



Open Water Meet Manager's Guide

A Manual for Event Organizers

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INTRODUCTION

Open water swimming competition is becoming increasingly popular. Whether it's a 1/4 mile cable swim, a one mile lake swim or a six mile ocean swim, a carnival-like atmosphere usually prevails at open water events despite the arduous demands placed on the swimmers. Conquering the miles of open water is 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.

Now, thousands of newcomers are joining them. Also, the increasing popularity of triathlons has even more athletes "flying off into the wild blue" aquatic "yonder". Most of these uninitiated swimmers have little idea what they are getting themselves into and the hazards and potential for trouble or tragedy have multiplied exponentially. The need for efficiently organized safe swims has become imperative.

This handbook is designed to help you provide safe open water swims for all competitors, particularly the inexperienced.

USA Swimming hopes that the information included here - everything from how to generate publicity and job descriptions for meet personal to safety guidelines - helps you identify the dangers of open water competition while encouraging cooperation between event organizers, USA Swimming, local governments, lifeguarding associations, and swimmers. By establishing areas of responsibility, sponsors and organizers may conduct safer swims. We feel this is the first step toward keeping the freedom, exhilaration, and challenge of open water competition an irresistible drawing card for participants of all ages.

Throughout this booklet we refer to USA Swimming Headquarters or National Headquarters at:

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Special thanks to Craig Tribuzi and Steve Schofield who helped originate this document.

2. USA SWIMMING OPEN WATER EVENTS

There are many types of open water events as there are waves in the ocean. Rough water or open water swimming events normally occur in a natural body of water such as an ocean, a lake or river, although manmade quarries, pools and reservoirs are sometimes used.

2.1 OCEAN SWIMS

Ocean races have become increasingly popular on coasts but especially in California where it started 50 years ago. In summer, there are more than 60 ocean swimming events, several each weekend in California alone. Races such as the La Jolla Roughwater draw up to 1800 swimmers. East Coast and Gulf State events have also increased dramatically in the past few years. The annual four and half mile Chesapeake Bay Bridge Swim in Maryland has had to impose a limit of 600 competitors due to the number of entrants. Usually swimmers compete in many age/sex classifications for ribbons, medals, or trophies. T-shirt commemorating the event are hot items. Traditionally, ocean swims feature either a mass start on the beach with a short run into the water or an in water start. The finish may have either an in water finish or a run out of the water. In water starts and finishes are required for USA Swimming National Championships. The course then either:

1. Parallels the beach,
2. Goes out or around a fixed point such as a pier or island,
3. Circles a closed course marked by buoys, or
4. A combination of any of the above.

In some races there is a final run up the beach to the finish line. When possible, we encourage the meet manager to place the finish line in the water or limit the distance of the beach run to a short a distance as possible. Most ocean races are between one-half and five miles.

In determining the type of course for your event, use the environment as your guide. If there is a pier, why not go around it? Can you get those fishing to pull in their lines as swimmers go underneath? If there is a strong current running along the beach, you may want to swim wide around it since the swimmers would be swept into or quickly away from the piling.

If you do not have access to buoy markers, and sufficient boats and personnel needed to patrol a marked course off the shoreline, a closed course may not be to feasible.

Keep in mind that a parallel point-to-point course usually does not finish where it starts, while most others generally do. In addition, some swims must have a finish line in the water. A parallel course will require more facilities and coordination between the start and finish. An example of a point-to-point swim is the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Race. Swimmers swim from the Western Shore of the Chesapeake Bay under the Bay Bridge to the Eastern Shore. An example of the around-the-pier course is the Huntington Beach (Calif.) half-mile pier swim known for its strong-current-through-the-pilings problem.

Of course there are many variations and combinations. Southern California's International Surf Festival two-mile has swimmers going out around the Hermosa Pier, then swimming parallel to the Manhattan Beach Pier to the finish on the beach.

Most ocean swims are sponsored or co-sponsored by the governing city's Park and Recreation Department or the local lifeguard association. Sometimes a local swim club or YMCA is also involved in an effort to raise funds in exchange for manpower. City facilities and lifeguard services are used and all permission and permits must come from the appropriate city or county controlling the beach access to the water. Most do not charge for their services while other's fees are so exorbitant that is impossible to host an event. Obtain the estimate of costs and permits well in advance of the anticipated date of the event.

2.2 LAKE AND RIVER SWIMS

Lake and river swims occur most commonly in the Midwest and on the East Coast. The same course types exist as in ocean swimming:

1. Parallel to a shore
2. To and around a pier, a rock, island or other identifiable landmark
3. Around a closed course marked by buoys
4. Point-to-point

2. USA SWIMMING OPEN WATER EVENTS

The Lake Massapong Massachusetts race is swum around a two-mile course that parallels the shore. The course is marked with buoys. Swimmers have the option of swimming either the two, four, or six mile events which all start at the same time. Another example of a closed course event is the Quartermile Straightaway (Four-miles). The race is contested by swimming eight circuits of a 440 yard straightaway course that has turn buoys at the end of the course and a cable supported by marker buoys the entire length of the course.

The annual Around Naples Island Race is an example of a point-to-point swim that starts and finishes in the same place. As the name implies, this is around the island.

Lake and river swims are usually easier to organize than ocean events since the variables of ocean swimming are greater. Conditions in lakes or rivers remain more constant. In a river, make sure you take the strength of the current and the course distance into account to estimate the elapsed swimming time.

2.3 ESCORTED SWIMS

When conditions or distance indicate, a swimmer must be escorted. Escorts are used in the 15K and 25k National Championships. This escort may be by paddler, water ski/canoe, row boat or larger powerboat/yacht depending on the safety factors. The difficulties in obtaining reliable escorts, whether they be paddlers or experienced boat captains, are obvious and they are essential to the safe conduct of the meet. The duties of the escorts will be discussed in greater detail in the Job Descriptions section.

The danger of boats and propellers only a few feet away from swimmers is an added risk. Gas fumes can be dangerous and annoying even on calm days. Anything that impedes the progress of a swimmer is a consideration when determining the type and number of escorts you need. You need to establish special rules such as no paddlers in the start area, escort boats may not get next to the swimmer for the first quarter-mile etc. The size and type of each escort is important. You probably do not need the Queen Mary, but you do need a

craft large enough to carry the boat crew, special safety and feeding supplies and the swimmer's coach/trainer.

The paddler must be sufficiently fit to complete the course. Boats must be capable of running at very slow (one to three miles per hour) speeds on the course. It is also suggested that each escort have a flag of some type in the boat to wave in case of emergency. This can also be used if the crew is unsure about the course direction.

You may also want to consider the use of both boats and paddleboards as escorts. The paddleboards are supported by the boats with backup paddlers, food, and coach for the swimmer. It may be possible, although not always necessary, to have one boat act as a hub for several satellite boats or swimmers.

2.4 CABLE SWIMS

Cable swims consist of a fixed course around a set distance. The course is marked by buoys and floats on a quarter-mile cable which has been previously surveyed for accuracy. The cable is pulled taut between pylons set a quarter-mile apart. Usually the race distance is 1 or 2 miles. Cable swims are one of the safest ways to conduct an open water event since the course is delineated by a cable, which provides safety support as well as a means of orientation for swimmers. Cable Championships are held by US Masters Swimming every year and records are maintained in the respective age groups.

2.5 TEAM SWIMS

Most of the events mentioned are designed primarily for individuals—everybody for himself or herself! However the USA Swimming also recognize Team Events. The team consists of three swimmers and the team championship may be determined by the cumulative time of the three swimmers or by a point system basis. Please see section 803.5 of the USA Swimming Rulebook for more information.

International rules, established by the Federation Internationale de Natation Amateur (FINA), a team consist of two men and two women. The

3. COURSE

lowest cumulative time of three members of a team is used to determine the winners and the places.

2.6 RELAY SWIMS

Traditionally, and in accordance with USA Swimming Open Water Rules, a relay has three to six swimmers. Each swimmer will swim for a specific time and then be relieved by the next swimmer. The swimmers continue to swim on a rotating basis until the distance is completed.

Both the English Channel Association and the Catalina Channel Swimming Federation maintain relay records. Swimmers swim for an hour at a time. Single, Double and triple crossing records are maintained. Both of these organizations permit mixing of sexes and ages in the composition of the teams.

One example of a relay is the Maui Channel Relay. Each swimmer swims an initial 30-minute leg and then 10-minute legs in rotation for the balance of the swim. Relays may start at the same time but compete in different age and sex classifications.

3. COURSE

The swim course is defined by:

1. The starting line
2. The turn markers with explicit directions as to which side of the marker the swimmer must pass. All other markers are for directions only and do not define the limits of the course.
3. The finish line

A good course have the following characteristics:

1. The course of the swim should be designed to minimize confusion of the swimmers. Courses should avoid head-on traffic patterns where swimmers could pass close to each other in opposing directions.
2. Course design should also eliminate changes in course direction until the field of contestants has spread out from starting line congestion.

3. A large map of the course should be available for the viewing of the contestants at the race site
4. Fixed or anchored course markers should be used as follows:
 - a. Provide course markers at 200-yard points (or closer).
 - b. Markers should be a bright color. Turn markers should be different from course markers.
 - c. Markers should have a visible surface area of at least four square feet and be securely anchored.
 - d. Hazards or dangerous areas on the course should be marked different in color from course or turn markers.
5. Start
 - a. Bottom should be firm, clean, and free from hazards (rocks, algae, glass, etc.)
 - b. Starting line should be as wide as possible to minimize multiple row starting. The course design should provide a starting line which is perpendicular as possible to the first leg of the course whereby all contestants along the starting line have equal advantage.
 - c. The starter must be clearly identified, visible by all the persons on the starting line, and in front of the starting line.
 - d. The starting area and course should be controlled so as to keep non-participants clear.
 - e. A gun, horn, or siren start should be used while simultaneously waving a flag. Prior to the start, a three minute flag and one minute flag warning can also be provided.
6. Finish
 - a. A chute finish is recommended with the swimmers being funneled towards the finish line.
 - b. The chute should be long enough and wide enough to accommodate the number of swimmers expected to finish at about the same time.
 - c. The finish line should be clearly marked and visible from the water from at least 1/4 mile away.

4. SAFETY

- d. The finish area should be controlled so as to keep non-participants clear.
- e. Finish monitors should be provided to aid swimmers standing up and exiting the water.

4. SAFETY

Safety is the paramount issue in the organization and conduct of any open water swimming event. The first step in planning an open water swim is the consideration of all safety factors. We strongly urge that you contact the city or county to determine who will be responsible for the safety at your event. Seek their advice. No one will know the local safety requirements and the local conditions better than the experts in the field.

Your local Red Cross Chapter may be able to provide you with information, personnel and equipment to assist you with the conduct of a meet, local canoe, rowing and kayak clubs may also be able to assist. Invite them to participate. One word of caution: ascertain in advance if there will be any charges associated with their support. The Local Swimming Committee (LSC) of USA Swimming should also be a useful resource.

If your event is a very long and/or crosses heavily trafficked boat or shipping lanes, contact the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), Corps of Engineers, Coast Guard Auxiliary, the U.S. Navy or the local Harbormaster. Their main concern is safety on the water and they can be of great help. One valuable service they usually provide is the notification of ships race area. They will also provide assistance in filling out the necessary permit requests.

If you need help with communications, local amateur radio organizations are helpful and eager to assist.

The following items shall or should be considered prior to the event:

Emergency Provisions

1. All event personnel shall be informed of the emergency provisions for the race. It is recommended that the meet director hold a

meeting including all personnel just before the event to make them aware of all safety provisions.

2. All open water swims shall have a Medical evacuation plan. The plan(s) must outline detailed procedures and methods of transport for swimmers needing emergency medical aid from water pickup to land-based services. The plan required shall be as follows:
 - a. One plan is required if the start and finish of the race are the same location (or less than 1/4 mile apart).
 - b. Two plans are required if the start and finish are not in the same location (or more than 1/4 mile apart).
3. The host club shall provide mechanisms/procedures sufficient to transport swimmers to shore-based medical assistance in less than ten minutes.
4. It is strongly recommended that safety monitor stations (i.e. row boats, canoes, paddle boards, rafts, etc.) be positioned on the course in a minimum ration of one station per thirty (30) entrants or one station for every 1/4 mile of course length, whichever number of stations is greater. It is the intent of this rule to require coverage of the complete field at all times. Pilots are considered safety stations. Emergency evacuation boats cannot be counted as safety stations.
5. Safety monitor stations shall be equipped with first aid supplies and an emergency signaling device to summon a medical evacuation boat (signals may be day flares, smoke flares, radio, or flags).
6. A detailed plan must be available to cancel the race in case of inclement weather or other safety problems arising after competition starts.
7. It is important that every participant be accounted for as they enter and exit the water. A suggested method is to record the participant's number as they enter the water. The record would be marked off as they exit the course (either at the finish area or if removed for safety reasons).

4. SAFETY

8. A public briefing of all swimmers must be held prior to the start of the event. Attempts should be made to involve all the contestants in the briefing and ensure that instructions can be heard and understood. A good public address system is essential. The briefing must include the following explanations in the following order:
 - a. Opportunity for withdrawal if any swimmer has apprehensions as to his ability or desire to participate.
 - b. Participants obligations if they drop out/quit.
 - c. Procedure for getting aid while swimming.
 - d. Finish procedures/cut off time.
 - e. Encourage the contestants to position themselves at the start with the faster swimmers in front. Swimmers should be courteous and pay attention to others' safety.
 - f. Course directions/markers/rules.
 - g. Starting procedures/signals
9. The host club shall establish and announce a cut-off time for the event, at which time, all contestants still on the course must be picked up by the sweeper or clean-up boat. Swimmers failing to finish under the designated time must be disqualified and picked up.
10. Escort and Pilot Craft
 - a. On individual swims over six miles, each contestant should be supplied an escort craft capable of maintaining pace with the contestant.
 - b. On swims between two and six miles, it is the meet directors decisions whether or not to provide escort craft based upon conditions and swimmers' ability.
 - c. All boats used in conjunction with the event must meet USCG and local standards for equipment and loading capacity.
 - d. Provisions for non-event boat traffic control must be provided. It is strongly suggested that control be arranged through a law enforcement agency.

- e. Escort boats must display a fluorescent orange "skier down" flag at all times.
11. Heats—In events where large participation is expected, it is suggested that swimmers be sent off in heats. The size of the heats is commensurate with:
 1. Emergency Provisions as stated earlier.
 2. Course Definition (start line size, length of course, and finish area).
 3. Number of participants.

Timing between heats should be uniform to allow participants to determine their approximate start time. The time between heats should be commensurate with the above stated conditions. It is suggested that heat definition be tied to some discernable item such as different colored swim caps.

Do not try to do it alone. There are any number of volunteer groups and organizations that are willing to assist. Try local Sea and Boy Scouts, civic groups, local swimming clubs, boat clubs etc. Many will help for a shirt or their name and organization on the programs and press releases. Their public service orientation can really help get jobs done that might otherwise prove unnecessarily expensive.

5. ORGANIZER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Unlike a pool swim, open water events usually do not have many of the "facilities" or hardware required. Be prepared to transport all necessary items to the race site and allow enough time for setup prior to the time at which swimmers can register. Considerations are to be made for such items as portable electrical power, portable toilets, fresh water, tables, chairs, timing system, etc.

In addition, the following items should be addressed prior to issuing the entry form:

1. Plan a safe well-marked and patrolled open water course. The established Start and Finish areas should be highly visible from both land and water.

5. ORGANIZER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

2. Consult with any and all local authorities concerning permits, authorizations, etc. 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.
3. Notify and consult land emergency organizations (ambulance, fire department, etc.) concerning the event and obtain emergency numbers. It is desirable for standby emergency units to be at the event.
4. Be alert for symptoms of hypothermia, heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Be prepared to treat these and other conditions.
5. Include a communications network with two-way radios, an effective Public Address system and an announcer that can give instructions, emergency announcements and race details to the spectators.
6. Explore the possibility of using a computer for entries, registration, and results. This item is highly recommended for events in which over 100 entrants are expected.
7. If paddlers, boats and drivers are "volunteers," plan to have 20 percent more than the actual number needed. You need to have back-ups in case some volunteers backout.
8. A chart and/or map for entrants and escorts to study at the race location should be set up. This should also be available with the meet information packet.
9. Late entries are not recommended. You can not adequately plan if you do not know the number of swimmers who will start.
10. Conduct a meeting 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. The following items should be discussed at the meeting:
 - a. Describe the course, water temperature, surf conditions, and bottom conditions. Pinpoint hazards and currents in detail.
 - b. Establish an accurate head count of swimmers and verify it at the starting line and at the finish line.
 - c. Instruct swimmers and escorts of the system to be used to notify race officials when a swimmer withdraws from the race.
 - d. Be prepared to answer any questions and brief swimmers on any special safety matters including:
 - i. Requirement to wear a brightly colored cap, preferable international orange or similar color. A cap will assist keeping a swimmer warm, but the cap must conform to USA Swimming rules and only one cap may be worn.
 - ii. Location or restriction on use of escorts such as: not being allowed in the beach area, only after a quarter of a mile may a boat escort a swimmer, etc. Describe registration and numbering procedures.
 - iii. Procedures in case the event is cancelled after the start due to hazardous conditions.
11. Provide qualified water rescue, safety personnel, and any additional medical support personnel.
12. Arrange for a cooperative effort between water rescue safety personnel and paddlers, who will be patrolling the open water course if the swim is not escorted. Urge the attendance of qualified lifeguards and safety personnel to oversee and participate in monitoring the swim.
13. Establish a cut off time, where swimmers are disqualified and removed from the water if they fail to finish within the established limits. For example, in the 15 and 25K National Championships, all swimmers not finishing within two hours of the winner are withdrawn from the water.
14. 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.

6. SWIMMER'S RESPONSIBILITY

15. 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 competitors, the race should be canceled immediately. 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 an escort and not the swimmer in danger. If the escort is in danger, so is the swimmer and the race or that swimmer should be stopped.
16. The meet management must also protect individual swimmers and it must have the authority to disqualify any swimmer in an unsafe situation. In addition to being disqualified for violation of technical rules (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.
17. In the cases of cancellation or disqualification, the race organizers' and officials' primary concern is for safety, and they need to be prepared to take prompt decisive action.
18. Because of the numerous safety related items at the meet, it is advisable that a Meet Safety Officer be assigned.
2. It is suggested athletes swim the entire distance without stopping in preparation for races shorter than 2 miles. For races over 2 miles, swimmers should complete 85 percent of the distance one month to two weeks prior to the event in order to gain the necessary self-confidence and determine feeding times, food items and support personnel needed.
3. No one should undertake any competitive open water event unless he is physically fit, in excellent health, and fully expects to finish. It is advisable for any person undertaking any athletic event to be checked by a qualified medical expert.
4. Dropouts, no-shows, or swimmers failing to complete the swim should report to race officials in the manner described in the pre-race meetings.
5. Swimmers are responsible for personal property left at the swimming site while they are in the water. Swimmers should plan ahead and insure that needed items such as warm clothing and food are available at the finish.
6. The swimmer is responsible for all his/her support needs-escort, food and special equipment.
7. No paddler-No escort- No swim will be strictly enforced.

6. SWIMMER'S RESPONSIBILITY

Organizers can prepare the safest course possible, but without participant preparation, all the planning can be for naught. 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 chose to enter.

7. PADDLERS, ESCORTS, AND MONITORS

1. Paddlers' attendance is mandatory at the pre-race meetings. As the paddler will need to be in the water ready to go prior to the start of the race a separate paddler meeting may be held prior to the final swimmers meeting. Allow sufficient time for questions and answers and cover all points discussed in previous meetings.

7. PADDLERS, ESCORTS, AND MONITORS

2. All rules applying to swimmers also apply to paddler/escort personnel. They must also train to be capable of completing the distance and maintaining the speed necessary to keep up with their swimmers.
3. The escort should be assigned the same number as the swimmer and should be marked in the same manner as the swimmer. Numbered ski vests (as worn by downhill skiers) can prove useful in identifying the swimmer. If the number of race entrants is small, marking the boats with the swimmers' last name is preferable for media and spectators.
4. The paddlers must know the course and any special rules. The board should be sufficiently long, able to hold two people afloat.
5. During short swims less than two miles in length individual paddlers should be discouraged. Too many paddlers aggressively working to support their swimmers can be dangerous. Instead, safety personnel (boats and paddlers) should be placed at strategic locations along the course.
6. On longer swims, individual escorts are necessary. In addition to being the eyes and ears for the swimmer and providing a measure of safety, they are also responsible for detecting signs of hypothermia or other conditions of the swimmer and providing the initial first aid measures.
7. In addition to providing all the services mentioned above, escorts are responsible for feeding the swimmer and providing the mental stimulation necessary for the swimmer's well being throughout the race

8. RULES AND REGULATIONS

The Rules and Regulations can be obtained from USA Swimming. Part VIII of this document covers the rules for open water swimming and details the general and national competition rules.

9. PUBLICITY

A primary concern of the race organizer—besides the safety elements and putting on the event—is getting people to participate. This is especially true for first-time events where you do not have past participants spreading the word to their friends.

The three basic ways to get out the word about your event and to attract participants are by arranging free publicity, buying advertising, and putting out announcements and entry forms in the area.

Buying advertising / Buying advertising time and space in the regular media (radio, TV, newspapers, magazines) is great but very expensive. Most race organizers do not have the budget to consider this option. One exception would be an ad or paid-for entry form reproduction in a specialty sports publication such as a swimming magazine. Some of these publications have reduced rates on entry forms for race organizers or event announcements. These are good bets because they go directly to the people you want to reach.

Free Publicity / Getting free publicity in radio, TV, newspaper or magazines is obviously better than purchasing an advertisement. Consider publicity both before and after your event. Free publicity is not difficult to obtain, although it takes some time and effort. Here is how.

1. Pre-Event Publicity

The key to getting pre-event publicity is in preparing and sending out a good Press Release (See Appendix C). A press release is a typed statement describing the event. That's it. It must be typed, double-spaced, and usually not more than one page. It should include the who, what, where, when, and why of the event: Date, time location, possible story ideas, event description and whom to contact for more information. That's all you need. If you have a glossy black and white photograph to sent with it, great! But it's usually not required.

- a. LSC Newsletter / Contact your LSC newsletter editor to determine deadline

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dates and possible inclusion of the entry in the next issue of the newsletter.

- b. **Newspaper** / Send your Press Release to the Sports Editors of all the local newspapers. Follow up with a telephone call in a couple of days. Make friends with the local sports editor. He can do a lot for you and your event.
 - c. **Television** / In many metropolitan areas there is a Sunday-type regional "Magazine" TV show. Send your Press Release to the producer and follow up with a telephone call. Suggest he come down and film a segment of your race.
 - d. **USA Swimming and US Masters Swimming (USMS) Open Water Calendar** / In the spring of every year, USA Swimming and USMS publish a calendar of Open Water events. Send your press release to appropriate swimming body by March 15 of each year to be included in this publication, or call the National Office to find out who is the current publisher.
 - e. **Magazines** / Most specialty magazines have a Calendar of Events. Keep in mind that most magazines have a long lead time (they work far in advance) so you must send your Press Release at least four to five months before the event
- 2. Post-Event Publicity**
- Try to get as much publicity in the media after the event as your did before. Many people who missed the event will see the television and newspaper coverage and remember it for the next time. Besides, having TV and newspaper photographers at your races adds a touch of glamour and excitement.
- a. **Newspaper** / The best post-event publicity to shoot for is coverage by local newspapers with lots of action photos. Work with the sports editor as much as possible. Make his or her job easier by suggesting personalities for interviews, providing access to special vantage points to photographers, and providing results of the event immediately after it's over. You should make a file and clip out all the stories and photos that were published. You can use these next year by sending copies with your Press Releases. That way each sports editor will remember how the race was covered the year before.
 - b. **Radio** / Call all the local radio stations and talk to the Public Affairs or Promotions person. Tell them you would like them to air a short Public Service Announcement about your event. (Every radio station is required by the FCC to include a certain number of Public Service Announcements in their programming each week.) Send them your Press Release. Then follow up with a telephone call in a couple of days to make sure they have the information straight and plan to air it.
 - c. **Television** / Call the Weekend Assignment Editor (assuming your event is on a weekend) in advance and suggest that he send a News Camera Crew to cover the event for that evening's local news show. You will be surprised at how many people will remember seeing your race on the local news, even if it's on for only a few seconds.
- In general, when you are trying to convince the media to cover or mention your contests, emphasize that your event is exciting and dynamic, with lots of people of all ages rushing in and out of the water. Include participant numbers who are members of the local community, and show people who are healthy and attractive having fun doing something that readers and viewers would like to see.

10. ADMINISTRATION

10.1 ENTRY FORMS AND MEET ANNOUNCEMENTS

Putting stacks of entry forms and meet information announcements in places where potential participants might be sporting goods stores, swimming pools, other races etc., is probably a good way to sign people up. It's best to get all of your entries in advance. Set an entry date that will allow you to properly plan your event and contestants to make an intelligent decision regarding participation. Your LSC can assist you with the distribution of entry forms.

10.2 HOW TO MAKE UP AN ENTRY FORM

Make your announcement also the official entry form, on one sheet of paper. The most common and easiest to reproduce is 8 1/2 x 11. Legal size (8 1/2 x 14) is acceptable if you need more room. Using two sides is all right but more expensive to print. An entry form should contain these elements:

1. A large headline naming the event. This usually goes at the top and should be dominant enough to grab the attention of anyone walking by.
2. The facts: date, time, location, fees, USA Swimming rules, eligibility, awards, deadlines, the mailing address for further information, and a map to the race site. A map on the entry form is important to be able to direct those people from outside the immediate area to the race site.
3. Clip-and-mail coupon at the bottom with room for the participant's name, address, phone number, USA Swimming registration, age, and club. Include the events mailing address and deadline for receiving the entry on the coupon and the payee for the entry fees.
4. A warning statement must be included on each entry form which cautions the swimmer about special hazards of the event (i.e. water temperature, distance, surface conditions, etc.) and advises medical examinations and

training under race conditions prior to participation.

5. In longer races it may be advisable to require a statement from a qualified medical authority as to the swimmers' fitness and physical ability to participate.
6. Consider asking participants to send a self-addressed stamped envelope for results and/or post card for verification of receipt of entry.

Prepare a clean version of the entry form by combining headline and the other typed elements and have it reproduced at some instant press shop. Print at least three times the number of entrants you expect, and use colored paper to attract attention. Distribute them at least eight weeks before the event. This takes into account procrastinators and postal delays. Make copies and distribute in this suggested manner:

1. To all clubs in the LSC (about 10 each)
2. Mail to all entrants from the previous event. As a suggestion, at the end of the meet, prepare two sets of mailing labels - one for results and one for the next year's entry mail-out.
3. Distribute (about 50) to sports shops, community centers, etc. around the area.

The entry forms are used to prepare entry lists for official and program use. A computer is useful for this purpose or the necessary list can be developed manually. Note: Do not destroy the entry forms after they are processed. They are the basis for future mailing lists-an invaluable resource for you.

10.3 CAPS

It is suggested that meet directors use fluorescent or other brightly colored caps to all participants to better track them in the water by safety watercraft. It is suggested that when possible, the cap color should be different than the buoy color to better allow the swimmers to be able to distinguish the course navigation markers. Arranging for the design and ordering of swim caps can take 6-8 weeks, plan ahead.

11. SANCTIONS / INSURANCE

10.4 AWARDS

Awards can take time to prepare, order and deliver. Allow 6-8 weeks for the process unless there is a local source which can provide them in a timely manner. Since long distance swimming is a unique sport, consider alternative awards to the standard medals and trophies.

10.5 T-SHIRTS

Since t-shirts design and fabrication take around 6-8 weeks, plan early. When deciding on how many to order, consider the following:

1. Pre-ordered participants shirts which are available in separate boxes to be handed out at check-in.
2. Volunteer shirts - get their sizes as volunteers sign up.
3. Shirts that have not been designated for the previous two categories can be sold at check-in or after the race.

10.6 MISCELLANEOUS ORDERS

1. If required, arrange for portable toilets to be on site
2. Arrange for timing equipment
3. Photographers
4. Refreshments and food for the finish. Include fresh water if it is not already available.
5. Special Awards - Can be donated items such as dinners, movie passes, etc., that can be awarded for special people, such as the oldest, traveled the farthest, first man/woman to finish, etc.
6. Race course buoys and markers. Make sure that you have enough rope and anchors to fix the buoys.
7. Cinder blocks are cheap and work well as anchors.
8. Signs for directions and check-in. Conduct an inventory and make new ones if necessary.
9. Arrange for tables and chairs, if needed
10. Obtain an effective portable PA system (a bullhorn is only effective if your race is small)

11. SANCTIONS / INSURANCE

An important consideration in planning an event is applying for a USA Swimming sanction. A sanctioned event is one that meets established criteria to insure that the race is carried out in the spirit of fair play and observance of the USA Swimming rules. One fringe benefit for race managers is that a sanction offers some specific insurance coverage to protect USA Swimming athletes, officials, and facilities. Insurance requirements, coverage and benefits change frequently, so ask the National Office for the current coverage.

A sanction is required before the entry form can be distributed to contestants, or the event will not be insured. All competitors participating in the meet must be registered under USA Swimming in order for the insurance coverage to apply to any single individual or to those individuals conducting the meet or the facility where it is held.

Registration and Sanctions

1. All open water swimming athletes will be required to be USA Swimming-registered.
2. If an open water swimming event wished to have both USA Swimming and USMS sections, two sanctions must be obtained, one from each of the governing bodies. LMSCs are responsible for issuing sanctions for events involving USMS athletes. Similarly, LSCs are the responsible agents for issuing sanctions for events involving USA Swimming athletes.

You can call your local USA Swimming or USMS chairperson for a sanction application. The LSC or LSMC will send you the sanction form. After completing the form, you must return it with complete meet information and a modest fee. They may also require an after meet report with the results, financial report, and record of prize money. All USA Swimming and USMS events must be sanctioned for recognition, verification of performances, records and championship titles.

12. USA SWIMMING NATIONAL OPEN WATER CHAMPIONSHIPS

USA Swimming conducts National Championships annually in the following distances: 5, 10, 15, and 25-Kilometers.

If you are awarded the championship you will be required to sign a contract which protects both USA Swimming and the host and identifies specific areas of responsibility. For example, USA Swimming will provide the awards, a contract payment and national exposure through USA Swimming publications.

If you are interested in bidding for any of the USA Swimming National Championships, please see the bid form at Appendix D. Bid forms for all of the championships are reviewed and sites selected at the USA Swimming Convention each year.

13. PERSONNEL DESCRIPTIONS

The personnel, job descriptions, and equipment described in this section are an example of one method of conducting a meet. It is far from complete and with the advent of modern equipment (i.e. computers, printout stop watches, etc.) there are certainly other methods of assigning tasks. We urge you to look at Section 805.6 of the current USA Swimming Rulebook as a supplement.

13.1 REFEREE / MEET MANAGER

He has full control and authority over all officials, approves their assignment and instructs them regarding any special features or regulations relating to the race. The referee shall enforce all the rules and decide all questions relating to the actual conduct of the meet. He shall adjudicate all protests relating to the competition, 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. He has full authority to cancel the event and disqualify any swimmer for violating technical or safety rules.

13.2 SAFETY OFFICER

The assigned Safety Officer shall be responsible for overseeing all aspects of the meet relating to safety.

13.3 ANNOUNCER

The announcer can handle a variety of tasks, including pre-race information, race updates and award presentation. A good public address system is essential to ensure that instructions can be heard and understood.

The following guidelines can be used for the pre-race briefing:

Welcome:	General Announcements:
Name of swim	Water Temperatures
Thank sponsors	Possible Hazards
	Currents or Tides

Safety/Emergency Procedures:

1. 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.
2. If you need assistance during the race, wave one arm overhead, a paddler will come to you.
3. If you drop out before or during the race, report immediately to the finish line judge under the finish banner so your safety can be accounted.
4. Faster swimmers should position themselves closer to the start line at the edge of the water with slower swimmers assuming a less risky position further back on the beach.
5. Emergency staff will be stationed (advise swimmers as to location)
6. A cut off time of _____ hours will be enforced. Any swimmer still in the water at this time will be brought to shore—please cooperate for your own safety.

13. PERSONNEL / JOB DESCRIPTIONS

The Finish: Chute directions
Clock
Computer tag directions (if needed)

The Course: Direction of swim
Required buoys
Reference to map or other markers

The Start: Time of start
Repeat Faster/Slower warning
Spread out, be courteous

Explain command signals (there will be a 3 min. and 1 min. flag warning. Flag + gun or horn = GO)

THANK YOU - HAVE A SAFE SWIM

Equipment needed: Radio system, timing system, binoculars, a good PA system with sound in all direction, stand or pedestal, tables, chairs, distinctive clothing.

13.4 REGISTRAR / CLERK OF COURSE

1. Check in each swimmer
2. Insure that all administrative details are accomplished: entry fees paid, waiver signed, USA Swimming registration completed.
3. If an escorted swim, ensure that the escorts are present.
4. Assign number and mark both the swimmer and the escort.
5. Brief or arrange to brief all swimmers and escorts on course and safety matters.
6. Assist the starter in lining up contestants.
7. After consulting with the starter have escorts take positions.

Equipment needed: Timing system, tables, chairs, cashbox, pens, marking pens, bullhorn, entry and registration forms, event sheets

13.5 STARTER

1. Have escorts/paddlers assume their positions prior to the start. Verify that each swimmer has escort if appropriate.
2. Line up swimmers at starting line.
3. Perform head count, Check it, verify, and check it again.

4. Describe course again and explain start procedure.
5. Explain Finish line procedure:
 - a. Explain Finish Judges job and introduce him.
 - b. "You'll get a stick (or some other numbering system). The race is not over until you get a stick. Go into the chute single file."
 - c. Introduce medical or emergency staff and their location.
6. Explain that Open Water swimming is not for everybody and it is dangerous if a swimmer is not fully prepared.
7. Explain the safety procedures and what a swimmer should do if encountering difficulty: stop, get escort or lifeguard's attention. Report as advised once out of the water.
8. Start the race.

Equipment needed: Starting gun, horn, starting line indicators, Distinctive clothing or ID.

13.6 TURN JUDGES

Turn judges should be assigned at course turns and other check points along the course. They should report any violations to the referee. In the longer races, they should have radio contact with the referee. In races with more than one circuit, finish judges can serve in this capacity. The Check Point Sheet (Appendix E) can be used by turn judges.

13.7 FINISH LINE

There are many different ways to administer the finish of an open water race. The geography, type of finish and number of swimmers will have a bearing on finish procedure. The description below would typically be used with a large number of swimmers finishing close together, similar to procedures used in running races. This description is a guideline and may be modified to suit your needs. We have also purposely omitted some of the paper flow procedures as they are affected by personalities and skills of the staff working the race. The mechanics of an in-water or beach run-up finish are different, but the same basic principles apply.

13. PERSONNEL / JOB DESCRIPTIONS

13.8 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 will be placed in a single file line for entry into a chute. Swimmers without numbers are not permitted in the chute. To assist the judge, observation boats or officials may be stationed a few meters in front of the finish line to call off the approaching swimmer's number. Television cameras or similar devices may be used as backup and to settle disputes.

13.9 HEAD TIMER

Calls off the time as each swimmer finishes. Backup watches are required, and a large spectator clock is highly desirable. There are stop watches available with a printout capability. These are ideal as they record the times and place each time the button is pushed.

13.10 TIME CLERK

Writes down the time for each finisher as it is called out by the head timer (use Time Sheet, Appendix G). When complete, this sheet will be handed to the Results Clerk.

13.11 FINISH CLERK

Records only the swimmer's number as indicated by the finish judge. (use Finish Sheet, Appendix F). This will serve as a backup to the number given by the stickman and can be used to resolve any dispute of finishing order.

13.12 STICKMAN

This person hands the swimmer a numbered pop-sicle stick or similar item finish line. This function may be impossible to implement with an in-water finish, in which case the records of the time and finish clerks would be used.

13.13 RESULTS CLERK

Swimmers take their number up the chute to the Results Clerk who writes down the swimmer's name and number by order of finish. (Use Results

sheet, Appendix H) The Results Clerk will add the finishing time to this sheet when received from the Time Clerk. Other information such as age and club can be added from the official entry form.

It is important for swimmers in the chute to stay in the order which they finished. Disputes can be settled by reviewing the Finish Clerk's sheet which has the proper order by swimmer number. Partial results can be shared with the announcer or awards personnel especially if there is a long time gap between swimmers.

After accounting for all swimmers, editing, and checking for possible errors, copies of the results are sent to awards, the announcer and the person responsible for compiling official results. The entire finish line paper flow could easily be handled with computers more effectively than the hand written system described above, however, due to the wide variety of equipment we will not describe a computer operation.

13.15 EQUIPMENT MANAGER / ASSISTANTS

Prepares and coordinates getting equipment to race site, Prepares Start/Finish areas and returns equipment to proper place or owner.

13.16 AWARDS

There are several methods for handling awards. With a large number of participants, an awards desk can be set up and given a copy of the results. The announcer states that the results are posted and swimmers can pick up their awards at the awards desk. For a smaller number of participants, a formal awards ceremony would be appropriate with the announcer calling the names of the swimmer and someone officially acknowledging their effort. A combination of both may be used, announcing the top finishers in a ceremony while handing out awards for other finishers at the desk. We encourage public acknowledgement for as many swimmers as possible in recognition of their achievement in finishing the race, especially in longer competitions.

14. POST-RACE ACTIVITIES

13.17 MEDICAL

Doctors, paramedics or the medical personnel should be available near the finish area to observe, check out and provide care for all participants. They should be in place before, during and after the race. They must have a method to transport athletes needing more intensive care to an appropriate medical facility.

14. POST-RACE ACTIVITIES

1. CLEAN-UP

Insure that the race site is cleaner and in better shape than it was found. Collect anything that can be reused - i.e. signs, buoys, rope, etc. for next year's race.

2. PROCESS THE RESULTS

Mail the results to all the participants, their clubs, and the LSC. If possible on the same day of the event, provide a copy to the news media which highlights local entrants.

3. EXTRAS

Order and mail extra shirts and/or awards as soon as possible

4. THANK-YOU'S

Write thank-you letters, either personally to major supporters (donations, volunteers, etc.) or in the newspaper.

5. EVALUATE

Hold an evaluation meeting with all workers. Within five days of the finish, make a written list of ideas for the next event. Include changes as well as special things to keep.

6. FINANCIAL REPORT

Financial report should be sent to the LSC

15. NATIONAL OPEN WATER OFFICIAL CERTIFICATION

Requirements—Applicant must:

- a. Be a current member of USA Swimming; certification will not be issued and application fees will not be refunded to non-member applicants.
- b. Participate in and complete a USA Swimming Open Water Officials Workshop as approved by the USA Swimming Open Water Officials Committee. Although hypothermia and CPR will be discussed, applicants are strongly urged to have a current CPR and First Aid certification.
- c. Been mentored by an approved mentoring official at two USA Swimming Championship events or other approved events, one of which must be a race in which swimmers are escorted by swimmer's coach/trainer and an escort craft.

Form Instructions (see Appendix I)

- a. Fill out application form completely.
- b. Certification portion must be signed by the approved mentoring official for meets worked.
- c. Make checks payable to USA Swimming, and submit with application to your mentor. If this was your first time being mentored, please retain the application and submit as directed above upon your second mentoring.
- d. If already a certified pool official, no addition fees are required.
- e. For annual renewal, only sections one and four need to be completed.

APPENDIX A.

SUGGESTED EVENT TIMELINE

A.1 12-9 MONTHS OUT

1. Organizing Event Committee
2. Make outline and timetable
3. Make out a tentative budget
4. First of monthly meetings
5. Complete logo design
6. Begin keeping records of all activities for reference and to help future meet directors
7. Rough draft on entries/meet information completed
8. First publicity release to all media, especially swim magazines and all LMSC meets held during 12 months prior to your meet.
9. Ad solicitations begin
10. Lodging commitments

A.2 8-6 MONTHS OUT

1. Monthly meetings continue
2. Update committees
3. Clear the dates and use of equipment and area
4. Apply for permit(s) necessary for the event
5. Sanction: ask your LSC's chair for the sanction procedure and follow it
6. Printing of entry and meet info; distributing it throughout Zone
7. Order medals and other awards
8. Begin work on mementos/t-shirts, etc.
9. Select site of social event (if one will be held)
10. Volunteers: arrange as many as you can: announcer, runners, registration, medical emergency, etc.—give everyone a job, it will keep them involved.

A.3 5 MONTHS OUT

1. Monthly meetings continue
2. Update committees
3. Outline of program prepared
4. Ad solicitations push

A.4 4 MONTHS OUT

1. Monthly meetings continue
2. Update committees
3. Visit facility with committee
4. Organize officials and volunteers

5. Begin requesting donated items for participants
6. Final outline of program approved
7. T-shirts/mementos order placed
8. Begin media build-up
9. Finalize social event(s)

A.5 3 MONTHS OUT

1. Monthly meetings continue
2. Update committees
3. Review food concession/hospitality for officials

A.6 2 MONTHS OUT

1. Weekly meetings should begin
2. Update committees
3. Get 8-10 copies of current USA Swimming Rulebook
4. All officials and volunteers assigned duties
5. Process entries received
6. Continue media blitz

A.7 1 MONTH OUT

1. Weekly meetings continue or individual meetings with committee chairperson (ongoing dialogue from week prior)
2. Update committees
3. Entries close (2 weeks prior); entries processed
4. Packets prepared/set up meet (two days prior)
5. Timing system
6. Collect equipment
 - a. flags, buoys,
 - b. tables, chairs, P.A. system, extension cords, etc.
 - c. first aid kit, extra bathroom supplies
7. Setup the snack bar, food equipment, supplies, workers, etc.
8. Awards
9. Officials
10. Computer service and administrative supplies

A.8 DAY OF THE EVENT

1. Be there early
2. Check area and setup, lifeguards, rescue equipment and volunteers

3. Setup P.A. system and perform sound check
4. Setup registration area, start/finish lines, course
5. Have a meeting of the meet manager, officials, support personnel
6. Setup the hospitality / snack bar

A.9 START OF THE EVENT

1. Opening ceremonies, National anthem, etc.
2. Announcer provides details of the event
3. Call for participants to assemble at the start area
 - a. if heats are used, assemble the participants into their respective heats to queue them up
 - b. the Start Area official should insure the record of participants entering the water and that each participant is properly marked
4. Check for problems, wrong swimmer, no marking, etc.

A.10 POST EVENT

1. Distribute the awards /prizes
2. Collect the cash box, thank all volunteers, clean up, put all equipment away
3. Have an evaluation meeting with all key people; plan for next year

A.11 WITHIN 30 DAYS

1. All results mailed to those who have ordered/paid for them. (each club which participated must receive a copy)
2. Financial summary completed and distributed (within 60 days)
3. Meet Report (within 60 days) by Meet Director; committee heads.

You may want to set up a timetable to be more visually motivating. This is just a "skeleton" timetable. You may need to add action items specific to you meet. Keep in mind that all the committees are dependent upon one another. If one group fails to complete a task it usually affects one or more groups. Communication from Meet Directors to committee heads is essential to keep everyone focused and "on task".

APPENDIX B. EXAMPLE ENTRY FORMS

NATURAL FOODS 3K OPEN WATER

WINTER BAY
LITTLETON, CALIF.
AUG. 8, 1998

Sponsor: Southern LSC Sanction #: 97865
Start Time: 10 a.m. Check-in: 8:45-9:15 a.m.
Briefing: 9:30 a.m.
Eligibility: All participants must be USA Swimming or Masters
Swimming members
Divisions: Open for Male and Female
Awards: Medals for top eight finishers, male and female.
Race Description: The course is out and back running parallel to the
shore, 1.5 km from north to south. The start is on the
South side of Bay Club Pier. Swimmers will swim
southbound on the first leg, keeping the markers on
their left. At the halfway point the swimmers must
round 3 sets of buoys and return to the start pier.
Water temperature is expected to be 70-75 degrees.
Entry Deadline: July 27, 1998
Entry fee: \$15 (\$25 if ordering a t-shirt) payable to Southern
Swimming, Inc., includes lunch after the race
Mail to: James Leavens
6 N. Bay,
Littleton CA.96889
806.555.2457

Name: _____

Sex (circle one): M F

Age: _____

City: _____

State: _____

Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Team: _____

USA Swimming /
USMS Number: _____

Shirt size
)circle one): M L XL

WAIVER AND RELEASE AGREEMENT

Waiver and Release agreements can differ based upon the competition site. Please check with your LSC Safety Chairman.

APPENDIX C. EXAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

STATE OPEN WATER CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Eagle River Swim Club will be hosting the State Open Water Championship at Squash Lake on July 11. Swimmers, who are 12 years and older, will be competing in the 1 mile or 5 kilometer event. Race day begins 9 a.m. at Swamp Beach, in Squash Lake Park.

The women's 5K race will begin at 9 a.m., the men's 5K at 9:15. The women's 1 mile will start at 9:30, the men's 1 mile at 9:45. Last year's winners in the 1 mile took 18 minutes to complete the course and the 5K winner finished in just over one hour.

Three Lakes Swim Club won the team title at the State Open Water Championships here last year. Craig Taylor, a 17-year-old distance ace from Rhinelander, won the 5K and will be returning to defend his title as is Steve Jensen, from nearby Spring Lake, in the 1 mile event. Megan Rose, 16, from Three Lakes is the women's defending 5K champion and is also returning along with teammate Diane Smith, who won last year's one mile.

Three Lakes Swim Club hopes to take away the team trophy, but expects tough competition from Rhinelander Swim Club.

For more information, please contact Brian Walker at 716.555.5746. If there is inclement weather on race day, the competition will be postponed and held at 1 p.m. on Sunday, July 12.

PREPARING NEWS RELEASES

To promote a meet or an upcoming event, writing a press release is one of the necessary steps. There are three important key points to remember.

Accuracy

There will be no mistakes, especially on dates and times of events. Mistakes damage the credibility of the event.

Newsworthiness

The information must be newsworthy as well as genuinely interesting. Don't send press releases about the pool being cleaned. Send a release only when there is a specific event or program to promote.

Timeliness

Send a press release enough in advance of the event so the reporter can plan a schedule around it, and not the other way around.

HELPFUL TIPS FOR WRITING A RELEASE

1. Send the release to a specific person, not a sports desk. At times sending releases to the sports editor may be best, but they are also the ones who get massive stacks of mail. An assistant editor or a reporter won't get as much mail and may be more apt to take notice.
2. Try to keep the press release at one page. Double spacing isn't necessary, but being brief and to the point is a must. Only go to a second page if you are including historical or background information about swimmers or a meet.
3. Include "who, what, where, when and why" at the top of a release.
4. Stick to simple words. Don't try to be a human thesaurus with your vocabulary.
5. Be cautious of "swimspeak." Avoid using jargon that only swimming people may understand.
6. Spell out any abbreviations or acronyms on first mention like LSC (Local Swimming Committee)
7. Verify all the information and spellings before sending out the release. Errors in a release damage credibility.
8. Be sure to include a contact name or names with appropriate phone numbers. A good reporter will not take a press release at face value, but will talk to key people.

APPENDIX D.

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP BID FORM

SAMPLE LETTER

Aug. 6, 1998

TO: Potential Open Water National Championship Bid Candidate

FROM: Brian Schrader, National Team Coordinator

RE: Bid Packet

Enclosed you will find a sample contract for USA Swimming's Open Water National Championships.

If you are interested in bidding for an event, please put together the following information and return it to me at USA Swimming. I will then forward it to Mike Unger, National Events Director; Dave Thomas, Open Water Coordinator; and Rick Walker, National Open Water Coach. They will try to make a decision on sites with the help of the Open Water Committee. Hosts can earn \$3000 to host the 15K or 10K, and at least \$3000 for the 25K with the ability to be reimbursed an additional \$3000 for meet-related expenses (escort craft rentals).

We are looking for sites for the following events on the following dates:

25K Nationals

Late May/early June 1999—Preferred fresh water site. This will be a selection event for the Pan Pacific Championships and the pre-World Championship event.

15K Nationals

Late July 1999—Fresh or salt water.

10K Nationals

Late June/early July 1999 - Fresh or salt water.

PLEASE INCLUDE

Please provide the following information:

- Course design / description: saltwater, freshwater, map if possible.
- Site/location
- Proposed Date of competition
- Water Temperature range for competition date
- Currents/Tides
- Escort Craft contingencies--each athlete needs an escort craft for the 25K and 15K race. 10K race does not require individual athlete escorts.
- Start and finish-area description
- Safety Plan
- Hotel information and distance from venue
- Airport information and distance from venue
- Locker room/changing facilities at venue
- List of events that will be offered (ex. team race, individual, other distances)
- Have you run other open water races?
- Other offering at the event (pre-race meal, t-shirt, etc)
- Contingency plan for race day inclement weather

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you would like some advice on putting together this information, please contact the following:

Dave Thomas
Open Water Staff Liaison
719.866.4578
dthomas@usa-swimming.org

Denny Ryther
Open Water Coordinator
210.921.5234
dryther@accd.edu

David Johnson
Chair
210.491.6132
djohns@neisd.net

USA Swimming's website <www.usaswimming.org> also has extensive open water meet host information online in the Open Water section.

APPENDIX E.

EXAMPLE CHECK (TURN) POINT SHEET

Heat Number	_____	
Sheet Number	_____	
Place	Number	Time
1.	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____
7.	_____	_____
8.	_____	_____
9.	_____	_____
10.	_____	_____
11.	_____	_____
12.	_____	_____
13.	_____	_____
14.	_____	_____
15.	_____	_____
16.	_____	_____
17.	_____	_____
18.	_____	_____
19.	_____	_____
20.	_____	_____
21.	_____	_____
22.	_____	_____
23.	_____	_____
24.	_____	_____
25.	_____	_____

FORM INSTRUCTIONS

When first swimmer swims past check point, write down his/her administrative number. The Referee will advise you how this time is to be recorded. It may done in a variety of ways:

1. Start a stop watch with the first swimmer and record the time on the watch for subsequent swimmers. The first swimmer's time will be 0:00
2. Record the official time of the race (since the start) as each swimmer passes.
3. Record the time of day for all swimmers.
4. Per instruction of the referee take no times, only record the swimmers' numbers.

As each swimmer passes, record the swimmer's number which is written on their arm or back. If you cannot see the swimmer's number, write down some defining characteristics, such as "female, yellow cap with AMA logo, green suit." Also record the swimmer's time with a method indicated above.

Note

It is quite possible that several swimmers will pass the check point at the same time. All the swimmers in the group should be given the same time.

APPENDIX F. SAMPLE FINISH SHEET

EVENT:

PLACE	SWIMMER'S #	PLACE	SWIMMER'S #
1.	_____	31.	_____
2.	_____	32.	_____
3.	_____	33.	_____
4.	_____	34.	_____
5.	_____	35.	_____
6.	_____	36.	_____
7.	_____	37.	_____
8.	_____	38.	_____
9.	_____	39.	_____
10.	_____	40.	_____
11.	_____	41.	_____
12.	_____	42.	_____
13.	_____	43.	_____
14.	_____	44.	_____
15.	_____	45.	_____
16.	_____	46.	_____
17.	_____	47.	_____
18.	_____	48.	_____
19.	_____	49.	_____
20.	_____	50.	_____
21.	_____	51.	_____
22.	_____	52.	_____
23.	_____	53.	_____
24.	_____	54.	_____
25.	_____	55.	_____
26.	_____	56.	_____
27.	_____	57.	_____
28.	_____	58.	_____
29.	_____	59.	_____
30.	_____	60.	_____

FINISH SHEET INSTRUCTIONS

The event space will be filled in by the recorder or person designated by the referee.

The finish judge will fill in the swimmers administrative number in the order and corresponding to the finishing position. This may be accomplished by either having the finishing judge record the number as a swimmer finished or provide a swimmer with a "finishing stick" and filling in the finish order sheet immediately after the swimmer leaves the water.

APPENDIX G. EXAMPLE TIME SHEET

EVENT:

PLACE	FINISH TIME	PLACE	FINISH TIME
1.	_____	31.	_____
2.	_____	32.	_____
3.	_____	33.	_____
4.	_____	34.	_____
5.	_____	35.	_____
6.	_____	36.	_____
7.	_____	37.	_____
8.	_____	38.	_____
9.	_____	39.	_____
10.	_____	40.	_____
11.	_____	41.	_____
12.	_____	42.	_____
13.	_____	43.	_____
14.	_____	44.	_____
15.	_____	45.	_____
16.	_____	46.	_____
17.	_____	47.	_____
18.	_____	48.	_____
19.	_____	49.	_____
20.	_____	50.	_____
21.	_____	51.	_____
22.	_____	52.	_____
23.	_____	53.	_____
24.	_____	54.	_____
25.	_____	55.	_____
26.	_____	56.	_____
27.	_____	57.	_____
28.	_____	58.	_____
29.	_____	59.	_____
30.	_____	60.	_____

TIME SHEET INSTRUCTIONS

The event name etc will be filled in by the recorder or person designated by the meet referee.

As a swimmer finishes his/her time is recorded by a time judge. This time is placed on the time sheet with the concurrence of the head timer. The first place time is recorded adjacent to number one finish position, the second place overall finisher in the number 2 finish position. There is only one finish sheet. Separate times for men and women and the various classification will be determined by the recorders not the timers.

APPENDIX I.

OFFICIALS' CERTIFICATION FORM

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: _____
 Street Address: _____
 City: _____
 State: _____
 Zip: _____
 Home Phone: _____
 Office Phone: _____

CURRENT OPEN WATER OFFICIAL EXPERIENCE

Please include related experiences, i.e. meet director, organizing committee, etc.

	Position/Duties	Date
LSC:	_____	_____
Zone:	_____	_____
National:	_____	_____
International:	_____	_____

PARTICIPATED IN OPEN WATER OFFICIALS WORKSHOP

Location: _____ Date _____

SIGNATURES

The following certification must be signed by the applicant's mentor and the Open Water Swimming Coordinator.

One certification must be for an escorted event.

I certify that I monitored the applicant and he/she performed in a satisfactory manner.

Date _____ Escorted Swim Y (____) or N (____) Mentor _____

Date _____ Escorted Swim Y (____) or N (____) Mentor _____

Date _____ Open Water Swimming Coordinator _____

FEES

(____) New Certification - \$5 (includes patch and pin)

(____) Annual Renewal - \$2

(____) Already Certified as Pool Official - No charge

Make Checks Payable to "USA Swimming"

APPENDIX J. POTENTIAL PITFALLS

1. **Entry Form**
 - a. Publication of event form missed the newsletter deadline.
 - b. LMSC did not grant a sanction.
 - c. Wrong return address or phone number on entry form.
 - d. Wrong date on entry form (you probably used last year's date).
 - e. Incorrect directions to the event.
 - f. Wrong entry fee on entry form.
 - g. Failure to list "wet suit" policy
2. **Weather**
 - a. Air temperature: too hot or too cold
 - b. Water temperature: too hot or too cold
 - c. Wind: too strong or blowing sand which can create choppy water, high surf.
These type of conditions can make it difficult to safely supervise the course
 - d. Fog
3. **Awards**
 - a. Did not arrive or wrong awards arrived (T-Shirts, caps, medals, trophies, etc.)
4. **Area**
 - a. Was booked by someone else or access gate is locked
 - b. Dangerous: broken glass, weeds, beach washed away, excessive ants
 - c. No power for PA system
 - d. Tide too high or low
 - e. Inadequate facilities for the participants (restrooms, changing areas, etc.)
 - f. Improper entry/exit area
 - g. Sharks, jelly fish, crocodiles, or other animal hazards
5. **Equipment**
 - a. Generator: will not start, runs out of gas, left at home
 - b. Tables not available
 - c. Vehicles get stuck in sand or mud
 - d. No course markers
 - e. Registration equipment: pens, pencils, markers to mark swimmers, etc.
 - f. No PA system
6. **Personnel**
 - a. No life guards or EMTs with safety equipment
 - b. Not enough paddlers or escort crafts.
 - c. No workers: starter, finish judges, timers, awards, check in, etc.
 - d. No paper work: entry sheets, liability releases, large course map, results sheets, finish sheets, etc
7. **Safety**
 - a. No life guards or EMTs with safety equipment
 - b. No phone service or other communication equipment

APPENDIX K.

SUGGESTED FINISH SET-UP FOR NATIONALS

STROBE



FINISH BANNER



BUOYS

should be placed
approximately
200-300 meters from
the Finish Banner

BUOY

BUOY