



SWA OPEN WATER SWIMMING RULES

All Swimming WA (SWA) Open Water Swimming competitions shall be governed by SAL's *Rules and By-Laws*, as determined from time to time, with the following exceptions and additions.

All World Championships, World Cups and FINA competitions shall be governed by the rules FINA with the following exceptions and additions and are found on the FINA website <http://www.fina.org>.

1. OPEN WATER SWIMMING

OWS1.1.1 OPEN WATER SWIMMING shall be defined as any competition that takes place in rivers, lakes, oceans or water channels, dams, or rowing course except for 10km events.

OWS1.1.1 MARATHON SWIMMING shall be defined as any 10km event in open water competitions.

FINA OWS1.1.1

OWS1.2 The age limit for all SWA Open Water Swimming events will be as follows:

500m	=	9yrs on day of event
1.25km	=	11yrs on day of event
2.5km	=	12yrs on day of event
5km	=	12yrs on day of event
10km	=	13yrs on day of event

All Swimmers under the age of 11 years of age must have a chaperone swimmer

2. THE VENUE

OWS2.1 The SWA Open Water Swimming competitions shall be conducted at a venue as approved by the SWA Board.

OWS2.2 The course shall be in water that is subject to only minor currents or tide and may be salt or fresh water.

FINA OWS5.2

OWS2.3 A certificate of suitability for use of the venue shall be issued by the appropriate local health and safety authorities upon request by SWA. In general terms the certification must relate to water purity and to physical safety from other considerations.

FINA OWS5.3

OWS2.4 The minimum depth of water at any point on the course shall be 1.40 metres except for SWA events which feature a dry land finish.

FINA OWS5.4

OWS2.5 The water temperature should be a minimum of 16°C. For State Championship events it should be checked on

FINA OWS5.5

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: a Referee, a Member of the Organising Committee and one Coach from the Teams present designated during the Technical Meeting.

OWS2.6 All turns/ alterations of course shall be clearly indicated.

FINA OWS5.6

OWS2.7 A clearly marked craft or platform, containing a Turn Judge, may, for some SWA events, be positioned at all alterations of course in such a manner as not to obstruct swimmer's visibility of the turn

FINA OWS5.7

OWS2.8 All feeding platforms, turning apparatus and Turn Judges' craft /platforms shall be appropriately secured to minimise tidal, wind or other movements.

FINA OWS5.8

- OWS2.9 The final approach to the finish shall be clearly defined with markers of a distinctive colour.
FINA OWS5.9
- OWS2.10 The finish shall be clearly defined and marked.
FINA OWS5.10

3. OFFICIALS

- OWS3.1 The following list of officials may be appointed at Open Water Swimming competitions as required:
FINA OWS2

- A Chief Referee,
- Referees,
- A Chief Judge,
- Chief Timekeeper utilising electronic timing equipment,
- Safety Officer,
- Medical Officer,
- Course Officer,
- Clerk of the Course,
- Recorder,
- Race Judges (one per swimmer) except for events of 10km or less,
- Turn Judges,
- Starter, and
- Announcer

- OWS3.2 For events of 10km or less, a number of the officials duties mentioned above may be combined.

4. DUTIES OF OFFICIALS

CHIEF REFEREE:

- OWS4.1 have full control and authority over all officials and shall approve their assignments and instruct them regarding all special features or regulations related to the competition. The Referee shall enforce all the rules and decisions of FINA, and SWA and shall decide all questions relating to the actual conduct of the competition, the final settlement of which is not otherwise covered by these Rules;
FINA OWS3.1
- OWS4.2 have authority to intervene in the competition at any stage to ensure that the Rules are observed;
FINA OWS3.2
- OWS4.2.1 In case of hazardous conditions that jeopardise the safety of the swimmers and the officials, in conjunction with the Safety Officer he can stop the race;
adjudicate on all protests related to the competition in progress;
- OWS4.3
FINA OWS3.3
- OWS4.4 give a decision in cases where the Judges' decision and times recorded do not agree;
FINA OWS3.4
- OWS4.5 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;
FINA OWS3.5
- OWS4.6 disqualify any swimmer for any violation of the Rules that he personally observes or which is reported to him by other authorised officials. Notwithstanding the provisions

of OWS6.3 hereof the Referee may decide to enforce the disqualification at the end of the race.

OWS4.7 ensure that all necessary officials for the conduct of the competition
FINA OWS3.7 are at their respective posts. He may appoint substitutes for any who are absent, incapable of acting or found to be inefficient. He may appoint additional officials if necessary;

OWS4.8 receive all reports prior to the start of the race from the Clerk of the Course,
FINA OWS3.8 Course Officer and Safety Officer;

REFEREES:

OWS4.9 have authority to intervene in competition at any stage to ensure that FINA Rules are observed.

OWS4.10 disqualify any swimmer for any violation of the Rules that he personally observes.

STARTER:

OWS4.11 start the race in accordance with OWS5 following the signal by the Chief Referee;
FINA OWS3.11

CHIEF TIMEKEEPER:

AOWS4.12 assign each Timekeeper to their positions for the start and finish;

OWS4.13 ensure that a time check is made to allow all persons to synchronise their
FINA OWS3.13 watches with the official running clocks fifteen (15) minutes before start time;

OWS4.14 collect from each timekeeper a card showing the time recorded for each
FINA OWS3.14 swimmer, and, if necessary, inspect their watches; and

OWS4.15 record or examine the official time on the card for each swimmer.
FINA OWS3.15

TIMEKEEPERS:

Unless utilising electronic timing equipment.

OWS4.16 take the time of each of swimmer assigned. The watches must have memory
FINA OWS3.16 and print out capability and shall be certified correct to the satisfaction of the Management Committee;

OWS4.17 start their watches at the starting signal, and only stop their watches when
FINA OWS3.17 instructed by the Chief Timekeeper;

OWS4.18 promptly after each finish record the time and swimmer's number on the time
FINA OWS3.18 card and turn it over to the Chief Timekeeper.

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

CHIEF JUDGE:

OWS4.19 assign each Judge to a position;
FINA OWS3.19

OWS4.20 Record and communicate any decision received from the Referees during the
FINA OWS3.20 competition

OWS4.21 collect after the race, signed results sheets from each Judge and establish the
FINA OWS3.21 result and placings which shall be sent directly to the Chief Referee.

FINISH JUDGES, (three):

OWS4.22 be positioned in line with the finish where they shall have, at all times, a clear
FINA OWS3.22 view of the finish;

- OWS4.23 record after each finish the placing of the swimmers according to the assignment
 FINA OWS3.23 given.
 NOTE: Finish Judges shall not act as Timekeepers in the same event.

EACH RACE JUDGE:

- OWS4.24 be positioned in an escort safety craft (where applicable), assigned by random draw
 prior to the
 FINA OWS3.24 start, so as to be able to observe, at all times, his appointed swimmer;
 OWS4.25 ensure at all times that the Rules of competition are complied with, violations
 FINA OWS3.25 being recorded in writing and reported to a Referee at the earliest opportunity;
 OWS4.26 have the power to order a swimmer from the water upon expiry of any time
 FINA OWS3.26 limit so ordered by the Referee;
 OWS4.27 ensure that his appointed swimmer does not take unfair advantage or commit
 FINA OWS3.27 unsporting impediment on another swimmer and if the situation requires instruct a
 swimmer to maintain clearance from any other swimmer.

TURN JUDGES:

- OWS4.28 be positioned so as to ensure all swimmers execute the alterations in course
 FINA OWS3.28 as indicated in the competition information documents and as given at the prerace
 briefing;
 OWS4.29 record any infringement of the turn procedures on the record sheets provided
 FINA OWS3.29 and indicate the infringement to the Race Judge at the time of infringement by blasts on
 a whistle;
 OWS4.30 promptly upon completion of the event deliver the signed record sheet to the
 FINA OWS3.30 Chief Judge.

SAFETY OFFICER:

- OWS4.31 be responsible to the Referee for all aspects of safety related to the conduct
 FINA OWS3.31 of the competition;
 OWS4.32 check that the entire course, with special regards to the start and finish areas,
 FINA OWS3.32 is safe, suitable, and free of any obstruction;
 OWS4.33 be responsible for ensuring that sufficient powered safety craft are available
 FINA OWS3.33 during the competition so as to provide full safety backup to the escort safety craft;
 OWS4.34 provide prior to the competitions to all swimmers a tide/current chart clearly
 FINA OWS3.34 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;
 OWS4.35 in conjunction with the Medical Officer advise the Chief Referee if, in their opinion,
 FINA OWS3.35 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.

MEDICAL OFFICER:

- OWS4.36 be responsible to the Referee for all medical aspects related to the
 FINA OWS3.36 competition and swimmers;
 OWS4.37 inform the local medical facilities of the nature of the competition and ensure
 FINA OWS3.37 that any casualties can be evacuated to medical facilities at the earliest
 opportunity;
 OWS4.38 in conjunction with the Safety Officer, advise the Chief Referee if, in their opinion,
 FINA OWS3.38 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.

COURSE OFFICER:

- OWS4.39 be responsible to the Management Committee for the correct survey of the
FINA OWS3.39 course,
OWS4.40 ensure the start and finish areas are correctly marked and all equipment has
FINA OWS3.40 been correctly installed and, where applicable, is in working order;
OWS4.41 ensure all course alteration points are correctly marked, and manned prior to
FINA OWS3.41 the commencement of the competition;
OWS4.42 with a Referee and Safety Officer inspect the course and markings prior to
FINA OWS3.42 the commencement of competition;
OWS4.43 ensure that Turn Judges are in position prior to the start of the competition
FINA OWS3.43 and report this to the Referees.

CLERK OF THE COURSE:

- OWS4.44 assemble and prepare swimmers prior to each event and ensure proper
FINA OWS3.44 reception facilities at the finish are available for all swimmers;
OWS4.45 ensure each swimmer is identified correctly with their race number and that all
FINA OWS3.45 swimmers have trimmed fingernails and toenails and are not wearing any jewellery,
including watches;
OWS4.46 be certain all swimmers are present, in the assembly area, at the required
FINA OWS3.46 time prior to the start;
OWS4.47 keep swimmers and officials informed of the time remaining before the start at
FINA OWS3.47 suitable intervals until the last five minutes, during which one minute warnings shall be
given;
OWS4.48 be responsible for ensuring that all clothing and equipment left in the start
FINA OWS3.48 area is transported to the finish area and kept in safekeeping;
OWS4.49 ensure that all swimmers leaving the water at the finish have the basic
FINA OWS3.49 equipment required for their well being should their own attendants not be present at
that time.

RECORDER:

- OWS4.50 record withdrawals from the competition, enter results on official forms, and
FINA OWS3.50 maintain record for team awards as appropriate.
AOWS4.51 Report any violation to the Chief Referee on a signed card detailing the event, the
swimmer's number and rule infringement.

5. THE START

- OWS5.1 All Open Water competitions shall start with all swimmers standing on a fixed
FINA OWS4.1 platform or in water depth sufficient for them to commence swimming on the start
signal.
OWS5.1.1 When starting from a fixed platform swimmers shall be assigned a position on
FINA OWS4.1.1 the platform, as determined by random draw.
OWS5.2 The Clerk of the Course shall keep swimmers and officials informed of the time
FINA OWS4.2 before start at suitable intervals and at one minute intervals for the last five minutes.
OWS5.3 When the number of entries dictate, the start shall be segregated in the Men's and
FINA OWS4.3 Women's competitions. The Men's event shall always start before the Women's event.
OWS5.4 The start line shall be clearly defined by either overhead apparatus or by removable

- FINA OWS4.4 equipment at water level.
- OWS5.5 The 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.
- FINA OWS4.5
- OWS5.6 The Starter shall be positioned so as to be clearly visible to all swimmers.
- FINA OWS4.6
- OWS5.6.1 On the Starter command "Take your marks" they shall take up a starting position with at least one foot at the front of the platform
- FINA OWS4.6.1
- OWS5.6.2 The Starter will give the starting signal when he considers all swimmers are ready
- OWS5.7 The start signal shall be both audible and visual.
- FINA OWS4.7
- OWS5.8 If in the opinion of the Referee unfair advantage has been gained at the start the offending swimmers will be given a yellow or red flag in accordance with OWS 6.3.
- FINA OWS4.8
- OWS5.9 All escort safety craft 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.
- OWS5.10 Although they may start together, in all other respects the Men's and Women's competitions shall be treated as separate events.
- FINA OWS4.10

6. THE RACE

- FINA OWS6
- OWS6.1 All Open Water competitions shall be Freestyle events.
- FINA OWS6.1
- OWS6.2 Race Judges shall instruct any swimmer who is, in their opinion, taking unfair advantage by pacing or slip streaming with the escort craft to move clear.
- FINA OWS6.2
- OWS6.3 Disqualification Procedure
- FINA OWS6.3
- AOWS6.3.1 If in the Opinion of the Chief Referee or Referees, any swimmer, or swimmer's approved representative, or escort safety craft takes advantage by committing any violation of the rules by making intentional contact with any swimmer, the following proceeding shall apply:
- FINA OWS6.3.1
- 1st Infraction:** A yellow flag and a card bearing the swimmer's number shall be raised to indicate and to inform the swimmer that he is in violation of the Rules.
- 2nd Infraction:** A red flag and a card bearing the swimmer's number shall be raised by the Referee (OWS4.6) to indicate and to inform the swimmer that he is for the second time in violation of the Rules. The swimmer shall be disqualified. He must leave the water immediately and be placed in an escort craft, and take no further part in the race.
- AOWS6.3.2 If in the opinion of the Referee, an action of a swimmer or an escort safety craft, or a swimmer's approved representative is deemed to be "Unsporting"
- FINA OWS6.3.2
- OWS6.4 the Referee shall disqualify the swimmer concerned immediately.
- OWS6.4 If applicable escort safety craft shall manoeuvre so as not to obstruct or place themselves directly ahead of any swimmer and not take unfair advantage by pacing or slip streaming.
- FINA OWS6.4
- OWS6.5 If applicable escort safety craft shall attempt to maintain a constant position so as to station the swimmer at, or forward of, the midpoint of the escort safety craft.
- FINA OWS6.5
- OWS6.6 Standing on the bottom during a race shall not disqualify a swimmer, but they may not walk or jump unless approaching the shore line for a dry land finish.
- FINA OWS6.6

- OWS6.7** With the exception of OWS6.6 swimmers shall not receive support from any fixed or floating object and shall not intentionally touch or be touched by their escort safety craft or crew therein.
FINA OWS6.7
- OWS6.7.1** Rendering assistance by an official medical officer to a swimmer in apparent distress should always supersede official rules of disqualification through “intentional contact” with a swimmer (OWS6.7)
FINA OWS6.7.1
- OWS6.8** If applicable each escort safety craft shall contain: a Race Judge, a person of the swimmer’s choice and the minimum crew required to operate the escort safety craft.
- OWS6.9** No swimmer shall be permitted to use or wear any device which may be an aid to their speed, endurance or buoyancy. Goggles, a maximum of two (2) caps, nose clip and earplugs may be used.
FINA OWS6.9
- OWS6.10** Swimmers shall be allowed to use grease or other such substances providing these are not, in the opinion of the Referee, excessive.
FINA OWS6.10
- OWS6.11** The pacing of a swimmer by another person entering the water is not permitted.
FINA OWS6.11
- OWS6.12** Coaching and the giving of instructions by the approved swimmer’s representative on the feeding platform or in the escort safety craft (if applicable) is permitted. No whistle shall be allowed.
- FINA OWS6.12*
- OWS6.13** When taking sustenance swimmers may use Rule OWS6.6 provided Rule OWS6.7 is not infringed.
FINA OWS6.13
- OWS6.14** All swimmers shall have their competition number clearly displayed in waterproof ink on their upper back, arms and hands and caps.
FINA OWS6.14
- OWS6.15** If applicable each escort safety craft shall display the swimmer’s competition number so as to be easily seen from either side of the escort safety craft and the national flag of the swimmer’s Federation.
- AOWS6.16.1** In all National events, time limits shall apply as follows from the finish time of the first swimmers:
FINA OWS6.16.1
- | | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| Events under 25km | = 30 minutes |
| Events of 25km | = 60 minutes |
| Events over 25km | = 120 minutes |
- For all other SWA open water competitions, the following cut off time limits currently applies:
- | | |
|----------|--|
| 1.25km = | 1 hours 20 mins |
| 2.5km = | 1 hours 50 mins |
| 5km = | 2 hours 30 mins |
| 10km = | 3 hours 15 mins (still water only) |
| 10km = | 4 hours 15 mins (except for non ocean swims) |
- OWS6.16.2** Swimmers who do not finish the course within the time limits shall be removed from the water except that the Referee may allow a swimmer outside the time limit to complete the course but not participate in any points or prizes awarded.
FINA OWS6.16.2
- OWS6.17** Emergency Abandonment
FINA OWS6.17
- OWS6.17.1** In cases of emergency abandonment of races of 10km or less, and otherwise in accordance with SWA Crisis Management protocol, the race may be restarted from the beginning at the earliest possible moment, postponed until further notice or cancelled indefinitely at the discretion of the Race Committee.
FINA OWS6.17.1
- OWS6.17.2** In cases of emergency abandonment for any race of longer than 10km, where

FINA OWS6.17.2 the lead swimmer has accomplished at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of the race, the final ranking will be as reported by the Chief Referee. If the lead swimmer has not completed $\frac{3}{4}$ of the race, it will be restarted from the beginning at the earliest moment possible.

7. FINISH OF THE RACE

- OWS7.1
FINA OWS7.1 The area leading to the finish apparatus should be clearly marked by rows of buoys which narrow as they get closer to the finish wall. If applicable, escort safety craft should be stationed at the approach to and entrance of the finish lane to ensure that only the escort safety craft authorised to do so enter or cross this entrance.
- OWS7.2 The finish apparatus should, where possible, be a vertical wall at least 5 metres wide fixed if necessary to floatation devices, securely fastened in place so as not to be moved by wind, tide or force of a swimmer striking the wall. The finish should be filmed and recorded by video system with slow motion and recall facilities including timing equipment.
- OWS7.2.1 When automatic Officiating Equipment is used for timing of competitions in accordance with Rule SWI I, microchip transponder technology capable of providing split times is mandatory and should be added to the Equipment. Use of microchip transponder technology is mandatory for competitions at the World Championships and Olympic Games. Microchip transponder timing technology will be recorded officially in tenths of seconds. The final places will be determined by the referee based upon the finish judges' report and the finish video tape.
- AOWS7.2.2 Where microchip transponder technology is used, it is mandatory for all swimmers to wear a microchip transponder on each wrist throughout the race. If a swimmer loses a transponder the Race Judge or other authorised Official, will immediately inform the Referee who will instruct the responsible official on the water to issue a replacement transponder. Any swimmer who finishes the race without a transponder will be disqualified.
- OWS7.3
FINA OWS7.3 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.
- OWS7.4
FINA OWS7.4 Every effort should be made to ensure that the swimmers' representative can get from the escort safety craft to meet the swimmer as they leave the water.
- OWS7.5
FINA OWS7.5 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.
- OWS7.6
FINA OWS7.6 A member of the Medical Team should inspect the swimmers as they leave the water. A chair, in which the swimmer can sit while an assessment is made, should be provided.
- OWS7.7
FINA OWS7.7 Once cleared by the Medical Member, swimmers should be given access to refreshments.