

Open Water Chairs Peer to Peer Teleconference - Notes

Thursday, May 2, 2017

The items posted in this section are notes from conversations that are not reviewed or approved by the attendees. The information in these notes is not intended to override guidelines, policies and procedures listed elsewhere in the LMSC Guide to Operations or elsewhere on usms.org or in the USMS rule book.

Facilitators: Jerry Clark, LMSC Development and Bill Roach, USMS Open Water Compliance Coordinator

Attendees: Sherry Brooks - SP, Bill Roach – IN, Wayne Huebner – IA, Bob Kolonkowski – MR, Jerry Clark – NC, Bob Bruce – OR, Skip Thompson – MI, James Biles - WI, Bob Singer - AD, Will Reeves – UT, Donn Livoni – MT, Jeanne Ensign – MT, Mary Pohlman – OZ, Chris McGiffin – NJ, Ed Salzman – GA, Aaron Norton – UT, Kate Stevenson – VA, Paige Buehler – IW, Helen Naylor - SE

Jerry introduced Bill Roach, the USMS Open Water Compliance Coordinator, who swims in the Indiana LMSC and is a NASTI swimmer. Bill has been a certified US Water Ski Safety Director for more than 60 tournaments, one National and a World Championship. After 30 years, he is a retired swim coach and aquatic's director. The NASTI's has hosted 5 USMS National Open Water Championships and he has served as Safety Director for all of them. In 2011, Bill attended the National Open Water Safety Conference in San Francisco. His first USMS National Convention was in 2012 where he volunteered to be on the USMS Open Water Committee. In early 2013 he was appointed the USMS Compliance Coordinator for open water swimming.

Bill was determined to unite all USMS open water Safety Directors with a certification program. As Compliance Coordinator, he immediately saw the need to simplify the safety plans, yet meet all the insurance and USMS requirements and recommendations. Because of the Open Water and Long Distance committees spending hours of discussion, writing, debate and re-writing, those objectives have been met.

2017 Sanctioning your open water event made easy:

- Current (7/1/2014) liability waiver
- Open water safety application plan from usms.org (It's short but comprehensive--only 7 pages long and includes cold and warm water thermal plans)
- Course map – No tech needed. Freehand drawing on white paper will suffice.
- Safety Director must be certified by the day if the event (but not necessarily at the time the sanction is issued). Certification consists of reviewing a 56-slide PowerPoint presentation and

completion of a comprehension test. Over 40 safety directors have been certified. USMS is the first national governing body in swimming to certify safety directors.

Bill would like to entertain questions but not debate rules (if you would like to comment on the rules, then please reach out to either rules, long distance, or legislation committees as appropriate.)

Is there a list of certified OW safety directors available? It's not posted, but Bill can send a list to those looking for a certified person to help organize and run an event. Better yet, persuade one or more people from your organization to become certified.

How to get started on an open water event? Start at the Guide to Operations under the "For Volunteers" section of the USMS website, then scroll down to the Open Water section.

How many open water swims are held each year? 58-60 in the past four years. The application process is simpler, the cost is much lower than in previous years (\$100 + \$5 per participant, rather than \$1000 between 2013-2016).

What kind of swimmer and participant accountability does each event have in place in the event of an aborted event? This was a question that safety plans must address.

Prior to each event, Bill emails each event's safety director to ask if they have the approved safety checklist and the incident report form.

Chris M and Bill emphasized that our fees are back to being very competitive and we have the structure for ensuring safe events. We look to the LMSCs to help broadcast that message and to help with costs, especially on new events. Jerry suggested putting a blurb in the Streamlines or especially SWIMMER magazine. Bill indicated the coaches are quite influential both in taking swimmers to events (which could include open water as well as pool events) and in creating events for their swimmers.

Bill sent an email to all sanctions chairs and LMSC chairs explaining the simplified process and the lowered fees. Jeanne suggested that it is time to repeat that email and Bill indicated that he would plan to do that.

What kind of support can a club or LMSC expect from the national long distance committee or national office for an open water event? Donn Livoni (Long Distance Cmte Chair) said that all national championship events have LD liaisons at the event and for prior activities (sanctioning, safety, logistics). National Office helps with marketing in publications and with registration as well as with medals, swag, caps, etc. For non-national championship events, LMSCs are looked to provide the sanctioning and safety oversight. They get Bill's support in helping with questions and resources to help grow the sport of open water swimming.

301.4 is a new rule regarding the age determining date for all open water swims: it is your age on Dec. 31 of that year, except for 18 year olds who must be 18 on the day that they swim.

Bill suggested that—ideally--there be several open water certified safety directors within an LMSC and that clubs should look to having ow clinics, practices, and events.

Should there be a hierarchy of safety directors within an LMSC? Bob Bruce answered that having backups is always good. Each event must have a designated safety director, or perhaps each day of an event has a different person. A hierarchy of safety directors, with a chief director with assistants, is fine.

Jerry thanked everyone for attending!