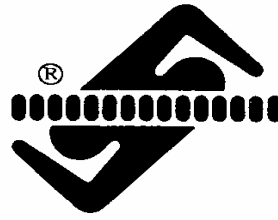


*United States
Masters
Swimming*



UNITED STATES MASTERS SWIMMING

OPEN WATER MANUAL

November 2008

The Open Water Manual was written to guide race directors in planning and organizing their open water events. It will help new directors get started and provide a few tips for old hands. New organizers should not be discouraged by the volume of information in this manual. Producing an open water event is not a simple operation. . Establishing an event that endures year after year is a source of great pride, as the authors of this manual can attest. The value of giving back to the sport, of providing entertainment and a challenge to many, of putting your town on the "swimming map" cannot be overestimated

The United States Masters Swimming Long Distance Committee extends a special thank you to Craig Tribuzi for his dedication to this project in its formative years. Thanks also to Peter Crumbine, Lynn Hazlewood, Alan Levinson, Sally Dillon, and Robert Zeitner for their many contributions.

To obtain a printed copy of the manual or to send any suggestions or corrections for this manual, contact the Long Distance Chairman (see address in Appendix A: Important Contacts).

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SECTION ONE: GENERAL INFORMATION

101 INTRODUCTION

- .1 There are many types of open water events for individuals and teams. Open water swimming events normally occur in a natural body of water such as an ocean, lake, or river, although man-made quarries and reservoirs are sometimes used. It is the hope of United States Masters Swimming (USMS) that this manual will assist you in directing a safe and efficient open water swim. For further information, please refer to the Long Distance/Open Water Swimming Rules in the USMS Rule Book, Part 3.
- .2 Prior to circulating an entry form, a race organizer should contact local authorities (including the Coast Guard when appropriate) and become familiar with local regulations that might affect their event. Course design, safety considerations, and support personnel must be provided for as well. A first time event director should consider obtaining guidance from an experienced director. This "mentor" should be available and provide input throughout the process. Develop a database with initial inputs from your Local Masters Swimming Committee (LMSC) registrar and other open water race hosts. This will have many uses including printing mailing labels and keeping track of past results.

102 ORGANIZER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The organizer's responsibilities cover pre-race, race-day, and post-race operations. The following lists show a wide variety of activities needed to run an open water race. It is unlikely that all these activities will be needed for any given race. The meet organizer will have to determine which of these operations are appropriate for their particular event. For example, if safety will be handled by a lifeguard association, the organizers will have less work to do in setting up safety measures.

- .1 **Pre-Race Operations**—Unlike a pool swim, open water events usually require facilities or hardware not "on the site." In addition to the usual organizational activities of an event, you will have to arrange to acquire and transport all necessary items to the race site. Pre-race operations will include:
 - A Confirm date of event.
 - B Obtain a facility or location.
 - C Obtain local government or facility approval, permits, and support.
 - D Secure USMS sanction, which includes insurance.
 - E Secure additional insurance, if needed.
 - F Prepare time line.
 - G Prepare operating budget.
 - H Design and distribute entry form, including specification of entry cut-off date and publication on the internet.
 - I Arrange for publicity.
 - J Recruit race officials and volunteers.
 - K Secure sponsors for the event if desired (financial or "goods and services" donations).
 - L Order T-shirts, hats, etc. to identify the event.
 - M Order bright colored t swim caps for participants to wear (highly recommended for safety).
 - N Design and order awards and determine how many places will receive awards.
 - O Arrange for first aid and safety procedures and secure personnel and equipment (e.g. ambulance,-rescue boats, etc.).
 - P Arrange for in-water safety equipment and personnel.
 - Q Prepare signs, posters for organizing the event, and course maps.
 - R Secure race-day equipment and supplies (tables, chairs, P.A. system, portable electric power, toilet facilities, shower facilities, tents, timing system and watches, pens, pencils, paper, paper clips).
 - S Secure hospitality food and water.
 - T Receive and process entries.
 - U Prepare for race-day swimmer check-in by stuffing packets (if there are any), organizing materials to hand out to swimmers, and identifying swimmers with registration problems.

- .2 Race-Day Operations**—Race-day operations begin with setting up equipment and organizing and training meet workers. Sometimes the set-up and training will be done a day or more ahead of time, depending on requirements. When planning for race-day, make sure you have emergency phone numbers for all outside agencies and race personnel in the event they don't show up on time. Have a game plan in case things don't go smoothly. When the swimmers begin to arrive, you need to be ready to check them in and run the race. On race day, the jobs will be:
- A** Organize parking and traffic control.
 - B** Set up all on-land equipment including swimmer check-in stations, P.A. equipment, timers and scorers areas, hospitality and food areas, safety equipment, etc. Instruct volunteers who are manning these stations.
 - C** Set up transport of swimmers' gear for point-to-point races. Bags/gear should have ID (entry form)
 - D** Set up start line and finish chute.
 - E** Set up in-water course (ropes, buoys, and other markers) equipment and instruct volunteers.
 - F** Set up first aid procedures, check that first aid equipment is in working order, and check personnel.
 - G** Set up in-water safety equipment and check or instruct personnel.
 - H** Organize swimmers at the starting area.
 - I** Give pre-race instructions and safety lecture. Have map or chalk board of outlined course VISIBLE.
 - J** Record official times, adjudicate protests, and compile official results.
 - K** Give out awards and prizes.
 - L** Clean up site.
- .3 Post-Race Operations**—Many meet organizers neglect this aspect of running an event. The last swimmer goes home and everybody forgets about the race until next year, or one person is burdened with the responsibility of the wrap-up. The post-race activities that need to be attended to are:
- A** Publish and distribute official results to swimmers, the internet, and governing organizations. See rule 305.8 in the USMS Rule Book.
 - B** Complete the financial accounting and pay all creditors.
 - C** File insurance incident reports, if necessary.
 - D** Send thank you notes to volunteers and sponsors.
 - E** Evaluate the event and plan improvements for the next year.

103 SANCTIONS AND INSURANCE

If you intend to organize an event with the approval and authority of USMS, you need to obtain a sanction for your event. One benefit for race managers is that a USMS sanction offers insurance coverage to protect USMS athletes, officials, and facilities. Insurance requirements, coverage, and benefits change frequently so ask your LMSC or the USMS National Office for the current coverage. The sanction number must be placed on the entry form. All registrants in the event are required to be registered with USMS as well and should indicate their registration number on the entry form. It is recommended that participants include a photocopy of their USMS card with their entry. With regard to international competitors, proof of Masters Swimming registration is required in the country of origin. (The phrase "international travel permit" could be a passport or birth certificate.)

104 SAFETY

Safety is paramount in any open water swimming event. The first step in planning an open water swim is the consideration of all safety factors. Although you are ultimately responsible for safety at your event, you should enlist the assistance of your local Lifeguard-Fire Department Services Emergency Medical Services, the Coast Guard, Harbor Patrol Services or other appropriate authorities. A Safety Officer should be assigned to the event, and should write a report to be filed with the local organizing committee

.1 Emergency Provisions

- A** Event personnel should be informed of the emergency provisions. The event director should hold a meeting for all event personnel just prior to the event.
- B** Open water swims should have a medical evacuation plan. The plan outlines procedures and methods of transport for swimmers needing emergency medical aid from water pickup to land-based services.

- C Safety monitor stations (i.e. row boats, canoes, kayaks, paddleboards, etc.) should be positioned on the course in a minimum ratio of one station per twenty-five (25) entrants or a minimum of one station for every 1/8 mile of course length, whichever number of stations is greater.
- D Emergency evacuation power boats should not approach the swimmers at any time. Swimmers in trouble should be brought to the evacuation boat by a safety monitor using non-motorized transportation.
- E A detailed plan must be available for event cancellation during the event due to safety considerations arising after the competition has started (e.g. lightning).
- F A procedure must be developed to account for each participant (e.g. a walkie-talkie and binoculars for reading numbers off the swimmers arms at a turn-around point.)
- G The host club should establish and announce a cut-off time for all or part of the event. Swimmers failing to meet the criteria should be disqualified and escorted to shore.
- H A briefing for swimmers should be held prior to the start of the event and all competitors should be present. A good public address system is essential to ensure that instructions can be heard and understood. Refer to section 304 Suggested Pre-Race Instructions for the specific instructions.

.2 Escorts and Monitors—Paddleboards, kayaks, and canoes are recommended for individual escorts and/or safety monitors.

- A The use of individual escorts should be the option of the host club.
- B Escorts' attendance should be mandatory at a pre-race meeting. As the escort will need to be in the water and ready to go prior to the start of the race, a separate escort meeting may be held prior to the swimmers' meeting.
- C All rules applying to swimmers apply to escort personnel as well. They should be capable of completing the distance and maintaining the speed necessary to keep up with their swimmers.
- D If desired, the escort can be assigned the same number as the swimmer and marked accordingly.
- E The escorts must know the course and any special rules. All escort craft should be of sufficient size to hold at least two people afloat—the paddlers(s) plus one swimmer.
- F Individual paddlers should be discouraged unless the length and design of the course can adequately support them. Too many paddlers aggressively working to support their swimmers can be dangerous. Instead, safety personnel should be placed at strategic locations along the course.
- G Individual escorts are highly desirable for longer swims and it is recommended that each contestant be allowed to supply an escort capable of maintaining their pace. In addition to being the eyes and ears for the swimmer and providing a measure of safety, the escort is responsible for detecting signs of hypothermia or other conditions of the swimmer.
- H When personal escorts are required, in addition to providing all the services mentioned above, they are responsible for feeding the swimmer and providing the mental stimulation necessary for the swimmer's wellbeing throughout the race.
- I Escorts should remain at the side of the swimmers to prevent possible drafting. Swimmers should not hold on to or hang from the support craft. (See Rule 303.2.1)
- J All boats used in conjunction with the event must meet U.S. Coast Guard and local standards for equipment and loading capacity. Escort boats should display a fluorescent orange "skier down" flag at all times.
- K Power boats should be used to protect the course, not as pilot or escort boats for individuals in non-relay events.
- L Provisions for non-event boat traffic control should be secured. It is strongly suggested that control be arranged through a law enforcement agency and/or Coast Guard.
- M A "clean-up" boat should be used and remain behind the last swimmer throughout the race.

105 SWIMMER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The following information should be communicated to the participants.

- .1 It is essential that swimmers prepare and train well in advance for any open water event they choose to enter.
- .2 No one should undertake any competitive open water event unless he is physically fit and fully expects to finish. It is advisable for any person undertaking any athletic event to be checked by a physician.

- .3 Swimmers failing to complete the swim must report to race officials as described in the pre-race meetings for their safety to be accounted.
- .4 Swimmers are responsible for personal property left at the swimming site while they are in the water. They should plan ahead and insure that items they may need are available at the finish. Bags should have proper identification if transportation of equipment is provided.
- .5 For longer swims it is recommended that swimmers provide their own water and/or nourishment.

SECTION TWO: PRE-RACE OPERATIONS

201 DETERMINING A COURSE

The swim course is defined by the start, the course design, and the finish.

.1 Start

- A The start can begin in the water (tread water or standing) or with a short run into the water.
- B The bottom should be firm, clean, and free from hazards (rocks, algae, glass, etc.). The Safety Director should conduct a "bottom check".
- C The starting area should be as wide as possible to minimize multiple row starting. The starting line should be perpendicular to the first leg of the course so all contestants along the starting line have equal advantage.
- D Heats are recommended for larger events. Heats reduce congestion on the course, minimize overtaking, and prevent injuries. Heats by age group rather than ability are better for spreading the field and minimizing bunching at the finish line. Separate heats for wetsuit competitors may be considered but are not absolutely necessary.
- E The starting area and course should be controlled to keep non-participants clear and to assure a fair start for all participants.

.2 Course Design—The course of the swim should be designed to minimize swimmer confusion. Courses should avoid head-on traffic patterns where swimmers could pass close to each other in opposing directions unless swimming on opposite sides of a rope. Course design should also eliminate changes in course direction until the field of contestants has spread out from the starting line congestion. Depending on the body of water the course might:

- A Parallel the beach,
- B Go out to or around a fixed point such as a pier or island,
- C Circle a closed course marked by buoys,
- D Go from point-to-point, starting and finishing in different locations,
- E Follow a course that is a combination of any of the above, or
- F Circle a 1/4 mile cable on a fixed course. (See Section 5)

.3 Finish

- A A chute is recommended at the finish with the official finish line at the entrance to the chute and as close to the water line as possible. A finish line in the water is possible but difficult to judge when large numbers participate in the event.
- B The finish should be clearly marked and visible from the water from at least 1/4 mile away.
- C The finish line should be clearly indicated for the purpose of judging.
- D The finish area should be controlled to keep non-participants clear.
- E Finish monitors should be provided for safety purposes to aid swimmers standing up and exiting the water if needed.
- F The chute (located beyond the finish line) should be long enough to accommodate the number of swimmers expected to finish at about the same time and narrow enough to keep the swimmers in order of finish until their results are noted.

202 CREATING AN ENTRY FORM/MEET ANNOUNCEMENT

It is advantageous to print your entry form on an 8 1/2" x 11" sheet. Have someone "proof read" your entry form/meet announcement. An entry form should contain the following:

- .1 A large headline naming the event.

- .2 The facts: date, time, location, sanction number (if any), host, fees, deadlines, liability release, and check-in information.
- .3 Other pertinent information: course and description, directions to the race site, USMS rules governance, eligibility, age groups, non wetsuit and wetsuit divisions, awards, safety (e.g. fluorescent caps), parking and/or fees other than entry, T-shirts, accommodations, sponsors, local hotels or a phone number to call for lodging information, etc. If sanctioned, require that a photo copy of the current USMS registration accompany the entry form.
- .4 When appropriate, a warning statement which cautions the swimmer about special hazards of the event, (e.g. water temperature, distance, surface conditions, etc.).
- .5 A "clip and mail" entry form. Allow ample room for the swimmer's name, gender, address, phone number, birth date, age, emergency contact name and phone number, team name and abbreviation, USMS registration number, and email address. Remember to include the name, address and phone number of the person receiving the entries. In addition to a mail-in form, you may wish to utilize an on-line entry system.
- .6 A liability release. Refer to the current USMS Rule Book for the proper wording as it changes from year to year. The liability release must be signed and dated for the entry to be accepted.
- .7 The opportunity to send a SASE for verification of entry, list of accommodations, a copy of the final results, or other pertinent information.
- .8 For examples of recent entry forms go to <http://www.usms.org/longdist/ldnats08/>

203 DISTRIBUTION OF ENTRY FORMS

- .1 Plan to print and distribute at least 4 times as many forms as the number of swimmers you might expect.
- .2 Consider using colored paper to attract attention to your form.
- .3 Distribute the forms at least 3 months before the event. Obtain mailing lists from your LMSC Registrar and/or other teams. Be sure your event is officially "announced" in the LMSC newsletter and that forms are available at local meets. Many LMSCs will print the entire entry form in the newsletter. Distribute entries to:
 - A All clubs in the LMSC (and neighboring LMSC's if possible).
 - B Participants from other open water and triathlon events.
 - C Local sport shops, community centers, swimming pools, etc.
- .4 Post your entry form on the Internet if possible. Many LMSC's will post forms for you if your team doesn't have a web site.

204 PUBLICITY

A primary concern for the race organizer is publicizing the event and attracting as many participants as is possible. This is especially true for first-time events where past participants aren't available to spread the word to their friends. Use the media before and after your event.

- .1 Send copies of your entry form as outlined above.
- .2 Write a "press release" and send it along with an official entry form to local newspapers, TV and radio stations and the Chamber of Commerce at least a month in advance. Sports magazines need the information many months in advance. Don't forget the local bulletin boards sometimes found on cable stations. Your press release should be brief but must include the date, time, location, description, and contact for the event. Be sure to include any interesting facts (e.g. special participants). Follow up all mailed press releases with a phone call to the sports page editor.
- .3 Get on the Internet.
- .4 Write an article for your LMSC Newsletter about your event. Deadline dates are 2-3 months ahead.
- .5 Get your event listed in the USMS Long Distance Calendar (see Appendix A: Important Contacts).
- .6 Purchase an ad in *USMS Swimmer* magazine or other swimming magazines (see Appendix A: Important Contacts).
- .7 Try to get as much publicity in the media after the event as you did before. In particular, encourage your local newspaper to have a reporter and photographer at the event. Many people who missed the event will see the coverage and remember it for the next time.

205 RECEIPT OF ENTRIES

Comment [AV1]: Later this year, we should add something about online entries

- .1 Check that entries are complete and legible. Resolve entry problems in advance of the event if possible. If time allows, return incomplete entries otherwise they will have to be resolved at check-in on race day. A completed entry should have at least:
 - A The swimmer's current USMS card attached for sanctioned events.
 - B Entry information that matches the USMS card, if sanctioned.
 - C A signed and dated liability release, which must be signed prior to the competition.
 - D Entry fee payment.
 - E Information on T-shirt orders, reservations for parties, etc. if applicable.
- .2 Mark the entry "paid" and attach the USMS photocopy, if any, to the form for future reference.
- .3 Send lodging information, if requested.
- .4 Send entry acknowledgment, if applicable.
- .5 Organize the entry forms in a logical and systematic order for quick reference. Many USMS meets use Hytek's Meet Manager program to input entries and produce results. The latest updates have incorporated open water races into the program.
- .6 Prepare check-in sheets prior to the event. Age groups and sexes usually are listed separately. Numbers should be assigned and many teams assign age group letters as follows: 18-24 W="A", 18-24 M="B", 25-29 W="C", 25-29 M="D", 30-34 W="E", 30-34 M="F", etc. Never use the same numbers, regardless of divisions.
- .7 Late and race-day entries can be tedious, but profitable, because you can charge \$10 more per entry. Be sure to have enough helpers to handle late entries and other race day complications.

206 ITEMS TO ORDER

- .1 **Swim Caps**—It is highly recommended that meet directors require fluorescent or other brightly colored caps for all participants for better visibility. Contact swim equipment suppliers for estimates (see Appendix A: Important Contacts). If you wish to have the caps printed, allow 6-8 weeks for receipt of the caps once you have provided your "camera ready" artwork. Many events include the cap as a participation award to ensure that all entrants have them. Different colored caps have been used to indicate heats and/or age groups allowing swimmers to identify their competition during the race.
- .2 **Awards**—Before you print your entry form, you need to decide how many awards to give out. Most events award 1st-3rd in each age group and many give a special something for the first male and female to finish overall. Look for ideas representative of your community (ex. a bottle of wine in a wine area). Avoid awards that are unusable after the event, because you will find that some age groups aren't represented, and you may have extras. Medals with the event name but no date could be used the following year. Sponsors will frequently provide assistance with awards.
- .3 **T-Shirts or other items to identify the event**—Many swimmers compete just to get the T-Shirt, etc. If you plan to include the shirt as a participation award, determine the cost for your shirts before you determine your race entry fees to avoid unpleasant surprises. Allow 6-8 weeks once you have provided your artwork. When deciding how many shirts to order, consider:
 - A Allowing swimmers to pre-order T-Shirts. Distribute to swimmers at check-in or at the finish to keep swimmers around for the awards.
 - B Giving volunteer shirts—estimate number needed and get sizes as they sign up.
 - C Selling any remaining shirts at check-in or at the conclusion of the race.
 - D Taking orders when you run out. You'll need to charge more to cover the cost of mailing and printing a smaller number.
- .4 **Miscellaneous things to order or arrange for as needed:**
 - A Portable toilets if adequate facilities are not available.
 - B Timing equipment: computer, finish "display" clock, "printout" and stop watches.
 - C Photographers.
 - D Refreshments for the finish. Include fresh water and hot liquids.
 - E Special awards for special people (oldest, traveled the farthest, etc.).
 - F Signs for directions, check-in, course, etc.
 - G Tables and chairs for registration and results.

- H** Portable Address system.
- I** Buoys for turning and direction.
- J** Finish banners.
- K** Finish chutes.
- L** Tents for shade.
- M** Safety boats.

207 RECRUITING & TRAINING PERSONNEL

Race volunteers should be recruited as early as possible. By one month prior to the race, you should have your list finalized. Volunteer training should be done as close to the race as possible so workers have clear in their mind what their responsibilities are. See 301 Race Day Personnel for a list of jobs you need to fill.

SECTION THREE: RACE-DAY OPERATIONS

301 RACE DAY PERSONNEL

Key personnel and their duties vary from event to event. Be creative but look ahead for potential problems. Suggested roles, some of which may be combined, include the following:

- .1 **Meet Director**—The Meet Director has full control and authority over personnel and should approve of their assignment and instruct them regarding any special conditions related to the race. The Meet Director should ensure that all necessary officials for the conduct of the event are at their respective posts, and arrange for assumption of duties of officials not reporting.
- .2 **Referee**—The Referee shall enforce the rules, decide all questions related to the conduct of the event, and adjudicate all protests related to the competition. The Referee has full authority to cancel the event and remove or disqualify from the competition any swimmer violating event and/or USMS rules and/or safety procedures.
- .3 **Safety Officer**—The Safety Officer is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the meet related to safety and should arrange for and meet with first aid and safety personnel.
- .4 **Announcer**—The Announcer makes any announcements the race director asks for and should conduct the pre-race briefing. The announcer should stand where they can be heard and understood by the competitors. See 304 Suggested Pre-race Instructions for a sample of the contents of the briefing.
- .5 **Registrar/Clerk**—The Registrar/Clerks should check in the swimmers and insure that all administrative details are accomplished (entry fees paid, waiver signed, USMS registration verified, and entry number assigned). A minimum of one clerk per 40 entrants is recommended for an efficient race day check-in. Caps and other participation awards should be distributed. In the case of an escorted swim, confirm that the escorts are present.
- .6 **Marshals**—Marshals can mark entry numbers on swimmers and/or confirm that electronic timing chips are properly affixed. They can assist in lining up swimmers at the start. At the finish, they should watch for and prevent interference and provide safety assistance if needed.
- .7 **Starter**—The Starter should be clearly identified and visible to all persons on the starting line and positioned in front of the starting line so the visual and audible start is clear to all participants. They should be sure that escorts assume their position prior to the start. The Starter should see that the swimmers are lined up properly at the starting line and start the race as described in the Announcer's section.
- .8 **Course Judges**—When appropriate, Course Judges should be assigned at course turns and other check points along the course (preferably at each buoy when used). The Starter should report any violations to the Referee. In longer races, it would be advisable to have radio contact with the Referee.
- .9 **Finish Judge**—The Finish Judge is stationed at the finish line and will decide the order of finish. As swimmers cross the finish line or touch a finishing plate they should be placed in a single file line for entry into a chute. Swimmers without numbers are not permitted in the chute. Observers in boats a few meters in front of the finish might be able to call out the approaching swimmer's number to assist the judge. Video cameras at the finish line are excellent for settling disputes.
- .10 **Timers and Recorders**—As explained in 306, Tabulation of Results, timers and recorders are needed to see that the official times and order of finish are maintained. The method of tabulation will dictate the number of people needed.
- .11 **Results Clerk or Computer Operator**—This person receives finish times and the order of finish from the timers and recorders and then calculates the final results. Results should be posted as they become available and swimmers should notify the Results Clerk of errors. After accounting for all swimmers, checking for possible errors, the results are sent to the Announcer for the awards presentation.

302 RACE CHECK-IN

- .1 **Equipment Needed**—Following is a list of suggested equipment for race check-in. Other equipment may be needed depending on your facility and method of "swimmer accounting."

Pens & Pencils	USMS Reg forms	Swim Caps	Course Map to View
Paper Clips	Blank Entry Forms	Tables & Chairs	Directional Signs
Permanent Marker Pens	Cash Boxes	Clipboards	
Rubber Bands	Staplers	Trash Bags	

- .2 Organization Required:**
 - A** Set up stations for check-in to handle pre-entries and race day entries separately. Set up separate stations for "problem" entries and writing numbers on swimmers or confirming that electronic timing chips are properly affixed.
 - B** Check-in forms must be at the appropriate stations along with any materials and equipment to be handed out to the swimmers.
- .3 Marking of Swimmers**—Swimmers must be "marked" with their official race number for safety and officiating purposes so they can be easily identified as they cross the finish line. Numbers can be written on their upper arm, upper leg, hand, or swim cap. Permanent non-toxic markers should be used. If electronic timing sensors are used, these markings are optional.

303 ORGANIZING THE START

- .1 Equipment Needed:**
 - A** Public address system.
 - B** Flags, flares, or other apparatus for indicating the race start.
 - C** Stop watches.
- .2 Organization Required:**
 - A** Designate an area to give instructions to the competitors. A public address system is usually required.
 - B** Have Marshals available on land and in the water, to ensure a fair start for all competitors.

304 SUGGESTED PRE-RACE INSTRUCTIONS

- .1 Welcome**
 - A** Announce the name of the swim
 - B** Thank the sponsors.
- .2 General Announcements**
 - A** Give water temperature
 - B** Point out possible hazards
 - C** Report on currents or tides
- .3 Safety/Emergency Procedures—Suggested Wording**
 - A** "If you are apprehensive about participation in the swim or your ability to complete the distance, please withdraw before entering the water at the start. This is not the time to test your open water swimming skill for the first time."
 - B** "If you need assistance during the race, wave one arm overhead and a paddler will come to you."
 - C** "If you drop out before or during the race, report immediately to the Finish Judge under the finish banner so your safety can be accounted for."
 - D** "Faster swimmers should position themselves closer to the start line at the edge of water with slower swimmers assuming a less risky position further back in the pack."
 - E** "Emergency staff will be stationed...(indicate where)."
 - F** A cut-off time of _____ hours/minutes will be enforced. Swimmers still in the water at this time will be brought to shore for their own safety."
- .4 Finish**
 - A** Give chute directions to all competitors.
 - B** Point out clock location to all competitors.
 - C** Explain finish directions to all competitors.
- .5 Course**
 - A** Point out directions of swim
 - B** Describe buoys—number, type, color, and related requirements.
 - C** Refer to course map and course violations.
- .6 Start**
 - A** Announce the expected time of the start.

- B Remind slower and faster swimmers to be their in correct starting position.
- C Emphasize to swimmers that they spread out and be courteous to one another.
- D Explain starting signals.
- E Identify start line.

305 FINISH

.1 Equipment Needed

- A Finish line equipment.
- B Forms for recording finish times and race numbers.
- C Timing equipment.
- D Large clock, if available.
- E Food and drink for finishing swimmers.
- F Emergency medical equipment.

.2 Organization Required

- A Set up stations as needed for results, first aid, hospitality, shirt sales, etc.
- B Set up the finish area including a finish line, finish chutes and/or finish banners.
- C If available, set up a large time clock for the swimmers to see as they cross the finish line.

306 TABULATION OF RESULTS

A successful event must have accurate reporting of results. Some methods of tabulation are:

- .1 **Computer Results:** If a computer program such as Meet Manager is not used, the swimmer's finish order can be determined with a finish list, on 3 x 5 cards, popsicle type sticks or any number of other methods. These results would be entered and the computer would compile results.
- .2 **Manual results by time:** A simpler approach is to give each swimmer at the finish line a 3 x 5 card with his or her time. The swimmer then goes through the finish chute to a desk where the time is recorded on a results form ordered by age group and gender. This requires 3 or 4 timers at the finish to deal with bunching, a problem which is greatly eased with heats by age group rather than ability.
- .3 **Manual result by order of finish:** 3 x 5 cards or popsicle type sticks, "numbered" with the order of finish, can be handed out to the swimmers and then "turned in" to a designated person. Official times will need to be recorded and matched to swimmers. "Printout" stop watches are excellent because they save the times for later review.
- .4 **Backup results:** Regardless of the method of timing and recording used, a backup system is recommended. Compare the official results with the backup results before giving out your awards. One backup method is to use pre-numbered lists to record times and pre-numbered lists to record finish numbers which requires two people "recording" and two people "calling out" the times or numbers.

307 AWARDS DISTRIBUTION

The Announcer and/or Race Director should conduct the presentation of the awards after the results are completed.

308 CLEAN UP

Insure that the race site is cleaner and in better shape than it was found. Collect anything that can be reused for the next race (ex: signs, buoys, rope, etc.).

SECTION FOUR: POST-RACE ACTIVITIES

401 RESULTS

- .1 Provide a copy of the results to the media, separate results for non wetsuit and wetsuit divisions, highlighting the local participants, within 24 hours. (See Rule 303.6.3)
- .2 Mail the results to participants and/or their clubs.
- .3 Post your results on the Internet if possible. Most LMSC's will post results for you if your team doesn't have a web site.

402 T-SHIRTS

- .1 Order and mail extra shirts.

403 THANK YOU NOTES

- .1 Send thank you letters to major supporters, sponsors, and volunteers.
- .2 Send a letter to the editor of the local newspaper thanking contributing businesses publicity.

404 EVALUATION

- .1 Hold an evaluation meeting with key volunteers shortly after the event. Ask for written suggestions as well. Make plans for next year's event.

405 FINANCIAL REPORT

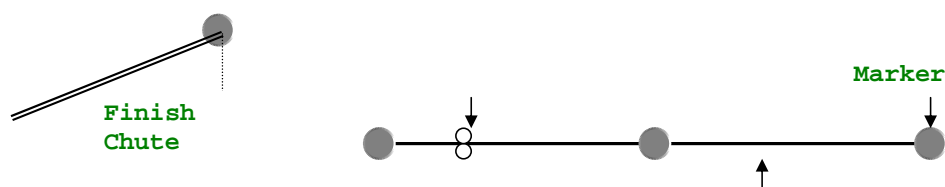
- .1 A financial report should be sent to the LMSC according to sanction requirements. See sample financial form in APPENDIX C: Financial Report Form.

SECTION FIVE: STRAIGHTAWAY SWIMS

The original of this section was written by Dr. Jim Miller, based on his experience as Race Director for several years of the 2-mile Cable Swim held annually at Chris Greene Lake in Charlottesville, Virginia.

501 INTRODUCTION

- 1 Prior to 1999, the only straightaway swims recognized by the Long Distance rules were those swum along a quarter-mile cable. For 1999, the definition of straightaway swims was expanded to encompass any swim of any length that is set on a straight course.
- 2 A straightaway swim is a very specific and strictly regulated type of open water swim. The course layout, the appropriate body of water, the start, and the finish are specified in the USMS Rules under sections 302.3.1, 303.3.3, 303.4.2. In order for a swim to qualify as a straightaway swim, it must conform to these rules.
- 3 The rules also specify that National Championships may be held at a distance of 1 mile on a quarter-mile cable and shall be held at a distance of 2 miles on a quarter-mile cable (Rules 305.2.1A & B). Individual national records are maintained in both 1-mile and 2-mile events (Rule 306.1.1), but not in any other straightaway event (Rule 306.1.3).
- 4 In addition to the aspects of running a straightaway swim which are regulated by USMS rules, many procedures have been developed over the years for organizing these events. Where no specific rule is cited, the information below describes what has been done in the past.



502 COURSE DESIGN

- 1 **Course**—"The course shall be straight, measured within plus or minus 6 inches, in stationary open water, and

Starting
Buoys



defined by a cable with floats or a continuous marking system visible to the swimmer. The ends of the course shall be delineated by two fixed and stationary markers in the water. Floats on the course shall be a maximum of 10 meters apart (Rule 302.3.1)."

The race can be set up so swimmers start at one end of the course and swim to the other end. It can also be set up so swimmers swim around the course one or more times and then swim off the end of the course to finish. The course diagram above represents a quarter-mile cable course layout.

- 2 **Stationary Markers**—There should be two or more pylons or markers set in the bottom of the body of water which mark the ends of the course and points between. The pylons can be posts sunk in a lake bed or marine anchors such as are used to secure rowing courses. Once the markers are set, they are left year round and are clearly marked for boating safety. If permanent markers are not practical, the course must be surveyed yearly for accuracy.
- 3 **Setting the Cable**—The cable is heavy-duty rope made of metal or nylon. Most cables will stretch and rot with prolonged exposure to the water. Therefore, the cable must be put in and removed each year for the event. To make sure the cable is taut for race day, stretch the cable out along the course two to three days prior to the event. Each day remove any slack in the cable by wrapping the line back over the pylon an additional time.
- 4 **Buoys, Floats, & Balloons**—The course is made visible to the swimmers by the use of buoys or floats of various colors set a maximum of 10 meters apart. For circular courses, use specially colored buoys to mark the

last 10 meters at each end of the course so swimmers know when they are coming to the turning points. Large balloons placed at both ends of the course and in the middle are helpful guides for swimmers.

- .5 **Start Location**—The starter buoys should be placed at least 10 meters in from the permanent marker at the starting end of the cable (see diagram). This allows the finish line to be set up at least 10 meters off the end of the course so finishers will not become confused with those making the turn to start back up the course.
- .6 **Finish Chute**—The finish chute is placed in the water off the end of the course. It should be positioned so swimmers can swim directly off the course and into the chute and should be the same distance from the end marker as the starting buoys. Two pool lane lines may be used to make the chute. The ends of the chute closest to the pylon should be marked by balloons to define the finish line. Swimmers are finished when they cross the plane defined by the leading edges of the balloons. The finish goes through a chute so race officials can get each participant's race number before the swimmers exit the finish area.

503 THE START

- .1 "A stationary water start shall be used in straightaway events (Rule 303.3.3)." The swimmers will be lined up next to the starting buoys and will tread water or stand on the bottom, if possible, until the starting signal sounds.
- .2 "Separate starts are preferable in straightaway events. The swimmers shall be seeded in order of time, with the fastest swimmer receiving the preferred position. If subsequent rows are needed, they will be seeded in a similar method behind the first row of swimmers (Rule 303.4.2)."
The preferred position is next to the course markers. Most cable swims are started in waves with a small group of swimmers (10–12) starting every thirty seconds. During scoring, the delayed starting time is deducted from the raw finish time to obtain the official finish time.
- .3 Many circular events are seeded in two heats: one heat clockwise for right side breathers and the other counterclockwise for left side breathers. This permits participants to swim in the direction that allows them to breathe toward the course markers. The direction of the first heat is rotated each year so the same swimmers don't always get to swim first (on hot days) or last (on cold days). Another method would be to swim one heat and determine the direction of the swim by a coin toss 15 minutes or so before the start. This enables all swimmers to compete against those who are the same speed.

Comment [AV2]: At Lake Placid this year, we are going to have one heat. Direction will be determined by flip a coin 15 min before the start, as per suggestion of Bob Bruce.

504 THE RACE

- .1 Quarter-mile cable swims are generally 1 mile or 2 miles in length, but may be longer or shorter at the race director's discretion. The 2-mile cable is most common. Swimmers begin at the starting buoys, which are positioned as specified in 502.5 above, and swim around the course the requisite number of times (2 times for the 1-mile and 4 times for the 2-mile).
- .2 Other straightaway swims may be swum in a circular fashion as the quarter-mile cable events, or in one direction with swimmers starting at one end of the course and swimming down to the other end.

505 THE FINISH

- .1 "An in-the-water finish shall be used in straightaway events (Rule 303.5.3)."
- .2 After the swimmers have gone around a circular course the appropriate number of times or swum all the way down a one-direction course, they swim off the end of the course and cross the finish line at the beginning of the finish chute.

506 SCORING

The wave start, multi-heat format, and in-the-water finish common to most straightaway swims create scoring complications that are not normally found in open water swims. In order to make sure each swimmer is assigned the correct finish time, the following procedures need to be observed:

- .1 **Pre-Race Preparation**—Prior to the race, each swimmer must be assigned a race number that will identify them during the race.
- .2 **Recording During the Race:**
 - A With wave starts, a delayed starting time must be noted for each wave. For example, with waves which are 30 seconds apart, swimmers in the first wave will be assigned a delay of 0 seconds, the second wave 30 seconds, the third wave 1 minute, etc. It is best to do this as the start progresses rather than prior to the race in case the waves do not go off at an exact time interval.

- B** As swimmers cross the finish line, a list of finish times by finish position must be maintained. This list is built by direct entry into a computer, taking times on a chronomix (a timer with a printed output), writing down times taken on stop watches, or any combination of the three methods. Timers must be situated at the finish line and perpendicular to the course to get a good view of the swimmers finishing. Whether they are on land, standing in the water, or in a boat depends on how far the course is from shore.
- C** As swimmers cross the finish line, a list of swimmers' race numbers by finish position must be maintained. Race numbers may be recorded directly into the computer or to a hand-written list from wrist tags worn by each swimmer, or from race numbers printed on swimmers' bodies. Precise finish positions may be taken from a number handed to each swimmer as they cross the finish line. The method chosen will depend on the configuration and location of the finish chute.
- D** During the race, it is important to maintain compatibility between the finish times and race numbers lists. For example, if 15 finish times have been recorded, then 15 race numbers should be recorded. Any discrepancy should be resolved immediately. The longer the lists get, the harder it is to find the problem if anything is out of place. A race official should be assigned to do this job alone.
- E** In addition to the main lists, a race official should record "select" times periodically (every 20 finishers, for example). Select a swimmer and get an exact finish time and race number for that swimmer. If any problems are found during step "D" above, use the select time to identify where a time or race number is missing.
- F** Electronic timing systems that can record finish times and race numbers from an electronic chip worn by the swimmer may be utilized instead of the manual methods described within this manual.

.3 Processing After Each Heat

- A** After each heat is complete, validate the finish times and race numbers lists.
- B** Put the two lists together to get a raw time for each swimmer.
- C** Subtract the delayed starting time from the raw time to obtain the official time.
- D** Once all the heats are complete and official times are calculated for all swimmers, results and placings may be determined.

APPENDIX A: IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Please advise the national office if this page is not up to date.

USMS OPEN WATER CHAIR

Marcia Cleveland
915 Pine Tree Lane, Winnetka, IL 60093
847-446-5142
longdistance@usms.org

USMS NATIONAL OFFICE

Tracy Grilli
P.O. Box 185, Londonderry, NH 03035-0185
800-555-SWIM (7946)
603-537-0204 (FAX)
info@usms.org; USMS@usms.org

USMS LONG DISTANCE CALENDAR

Lynn Hazlewood
1415 Aldenham Lane, Reston, VA 20190
703-435-2180, lynhzlwd@usms.org
Get Your Event Listed: www.usms.org/comp/events.htm
Calendar: www.usms.org/comp/ldcalendar.htm
Send SASE for Printed Copy

USMS SWIMMER

The Official Magazine of
United States Masters Swimming

www.usmsswimmer.com

SUPPLIES (CAPS, ETC.)

For all USMS Sponsors, go to:

<http://www.usms.org/merch/sponsors.php>

APPENDIX B: SUGGESTED TIME LINE

Time lines will vary with different events depending on a number of factors including event size and sanctioning LMSC and/or community requirements. To avoid unexpected problems, start organizing early. "At least" . . .

6-12 MONTHS PRIOR:

1. Determine date and location of the event.
2. Submit event information to the Long Distance Calendar.
3. Determine the Meet Director and "key" personnel.
4. Determine the budget.
5. Obtain local approval as needed.
6. Contact local fire and rescue for help.
7. Obtain sponsors.
8. Develop a list of hotels and campgrounds
9. Design logos for entry forms, shirts, etc.
10. Design entry form.
11. Obtain sanction or approval from USMS.

5 MONTHS PRIOR:

1. Finalize entry form.
2. Send entry form to LMSC newsletter.
3. Obtain current USMS Rule Book.
4. Organize publicity campaign.
5. Order awards needing a long lead time.

4 MONTHS PRIOR:

1. Mail entry forms to data base developed from other events (or previous events).
2. Distribute entry forms to pools and swim shops and continue until the event takes place.
3. Post entry form on the Internet.

3 MONTHS PRIOR:

1. Begin processing entry forms as they are received, resolving problems when possible.
2. Contact newspapers, etc. for publicity.
3. Meet with "key" personnel to firm up plans.
4. Order swim caps, t-shirts, and awards.

2 MONTHS PRIOR:

1. Reserve tables, chairs, etc.
2. Begin recruiting other volunteers.
3. Order Bar Codes or other official equipment.

2 MONTHS PRIOR (continued):

4. Re-contact emergency personnel to firm up involvement.
5. Purchase equipment and supplies as needed.

1 MONTH PRIOR:

1. Finalize list of volunteers.
2. Pick up swim caps, t-shirts, and awards.
3. Distribute job descriptions and information to event personnel.

1-2 WEEKS PRIOR:

1. Meet with volunteers for training.
2. Finalize plans with local authorities.
3. Prepare packets for competitors (if used).
4. Arrange for course "set up" (which should be done either the morning of or the night before the race).
5. Pick up tables, chairs, clipboards, and other necessary equipment.
6. Prepare reports and worksheets for check-in and results accounting.

RACE DAY:

1. Set up all equipment on-land and in-water.
2. Training and final check-out of personnel.
3. Swimmer check-in.
4. Run the race.
5. Compile and post official results.
6. Post-race social and presentation of awards.
7. Clean up race site.

1-2 WEEKS POST:

1. Produce official results and mail to participants & USMS officials, if necessary.
3. Post results on the Internet.
4. Order extra t-shirts.
5. Prepare financial report.
6. Post-race evaluation.
7. Thank you notes to race workers.

APPENDIX C: FINANCIAL REPORT FORM

EVENT: _____ DATE: _____

REVENUE:

individual pre-entries _____ x \$ _____ entry fee = _____

individual late-entries _____ x \$ _____ entry fee = _____

individual entries _____ x \$ _____ surcharge = _____

Subtotal individual fees _____

relay pre-entries _____ x \$ _____ entry fee = _____

relay late-entries _____ x \$ _____ entry fee = _____

Subtotal relay fees _____

Subtotal all fees _____

OTHER REVENUE:

Food Concession _____

T-shirts _____

Donations _____

Other _____

Subtotal other revenue _____

TOTAL REVENUE _____

EXPENSES:

Local Sanction Fees _____

USMS National Surcharge (championships only) (due after event) _____

Printing/copying _____

Postage _____

Phone _____

T-shirts _____

Advertising _____

Awards (place) _____

Awards (participation) _____

Hospitality _____

Facility _____

Computer _____

Timing _____

Miscellaneous Supplies _____

Personnel _____

Other _____

TOTAL EXPENSES _____

PROFIT (LOSS) _____

APPENDIX D: SAMPLE ENTRY FORMS

All the entry forms for the Long Distance Championship Events are available at www.usms.org/longdist