committing any violation of the Rules or by making intentional contact with any Athlete, the following proceeding shall apply:
- 1.5.3.2 1st Infringement: A yellow flag and a card bearing the Athlete's number shall be raised to indicate and to inform the Athlete or the Support Staff that they are in violation of the Rules.
- 1.5.3.3 2nd Infringement: A red flag and a card bearing the Athlete's number shall be raised by the Referee (Rule 1.2.2.7) to indicate and to inform the Athlete or the Support Staff that they are for the second time in violation of the Rules. The Athlete shall be disqualified.

- 1.5.3.4 If in the opinion of a Referee, an action of an Athlete or an escort safety craft, or Athlete's approved representative/Support Staff is deemed to be 'unsporting' the Referee shall disqualify the Athlete concerned immediately. He must leave the water immediately and be placed in an escort craft and take no further part in the race.
- 1.5.4 Escort safety craft and Support Staff shall manoeuvre so as not to obstruct or place themselves directly ahead of any Athlete and not to take advantage by pacing or slip streaming.
- 1.5.5 Escort safety craft shall attempt to maintain a constant position so as to station the Athlete at, or forward of, the midpoint of the escort safety craft.
- 1.5.6 Standing on the bottom during a race shall not disqualify an Athlete but they may not walk or jump.
- 1.5.7 With the exception of Rule 1.5.6, Athletes 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 therein during the race.
- 1.5.7.1 Rendering assistance by an official Medical Officer to an Athlete in apparent distress should always supersede official rules of disqualification through "intentional contact" with an Athlete.
- 1.5.8 Each safety craft shall contain appropriately qualified Safety Personnel and the minimum crew required to operate the safety craft.
- 1.5.9 No Athlete shall be permitted to use or wear any device, which may be an aid to their speed, endurance or buoyancy. Approved swimsuit, goggles, a maximum of two (2) caps, nose clip and earplugs may be used.
- 1.5.9.1 For Open Water Swimming competitions with water temperature from 20°C, swimsuits for both men and women shall not cover the neck, nor extend past the shoulder, nor extend below the ankle. Subject to these

specific shape specifications, swimsuits for Open Water Swimming competitions shall further comply with all other requirements applicable to swimsuits for pool swimming competition.

- 1.5.9.2 For Open Water Swimming competitions in water with temperature below 20 °C, men and women may use either swimsuits or wetsuits. When the water temperature is below 18°C, the use of wetsuits is compulsory.
- 1.5.9.3 For the purpose of Rules 1.5.9.1 and 1.5.9.2, wetsuits are swimsuits made of material providing thermal insulation. Wetsuits for both men and women shall completely cover torso, back, shoulders and knees. They shall not extend beyond the neck, wrists and ankles.
- 1.5.10 Athletes shall be allowed to use grease or other such substances providing these are not, in the opinion of the Referee, excessive.
- 1.5.11 The pacing of an Athlete by another person entering the water is not permitted.
- 1.5.12 Coaching and the giving of instructions by the approved Athlete's representative/Support Staff in the escort safety craft is permitted. No whistle shall be allowed.

## **1.6 Emergency Abandonment**

- 1.6.1 In case of emergency abandonment of the race, the race will be restarted from the beginning at the earliest possible moment.

## **1.7 The Finish of the Event**

- 1.7.1 The area leading to the finish apparatus should be clearly marked by rows of buoys which narrow as they get closer to the finish wall. Escort safety craft should be stationed at the approach to and entrance of the finish lane to ensure that only the escort safety craft authorised to do so enter or cross this entrance.
- 1.7.2 The finish apparatus should, where possible, be a vertical wall at least five (5) metres wide fixed if necessary to floatation devices, securely fastened in place so

as not to be moved by wind, tide or the force of an Athlete striking the wall. The finish should be filmed and recorded by video system with slow motion and recall facilities including timing equipment. The finish should be filmed and recorded from each side and above by a video system with slow motion and recall facilities including timing equipment.

- 1.7.2.1 When Automatic Officiating Equipment (AOE) is used for timing of the competitions it is to be in accordance with Facilities Rule 1.4. Microchip transponder technology capable of providing split times is mandatory and should be added to the equipment. Use of microchip transponders technology is mandatory for IPC Games and WPS Competitions. Microchip transponder timing technology will be recorded officially in tenths of seconds. The final places will be determined by the Chief Referee based upon the Finish Judges' report and the finish video tape.
  - 1.7.2.2 It is mandatory for all Athletes to wear a microchip transponder on their wrists throughout the race. If an Athlete loses a transponder the Race Judge or other authorised Official, will immediately inform the Chief Referee who will instruct the responsible Official on the water to issue a replacement transponder. Any Athlete who finishes the race without a transponder will be disqualified.
  - 1.7.2.3 Athletes with no upper limbs shall be provided with alternative means to attach the microchip transponders.
  - 1.7.2.4 Athletes with a vision impairment may be touched by their Support Staff to indicate the finish of the race.
  - 1.7.2.5 When, at the finish of an Open Water Swimming competition, a vertical wall is available, Athletes must touch the vertical wall to finish the race. Any Athlete who does not touch the vertical wall will be disqualified.
- 1.7.3 The Finish Judges and Timekeepers shall be placed so as to be able to observe

- the finish at all times. The area in which they are stationed should be for their exclusive use.
- 1.7.4 Every effort should be made to ensure that the Athlete's representative/Support Staff can get from the escort safety craft to meet the Athlete as they leave the water.
  - 1.7.5 Upon leaving the water some Athletes may require assistance. Athletes should only be touched or handled if they clearly display a need or ask for assistance.
  - 1.7.6 A member of the medical team should examine the Athlete as they leave the water. A chair, in which the Athlete can sit while an assessment is made, should be provided.
  - 1.7.7 Once cleared by the medical member, the Athlete should be given access to refreshment.