

SPECIAL OPEN WATER ARTICLES



JACK'S BACK – WALKING THE SIDES OF THE POOL

POTOMAC VALLEY SWIMMING MISSION STATEMENT

Potomac Valley Swimming (PVS) shall promote swimming and foster equal access for competitive opportunities for the benefit of swimmers of all ages and abilities, in accordance with the standards, rules, regulations, policies and procedures of the Federation Internationale de Natation (FINA), USA Swimming (USA-S) and PVS and its Articles of Incorporation. The objectives and primary purpose of PVS shall be the education and assurance of instruction and training of individuals to develop and improve their capabilities in the sport of swimming.



From the Chairman
PVS Officials Committee Chair Tim Husson



The Olympic Games are less than three months away. And, the US Olympic Trials, one of the fastest, most competitive meets in the world is less than six weeks away. Both competitions will have a lot of television coverage, giving our sport the universal exposure we don't often get. It should be exciting.

On the local front, a full schedule of long course meets has already begun. Please continue to support these meets as volunteer officials. It takes more officials to cover the LC pool than the SC pool. Potomac Valley officials have already donated over 20,000 hours of our time to ensure fair competitions during the SC season. On behalf of the swimmers and coaches of Potomac Valley, I thank you.

This month's newsletter includes a couple of articles about open water swimming. If you have not yet experienced an open water competition, it is a lot of fun. Being a turn judge in a boat or a kayak, being a starter on the beach, being a finish judge logging the swimmers as they return from the course, or being an admin official responsible for marking the swimmers with their competitor numbers are jobs we don't get in pool competitions. If you are interested in experiencing it yourself, the Eastern Zone Open Water Meet will be held in Atlantic City, NJ on June 25, and they will do on-the-job training for rookies. If you are interested, I can put you in touch with the meet referee.

I hope to see you at one or more of the meets this summer. Email me your comments and questions anytime.

Tim Husson
OfficialsChair@pvswim.org

Master Safety Plan for Open Water Event by Kurt Thiel



Let's start off with why it is so very important to have one. I think these words from the USA Swimming Open Water Meet Manager's Guide preamble are spot on.



“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.”

Those last words, “...efficiently organized safe swims has become imperative.” is at the heart of the need for a Master Safety Plan and one that isn't just efficient, but also effective and comprehensive. Another small quote to drive home the point comes from the Open Water Referee's Training manual, **“There are significant potential risks to all participants in Open Water Swimming. ... This is not a one-man show - teamwork is paramount. The officiating team must place the safety of the swimmer before all else.”** So that pretty much answers why. Now let's see how we go about doing it in outline form.



1. **Master Safety Plan**

1.1 Safety Plan

Covers the who, what, where, when of the Rescue, Police, First Responder, and

Evacuation of victims.

1.2 **Contingency plan**

The main topic here is Abandonment of a Race that is in the water and how that it will be accomplished. Everyone's roll is spelled out to include the swimmers and all who are on the water

1.3 Emergency Action plan (EAP)

In this document you find the topic of the Distressed Swimmer and the actions the first individual to see a swimmer in distress takes to activate the plan. The EAP can be set in motion by a Lifeguard, a Safety boater, a Turn Judge, the Referee or any other individual who has a position on the Event Staff witnessing, or having firsthand knowledge of a Missing Swimmer. The EAP clearly spells out responsibilities and actions to be taken by each person on the Meet Team. Unfortunately in today's threat environment it also must cover hostile actions of outside forces to disrupt, or take far worse actions, during the event



Open Water Officiating by Sandy Drake - Hawaiian Swimming



Sandy is the Officials Chair for Hawaiian Swimming and is a member of the National Officials Committee responsible for Open Water.

Open Water swimming is often compared to running a marathon. The athletes train much differently than they would in the pool. Officials also are trained differently from pool to open water officiating.



An important difference between pool and open water swimming is the magnitude of safety considerations. OW swimming takes safety to a new level. The pool venue affords an element of protection from climatic conditions and is a controlled environment. There are certain constants we expect at a pool venue: water quality, course length, starting blocks, lane lines, backstroke flags, timing equipment, and a level pool deck for observation.

The OW swimming environment is not controlled. Everything is variable and much is unknown. In the ocean, river, or lake, we also have marine life, water quality, air and water temperature, tides, and currents to consider as part of the overall open water swim venue. Observing the race can be from a boat, the beach, or rocks on a shoreline. The starting line could be on the beach or in the water. The



finish line could be in the water or up the shore by the parking lot. Even events that are run consecutively at the same location year after year can be affected by different weather conditions, changing environmental conditions, varying numbers of entered athletes and volunteer support personnel. Even though an OW swim event is one or two races, it is the complexity of the preparation, the course, and the overall officiating experience that makes it so interesting and fun.

Being an OW official can be very rewarding. No two races are alike. Depending on the venue, escorted or un-escorted races, lake or ocean, we look at each race differently. It is just another exciting way to volunteer your time as an official.

You Make the Call!



After passing under the flags and preparing for a turn during a 100-yard backstroke event, a swimmer turns past the vertical towards the breast and extends his arm while kicking. He does not take an arm pull but continues to kick into the wall then executes a flip turn, leaving the wall on his back.

Question: Should he be disqualified?



Jack's Corner

Thoughts to Ponder by Jack Neill



Walking the Sides

Stroke Judges are a critical part of ensuring fair and equitable competition. The Stroke Judge is responsible for observing the swimmers at the 15 meter mark for all strokes except the breaststroke. After the start, the Stroke Judge walks the side of the pool, actively observing the swimmers as they move down the lanes. Like all officials, SJs should be unobtrusive and inconspicuous.

We often associate the use of Stroke Judges with long course swimming; but if staffing and pool configuration permit, SJs should be used in all competitions. In Potomac Valley, many of our short course venues are designed and configured to make it impossible to use this procedure effectively and fairly.

Turn Judges are often asked to put hands behind their backs; Stroke Judges should keep arms at the side, allowing them to swing naturally as they walk. This aids balance and equilibrium on a crowded, slippery pool deck.

The Stroke Judge must clearly be in position to watch all the swimmers in their jurisdiction. While you may have learned in a clinic that an SJ ideally walks slightly behind the slowest swimmer, not all situations are ideal, especially at an age group meet where swimmers can be widely separated. The Stroke Judge needs to find the position that allows him/her to observe all the swimmers in the jurisdiction as equitably as possible. Sometimes that position is between the swimmers.

When the staffing level allows, two Stroke Judges may work one side of the pool in a “lead-lag” observation as the field spreads out; i.e., the leading SJ observes over the faster swimmer(s) while the following SJ observes the slower swimmer(s). After each turn, the Stroke Judges switch jurisdictions as they begin to walk in the opposite direction. Teamwork and coordination are important between the two SJs to ensure that all of the swimmers are observed fairly.

The deck is crowded at most of our meets. SJs need to watch the competition while safely negotiating the side of the pool, avoiding things like poles, lifeguard stands, and other obstacles—including swimmers and coaches! Be respectful of the people on the side of the pool. Usually a polite word or two will clear the path with swimmers and coaches. Remember that the job of the lifeguards is significantly more important than ours.

And bring your FitBit—the Stroke Judge is one member of the officiating team who gets significant exercise during the session!

You Make the Call Resolution



Recommended Resolution: The swimmer should be disqualified for delay initiating arm pull. Since the arm pull has to be immediate after the shoulders pass vertical, the turning action was not continuous. The fact that the swimmer was kicking has no bearing on the disqualification.

Applicable Rule: 101.4.3

Upcoming Meets



MAY

Date	Meet	Host	Location
6	SNOW SC Spring Classic	SNOW	Claude Moore
7-8	SNOW LC Spring Classic	SNOW	Claude Moore
7-8	LC Derby Meet	FISH	GMU
7-8	Mini Olympics	MACH	Madeira
12-15	Arena Pro Swim Series (LCM)		Charlotte
13-15	Spring LC Classic	RMSC	KSAC
27-29	Virginia State LC Championships	PM	Oak Marr

JUNE

Date	Meet	Host	Location
2-5	Arena Pro Swim Series (LCM)		Indianapolis, IN
2-5	Arena Pro Swim Series (LCM)		Santa Clara, CA
3-5	Maryland State LC Champs	RMSC	Rockville
4-5	June LC Invitational	FISH	GMU
12	PVS LC Open 1	FBST	Lee District
		PAC	Fairland
		MACH	Audrey Moore
17-18	SNOW LC Invitational	SNOW	Claude Moore
17-19	UMAC Red & Black LC Invitational	UMAC	UMD
18-19	PVS LC Distance Meet	FBST	Lee District
25	Eastern Zone Open Water Meet	Middle Atlantic Swimming	Atlantic City, NJ
26	PVS LC Open 2	FBST	Lee District
		FAST	Fairland
		PM	Audrey Moore
26-3	US Olympic Trials	USA Swimming	Omaha, NE



BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT GOES TO THE SWIMMER!

Call what you see and see what you call

