



INTRODUCTION TO OPEN WATER SWIMMING (OWS) OFFICIATING - LEVEL 1

December 7, 2018

WELCOME



- The goal of any volunteer or official is to contribute to a fair, safe and positive competitive environment.
- The goal of this session is to:
 1. Begin your journey as an open water swimming official
 2. Understand the terms used at an open water swimming competition
 3. Understand the role of the other officials
 4. Understand the key duties of a timekeeper, turn judge, recorder, finish judge and other volunteers

CONTENT



- Key Terms
- The Course
- The Race
- Safety Considerations
- The Officials
- The Volunteers
- Wetsuit Regulations

EXCELLENCE IN OFFICIATING



- As an official, an individual must operate from a strong base. That base is made up of two factors – one is the authority of the rulebook and the other is the basic philosophy that the officials conduct the competition in accordance with the rules.
- The official's job is to uphold the rules by applying them in a fair and impartial manner and communicating their interpretation effectively.
- There is a code of conduct that all officials are expected to follow. Some Provincial Swimming bodies have all their officials sign and acknowledge a Code of Conduct.



KEY TERMS

WHAT IS OPEN WATER SWIMMING?



“As the name implies, a swimming competition in a body of water open to the outdoors over a long distance”

FINA OWS 1 DEFINITIONS

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

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

OWS 1.2 The age limit for all FINA Open Water Swimming events should be at least 14 years of age.

WHAT IS OPEN WATER SWIMMING?



KEY TERMS



- **Check in** – The indication that a swimmer intends to participate in an event.
- **Check Point** – A point along the course where a swimmer's progress is noted.
- **Countdown** – The announcement made at regular intervals communicating the time remaining before the start of the race.
- **Drafting or Slipstreaming** – Swimming behind a support craft with the purpose of taking advantage of the reduced water resistance created by the former's wake. (OWS 6.2)
- **Entry Times** – Times filed with an entry, as having been previously achieved. Also called Submitted Times.

KEY TERMS (cont'd)



- **Escort Craft** – Boats, paddle boards or other watercraft used by officials for the swimmer's safety and logistical support.
- **Finish** – The finish shall be clearly defined by a row of buoys and marked by a vertical wall. (OWS 7.2)
- **Grease** – Substance used by the swimmers to reduce friction or reduce the loss of body heat during a swim.
- **Heat** – The second or subsequent start used if the start area cannot accommodate all contestants at the same time for a start.

KEY TERMS (cont'd)



- **Individual Swim** – An individual un-paced and uncontested swim for time and/or distance, not normally considered to be part of a competitive race. Equivalent to a time trial or record attempt against time in pool swimming.
- **Invitational Competition** – For those swimmers, organizations and clubs invited by the host.
- **Lead Boat** – The boat used as a course guide for the swimmers, usually following the course a short distance in front of the lead swimmer.
- **LOC (Local Organizing Committee)** – The administrative body entrusted to plan and carry out the logistics' of the competition.

KEY TERMS (cont'd)



- **Material** – safety jackets, personal flotation device, sound system, radios, stop-watches, clip board, starting device, pencils, markers, bathing caps, rain poncho's, etc.
- **May** – Permissive, not mandatory – used in rulebooks
- **Medical Evacuation Plan** – Written plans for the procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency or need for medical intervention.
- **Navigational Aid** – A device used to accurately measure and establish a course to be swum.
- **Open Competition** – Competition which any qualified club, organization or individual may enter.

KEY TERMS (cont'd)



- **Pacing** – An attempt by a person not participating in the race to enter the water with the intent of providing moral support or otherwise assisting a swimmer in setting the tempo of the race.
- **Paddler** – A person on a paddle board or manually propelled craft who supports a swimmer or group of swimmers.
- **Provincial Sections (PS)**– Independent branches of Swimming Canada entrusted to administer the sanction authority of Swimming Canada within the geographic boundaries of the respective provinces.

KEY TERMS (cont'd)



- **Rulebook** – “Swimming Rules of Swimming Canada”; Revised Edition February 28, 2018
- **Sanction** – A permit issued by a PS to conduct an event or meet.
(Note: All athletes participating in any Swimming Canada sanctioned swim meet must be registered Swimming Canada members.)
- **Shall or Must** – Mandatory.
- **Split Time** – Time recorded from an official start to completion of an initial distance within a longer event.
- **Start List** – List of swimmers and their assigned numbers entered in an event.

KEY TERMS (cont'd)



- **Support Personnel** – Persons in the swimmer's escort craft or on land who provide feeding, navigating, coaching and/or other supporting activities for a swimmer.
- **Time Standard** – The time standard for an event in a meet is the time a swimmer must have previously achieved to enter that event.
- **Turn** – A point on the course where the swimmers reverse or change direction of the swim.
- **Venue** – Geographical area and environs where the swim is conducted.

TERMS/ACRONYMS



- **CMOWS** - Canadian Masters Open Water Swimming rule
- **COWS** - a Canadian Open Water Swimming rule
- **FINA** - Fédération Internationale de Natation
- **OWS** – FINA Open Water Swimming Rule

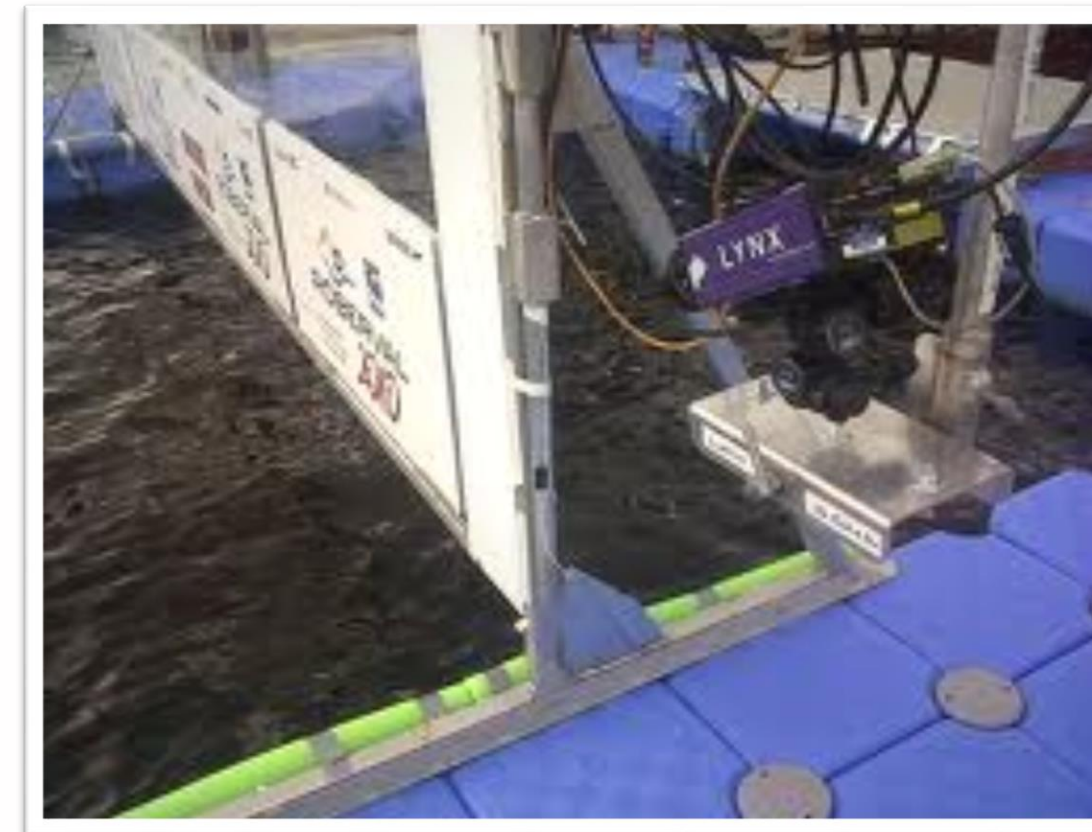


THE COURSE

THE COURSE

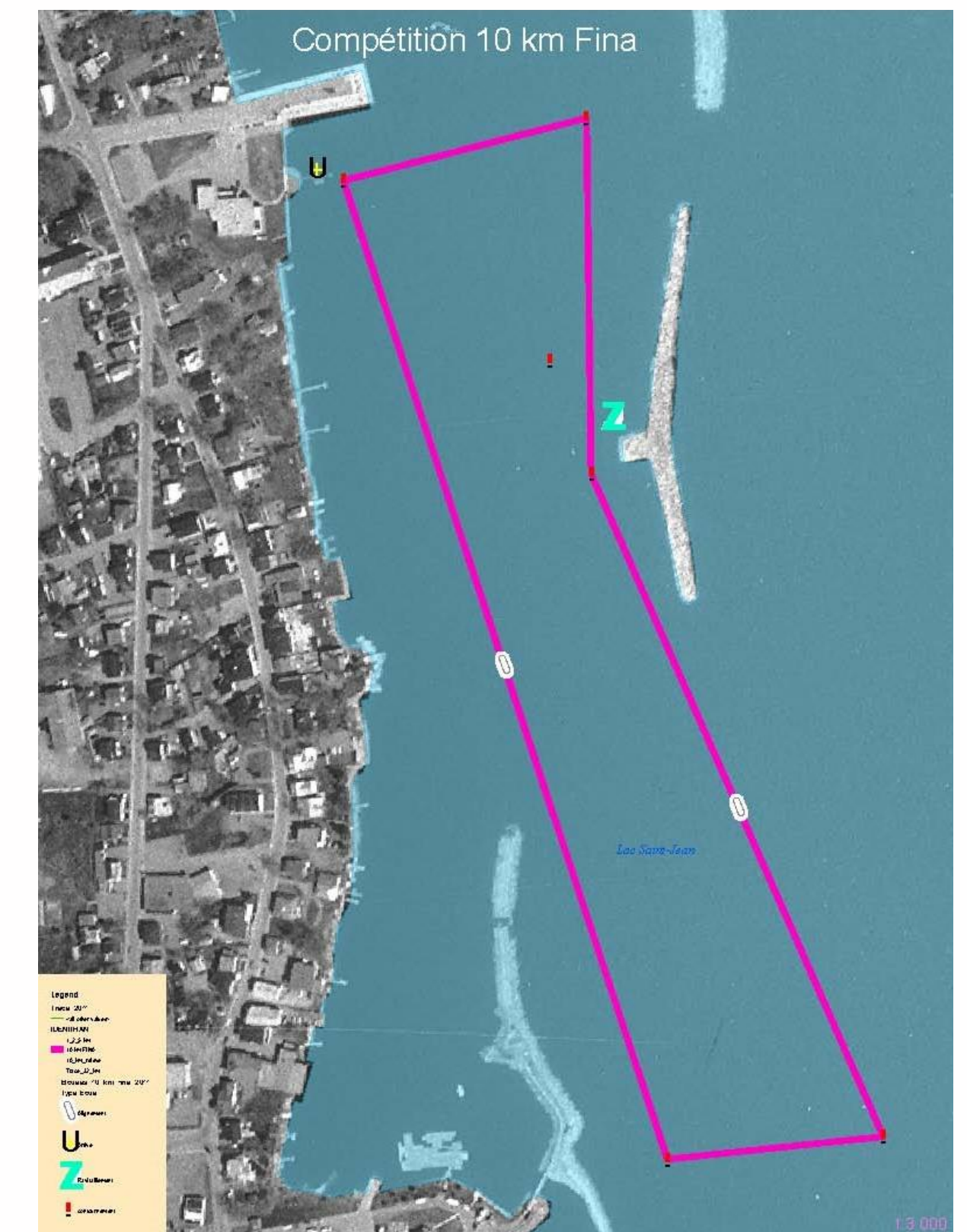


- Starting line
 - Dock start
 - In water start
- Markers
 - Turns
 - Course markers
- Finish line
 - Funnel entrance
 - Vertical plane



THE COURSE

- Parallel to a shoreline
- Point to point
- Lake and river swims
- Closed course marked by buoys
- Any combination of above
- Ocean swims



THE COURSE



A good Open Water swim course...

- Has a large map
- Minimizes swimmer confusion
- Eliminates direction change until field spreads
- Has fixed or anchored course markers:
 - At 3 metre intervals or so with a floating line for separation for courses that bring swimmers into close proximity in opposite directions
 - Brightly coloured turn markers - different colour than course markers
 - Securely anchored
 - Of different colours from course and turn markers for hazards or dangerous areas

THE BRIEFING



Mandatory briefing for all swimmers and coaches prior to start

- Ensure instructions heard and understood
- Involve all participants in briefing



Briefing should cover:

- Swimmer obligations
- Starting procedures/signals
- Swimmer positioning at start area
- Safety and courtesy
- Getting aid while swimming
- Course directions/markers/rules
- Feeding stations
- Finish procedure
- Race termination procedure
- Cut off time for event



THE RACE

THE START



Preparing For The Start

- Clerk of Course signals start by alerting participants at pre-set intervals
- Large entries can be divided into heats
- Swimmers clearly identified on the body & cap
- Start Line clearly defined
- Competitors begin:
 - Standing on a fixed platform or
 - Treading water if sufficient depth



THE START



OWS 4.1 – *All Open Water competitions shall start with all competitors standing on a fixed platform or in water depth sufficient for them to commence swimming on the start signal.*

OWS 4.4 – *The start line shall be clearly defined by either overhead apparatus or by removable equipment at water level.*

- Perpendicular to first leg
- Positioned near Starter

OWS 4.7 – *The start signal shall be both audible and visible.*



THE RACE – THE START



READY

- Referee indicates start is near by:
 - Holding a flag held upright
 - Short whistle blasts
- Turns race over to starter by pointing flag

SET

- Starter clearly visible to all competitors

GO

- Two signals:
 - Audible
 - Visible
- Referee determines if start fair
- May stop and restart competition



THE RACE – ESCORT SAFETY CRAFT



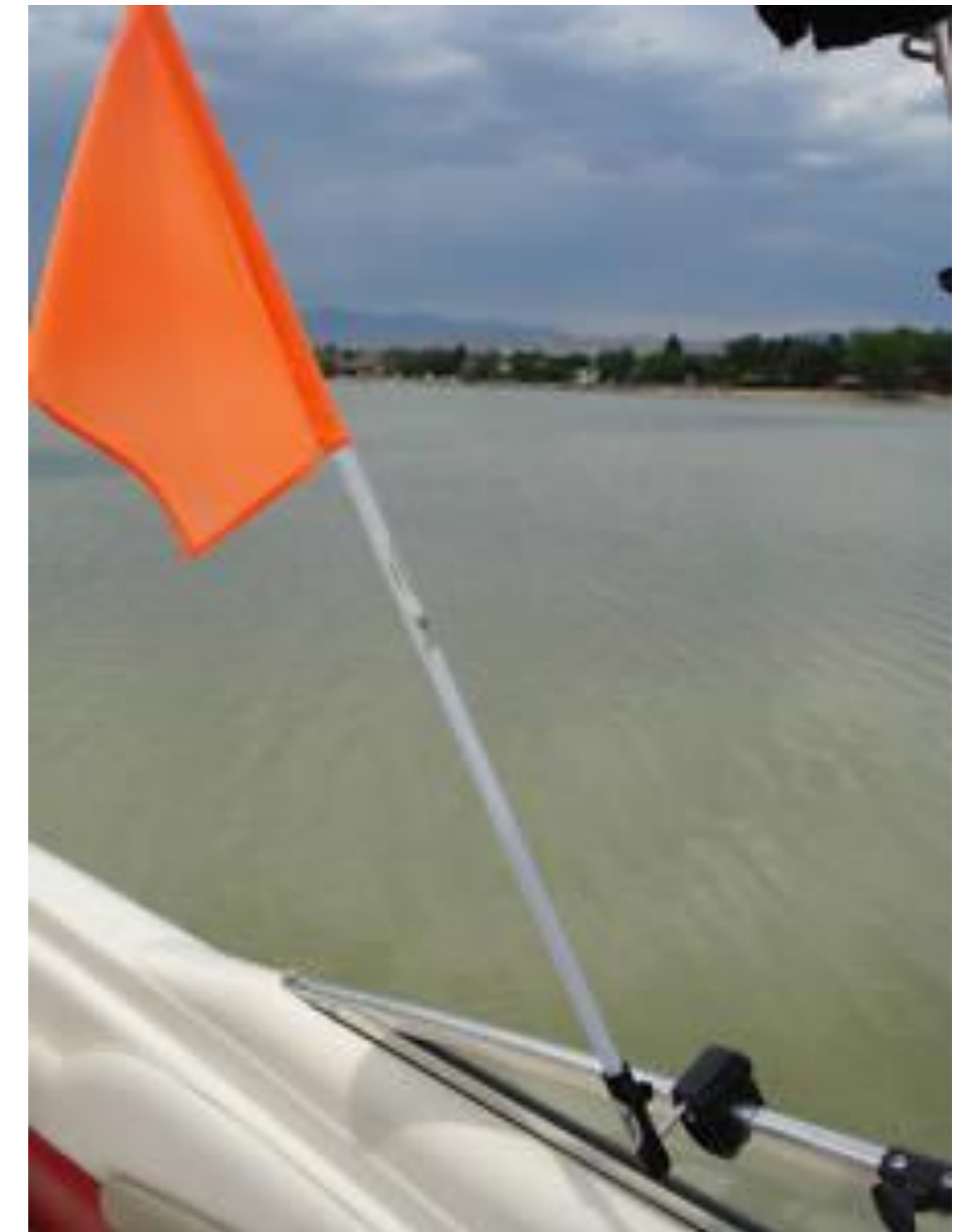
- Escort safety crafts are positioned so swimmer is at or forward of mid-point of the vessel
- Minimum crew for each escort safety craft is two people:
 - Race judge
 - Support person (chosen by the swimmer)



ESCORT AND PILOT CRAFT



- For swims over 10 km, each swimmer has an escort craft capable of keeping pace with swimmer
- For swims 3 km and 10 km – meet director's decision to provide escort craft
 - Based on conditions and swimmers' abilities
- Non-event boat traffic control must be provided
 - Arrangements with the local law enforcement agency
- Escort craft must always display a fluorescent orange flag and identification of swimmer



FEEDING PLATFORM



- Feeding stations may be required
 - Over 5km feeding stations should be provided every 2 to 3 km
- Generally provide water and nutrition:
- If water temperature rises, may need feeding stations closer together
- Several forms:
 - Floating platforms serviced from boats
 - Station positioned so swimmer cannot push off in direction of swim on leaving
 - Feeding poles – certified prior to event



THE FINISH



THE FINISH



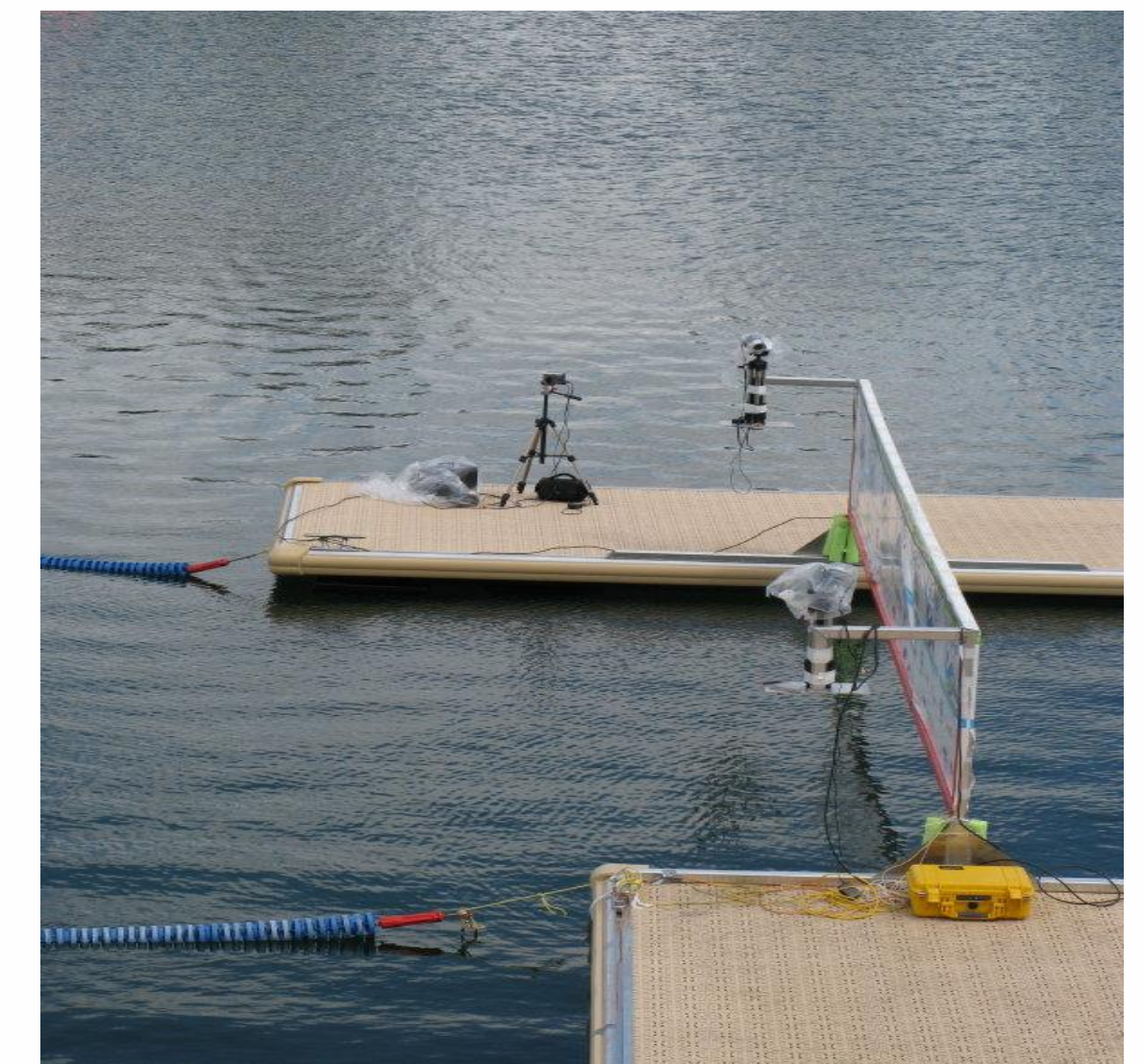
- Lines of uniquely coloured buoys demark area leading to finish line
- Escort safety crafts do not enter the finish area
- Finish line flotation devices securely fastened in place
- Finish filmed and recorded by video system with slow motion and recall facilities, including timing equipment



THE FINISH



- Chute finish recommended
 - Swimmers funneled towards finish line
 - Sized/designed for clusters of swimmers finishing
- Clearly marked
- Finish area controlled
 - Non-participants well clear
- Personnel to aid swimmers in standing up and exiting the water
- Water, towels, possible blankets available



THE FINISH



OWS 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.*

OWS 7.4 - *Every effort should be made to ensure that the swimmers' representative can get from the escort safety craft to meet the swimmer as they leave the water.*



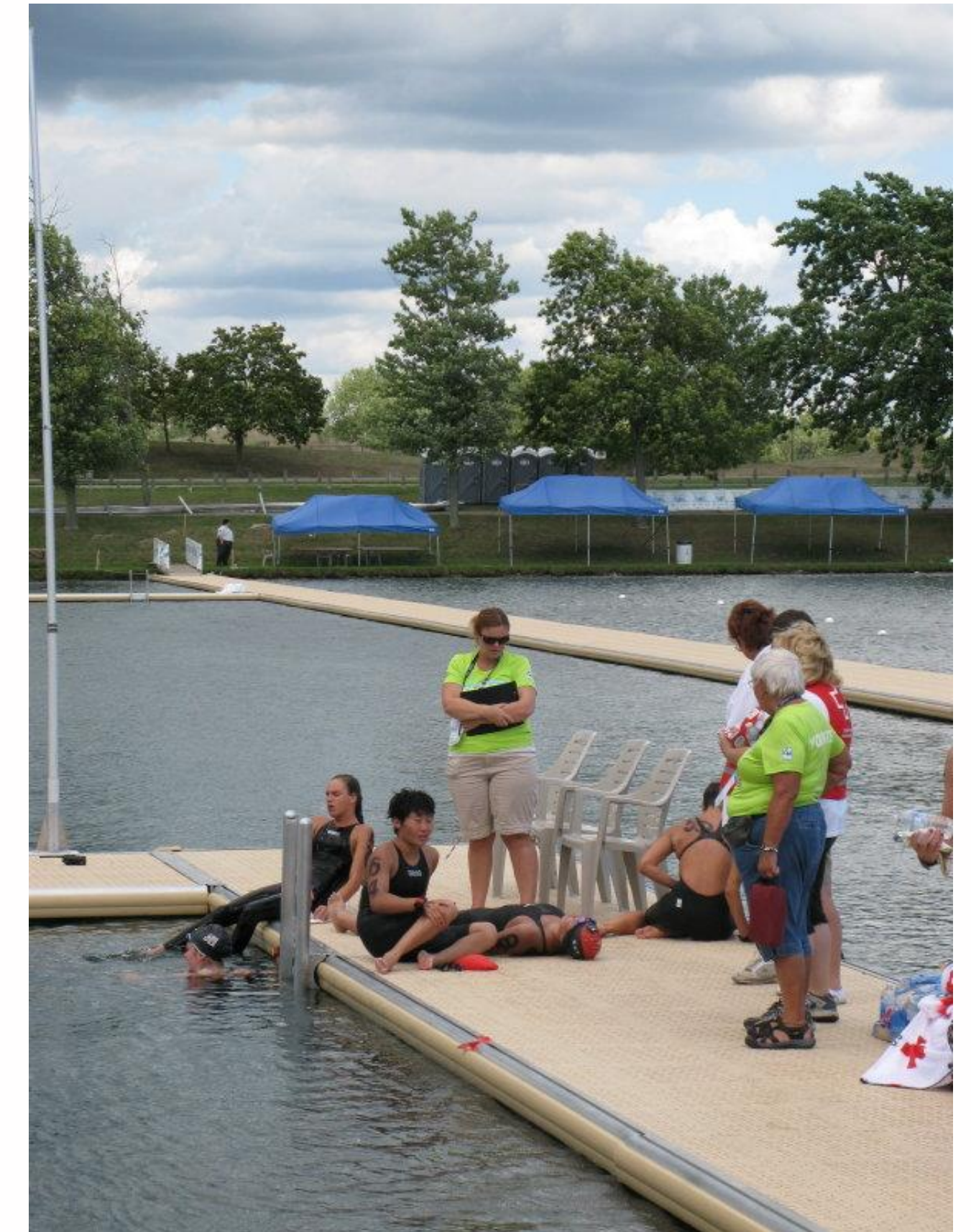
THE FINISH



OWS 7.5 - *Upon leaving the water some swimmers may require assistance. Swimmers should only be touched or handled if they clearly display a need, or ask for assistance*

OWS 7.6 - *A member of the medical team should inspect the swimmers as they leave water. A chair, in which the swimmer can sit while an assessment is made, should be provided.*

OWS 7.7 - *Once cleared by the medical member, swimmers should be given access to refreshment.*



RESULTS/PRESENTATION



- When last swimmer leaves water or on expiry of time limit for race, Chief Finish Judge ensures master copy of placing and times for all swimmers is accurately recorded ready for printing
- Once satisfied that Recorder's Official Results List correct, Chief Finish Judge presents to Referee for signing
- Referee signs it, certifying Ratified Results of event at 1/10 of a second
- Copies of Ratified Results List made available to all swimmers & representatives as soon as possible after last swimmer finishes





SAFETY

SAFETY FIRST



OWS can be dangerous.

Safety is the primary issue in any open water swimming event.

Consider all safety factors: start with...

- Who's responsible?
- Local Red Cross, canoeing and/or rowing / kayak clubs
- St. John Ambulance
- Local Emergency Medical Services organizations (fee likely)



SAFETY



Medical/Emergency Evacuation Plan:

- Detailed procedures
- Methods for transporting swimmers
- One plan required if the start and finish are same location
- Two plans required if start and finish are not in same location or more than $\frac{1}{4}$ km (250 m) apart



SAFETY MONITOR STATIONS



- Mechanisms/procedures for transporting injured swimmers
- Safety monitor stations positioned on course:
 - Minimum one station per thirty (30) entrants or
 - One station for every $\frac{1}{4}$ km (250 m) of course length, whichever number is greater
- Cover complete course at all times
- Emergency evacuation boats cannot be counted as safety monitor stations



SAFETY MONITOR STATIONS



- Safety monitor stations equipped with
 - First aid supplies
 - Emergency signaling devices to summon a medical evacuation boat
 - Communication system
- Detailed plan for cancelling
- Every participant accounted for
 - Record participants' numbers as they enter water
 - Record marked off as they exit the course (either at finish or if removed)
- Diagrams of course layout 'a must'



THE OFFICIALS

OFFICIALS OF AN OPEN WATER COMPETITION



Each of the volunteers will have a specific role or assignment. The following are some of the major officials required to run an effective open water competition.

- Chief Referee
- Referees
- Race Judge
- Turn Judges
- Feeding Platform Judge
- Chief Timekeeper (plus 2 Timekeepers)
- Chief Finish Judge (plus 2 Finish Judges)
- Clerk of Course
- Starter
- Announcer
- Recorder
- Safety Officer
- Medical Officer
- Course Officer

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 has been fulfilled.

OFFICIALS ATTIRE



As Open Water competitions take place outdoors in variable conditions, please ensure you have all the equipment required for the forecasted weather:

- Hat
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen
- Jacket
- Gloves
- Sweater
- Raincoat
- Shoes that are appropriate for your assigned position
- Any other clothing that may be needed for the weather conditions



TIMEKEEPER DUTIES

BEFORE THE EVENT



- Verify that the stopwatch is in good working order.
- Synchronise their stopwatch with the clock giving the official time 15 minutes prior to the start.
- Receive the start list from the Recorder.

Minimum Material Requirements

- Stopwatch with recording and printing capacity, rolls of paper and batteries.
- Clip boards and pencils
- Start list

DURING AND AFTER THE EVENT



- The start shall be given by lowering the flag, with the arm extended, while simultaneously emitting an audible signal once the starter judges that the swimmers are ready.
- Timers start their watches at the sound transmitter (whistle, horn, fog horn.)
- The Timekeeper aligns himself/herself beside or above the arrival pad.
- Records the swimmer's number and arrival time and provides the information to the Chief Timekeeper.
- Stop the stopwatch only upon the order of the Chief Timekeeper

THE FINISH



Note: The finish may be a vertical plate, a line suspended above the water or a virtual line between two points/buoys. Timekeepers time all the swimmers in the race, using the lap/split timing function of their stopwatch. When using a printing stopwatch, the lap/split button should be pushed for every swimmer in the field, even when they arrive as a group, so the count of recorded times matches the number and relative order of finish. Where printing stopwatches are used, it is useful to write the number of a swimmer next to their corresponding time on the printed tape every so often to assist in matching the correct times with the correct swimmer's number.



FINA OPEN WATER SWIMMING RULES RELATED TO TIMEKEEPER ROLE



OWS 3.16 - *Take the time of each swimmer(s) assigned. The watches must have memory and print out capability and shall be certified correct to the satisfaction of the Management Committee.*

OWS 3.17 - *Start their watches at the starting signal, and only stop their watches when instructed by the Chief Timekeeper.*

OWS 3.18 - *Promptly after each finish record the time and swimmers' number on the time card and turn it over to the Chief Timekeeper.*

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



TURN JUDGE DUTIES

BEFORE THE EVENT



- Receive the race plan from the Organizing Committee.
- Receive the start lists from the Recorder.

Minimum Material Requirements

- Whistle
- Start list
- Pencils
- Pre-numbered turn forms



DURING AND AFTER THE EVENT



During the event

The Turn Judge is positioned near the buoy for which he is responsible to:

- See to the proper turning of the swimmer around the buoy.
- Warn swimmers in case of infraction by blast on a whistle.
- Inform a Referee of all rule infractions as quickly as possible.
- Complete the pre-numbered Turn Forms for each lap then sign and submit them to the Chief Finish Judge at the end of the event.

After the event

- Leaves his position only once authorization is given by the Chief Referee.

FINA OPEN WATER SWIMMING RULES RELATED TO TURN JUDGE ROLE



OWS 3.31 - *Be positioned so as to ensure all swimmers execute the alterations in course as indicated in the competition information documents and as given at the pre-race briefing.*

OWS 3.32 - *Record any infringement of the turn procedures on the record sheets provided and indicate the infringement at the time by blasts on a whistle, then immediately communicate the infringement to the Chief Referee.*

OWS 3.33 - *Promptly upon completion of the event deliver the signed record sheet to the Chief Race Judge.*



FEEDING PLATFORM

JUDGE DUTIES

FINA OPEN WATER SWIMMING RULES RELATED TO FEEDING PLATFORM JUDGE ROLE



OWS 3.55 - *Be responsible for the management of the activity and the swimmers authorized representatives present on the platform, in accordance with FINA rules.*



FINISH JUDGE DUTIES

BEFORE THE EVENT



- Support the clerk of course team
- Receive, in sufficient number, arrival forms from the Recorder

Minimum Material Requirements

- Pencils
- Start lists
- Arrival forms

DURING AND AFTER THE EVENT



- The Finish Judge aligns himself beside or above the vertical plane.
- At each swimmer's arrival, record the swimmer's number on the arrival forms and submits them to the Chief Finish Judge.



FINA OPEN WATER SWIMMING RULES RELATED TO FINISH JUDGE ROLE



OWS 3.25 - *Be positioned in line with the finish where they shall have at all times a clear view of the finish.*

OWS 3.26 - *Record after each finish the placing of the swimmers according to the assignment given.*

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



SAFETY OFFICER

BEFORE THE EVENT



- Verify the start and arrival zones
- Verify the course with the Chief Referee, Course Officer and, at international meets, the FINA Delegate
- Verify the safety protocol
- Clarify the roles of rescuers
- Hold a safety meeting with all those involved with the event safety (Physician, land and water safety officials, kayakers, etc.) at least one hour before the start.
- If necessary, distribute information signaling particular dangers (tide, currents, obstacles, etc.) to the participants

BEFORE THE EVENT (cont'd)



- Receive the start lists from the Recorder.
- Submit Safety Officer report to the Chief Referee at the least 15 minutes prior to the start of the race.
- Identify safety boats with a number.

Minimum Material Requirements

- Paper and pencils
- Radio contact with all first responders, safety personnel and officials on the course.

DURING THE EVENT



The Safety Officer follows the event from land.

- Co-ordinate safety
- Verify, with the withdrawal official, the return to land of all contestants who abandon the race.
- Inform safety personnel of all incidents.

SAFETY IS A LIFESTYLE



SAFETY
ON THE
SEA

FINA OPEN WATER SWIMMING RULES RELATED TO SAFETY OFFICER ROLE



OWS 3.34 - *Be responsible to the Referee for all aspects of safety related to the conduct of the competition.*

OWS 3.35 - *Check that the entire course, with special regard to the start and finish areas, is safe, suitable, and free of any obstruction.*

OWS 3.36 - *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 craft.*

FINA OPEN WATER SWIMMING RULES RELATED TO SAFETY OFFICER ROLE (cont'd)



OWS 3.37 - *Provide prior to the competitions 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.*

OWS 3.38 - *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 manner in which the competition is conducted.*



OTHER VOLUNTEERS

OTHER VOLUNTEERS - MARKER



Under responsibility of the Clerk of Course

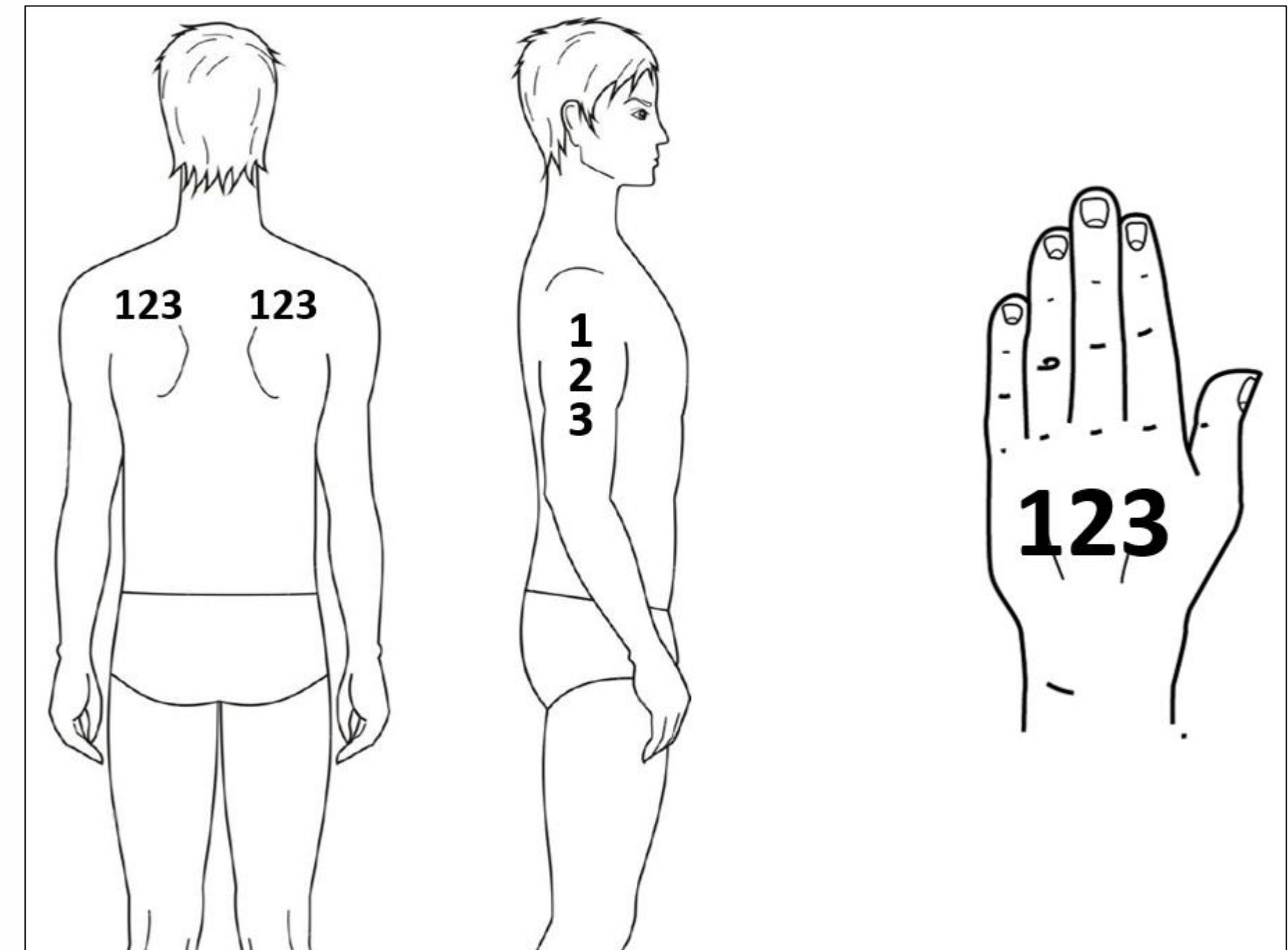
Before the start of the event:

- Control the swimmer identification process (Passport, ID card).
- Request swimmer put their suits on completely (one only) depending of the information given.
- Verify that the swimmer is not greased.
- Verify finger and toe nails, jewelry, earrings etc.
- In certain competitions, install a microchip transponder according to provided instructions.

OTHER VOLUNTEERS – MARKER (cont'd)



- Mark the swimmers with the number assigned to them. Ideally, all of the following should be marked:
 - Hands (must be easily visible by video)
 - Upper arms – numbers must be marked vertically
 - Scapula (shoulder blades) – numbers must be marked horizontally
- Respect the marking model.
- Ensure that numbers are clear and legible.
- If writing numbers by hand, pay special attention to the numbers **1** and **7**.
- Ensure that the marking is **not** done by the swimmers or coaches (respect of marking models).



OTHER VOLUNTEERS – MARKER (cont'd)

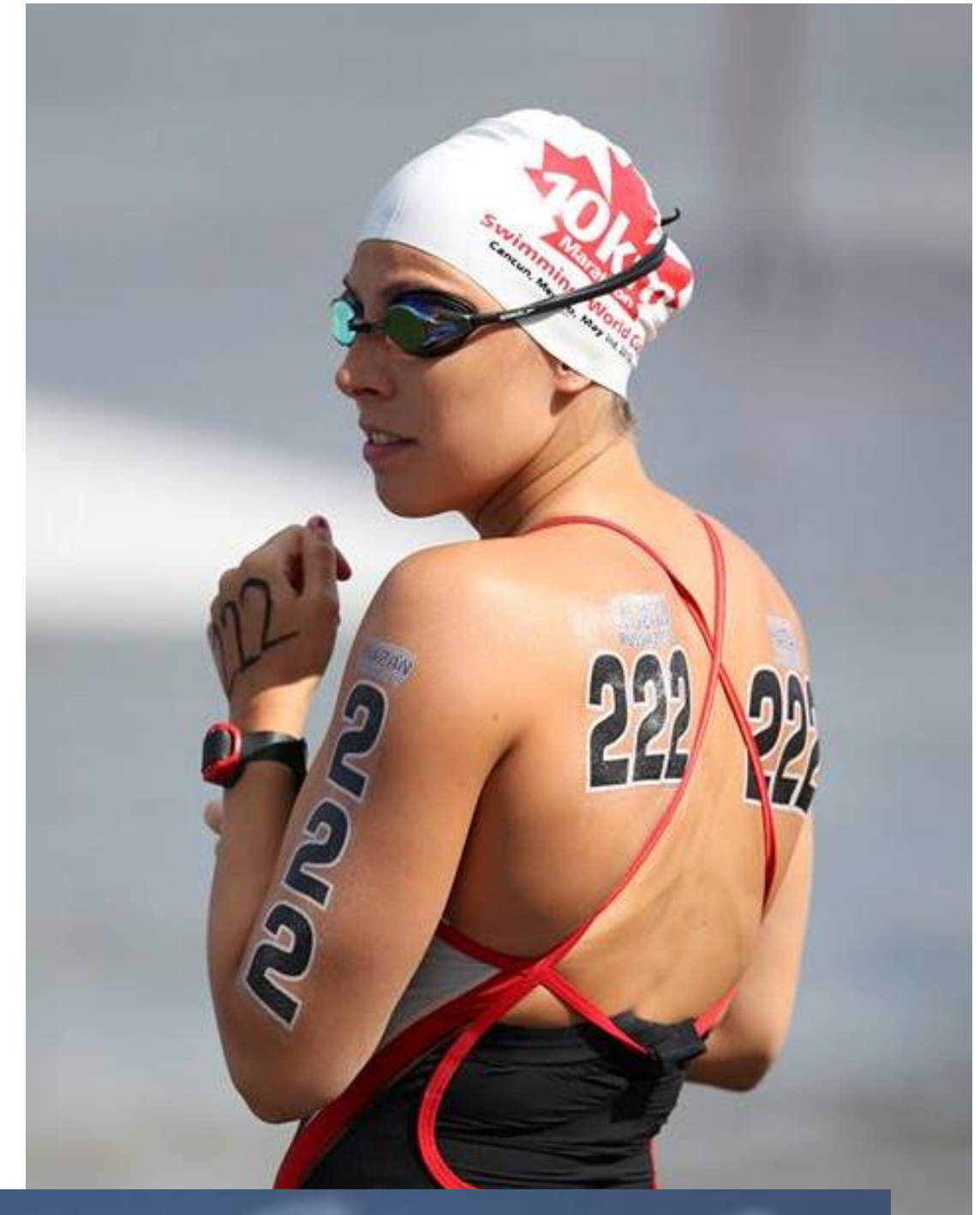


During and after the event:

- Prepare clothes, snacks, etc. to be returned to the athletes
- If microchip transponders have been distributed, retrieve them
- Return Accreditation cards depending on the meet

Mandatory minimum equipment

- List of swimmers
- Indelible large black felt pens (20mm) or stamps (note: plan for coloured markers for swimmers with darker complexions)
- Chip bracelets if they are being used
- Nail clippers or scissors with a liquid disinfectant



OTHER VOLUNTEERS – PROTOCOL



The week before the event:

- For international events, ensure that the flags and national anthems of all countries present are available for the awards ceremonies, for certain countries several flags may be necessary.
- Ensure that the organizing committee are in possession of the medals and provide all material necessary for the medal ceremonies.

Before the start of the event:

- Prepare the medal lists
- Prepare the awards
- Gather the dignitaries

OTHER VOLUNTEERS – PROTOCOL (cont'd)



During the event:

- Prepare the flowers
- Prepare the flags and national anthems, the flag and cushion bearers
- Verify flag pole function
- Verify the podium and its background image

After the end of the event

- Receive the results from the Recorder
- Organize the awards ceremony



OTHER VOLUNTEERS – ANNOUNCER



Before the start of the event:

- Receive the start list from the Recorder
- Announce regularly the times limits for registrations (when required)
- Announce the time remaining before the start in conjunction with Clerk of Course
- Call for the technical, safety and all other organizational meetings
- Provide all the information necessary for the smooth functioning of the event
- Ensure radio communication with the Media boat on a designated frequency
- Announce time remaining until start 20min, 10min, and 5min before the start
- Introduce the swimmers 5 minutes prior to the start

OTHER VOLUNTEERS – ANOUNCER (cont'd) & HOSPITALITY



During the event

- Provide commentary of the race

After the end of the event

- Announce the results

Hospitality Responsibilities

- Food delivery to event volunteers, officials and coaches on water and in place



FINA WETSUIT REGULATIONS

FINA WETSUIT REGULATIONS



Following the “Investigation Into Lower Water Temperatures For Open Water Swim Racing” done by the University of Portsmouth’s Extreme Environments Laboratory (EEL) and the decision of the FINA Bureau regarding the use of wetsuits at the FINA competitions, the following rules will apply for Open Water events starting from the 1st of January 2017:

- The lowest possible temperature of the water should remain at 16° C
- Between 16° C and 18° C, wetsuits + bathing cap are mandatory
- Between 18° C and 20° C, wetsuits are optional
- Over 20° C, wetsuits are not allowed.

FINA WETSUIT REGULATIONS (cont'd)



According to the FINA rule GR 5.4 “Before any swimwear of new design, construction or material is used in competition, the manufacturer of such swimwear must submit the swimwear to FINA and obtain approval of FINA.”

BL 8.2 - *In pool and open water swimming competitions the competitor must wear only one swimsuit in one or two pieces. No additional items, like arm bands or leg bands shall be regarded as parts of a swimsuit. All swimsuits (including wetsuits for open water competitions) shall comply with the requirements set forth in these By-Laws and the FRSA.*

Please refer to the FINA Memorandum – Wetsuits for Open Water Swimming and the FINA website for updates to the Wetsuit regulations as this is a new rule under development.

FINA WETSUIT REGULATIONS (cont'd)



BL 8.4 - *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.*

Please refer to the FINA Memorandum – Wetsuits for Open Water Swimming and the FINA website for updates to the Wetsuit regulations as this is a new rule under development.

CONGRATULATIONS



You have now completed the Level 1 OWS Clinic!

In order to complete your certification as a Level 1 Open Water official you must obtain the following experiences in an open water swimming competition:

- 1 experience as Turn Judge
- 1 experience as Timekeeper or Finish Judge

You may participate in the Open Water Level 2 Clinic, however you are not eligible for Level 2 certification until you have met both Level 1 and Level 2 certification criteria.

Note: The Level 3 Open Water Certification Clinic is only available to certified Level 2 officials.



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