

Swimming WA Incorporated

Open Water Swimming Guidelines

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1. Background

All competitive elements within a Swimming WA Open-Water Swimming event will be officiated following World Aquatics guidelines, and the event's operation will adhere to these guidelines. Recreational elements within a Swimming WA Open-Water Swimming events are not subject to such scrutiny by Technical Officials, so long as they have complied with safety guidelines and the objects of a fair and equitable event.

The Open Water Swimming Season is from September 1 to 31 March.

2. Definitions

Open Water Swimming; shall be defined as any competition that takes place in rivers, lakes, oceans water channels, dams, or rowing courses except for 10km events.

Marathon Swimming shall be defined as any 10km event in open water competitions.

3. Entries

Events are open to everyone (regardless of membership) nine (9) years and above.

Events are open to both members and the public.

All competitors are required to register through our registration platform and agree to the terms and conditions outlined in the conditions of entry.

- a) Swimmers are responsible for their physical condition and are urged to train appropriately for the event (be able to swim the full distance and have open water swimming experience) and have a medical check before entry if required.
- b) It is important to note, that while every effort will be made to ensure a safe and fun event, organisers and crew are unable to guarantee swimmer safety.

4. Distance

Swimming WA Open Water Swimming development programs will include distances of 500m and 1.25km and will allow swimmers nine (9) to eleven (11) years of age respectively to participate.

The age limit for all Swimming WA Open Water Swimming events will be as follows:

- 500m = 9 years on the day of the event.
- 1.25km = 11 years on the day of the event.
- 2.5km = 12 years on the day of the event.
- 5km = 12 on the day of the event.
- 10km = 14 on the day of the event.

All Swimmers under the age of eleven (11) years must have a suitably experienced chaperone swimmer who is a minimum of 18 years of age.

Other open water swimming distances shorter than the above subscribed may be made available for swimmer development from time to time and age limits will be determined by the Swimming WA CEO cognisant of development objectives and assessed risks.

5. Age Categories

- 500m all participants receive a medal.
- Under 14 – 11years to 13years.
- Under 18 – 14years to 17years.
- Open – 18years to 34years.
- Legend – 35 years to 49 years.
- Super Legend – 50+ years.

6. Time limits

For all Open Water Swimming events, the following cut-off times apply following the first swimmer crossing the line. Swimming WA has full discretion over whether any swimmers will be removed from the water.

- 1.25km = 1 hour 20 mins.
- 2.5km = 1 hour 50 mins.
- 5km = 2 hours 30 mins.
- 10km = 4 hours 15 mins.

7. Race Abandonment

In cases of emergency abandonment of races of 10km or less, and otherwise, in accordance with Swimming WA Crisis Management protocol, the race may be restarted from the beginning at the earliest possible moment, postponed until further notice or cancelled indefinitely at the discretion of the Event Manager.

In cases of emergency abandonment for any race of longer than 10km, where the lead swimmer has accomplished at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of the race, the World Aquatics ranking will be as reported by the Chief Referee. If the lead swimmer has not completed $\frac{3}{4}$ of the race, it will be restarted from the beginning at the earliest moment possible.

8. Officials

The following list of officials may be appointed at Open Water Swimming competitions as required:

- A Chief Referee.
- Referees.
- A Chief Finish Judge.
- Chief Timekeeper utilising electronic timing equipment.
- Clerk of the Course.
- Recorder.
- Feeding/Race Judges.
- Starter.

For events of 10km or less, a few of the official's duties mentioned above may be combined.

8.1 Chief Referee

Have full control and authority over all officials and shall approve their assignments and instruct them regarding all special features or regulations related to the competition. The Referee shall enforce all the rules and decisions of World Aquatics, and Swimming WA and shall decide all questions relating to the actual conduct of the competition, the final settlement of which is not otherwise covered by these Rules.

Have the authority to intervene in the competition at any stage to ensure the Rules are observed.

In case of hazardous conditions that jeopardise the safety of the swimmers and the officials, in conjunction with the Event Manager and water safety, they can stop the race.

Adjudicate all protests related to the competition in progress.

Give a decision in cases where the Judges' decision and times recorded do not agree.

Signal to swimmers, by raising the flag and short blasts on a whistle, that the start is imminent. When satisfied, indicate by pointing the flag at the Starter that the competition may commence.

Disqualify any swimmer for any violation of the Rules they observe, or which is reported to him by other authorised officials.

Ensure all necessary officials for the conduct of the competition are at their respective posts. They may appoint substitutes for any who are absent, incapable of acting or found to be inefficient. They may appoint additional officials if necessary.

8.2 Referees

Have the authority to intervene in competition at any stage to ensure World Aquatics Rules are observed.

Disqualify any swimmer for any violation of the Rules he/she personally observes.

8.3 Starter

Start the race in accordance with the Starting of the race following the signal by the Chief Referee.

8.4 Chief Timekeeper

Assign each Timekeeper to their position for the start and finish.

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

Collect from each timekeeper a card showing the time recorded for each swimmer, and, if necessary, inspect their watches; and

Record or examine the official time on the card for each swimmer.

8.5 Timekeeper

Unless utilising electronic timing equipment.

Take the time of each swimmer as they cross the finish line. The watches must have memory and print-out capability and shall be certified correct to the satisfaction of the Management Committee (State and National Events Only); - Start their watches at the starting signal, and only stop their watches when instructed by the Chief Timekeeper.

Promptly after each finish record the time and swimmer's number on the timecard 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.

8.6 Chief Judge

Assign each Judge to a position.

Record and communicate any decision received from the Referees during the competition.

Collect during the race, signed results sheets from each Judge and establish the result and placings which shall be sent directly to the Chief Referee.

8.7 Finish Judge

Be positioned in line with the finish where they shall have, at all times, a clear view of the finish.

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.

8.8 Race Judges

Be positioned in an escort safety craft (where applicable).

Ensure at all times the Rules of the competition are complied with, violations are recorded in writing and reported to a Referee at the earliest opportunity.

Have the power to order a swimmer from the water upon expiry of any time limit so ordered by the Referee.

Ensure swimmers do not take unfair advantage or commit unsporting impediments on another competitor, and if the situation requires, instruct a competitor to maintain distance from any other competitor.

8.9 Feeding Judge

Each Feeding Platform Judge shall be responsible for the management of the activity and the competitors' authorised representatives.

this includes setting the feeding area, providing a briefing to the feeder, and monitoring any incorrect process.

8.10 Clerk of Course

Assemble and prepare swimmers before each event and ensure proper reception facilities at the finish are available for all swimmers.

Ensure each swimmer is identified correctly with their race number and that all swimmers have trimmed fingernails and toenails and are not wearing any jewellery, including watches.

Be certain all swimmers are present, in the assembly area, at the required time before the start.

Keep swimmers and officials informed of the time remaining before the start at suitable intervals until the last five minutes, during which one-minute warnings shall be given.

Be responsible for ensuring all clothing and equipment left in the start area is transported to the finish area and kept in safekeeping.

Ensure all swimmers leaving the water at the finish have the basic equipment required for their well-being should their attendants not be present at the time.

8.11 Recorder

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

Report any violation to the Chief Referee on a signed card detailing the event, the swimmer's number, and rule infringement.

9. The Course

The course shall be in the water and is subject to only minor currents or tides and maybe salt or fresh water.

Approval to swim must be approved by the local Department of Transport, Local Government, and the local Surf Life Saving Club.

The minimum depth of water at any point on the course shall be 1.40 metres except for Swimming WA events which feature a dry land finish.

The water temperature should be a minimum of 16 degrees Celsius and a maximum of 31 degrees Celsius. It should be checked on the day of the race, at least 30 minutes before the start, in the middle of the course at a depth of 40 cm. This control should be done by a Referee as appointed by the chief referee & a member of the on-water set-up crew. The temperature is to be advertised to the chief referee and meet manager who informs the swimmers via the announcer.

All turns/ alterations of course shall be indicated in the course map.

A clearly marked craft or platform, containing a Turn Judge, may, for some Swimming WA events, be positioned at all turn buoys of the course in such a manner as not to obstruct the swimmer's visibility of the turn as capacity permits.

All feeding platforms, turning apparatus and Turn Judges' craft /platforms shall be appropriately secured to minimise tidal, wind or other movements.

The Final approach to the finish shall be clearly defined with markers of a distinctive colour.

The finish shall be clearly defined and marked.

10. Before Race Protocols

The temperature of the water must be taken before the event is held by the officials. The water temperature must be higher than 16 degrees Celsius or the event cannot go ahead.

Swimmers must have at least two tattoos, a timing chip on their wrist and a swim cap to compete unless instructed otherwise by the Chief Referee.

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, a 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.

All swimmers must attend the pre-race briefing by the officials.

11. Starting

All Open Water 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.

The Clerk of the Course shall keep swimmers and officials informed of the time before the start.

When the number of entries dictates, the start shall be segregated in the Men's and Women's competitions. The Men's event shall always start before the Women's event.

The Referee shall indicate by a flag held upright and short blasts on a whistle when the start is imminent and indicate the competition is under the Starter's orders by pointing the flag at the Starter.

The start can be on land or from the water.

The Starter shall be positioned to be visible to all swimmers.

On the Starter command "Take your marks" they shall take up a starting position with at least one foot at the front of the platform or if in water start as indicated on the course.

The Starter will give the starting signal when he considers all swimmers are ready.

The start signal shall be both audible and visual.

If in the opinion of the Referee unfair advantage has been gained at the start the offending swimmers will be given a yellow or red flag.

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

Although they may start together, in all other respects the Men's and Women's competitions shall be treated as separate events.

In Water, Finishes shall only apply to the Swimming WA State Championship or National Events.

12. During Race Protocols

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

No object can be thrown from the feeding platform to the swimmers, including sustenance. The swimmers shall receive their feeding directly from their representative by a feeding pole or by hand.

Feeding poles are not to exceed 5 metres in length when extended. No objects, rope or wire may hang off the end of feeding poles except for swimmers' identification, which is allowed to be attached to the feeding pole but may not exceed the size of 30cm x 20cm.

All events will be beach feeds unless provided written permission by exception from Swimming WA.

All Open Water Swimming Competitions must be Freestyle events.

All swimmers will receive a time providing they have correctly worn their timing chip for the entire race. This is at the discretion of the Technical Officials.

Any swimmer participating in un-sportsmen behaviours as determined by our Open Water Swimming Officials will be disqualified from the race as follows:

- a) If, in the Opinion of the Chief Referee or Referees, 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 proceeding shall apply:
- b) 1st Infringement: A yellow flag and a card bearing the swimmer's number shall be raised to indicate and to inform the swimmer he violates the Rules.
- c) 2nd Infringement: A red flag and a card bearing the swimmer's number shall be raised by the Referee to indicate and to inform the swimmer he is for the second time in violation of the Rules.

The swimmer shall be disqualified. He must leave the water immediately and be placed in an escort craft and take no further part in the race.

Slower swimmers should endeavour to allow the faster swimmers to the front to create space.

Standing on the bottom during a race shall not disqualify a swimmer, but they may not walk or jump unless approaching the shoreline for a dry land finish.

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 therein.

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.

13. Race Incidents/Withdrawal

Any swimmer withdrawing from the race MUST come through the finish chute and inform timing or an official so they can be recorded.

If any incidents or injuries occur, you must report to the medical team on the day. An incident and medical report will be available for you to fill out after the incident.

Any swimmer needing medical attention should attract attention to water safety as follows.

- a) Swimmers are required to raise one arm so water safety personnel can assist. If this is not possible, the swimmer should roll onto their back to float in a relaxed position and try to alert a lifeguard.
- b) In the event of witnessing an injury/accident/medical incident during the swim, report this to one of the lifeguards on the water or land as soon as possible.

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

Upon leaving the water some swimmers may require assistance.

Swimmers should only be touched or handled if they display a need or ask for assistance.

A member of the Medical Team should inspect the swimmers as they leave the water. A chair, in which the swimmer can sit while an assessment is made, should be provided.

Once cleared by a member of the medical team, swimmers should be given access to refreshments.

14. Awards

All age competitors for the WA Open Water Swimming Series Awards and Round Awards shall have their age determined as of 31 March in the season of competition.

Any prizes or medals handed out at events will be awarded in line with the Swimming WA Open Water Swimming awards below.

All participants in the 500m swim will receive a participation medal.

For each Open Water Swimming Series Round, the following medals will be awarded for the distances 1.25km, 2.5km, 5km, 7.5km and 10km.

In the event relay events are run, medals will be awarded to all participants in either a participation medal or by event category or place.

Round Place Prizes

Age Group	Gender	Prize
Under 14	Male & Female	OWS Medal 1 / 2 / 3
Under 18	Male & Female	OWS Medal 1 / 2 / 3
Open	Male & Female	OWS Medal 1 / 2 / 3
Legend	Male & Female	OWS Medal 1 / 2 / 3
Super Legend	Male & Female	OWS Medal 1 / 2 / 3

15. Presentation Procedure

Swimming WA will aim to present all medals in a way that is fair and respectful to all swimming in the race. Once Swimming WA has confirmation from electronic timing, finish judges and timekeepers the first ten (10) placegetters have crossed the line, Swimming WA will move to present the top three place-getters in either the distance or age categories for distance. Swimming WA reserves the right to present medals for distances that do not have the quota of ten people having crossed the line 30 minutes after the first-place getter has finished the race in any distance or age group.

16. 24/25 Elite Series

This year's 2024/25 Elite Series will take place across the three State Championship Rounds. All SWA competitive members will be eligible to enter. Swimmers receive points based on placings at the 3 State Championship rounds. The swimmer who achieves the highest total point score after all three Open Water Swimming State Rounds will be awarded the Elite Shield and an additional \$500 in prize money. The winner of the Elite Shield will be eligible to also win the Open Water Swimming Series shields. *Please note, to be eligible to be awarded the Elite Shield and \$500 Prize, the athlete must have taken part in all 3 State Rounds. * In addition to this- the three State Championships Rounds will have an increased prize money on the individual races with prize money to be awarded.

17. Confidentiality and Reporting

Breaches of this policy must be reported to SWA Management within 14 days of any occurrence. Breaches of this policy must be kept confidential, and disclosure to any third party beyond SWA Management is not permitted.

18. Related Documents

Related documents include the following:

- SWA Competition Policy

19. Version Control

Version	Issue Date	Approved By	Approval Date	Review Date
1.0	September 2024	CEO	September 2024	April 2025