

OPEN WATER SWIMMING

WPA/SSA SANCTIONING



OF OWS EVENTS MANUAL



WESTERN PROVINCE AQUATICS

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PREFACE

This Manual is intended to assist the management committee of the Local Organising Committee (LOC) in the successful staging of Open Water Swimming events in the Western Cape.

Every open water swimming event will have specific requirements depending upon the venue, type of water, start and finish points and safety considerations. While covering these points in general terms each LOC should appoint local specialists to interpret the guidelines to fit their specific needs.

Open water swimming competition is becoming increasingly popular. Whether it is a 1500 metre lake swim or a 25 kilometre ocean swim, a carnival-like atmosphere usually prevails, despite the arduous demands placed on the swimmers. Conquering the kilometres of open water is a quite a feat.

Until recently only a hardy few braved these events. These circuit regulars are well versed in the special challenges of open water competition, having trained for their races the way a distance runner prepares for a marathon

The increasing popularity of triathlons and the addition of long distance events to the FINA World Championships and Olympics, have even more athletes 'flying off into the wild blue aquatic yonder'. Most of these uninitiated swimmers have little idea of what they are getting themselves into and the hazards and potential for trouble or tragedy have multiplied.

The need for efficiently organised safe swims has become imperative

1. ORGANISING AN OPEN WATER COMPETITION

- 1.1 Plan a safe, well-marked, patrolled open water swimming course.
- 1.2 The established Start and Finish areas should be highly visible from both land and water.
- 1.3 Consult with all local authorities concerning permits and authorisation for the conduct of the event in the specific location, on the date and for specific hours. This should include not only in-and-on-the-water details, but vehicle parking, traffic control, other logistics, and emergency action.
- 1.4 Notify and consult land emergency organisations (ambulance, hospital, fire department, SAPS etc.) concerning the event and obtain emergency numbers. Stand-by emergency units must be at the event. A competition doctor shall always be available throughout the race.
- 1.5 Understand symptoms of hyperthermia, heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Be prepared to treat these and other conditions.
- 1.6 Include a communications network with two-way radios, an effective Public Address system and an Announcer who can give instructions, emergency announcements and race details to the spectators.
- 1.7 The admin/records office to utilise Meet Manager to record entries, registrations and results. Computer and printer to be available and photocopier if required, depending on the number of entries.
- 1.8 A location chart and course map detailing distance to be swum and depth, for entrants and escorts to study, must be set up at the race location. This should also be available with the meet information packet, where appropriate.
- 1.9 Entries can be taken on the day, within arranged time frame. However, pre-entries are to be encouraged, as you can not adequately plan if you do not know the number of swimmers who will start.
- 1.10 Conduct a meeting 30 minutes prior to the start of the race. Mandatory attendance is required of all coaches, swimmers and escort personnel. A refresher meeting should be held immediately prior to the-race.
- 1.11 At the meeting:
 - 1.11.1 Describe the course, water temperature (min 16 degrees C – to be checked 2 hours before the start , in the middle of the course at 40cm below surface in the presence of the referee and a coach), surface condition and bottom conditions. Pinpoint hazards and currents in detail. This to be displayed on a notice board.
 - 1.11.2 Establish an accurate head count of swimmers and verify it at the starting line and at the finish line.
 - 1.11.3 Instruct swimmers and escorts of the system to be used to notify Race Officials that a swimmer has withdrawn from the race.
 - 1.11.4 Instruct swimmers on the event rules, including starting and finishing requirements.
 - 1.11.5 Be prepared to answer any questions and brief swimmers on any special safety matters that may include:
 - 1.11.5.1 Requirement to wear a brightly coloured cap
 - 1.11.5.2 Location or restriction on use of escort's boats
 - 1.11.5.3 Registration and numbering procedures
- 1.12 Provide qualified water rescue, safety personnel and any additional medical support personnel.
- 1.13 Arrange for a co-operative effort between water rescue, safety personnel and paddlers, who will be patrolling the open water swimming course. The attendance of qualified lifeguards, divers, skippers and safety personnel must participate in monitoring the swim.
- 1.14 Establish a cut off time, where swimmers are deemed "not to have finished" and may be removed from the water if they fail to finish within the established limits. For all Western Province (WPA)/Swimming South Africa (SSA) sanctioned events, the rule requires that all swimmers not finishing within forty five minutes of the winner may be withdrawn from the water.
- 1.15 On longer swims and in cold water swims, where hypothermia is a problem, in-water finishes are essential. Requiring a person to run up a beach could be disastrous. It is for this reason that all WPA 500m, 1km, 5km and 10km events will have in water starts and finishes.
- 1.16 There are conditions that arise and special considerations that may warrant cancellation of a race by the meet management. If inclement weather, fog, lightning, heavy winds, tides/currents, unfriendly sea creatures or any other conditions adversely affect the safety of the swimmers, the race should be cancelled. If the race is in progress, Race Officials should have a plan to remove all the swimmers from the water. There are sometimes conditions that place the escort and not the swimmer in danger. If the escort is in danger, so is the swimmer and they should be stopped.
- 1.17 The Meet Management must protect individual swimmers and it must have authority to remove any swimmer from an unsafe situation. In addition to being disqualified for violations of

technical rules (i.e. the impediment rule, unsportsmanlike conduct, or not meeting the time limit), the swimmer can be disqualified for violation of a safety rule such as swimmer or support crew drinking alcohol or improperly placing a boat to cut off another swimmer.

- 1.18 As unpopular as a decision to cancel or disqualify may be, the Race Organisers' and Officials' primary concern is for safety, and they need to be prepared to take prompt decisive action.
- 1.19 Because of the numerous safety-related items at the meet, it is essential that a Meet Safety Officer is appointed.

2. ORGANISATION OF WPA/SSA SANCTIONED EVENTS

- 2.1 Bids to stage a WPA/SSA sanctioned open water swimming event must be submitted to the WPA Swim Board at the beginning of each season, which commences 1st May each year. Swim Board will then submit applications to the WPA Executive for ratification.
- 2.1.1 Before bids are made, the would-be host Affiliate or Event Organiser shall clearly establish the following points:
 - 2.1.1.1 A suitable course is available to FINA requirements.
 - 2.1.1.2 All safety requirements can be met.
 - 2.1.1.3 Displayed water purity and temperature limits which shall not be exceeded.
 - 2.1.1.4 Sufficient funding can be provided to cover all organisational requirements.
- 2.1.2 In order to allow WPA/SSA to make fair appraisal of a bid, submitting Affiliates and or Event Organisers should ensure that the fullest details are given of the course, organising committee, funding and media coverage.
- 2.1.3 Upon being awarded a WPA/SSA SANCTIONED open water swimming event, the COORDINATOR OPEN WATER SWIMMING shall notify all member Affiliates of WPA/SSA of details of the date, venue and course. Course details shall include type of water (salt or fresh), temperature range, tidal/current parameters, type of escort craft, and details of all events taking place.
- 2.1.4 Application to host a WPA/SSA SANCTIONED open water swimming event will only be accepted from a member Affiliate of WPA/SSA. Applications from non-affiliated organisations will not be accepted.
- 2.1.5 The Host Affiliate and/or Event Organiser shall appoint a liaison officer to work with, and keep informed, WPA, the Swim Board and the WPA Coordinator Open Water Swimming

2.2 THE ORGANISING COMMITTEE

The Organising Committee appointed by the Host Affiliate and or the Event Organiser shall be responsible for providing the items or facilities given below, and for checking, correcting and/or maintaining the various requirements before and throughout the competition. The details given in the FINA Handbook concerning Open Water Swimming should be carefully consulted well in advance.

2.3 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE WPA/SSA COORDINATORS OPEN WATER SWIMMING

- 2.3.1 Co-ordinate with the Host Affiliate and or the Event Organiser on all details (numbers) for the conduct of the long distance swimming competitions in the WPA/SSA SANCTIONED open water swimming events.
- 2.3.2 Conduct a final inspection of facilities prior to the start of competitions, including any automatic timing equipment to be used.
- 2.3.3 Conduct meetings for the briefings of Delegates and Team Managers of participating members two days before the start of the competition (*SSA National events only*).
- 2.3.4 Conduct briefings for Technical Meet Officials who will participate in the control of the competition.
- 2.3.5 Prepare a report to the WPA Executive, for submission to SSA.

2.4 THE SSA TOWSC (Technical Open Water Swimming Committee) DUTIES

For the Telkom South African National Aquatic Championships, the South African Long Distance Swimming Championships and other SSA Open Water Swimming events, the allocation of tasks for the TOWSC will require the participation of all members of the Committee in the preparation and conduct of the competition.

In particular:

- 2.4.1 **ENTRIES** To review all applications and start lists.
- 2.4.2 **OFFICIALS** To check all officials are accounted for. Nature of event/entries and nature of facility will dictate the minimum number of officials and safety officers
- 2.4.3 **PROTOCOL** To assist and ensure proper protocol is observed.
- 2.4.4 **MEDIA** To assist the Affiliate officer appointed on matters related to SSA and FINA
- 2.4.5 **RESULTS** To review and approve the ratified results list.
- 2.4.6 **MEDICAL** To receive the report of the medical officer on pre-event medicals and to review the drug testing arrangements and actuation.
- 2.4.7 **SAFETY** To ensure that all safety precautions are in place for the event. Clearly defined evacuation points in case of emergency
- 2.4.8 **COMPETITION** To supervise all other arrangements.

2.5 THE COURSE

- 2.5.1 Certification of the length and depth of the course, and suitability of the water must be provided to the Coordinator Open Water Swimming and the Event Safety Officer, and published on notice boards at registration and briefing points. Referee to participate in course survey.
- 2.5.2 Course identification. The course is to be clearly marked (and must comply with FINA) with distance markers, where practical, every 1km along the course and all alterations/turns to be clearly marked and manned by a Turn Judge. A chart clearly showing the course and any/all turns is to be provided for all swimmers and each Race Judge. A distinctive marker is to be placed to indicate, at both start and finish areas, the point at which escorts boats may join or must leave their swimmers.
- 2.5.3 The following are to be provided in addition to those given for the Start and Finish Areas:
 - 2.5.3.1 A suitable boat for the Race Referee to be used and directed entirely at the Referee's discretion.
 - 2.5.3.2 Transport to take all Turn Judges to their allocated positions and to retrieve them immediately after the last swimmer has passed or upon the Referee declaring the competitions closed.
 - 2.5.3.3 A suitable safety boat to allow VIP's to view the competition, if required. (provided it is under control of the referee).
 - 2.5.3.4 Safety boats as required, having regard to the course. (Sufficient to be made available)
 - 2.5.3.5 A suitable pilot craft that will maintain a position approximately 100 metres ahead of the leading swimmer.
 - 2.5.3.6 Landing points along the course at which withdrawn swimmers can be landed must be reported.
 - 2.5.3.7 Points along the course at which patients can receive immediate treatment.
 - 2.5.3.8 Spare escort boats able to substitute should one in service become inoperable
 - 2.5.3.9 A supply boat able to provide food and refreshments to all boat occupants throughout the race.
- 2.5.4 The start line marking apparatus to be secure, safe and in proper working order.
- 2.5.5 If an operational system is used, it must be installed and maintained as approved by the WPA/SSA Coordinator Open Water Swimming/Referee, including:
 - 2.5.5.1 Automatic timing system, using touchpad at finish and video facilities.
 - 2.5.5.2 Audio-Visual System for Starter.
 - 2.5.5.3 Public Address System.
 - 2.6.5.4 Provision of back-up hand timing equipment.
- 2.5.6 The finishing point to be checked as securely fixed, safe and in proper working order.
- 2.5.7 Turn Judges positions to be checked as in place and secure.
- 2.5.8 Turn or alteration points to be clearly marked
- 2.5.9 Necessary chairs, weatherproof clothing and recording books to be issued to all appropriate Officials.
- 2.5.10 Suitable containers for swimmers' equipment, their safe storage and transportation to the finish point to be arranged.
- 2.5.11 Equipment to be distributed to all safety craft and personnel including spare toweling material and blankets / space blankets.

2.6 PRE-RACE FACILITIES

- 2.6.1 The following facilities are to be provided prior to the race day:
 - 2.6.1.1 Medical inspection room
 - 2.6.1.2 Briefing meeting place/area

- 2.6.1.3 Officials briefing place/area
- 2.6.1.4 Course inspection by Swimmers, Team Officials and Race Officials.

2.7 START AREA

- 2.7.1 The following facilities to be provided in the start area:
 - 2.7.1.1 Changing rooms for Swimmers and their representatives
 - 2.7.1.2 Changing rooms for Officials.
 - 2.7.1.3 Room or covered/wind proof area for greasing/awaiting start.
 - 2.7.1.4 Receptacles for waste material.
 - 2.7.1.5 Medical treatment facilities
 - 2.7.1.6 Seating
 - 2.7.1.7 Suitable containers for swimmers equipment which is not going on a boat.
 - 2.7.1.8 Secure stowage and transportation of items in 2.7.1.7 above.
 - 2.7.1.9 Toilet facilities and clean drinking water
 - 2.7.1.10 Facilities for providing hot water for flasks
 - 2.7.1.11 Waterproof marking pens for marking swimmers with their numbers
 - 2.7.1.12 A suitable area for warm up – away from course
 - 2.7.1.13 Area for final all Race Officials briefing
 - 2.7.1.14 Area for all Boat Crews briefing
 - 2.7.1.15 Suitable crowd control personnel and equipment to keep the water entry point clear.
 - 2.7.1.16 Spectator accommodation with clear view of start.
 - 2.7.1.17 VIP seating with clear view of start, if required.
 - 2.7.1.18 Flagstaff for required flags
 - 2.7.1.19 Display of Affiliate flags for all Affiliates competing.
 - 2.7.1.20 Public Address System, and (if available) Timing Display Equipment
 - 2.7.1.21 Refreshment room for VIP's/Officials
 - 2.7.1.22 Officials replenishments.

2.8 FINISH AREA

- 2.8.1 The following facilities are to be provided in the vicinity of the finish point
 - 2.8.1.1 A dias for honouring Swimmers.
 - 2.8.1.2 Affiliate flags of all Affiliates competing.
 - 2.8.1.3 Flagstaff for various flags
 - 2.8.1.4 Sufficient crowd control personnel and equipment.
 - 2.8.1.5 Medical treatment area.
 - 2.8.1.6 Media interview area.
 - 2.8.1.7 Drug testing rooms, when required.
 - 2.8.1.8 Seating arrangements for VIP's and officials.
 - 2.8.1.9 Information board giving current race data.
 - 2.8.1.10 Facilities for spectators giving clear view of finish.
 - 2.8.1.11 Landing facilities for personal equipment.
 - 2.8.1.12 Provision for swimmers' equipment that had been left in start area.
 - 2.8.1.13 Showers and changing facilities.
 - 2.8.1.14 Public Address system and (if available) Timing Display Equipment.
 - 2.8.1.15 Supply of drinks and refreshments for Swimmers, Coaches, Boat Crews, Race Admin Officials. SAPS Diving Unit, Lifeguards
 - 2.8.1.16 Provision of refreshments for officials and VIP's on site.
 - 2.8.1.17 Results publication facilities.
 - 2.8.1.18 Transport to take swimmers back to accommodation.

2.9 COMMUNICATIONS: GENERAL AND SPECIFIC

- 2.9.1 All Swimmers and Officials are to be given accurate information in verbal and written form clearly indicating any tidal/current flows as well as any deep points that will in any way affect the course during the events. In tidal waters the time of tide change and rate of water movement are to be given.
- 2.9.2 The pick-up point when escort boats can get alongside their Swimmers clear of the congested start area is to be clearly marked as should be the designated point at the finish, at which boats must leave the Swimmer. The referee must be informed or give his/her approval.
- 2.9.3 The public address system is to give a time check as authorised by the Chief Timekeeper prior to the start to allow all Officials and spectators or interested persons to synchronise their watches.
- 2.9.4 A communications plan is to be established, including use of 2-way radios. The "Primary" net

shall include the Referees, the Safety Officer, and the Medical Officer plus a member of the Management Committee at the finish area. This net is to be used for the communications of urgent information only.

- 2.9.5 The "Secondary Working" net is to include Safety Personnel and secondary Race Officials and is to be used as the main linking system between all areas of the event and back-up facilities.
- 2.9.6 The "Secondary Working" net can be used for passing up to date positions to the Announcer and Information Board Operator at the finish point. All communications are to be conducted in English and the national or designated language of the Host Affiliate.
- 2.9.7 All those concerned with the event are to be provided with detailed maps which clearly show the accommodation, briefing, medical inspection, start, finish and presentation venues together with an appropriate timetable.
- 2.9.8 Full press facilities are to be provided including access to telephone, fax and other such means of communications as are necessary (Championship and SSA Nationals only).
- 2.9.9 Visual media requirements should be provided to enable film or television teams to have access to all stages as appropriate, if required.
- 2.9.10 Printing facilities shall be provided to enable a rapid results list to be produced immediately after the event is declared closed. The ratified results list must be published and displayed prior to the presentation ceremony.
- 2.9.11 All communication must be checked for effectiveness to ensure both referees and all safety/medical officers are constantly informed of all matters.

3. SAFETY CRITERIA FOR WPA/SSA SANCTIONED EVENTS

Water safety and medical backup will and must always be the number one priority at any open water event

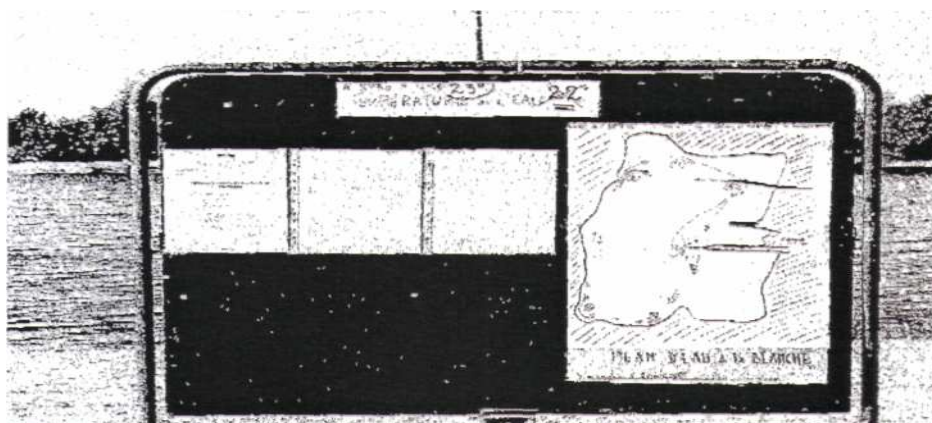
All WPA/SSA SANCTIONED open water swimming events will have a SAFETY OFFICER and a MEDICAL OFFICER nominated by the event organizing committee - to be approved by WPA.

The SAFETY OFFICER will ensure that the relevant chapter of SA LIFESAVING is present to oversee the safety of all participants. All lifeguards on duty will be in possession of a FPA - Fresh Water Proficiency award or a SPA - Surfers Proficiency Award.

The following guidelines should be used for each event :

- Minimum number of patrollers with rescue boards on the water at any one time = 15
- Patrollers in rest / reserve on shore - 5 (minimum)
- 1RB with skipper and one crewman on the water at any one time, with 2-way radio = 2
- Base support (Tent, gazebo's, ablutions) needs to be at the control point.
- Close co-operation with a diving unit (SAPS)

The MEDICAL OFFICER will ensure that a qualified medical practitioner along with a recognised medical back-up service, is available. The medical back-up service should include paramedics and an ambulance which should be positioned on site at least 30 minutes prior to the first event commencing. This unit will only be permitted to depart once the last competitor from the final event has left the water. A clearly demarcated area, with rapid exit, must be made available.



The water purification certificate from a recognised Laboratory and a detailed map of the course must be displayed throughout the duration of the event. Example = as above.

3.1 MEDICAL ISSUES

The following is derived from Australian Open Water Swimming - Medical Notes by Dr Paul Mark.

Nutrition and fluid Balance:

Competing in open water swimming events is a major physical effort, for which all competitors should have adequately trained. Swimmers can expect to be in the water for 2 - 4 hours for an up to 8km event and up to 6 - 8 hours for a 25km event. It is therefore important to recognize that the body has a finite reserve of carbohydrate and liquid and that the frequent intake of nutritional substances is essential.

It is not appropriate for swimmers to wait until they feel their energy levels decreasing before stopping for nutrition. Rather, swimmers should aim to complete the event with "half a tank full" of energy. This will require frequent stops over the longer events of 25km events even though they may feel their energy reserves are adequate.

It is recommended that approximately 200 - 400mls of a balanced carbohydrate/electrolyte solution is ingested every half hour. This will also help in reducing cramps that are due to electrolyte depletion. Suitable products include USK Vooma, Energade, Maxim and Poweraid. Solid food may also be ingested but it will be difficult to chew with a fast heart rate. Chopped up banana, peach or fruit salad are recommended. Ingested substances should not be icy cold.

It is important to limit the duration of each break to less than 30 second in order to reduce the risks of hypothermia (getting too cold) and muscle stiffness

Hypothermia (Lowered Body Temperature):

Prevention of hypothermia is essential. Wool fat (anhydrous lanolin) should be applied and will also help to lubricate the skin, especially around the neck, groin and armpit. Double bathing caps should be worn because a large amount of body heat is lost through the head. As body temperature is reduced, the blood vessels in the skin constrict and a disproportionately larger amount of heat is lost through the head and neck rather than through the rest of the body.

Nutrition stops should be brief because exercise increases the amount of blood flow through the skin, thereby increasing heat loss. Whilst active exertion is taking place, this is balanced by the increased muscle activity but when the swimmer stops, the increased flow through the skin results in further heat loss whilst muscular heat production is reduced. Prolonged stops are an easy formula for the development of hypothermia.

Swimmers who begin to feel cold should ingest more food by taking more stops of short duration. Food increases the body temperature because heat is produced by digestion and because the muscles require high levels of nutritional substances for maximum efficiency including heat production.

Escort crews should always be on the look out for the development of hypothermia in their swimmers. Early symptoms consist of uncoordinated swimming movements and continual veering off course. When the swimmer stops, their mental processes may be dulled and they may appear vague. If a swimmer is unable to raise his/her arms above the head, obey other commands or to answer questions appropriately, then he/she should be retrieved from the water.

Hypothermia casualties should be handled gently. They should be dried thoroughly and wrapped on all sides with thick blankets. Towels etc. may be wrapped around the scalp and the sides of the neck. They should be protected from the wind either with windproof jackets or large green garbage bags. Food and fluids should be encouraged frequently in small amounts but alcohol is not advised.

The Medical Officer for the event should see the patient retrieved from the water, on account of hypothermia.

3.1.1 Exhaustion:

Exhaustion occurs because of lack of energy from inadequate nutritional intake and from the effects of hypothermia, its recognition and management are similar to hypothermia.

3.1.2 Pain:

Approximately 1 Km into a swim, many swimmers develop pain, especially in the shoulders. They may become abusive but can obey commands and answer questions. Support crews will require considerable tolerance in this situation but should encourage their swimmers to continue.

3.1.3 Sunburn:

This is a real risk despite the water. As a minimum, IC1 Sports Blackout 15+ should be applied 15 minutes prior to wool fat. It is important to include the area behind the ears, the back, the back of the legs and the bottom of the feet. Fair skinned persons should reapply sun block every two hours to any area of their body not covered by wool fat.

3.1.4 Jellyfish stings:

These could be a problem for those people susceptible to stings. Wool fat will help to prevent them but Vaseline is far less effective because it melts off. The main problem with jellyfish stings is pain, although if there are multiple contacts, the pain may be severe and systematic symptoms such as nausea and vomiting may develop.

Pain is often soothed by the coolness of the water. Persistent severe pain should be reported to the Medical Officers.

3.1.5 Swallowed saltwater:

Salt water is approximately 3% sodium chloride that is three times more concentrated than the body's internal fluids. Ingestion often results in vomiting. Treatment includes reassurance in the first instance, but persistent vomiting may require withdrawal

3.1.6 Trauma:

Shark attack is unlikely. A significant risk however exists from escort boat propellers and extreme care must be taken when maneuvering near swimmers. It is therefore highly recommended that all 1KB units that are used in the vicinity of swimmers be equipped with a "prop guard", a stainless steel unit that fits over the exposed propeller.

4. WPA/SSA SANCTIONED EVENTS - OFFICIALS - EXPLANATORY NOTES

The following is intended to give guidance to Event Officials on the interpretation and manner of execution of the Event Rules.

4.1 The Head (Water) Referee

The Head (Water) Referee shall:

- 4.1.1 have full control and authority over all officials and shall approve their assignments and instruct them regarding all special features or regulation related to the competition. He shall enforce all Rules and decisions of FINA and shall decide all questions relating to the actual conduct of the meet, the event or competition, the final settlement of which is not otherwise covered by these Rules (OWS 3.1)
- 4.1.2 have authority to intervene in the competition at any stage to ensure that FINA Rules are observed (OWS 3.2)

- 4.1.3 adjudicate on all protests related to the competition in progress (OWS 3.3)
- 4.1.4 give a decision in cases where the Judges' decision and times recorded do not agree (OWS 3.4)
- 4.1.5 signal to swimmers, by raised flag and short blasts on a whistle, that the start is imminent and when satisfied indicate by pointing the flag at the Starter that the competition may commence (OWS 3.5).
- 4.1.6 disqualify any swimmer for any violation of the Rules that he personally observes or which is reported to him by other Authorised Officials (OWS 3. 6)
- 4.1.7 insure that the course is completely clear of all bodies before declaring closing of the event and must concur with Assistant (Ground)Referee.

4.2 The Assistant (Ground) Referee

The Assistant (Ground) Referee shall:

- 4.2.1 ensure that all necessary officials for the conduct of the event or competition are at their respective posts He may, in concurrence with the Head (Water) Referee, appoint substitutes for any who are absent, incapable of acting or found to be inefficient. He may appoint additional Officials if considered necessary (OWS 3.7)
- 4.2.2 receive all reports prior to the start of the race from the Clerk of the Course, Course Officer and Safety Officer and inform the Head (water) Referee of their contents 15 minutes before the scheduled start of the race (OWS 3.8).
- 4.2.3 conduct the draw for Race Judges and allocate them to their respective boats (OWS 3.9).
- 4.2.4 remain accountable for the numbers of all bodies in and out of water and advise water Referee accordingly.

4.3 The Starter

The Starter shall:

- 4.3.1 be stationed in such a position as to be clearly visible to all swimmers (OWS 3-10)
- 4.3.2 on signal from the Assistant (ground) Referee, the Head (water) Referee raises the flag as signal for the starter to commence.
- 4.3.3 simultaneously bring the flag holding arm down, with arm kept straight, and activate an audible signal (OWS 3.12)

In addition he shall:

- 4.3.4 have escort boats assume their positions prior to the start and verify that each swimmer has an appropriate escort, if necessary.
- 4.3.4 explain start and false start procedure
- 4.3.5 line up swimmers at the starting line.
- 4.3.6 start the race (OWS 3.12).

4.4 Clerk Of the Course

The Clerk of the Course shall:

- 4.4.1.1 assemble and prepare swimmers prior to each competition and ensure proper reception facilities at the finish area are available for all swimmers (OWS 3.46).
- 4.4.2 ensure each swimmer is identified correctly with their race number (OWS 3.47).
- 4.4.3 be certain all swimmers are present, in the assembly area, at the required time prior to the start (OWS 3.48).
- 4.4.4 keep swimmers and Officials informed of the time remaining before the start at suitable intervals until the last 5 minutes, during which one minute warnings shall be given (OWS 3.49).
- 4.4.5 be responsible for ensuring that all clothing and equipment left in the start area is transported to the finish area and kept in safekeeping (OWS 3.50)
- 4.4.6 ensure that all swimmers leaving the water at the finish have the basic equipment required for their well being, should their own attendants not be present at the time (OWS 3.51).
- 4.4.7 Also the Clerk of the Course shall ensure that swimmers are properly identified by number. The numbers assigned will be selected automatically by the computer, upon entry (the number allocated to swimmers, will also indicate the number of the escort craft for long distance events)
- 4.4.8 It is the responsibility of the Clerk of the Course to ensure that all swimmers and their representatives are kept fully informed of the approach of the start signal and in that

capacity to ensure that the swimmer's representative is made aware of the exact location of the escort boat in which they will travel plus the arrangements for getting into that boat immediately prior to the start. The Clerk of the Course is to ensure that all swimmers are taken from their preparation area into the start area at the appropriate time and that clearly marked containers are available for any equipment not going on the boat, which after the start will be transported and stored at the finish area.

4.4.9 Keep announcer informed of swimmers' achievements throughout event.

4.5 The Chief Timekeeper

The Chief Timekeeper shall:

- 4.5.1 assign at least 3 Timekeepers to their positions for the start and finish (OWS 3.13)
- 4.5.2 ensure that a time check is made to allow all persons to synchronise their watches with the official running clocks 15 minutes before start time(OWS3.14)
- 4.5.3 collect from each Timekeeper a card showing the time recorded for each swimmer, and if necessary, inspect their watches (OWS 315).
- 4.5.4 record or examine the official time on the card of each swimmer (OWS 3.16)

4.6 The Timekeepers

The Timekeepers shall:

- 4.6.1 take the time of each swimmer assigned. The watches shall be certified correct to the satisfaction of the Management Committee (OWS 3.17).
- 4.6.2 start their watches at the starting signal, and only stop their watches when instructed by the Chief Timekeeper (OWS 3.18).
- 4.6.3 promptly after each finish record the time and swimmers' number on the time card and turn it over to the Chief Timekeeper (OWS 3.19).

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

4.7 The Chief Judge

The Chief Judge shall:

- 4.7.1 assign each Judge to a position (OWS 3.20).
- 4.7.2 collect after the race, signed results sheets from each Judge and establish the results and placings, which shall be sent directly to the Referee (OWS 3.21)

4.8 The Finish Judges

The Finish Judges (three, one of them shall be the Chief Judge) shall;

- 4.8.1 be positioned in line with the finish where they shall at all times have a clear view of the finish (OWS 3.22).
- 4.8.2 record after each finish the placing of the swimmers according-to the assignment given (OWS 3.23).

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

4.9 The Race Judges

4.9.1 The Referee will brief the Race Judges on their assignments. The instructions will cover, but not be limited to the following:

- 4.9.1.1 Rules and their interpretation
- 4.9.1.2 Course
- 4.9.1.3 Safety
- 4.9.1.4 Protocol
- 4.9.1.5 Special instructions

Each Race Judge shall:

- 4.9.2 be positioned in an escort boat, or on land depending on the nature of the course, assigned by

random draw immediately prior to the start, so as to be able to observe swimmers at all times (OWS 3.24).

- 4.9.3 ensure at all times that the Rules of the competition are complied with, violations being recorded in writing and reported to the Referee at the earliest opportunity (OWS 3.25).
- 4.9.4 keep a complete record of the swimmer, including distance covered per hour, stroke rate, times of feeding and any incidents (OWS 3.26)
- 4.9.5 have the power to order a swimmer from the water upon expiry of a time limit so ordered by the Referee (OWS 3.27).
- 4.9.6 ensure that swimmers do not take unfair advantage or commit impedance on another swimmer and if the situation requires, instruct a swimmer to maintain clearance from any other swimmer or boat (OWS 3.28)
- 4.9.7 The Race Judges will be assigned to an escort craft by draw immediately prior to the launching of the craft. Once assigned the Race Judge shall immediately load and board the designated craft. Alternatively, if on land, the Race Judges will take up post immediately. No contact with the swimmer or swimmer's representative shall take place prior to boarding and/or taking up position.
- 4.9.7 The Race Judge shall report all technical violations to the Chief Judge in the manner prescribed in the pre-race briefing.
- 4.9.8 The Race Judge shall refrain from offering advise in the best routes to follow, but shall ensure (except on ground of safety) that the crew follow such directions as the swimmer's representative may give.
- 4.9.9 The Race Judge shall enforce the "impediment" rule. The rule is intended to eliminate slip streaming /drafting or "impedance". The rule shall not be enforced within the designated start area, finish area or turns in the case of slip streaming but shall apply at all times for cases of impedance. If, in the opinion of the Race Judge, a swimmer is impeding and or slip streaming another swimmer, the Race Judge shall warn the swimmer to immediately achieve a separation. Where one swimmer has to manoeuvre to give the required separation it shall be deemed that the overtaking swimmer is responsible for maintaining the separation until such time as they show they have a clear advantage over the swimmer previously in front. It is then the duty of the "overtaken swimmer" to maintain the required separation. The decision of which swimmer shall give way shall be based on the relative positions of the swimmers and not of their escorted boats. In all cases the Race Judge shall indicate infringement by clearly indicating with hand, palms facing, at shoulder width apart and then move them outwards followed by pointing at the swimmer.
- 4.9.10 The Race Judge shall keep a log on all matters pertaining to the swim. This log shall include violations of rules, time/distance information, stroke rate, times of feeding and any other incidents. This information shall be kept in a clear manner to enable inspection by a Medical Officer should the ability of the swimmer to continue be in any doubt.
- 4.9.11 Race Judges shall, at all times, bear in mind that they are the Referee's representative, their primary role being to uphold the rules of the competition and to ensure that the swimmer and swimmer's Representative are competing within the spirit of the sport.
- 4.9.12 In a small boat, it is important that a cordial relationship is established and maintained and that the swimmers are given every opportunity to swim the course to the best of their ability.
- 4.9.13 At all times from start until the swimmers leave the water, the Race Judge shall be in such a position as to maintain close observation of all swimmers. With the obvious problems that arise in being on a small craft for this space of time, care should be taken to ensure the Race Judge is fully prepared for personal comfort and sustenance.

4.10 The Turn Judges

The Turn Judges shall:

- 4.10.1 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 3.29).
- 4.10.2 Record any infringements of the turn procedures on the record sheets provided and indicate the infringement to the Race Judge at the time of infringement, by blasts on a whistle (OWS 3.30).
- 4.10.3 promptly, upon completion of the event, deliver the signed record sheet to the Chief Judge (OWS 3.31).

4.11 The Safety Officer

The Safety Officer shall:

- 4.11.1 be responsible to the Referees for all aspects of safety related to the conduct of the competition ('OWS 3.32).

- 4.11.2 check that the entire course, with special regard to the start and finish areas, is safe, suitable, and free of any obstruction (OWS 3.33).
- 4.11.2 be responsible for ensuring that sufficient powered safety craft are available during the competition so as to provide full safety backup to the escort boats (OWS 3.34)
- 4. 11.4 7 days prior to the events provide 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 3.35), where applicable.
- 4.11.5 in conjunction with the Medical Officer, advise the Referees 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 (OWS 3.36)

In addition to the Rules, please note the Safety Officer :

- 4.11.6 Co-ordinates with the Course Officer on all aspects of the course. Checks the tidal conditions/rates of water flow and be satisfied that the course is safe for the conduct of the event.
- 4.11.7 Checks with the Course Officer that suitable warnings of the event have been passed to all other craft using, or likely to use, any portion of the course.
- 4.11.8 Briefs swimmers, handlers, and Race Judges and boat crews on all or any potential safety hazards and the action to be taken should any happen.
- 4.11.9 Checks prior to the start, evacuation procedures and sites of Medical Teams/paramedics.
- 4.11.10 15 minutes prior to the start confirms to the Referees that, in their opinion, all safety requirements have been met.
- 4.11.11 Inspect the swimmers' escort craft as being suitable for the purpose intended. Depending upon conditions appertaining to a particular course, the type of boat used will vary. In general terms the following criteria should apply:
 - 4.11.11.1 The boat should be of sufficient size to be able to contain the crew, the Race Judge and in a long distance event, a Swimmer's representative.
 - 4.11.11.2 During any Event over 10km, the swimmers will need to receive refreshment at regular intervals. Therefore it is essential that the Swimmer's Representative can get close enough to transfer the required refreshment without impairment or delay to the swimmer (the swimmer may not hang onto the boat/feeding station).
 - 4.11.11.3 If propulsion of the escort boat is achieved by human effort, it must be remembered that the swimmers will be traveling at up to 4km and if there would be a head wind during the event, staying with the swimmer could be very difficult.
 - 4.11.11.4 When an escort boat with mechanical propulsion is used the following points should be considered:
 - i. Exhaust fumes. Vertical or inboard exhausts present little problem; However, waterline exhausts can cause severe problems for the swimmer.
 - ii. Propeller safety guards are also required.
 - iii. At surface speeds of 3 knots or less, a standard inboard or outboard engine will be liable to "oiling up" and require periods of high revolution bursts to keep the engine clean. These should always be conducted with the engine in neutral.
 - iv. When a large engine is used and there is a problem with staying alongside a swimmer, "Drogues" can be used. One or two buckets attached to secure lines can be streamed behind the boat to give additional drag. Care must be exercised that the lines cannot become tangled in the propellers.
 - v. Toilet arrangements. Consideration should be given to the personal requirements of those persons who may be in the boat for up to eight or nine hours.
- 4.11.12 inflatables should only be used as a last resort due to their inability to keep a constant track in windy conditions and their unsuitability to be rowed at the required pace.
- 4.11.13 canoes/surfboards can be of use as close-in escort in open stretches of rough water but must always be backed up by a suitable larger craft.

4.12 The Course Officer

The Course Officer shall:

- 4.12.1 be responsible to the Management Committee for the correct survey of the course (OWS 341) – which will be verified by the water referee.
- 4.12.2 ensure that start and finish areas are correctly marked and all equipment has been correctly installed, and where applicable, is in working order (OWS 3 42).

- 4.12.3 ensure all course alteration points are correctly marked and manned prior to the commencement of the event (OWS 3.43).
- 4.12.4 with the Referees and Safety Officer, inspect the course and markings prior to the commencement of the competition (OWS 3.44).
- 4.12.5 ensure that Turn Judges are in position prior to the start of the competition and report this to the Assistant (Ground) Referee (OWS 3.45)

Some additional points-

- 4.12.6 Prior to the first briefing meeting that all aspects of the course are such as to conform to the initial safety clearance given at time of application.
- 4.12.7 Ensure prior to the first briefing that no obstructions exist on the course other than those already allowed for.
- 4.12.8 Confer with, and keep fully briefed, the Safety Officer.
- 4.12.9 At the briefing meeting, ensure that large scale maps of the course, clearly showing start, finish and all turns, are available for swimmers representatives, Race Judges, all Officials and the media.
- 4.12.10 Brief all Turn Judges and allocate positions, ensuring sufficient markers and flags are available.
- 4.12.11 Check that sufficient transport is available to ensure that Turn Judges will be on station in time to carry out their duties and that sufficient arrangements have been made to ensure their collection after the last swimmer has passed their post.

4.13 The Medical Officer

The Medical Officer shall:

- 4.13.1 be responsible to the Referee for all medical aspects related to the competition and swimmers (OWS 3.37)
- 4.13.2 inform the local medical facilities of the nature of the competition and ensure that any casualties can be evacuated to medical facilities at the earliest opportunity (OWS 3.38)
- 4.13.3 ensure that a medical inspection of each swimmer has been made prior to the race and report any persons who, in their opinion, are unfit to compete to the Referees and Management Committee. The Referees shall stop any thus reported person from competing in the event (OWS 3.39).
- 4.13.4 in conjunction with the Safety Officer, advise the Referees 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 (OWS 3.40).

In addition to the Rules:

- 4.13.5 The Medical Officer is responsible to the Organizing Committee for the provision of adequate medical safety cover to ensure the well being of all swimmers and provide such facilities as are required under the rules and recommendations of FINA. During the actual event the Medical Officer's primary responsibility is to the Referees and will also act in conjunction with, and liaise with, the Safety Officer.
- 4.13.6 The Medical Officers duties shall include:
 - 4.13.6.1 Checking that the water quality for the designated course is safe and suitable for staging the event and to confirm that there are no other factors (such as shark, crocodile or jellyfish) which would render the venue undesirable.
 - 4.13.6.2 At National championships, provision should be made for final physical examination of all swimmers prior to the day of the event. Any swimmer who is in the opinion of the Medical Officer, medically unfit to take part, shall be reported to the Referees and Organising Committee.
 - 4.13.6.3 To compile such data on the status of the swimmers as may be requested by FINA.
 - 4.13.6.4 Provide for officials, boat crews and swimmers' representatives an explanation of the race medical plan. This plan should include swimmer recovery/casualty evacuation procedures.
 - 4.13.6.5 Provide for Medical, First Aid and Paramedic Teams a detailed explanation of the medical plan together with relevant procedures required for its activation.
 - 4.13.6.6 Ensure that all swimmers, at the time of finishing or in the case of withdraw, at the point of landing are not requiring further medial supervision.
 - 4.13.6.7 Provide advice and assistance regarding suitable intake of refreshment or sustenance to aid recovery from the event.

- 4.13.6.8 Submitting a detailed report on all medical aspects of the event together with any recommendations for the planning and execution of medical plans in future events.
- 4.13.6.9 The Medical Officer shall also provide a Medical Plan.
- 4.13.6.10 The detailed medical plan for any given event will be unique when the vast ranges of variables are taken into consideration, especially the variations in temperatures and climatic conditions.

4.13.7 The medical plan should include but not be limited to the following:

- 4.13.7.1 Sufficient personnel and equipment to execute the plan.
- 4.13.7.2 A Timetable and personnel roster for the pre-race inspection of all swimmers.
- 4.13.7.3 A main medical receiving site at which there should be sufficient medical equipment and trained personnel to ensure the basic medical needs of a swimmer until onward transportation or evacuation can be accomplished.
- 4.13.7.4 Detailed plan for onward evacuation of serious urgent medical cases to prepared designated hospitals or medical centres.
- 4.13.7.5 Sufficient means of communication to establish and maintain contact between the Medical Officer and their Medical Teams.
- 4.13.7.6 Detailed planning for the treatment of either hypothermic or nypathennic symptoms.
- 4.13.7.7 Details of the provisions made to supply the equipment and personnel required to conform to the rules and recommendations regarding the testing of swimmers for banned substances.
- 4.13.7.8 Sufficient land, water and airborne transportation to ensure the rapid movement of any casualties from the water or escort boat to a medical team.

4.14 The Announcer

The Announcer shall:

- 4.14.1 Welcome swimmers and spectators.
- 4.14.2 Introduce them to Open Water Swimming.
- 4.14.3 Introduce Principals, Race Officials, Organisers, Sponsors, Elected Officials, etc..
- 4.14.4 Describe the course, the event, when to start day's other events, conditions.
- 4.14.5 Explain safety measures:
 - 4.14.5.1 head count,
 - 4.14.5.2 paddlers,
 - 4.14.5.3 escorts,
 - 4.14.5.4 lifeguards,
 - 4.14.5.5 doctor,
 - 4.14.5.6 retirement procedures

4.14.6 Announce notables present:

- 4.14.6.1 International Swimmers,
- 4.14.6.2 National Record Holders etc.
- 4.14.6.3 Keep an eye on the finish area and announce accordingly
- 4.14.6.4 Announce results and advise where they are posted.

5. IMPORTANT FINA and WPA/SSA RULES ABOUT START, VENUE, RACE AND TEAM EVENTS

5.1 THE START

(OWS 4.1-4.11)

- 5.1.1 All Open Water competitions shall start with all swimmers standing or treading water in a depth sufficient for them to commence swimming on the start signal.
- 5.1.2 The Clerk of the Course shall keep swimmers and officials informed of the time before start at suitable intervals and at one minute intervals for the last 5 minutes.
- 5.1.3 Swimmers shall assume their start positions as decided by random draw with the lowest number on the left and the highest number on the right.
- 5.1.4 When the numbers of entries dictate it, the start shall be segregated in the Men's and Ladies' competitions. The Men's event shall always start before the Ladies' event.

- 5.1.5 The start line shall be clearly defined by either overhead apparatus or by removable equipment at water level.
- 5.1.6 The Head (water) Referee shall indicate by a flag held upright and short blasts on a whistle, when the start is imminent and indicate that the competition is under Starter's orders by pointing the flag at the starter.
- 5.1.7 The Starter shall be positioned so as to be clearly visible to all swimmers.
- 5.1.8 The start signal shall be both audible and visual.
- 5.1.9 If in the opinion of the Referees, unfair advantage has been gained at the start, the competition shall be stopped and restarted.
- 5.1.10 All escorts boats shall be stationed prior to 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.
- 5.1.11 Although they may start together, in all other respects the men's and ladies' competitions shall be treated as separate events.

5.2 THE VENUE

(OWS 5.1-5.10)

- 5.2.1. WPA/SSA SANCTIONED open water swimming events 500m, 1000m, 1500m, 3km, 5km, 10km or 25km must be conducted at a venue and course approved by WPA/SSA.
- 5.2.2 The course shall be in water that is subject to only minor currents or tide and may be salt or fresh water.
- 5.2.3 The appropriate local health and safety authorities shall issue a certificate of suitability for use of the venue. In general terms the certification must relate to water purity and to physical safety from other considerations.
- 5.2.4 The minimum depth of water at any point on the course shall be 1,4 metres. Should the entire course be such that the swimmer can walk the entire course, additional qualified judges must be approved and placed to ensure full coverage of the entire course. A shallow course where swimmers are able to stand for the bulk of the race distance, must be swept to ensure no obstacle capable of cutting or hurting swimmers is present.
- 5.2.5 The water temperature should be minimum of 16 degrees Celsius. It should be checked the day of the race, 2 hours before the start, in the middle of the course at a depth of 40cm. This control should be done in the presence of a Commission made up of the following persons present:
 - 5.2.5.1 a Referee
 - 5.2.5.2 a member of the Organising Committee;
 - 5.2.5.3 and one coach from the teams designated during the Technical Meeting.
- 5.2.6 All turns/alterations of course shall be clearly indicated.
- 5.2.7 A clearly marked craft or platform, containing a Turn Judge, shall be positioned at all alternatives-of-course in such a manner as not to obstruct a swimmer's visibility of the turn.
- 5.2.8 All turning apparatus and Turn Judges' craft/platform shall be securely fixed in position and not be subject to tidal, wind or other movements.
- 5.2.9 The final approach to the finish shall be clearly defined with markers of a distinctive colour
- 5.2.10 The finish shall be clearly defined and marked by a vertical face.

5.3 THE RACE

(OWS 6.1-6.16)

- 5.3.1 All Open Water Competitions shall be Freestyle events.
- 5.3.2 Swimmers should swim in such a manner as to not impede, or slip stream other swimmers, Race Judges shall instruct any swimmer who is, in their opinion, taking unfair advantage by pace or slip streaming to move clear of another swimmer.
- 5.3.3 Obstructing, interfering with, or making intentional contact with another swimmer shall, if in the opinion of the Referee deemed to be "impedance", lead to disqualification whether made by a swimmer or their escort craft.
- 5.3.4 Escort boats shall manoeuvre so as not to obstruct or place themselves directly ahead of another swimmer.
- 5.3.5 Escort boats shall attempt to maintain a constant position so as to station the swimmer at, or forward of, the mid point of the boat.
- 5.3.6 Standing on the bottom during a race shall not disqualify a swimmer but they may not walk or jump.
- 5.3.7 With the exception mentioned above, swimmers shall not receive support from any fixed or floating object and shall not intentionally touch or be touched by their escort craft or crew therein.

- 5.3.8 During long distance events, each escort boat shall contain a Race Judge, a person of the swimmer's choice, and the minimum crew required to operate the escort boat.
- 5.3.9 No swimmer shall be permitted to use or wear any device that may be an aid to their speed, endurance or buoyancy. Goggles, cap, nose clip and earplugs may be used.
- 5.3.10 Swimmers shall be allowed to use grease or other such substances providing these are not in the opinion of the Referee, excessive.
- 5.3.11 The pacing of a swimmer by another person entering the water is not permitted.
- 5.3.12 Coaching and the giving of instructions by the swimmer's representative in the escort boat are permitted.
- 5.3.13 A cut-off time limit of two hours after the first swimmer in each competition has finished shall operate in all events 25km and over. For competitions under 25km, the time limit shall be forty five minutes. After expiry of the designated time limit, the Referee may order any or all swimmers still on the course from the water. The Referee may delegate this responsibility to the Race Judges in which case a specific time must be appointed after the first swimmer has finished.

5.4 THE FINISH OF THE RACE

(OWS 7.1-7.7)

- 5.4.1 The area leading to the finish apparatus should be clearly marked by rows of buoys that narrow as they get closer to the finish wall. Security boats should be stationed at the approach to, and entrance of the finish lane, to ensure that only the boats authorized to do so, enter or cross this entrance.
- 5.4.2 The finish apparatus should, where possible, be in a vertical wall fixed if necessary to flotation devices, securely fastened in place so as not to be moved by wind, tide or the force of a swimmer striking the wall, and be wide enough to accommodate at least 3 swimmers.
- 5.4.3 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. If available, video equipment may be used to record the finish. This must be placed so as not to interfere with the Finish Judges and Timekeepers observation of the finish.
- 5.4.4 Every effort should be made to ensure that the swimmer's representative can get from the escort boat to meet the swimmer as they leave the water.
- 5.4.5 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.
- 5.4.6 A member of the Medical Team should inspect the swimmers as they leave the water. A chair should be provided in which the swimmer can sit while an assessment is made.

5.5 TEAM EVENTS

(OWS 8.1-8.2)

- 5.5.1 At the WPA Championships and Telkom South African National Aquatic championship events, there will be team events which will be contested on a club/provincial basis.
 - 5.5.1.1 Teams will consist of two male and two female swimmers
 - 5.5.1.2 The fastest three times in the 5km event will be combined and the team scoring the highest totaled combination will be deemed the winner.