

**LAST GASP OF SUMMER  
OPEN WATER SWIM SAFETY PLAN**

# LAST GASP OF SUMMER OPEN WATER SWIM SAFETY PLAN

## 1 EVENT DESCRIPTION

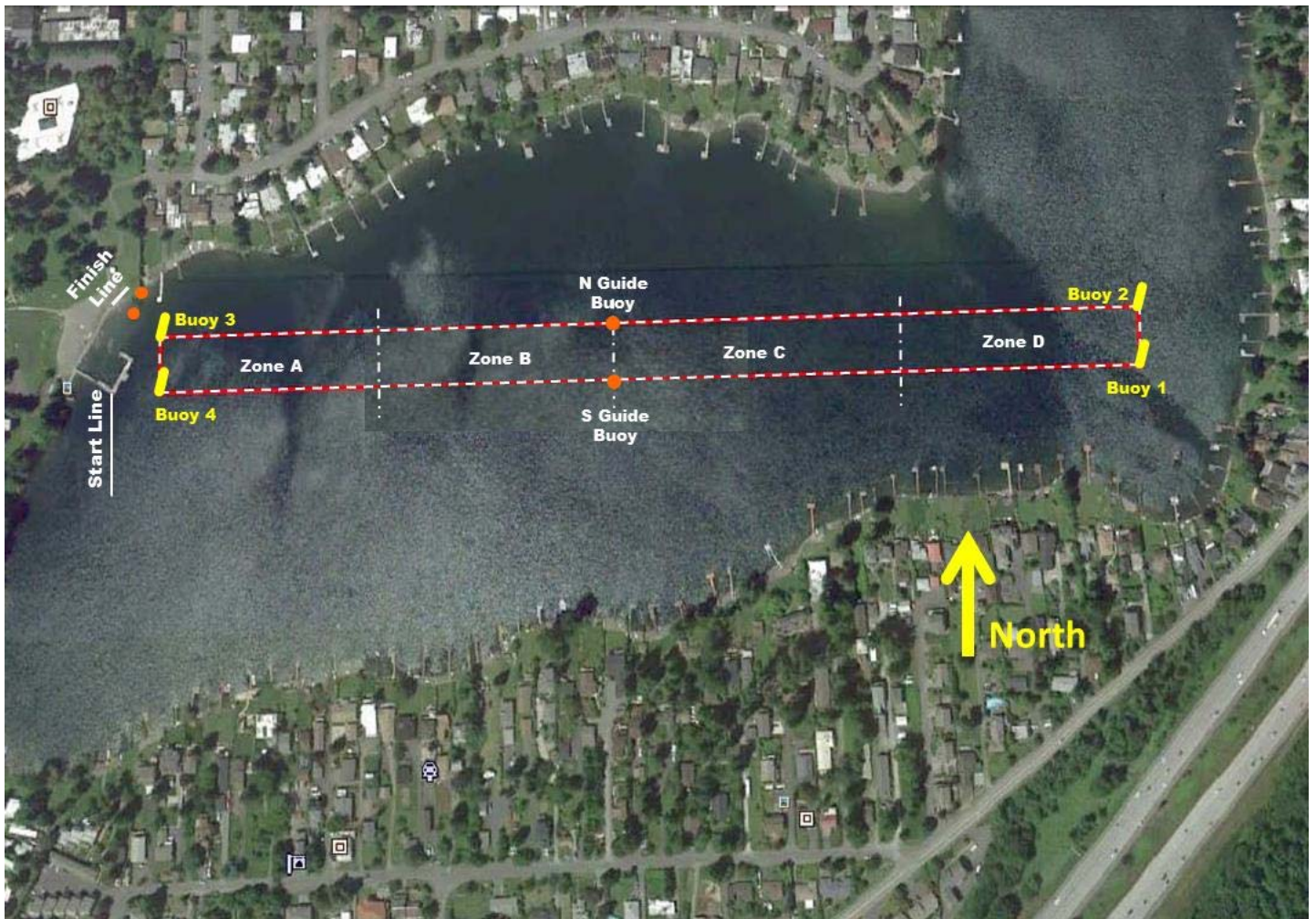
### 1.1 General Description

The September 17th, 2016 event includes an Elite 1.0 Mile, 1.0 mile and 2.0 mile race on a rectangular course at Angle Lake in Seatac, Washington. This meet will be dually sanctioned with USA Swimming. The Elite 1.0 mile race will start at 9:00 am, the 2.0 mile race will start at 10:35am and the 1.0 will start at 10:45 a.m. The last swimmer is expected to finish around 12:15pm. Elite swimmer check in only 8:00 am, the 1.0 and 2.0 check in will start 8:30. All swimmers must attend a mandatory safety meeting Elite Mile 8:30 a.m. and 1.0, 2.0 mile safety meeting at 9:45am. No late check-ins will be allowed.

### 1.2 Swim Race Course

Refer to the course map below. The race course is rectangular, approximately one mile in length swum in a counterclockwise direction (left shoulder turns). It's long in the east/west direction, marked by 4 tall, cylindrical yellow buoys at each corner of the course and two orange guide buoys, one in the approximate center of each of the long legs of the rectangle. The course can be seen in its entirety from the dock and shoreline.

The start line will be located at the southeast corner of the dock, near Buoy 4, and extend south from the corner of the dock as necessary, approximately 50 feet. Buoy 1 is the first turn at the southeast corner of the course. Buoy 2 (turn 2) at the northeast corner, buoy 3 at the northwest corner and Buoy 4 is at the southeast corner. The finish line will be on the beach, past Buoy 3. 2 orange buoys will be set up on the water, designating the finish area. The finish line is on the beach.



# LAST GASP OF SUMMER OPEN WATER SWIM SAFETY PLAN

## 1.3 Expected Race Conditions

Water temperature is expected to be in the upper sixties

## 1.4 Race Day Schedule

### 1.4.1 USMS Open Water Sprint Distance National Championship

7:30 am Registration opens

8:30 am MANDATORY Safety Meeting

8:45 am Chip check-in and warmups

9:00 am START USMS Open Water National

### 1.4.2 USA and USMS 1 Mile, 2 Mile and Fun Swim

9:00 am Registration opens

10:15 am MANDATORY Safety Meeting

10:40 am Chip check-in and warmups

11:00 am START USA 2 Mile Swim

11:05 am START USMS 2 Mile Swim

11:10 am START USA 1 Mile Swim

11:15 am START USMS 1 Mile Swim

11:20 AM START Fun Swim

11:35 am START USA 500 Meter swim at the conclusion of the 2 Mile Swim

## 1.5 Race Director

Mike Murphy [MeetDirector@BlueWave-Aquatics.com](mailto:MeetDirector@BlueWave-Aquatics.com) 206-316-0234

## 1.6 Safety Director

Jim Davidson [jedavidson98001@yahoo.com](mailto:jedavidson98001@yahoo.com) 253-569-8047

## 1.7 Head Lifeguard POC

Ken Rice [kenriceswims@gmail.com](mailto:kenriceswims@gmail.com) 360-790-0537

## 1.8 Meet Referee

Meet Referee: Connie Sholdra [sholdras@yahoo.com](mailto:sholdras@yahoo.com) 425-255-2608

## 1.9 Asst Meet Director

Wendy Neely [wendymal@mac.com](mailto:wendymal@mac.com) 206-793-9391

## 1.10 Meet Registrar

Angela Turley, [registrar@bluewave-aquatics.com](mailto:registrar@bluewave-aquatics.com) 253-797-4920

# LAST GASP OF SUMMER OPEN WATER SWIM SAFETY PLAN

## 1.11 First Aid and Medical Assistance

There will be 2 medical doctors on site, on shore. All calls to 911 Emergency response or local hospitals will be made by the medical staff on site, not by other personnel, in order to increase the clarity of the communicated information and to speed proper advanced medical treatment.

## 1.12 EMT Boat

An EMT boat (exempt from propeller guards) will be patrolling the South side of the course, available to render aid and medical assistance as necessary. The boat will have a safety radio on board.

## 1.13 Emergency hospital:

Nearest emergency hospital: Highline Medical Center

Phone: 206-244-9970

Address: 16251 Sylvester Rd SW Burien, WA 98166

Distance from site: 3.2 miles

## 2 Roles and Requirements

For day of race communication purposes the course will be divided into 4 roughly equal and rectangular zones: A, B, C, and D. Zone A will be the most westerly closest to the start and finish, containing Buoys 3 and 4. Zone D will be the most easterly, furthest away from the start and finish, containing Buoys 1 and 2. Zones B & C, the middle zones, will be split by the middle guide buoys.

For the purposes of this safety plan, the victim or distressed swimmer will be referred to as *DS*.

### 2.1 Safety Director

Safety Director will be responsible for safe conduct of the race. The safety director will verify that the thresholds for weather and visibility support the start of the swim. He will also communicate with boats periodically to check on the progress of the race and to account for the number of swimmers in the water. He will confirm that all swimmers are accounted for upon exit as explained in Section 5.0 and will be the prime point of responsibility to initiate any emergency water evacuation as explained in Section 6.2. The Safety Director will complete the Safety Director's Checklist (see page 13).

### 2.2 Lifeguards (12-16)

There will be a maximum ratio of 15 swimmers to 1 lifeguard. The intent of the lifeguards and kayakers is to provide a ready response to swimmers in distress, and to initiate rescue, provide first response, treatment and transportation to safety and advanced care.

- **Head Lifeguard-** Will give pre-race briefing to all lifeguards. Will be on shore with a safety radio coordinating lifeguards and, if necessary, rescue efforts.
- **East and West Lead Lifeguards-** will be in a kayak with whistle, flag, safety radio and rescue tube, West Lifeguard is responsible for coordinating lifeguards in Zones A & B. East Lifeguard is responsible for coordinating lifeguards in Zones C & D. Both lead lifeguards will receive direction from the Head Lifeguard. May make first contact with DS.
- **Long board Lifeguards-** will be on a long board with whistle and flag, one long board lifeguard in each of four zones. Responsible for reaching and moving DS to EMT boat or shore, whichever is most expedient. May make first contact with DS.
- **Kayak Lifeguards-** will be in kayaks with whistle, flag, and rescue tube. Two or three in each zone. Responsible for identifying swimmers in distress, making first contact with distressed swimmer (DS), if necessary, assisting DS until long board lifeguard arrives to move DS.

# LAST GASP OF SUMMER OPEN WATER SWIM SAFETY PLAN

## 2.3 Kayakers (4-8)

You are here to (1) keep swimmers from swimming outside of observed area, (2) watch for swimmers in distress, and (3) escort any swimmers withdrawing or needing rescue to EMT boat, to observation boat, or to shore.

The non-lifeguard kayakers will wear a personal flotation device (PFD), as well as have an extra flotation device i.e. rescue tube or foam noodle. They will also have a whistle and flag. Non-lifeguard kayakers are there to help ensure swimmer safety and to follow lag/last swimmers in each event. The non-lifeguard kayakers may offer assistance in the way of flotation devices but must defer to lifeguards if DS requires more assistance than flotation aid.

Kayakers should be experienced and come equipped for up to two hours of slow paddling. Boat must be seaworthy. Life jackets required. Bring the following if you have them:

- Red Flag (will be provided)
- Cell phone
- Flotation device i.e. rescue tube or foam noodle (will be provided)
- Extra life jacket

## 2.4 Swim Officials (4-6)

Swim officials in kayaks, wearing PFDs, will have a whistle and flag, extra flotation device, course radio, and cell phone. Some swim officials will be posted at turns and others will be following and observing groups of swimmers. Although swim officials are not in the water specifically for the safety of the swimmers, they may offer assistance in the way of flotation devices but must defer to lifeguards if DS requires more assistance than flotation aid.

## 2.5 Observation Boat

There will be one observation boat, located near the southeast corner of the course, at least 50 feet away from the swimmers. The boat will be manned by the captain and a swimmer monitor (USMS OW-102.2.2B). The boat will have a whistle, flag, and rescue tube or foam noodle flotation device. The boat will have cell phones for contacting race officials. It will also have warming blankets. The boat will be available for swimmers at the far end of the course who are not in need of medical attention but are too tired to continue with the race. The boat engine will be turned off if swimmers approach within 25 feet of the boat. The Captain and Safety director will complete the Boat Operator's Checklist (see page 15).

## 3 Race Day Operations

### 3.1 Pre Race

VOLUNTEERS PRE-RACE Meeting

7:45 am is the lifeguard and safety crew meeting conducted by Safety Director-Scott Lautman and/or Meet Director -Mike Murphy, Head Lifeguard –Ken Rice, and Lead Kayaker- TBD. During this 20-minute meeting we will review procedures for:

- Communication
- Swimmer rescue
- Course patrol and boat order
- Contact information
- Procedures for course evacuation

MANDATORY SAFETY/COURSE TALK FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS

## LAST GASP OF SUMMER OPEN WATER SWIM SAFETY PLAN

At 8:30 am and 1.0 and 2.0 miles safety meeting at 9:45 am the race director, safety coordinator and head lifeguard will host safety talk mandatory for all participants. All swimmers will be issued and marked with a unique competitor number during the registration process. They will also be given a ticket to enter the water. At this point no swimmer is allowed in the water without handing in their ticket to the appointed ticket official. Course description and conditions, distressed swimmer, early exit/race abandonment and personal responsibility will be covered in this briefing.

### VOLUNTEERS IN WATER READY TO GO

- All lifeguards and kayakers must be at the start area ready to go by 9:40 a.m.
- Be in the water by 9:45 a.m., the race starts at 10:00 a.m.

### 3.2 Swim Caps

Swimmers will be provided swim caps in high visibility colors. Cap colors, TBD, will be organized by event distance.

### 3.3 Race Start

The race will start in the water. The swimmers will hand their ticket to the appointed ticket official, walk over the timing pad then down to the water. The swimmers for each distance will gather in the water near the start line which will be between two small orange buoys. There will be a 2 minute, 1 minute, 30 seconds, and 15 second warnings prior to the start. The race start signal will consist of a whistle caution, then the starting official will raise one arm, then simultaneously lower the arm and sound a marine air horn to signal the start. The race will proceed from the start toward the southeast buoy (buoy #1) then counterclockwise around the course.

### 3.4 Communications

There will be two sets of radios, one set for course officials (course radio), and the other set for safety personnel (safety radio), including designated lifeguards, EMT boat, and safety officer. The race director will carry a radio from each set.

For kayakers, bring a cell phone if you have one. Race Director's (Mike Murphy) number is 206-316-0234. Safety Officer's (Scott Lautman) number is 206-669-6695. Meet referee (Connie Sholdra) 425-255-2608. All three are able to communicate by course radio and/or safety radio.

### 3.5 Course Patrol

#### 3.5.1 Lifeguards

Lifeguards monitor for swimmers showing signs of distress. Follow lifeguards instruction detailed in **4.6.1 Swimmer Rescue** for coordinated rescues with kayaks.

Lifeguards shall return to the race start and check in with their group POC after the swimmers have all finished.

#### 3.5.2 Kayakers

Kayakers should be watching for any swimmers in distress and alert your radio operator so that he/she can notify the Head Lifeguard/Safety Officer/Race Director.

Keep an eye out for other boats (There should be no other boats other than kayaks, observation boat(s) and the EMT boat).

If you see a swimmer heading off course, use your flag, paddle or shout to get their attention. Do not be shy about herding them back onto the course, but please try your best to not harm the swimmer in your attempt to redirect them.

## LAST GASP OF SUMMER OPEN WATER SWIM SAFETY PLAN

Avoid following swimmers off the course unless necessary to redirect them *back* to the course. In other words, don't keep moving out just because they are. Swimmers will follow you, right or wrong. Be a good guidepost for swimmers, encourage (and/or herd) the errant swimmers back on course.

If someone wants to abandon the race, please ask them to hold on to your boat and escort or direct them to a row boat for pick up. Do not allow them to swim to shore if at all possible. If they insist, please try to get their name and race number and relay that to a row boat, again, if at all possible.

Please remember that you are watching all the swimmers in your area. Do NOT follow an individual swimmer, you are not a personal escort.

In past events, some swimmers have insisted on having a kayak accompany them along the entire race course. This is not allowed. It jeopardizes everyone's safety.

### 3.6 Swimmer Patrol

#### 3.6.1 Swimmer Rescue

If you witness a medical emergency or if a kayaker, paddleboard or swimmer notifies or approaches you with a medical emergency, **NOTIFY THE RACE DIRECTOR/SAFETY OFFICER IMMEDIATELY!!** This is the fastest, most reliable communication to initiate a rescue.

If a swimmer is panicking or appears in trouble, signal a kayak, and/or lifeguard.

Lifeguards are intended to be the first response to rescues if they are available. If a DS requires assistance, the lifeguard making first contact will determine the type of assistance to offer. In each case the lifeguard will wave their flag to get the Lead Lifeguard's attention. Lead Lifeguard should make their way toward DS and inform Head Lifeguard of situation by radio.

A kayak may notify nearest long board lifeguard by whistle and/or flag that a swimmer requires a non-medical rescue. If a lifeguard is unable to reach the swimmer, quickly approach the swimmer, give them a flotation device (rescue tube, foam noodle). If reasonable, direct them to nearest observation boat (south side of course), or start/finish area.

As a last resort, allow the swimmer to hold onto your boat. Use caution, a panicked swimmer can dump a kayak easily and quickly. Get them to the stern and tow them to nearest longboard lifeguard, EMT boat, observation boat, or start/finish area.

Any swimmer rescued by a paddle board or kayak will be removed from the race. If a swimmer must be rescued for any reason the Head Lifeguard will notify the Race Director/Safety Officer. It may be necessary to fill out an incident report. Obtain swimmer name and number and general condition. Relay information to Race Director/Safety Officer, also noting time and approximate location along the course.

If the rescued swimmer does not need medical care (e.g. fatigue), get swimmer into a boat or to the start/finish area and comfortable. Offer blanket and keep swimmer on board until docked at race finish.

If the swimmer rescued requires medical attention

- If DS requires immediate medical assistance, lifeguard making initial contact will wave flag and blow whistle. Long board lifeguard should proceed immediately to DS location
- Long board lifeguards and/or EMT boat will evacuate any swimmer needing medical attention.
- Lead lifeguard must radio to head lifeguard that a rescue is being conducted so medical staff on dry land can call 911.
- Identify yourself and your location when radioing to the medical staff and follow outline above.
- The onsite medical personnel will determine the immediate course of treatment, and whether the swimmer should be transported to medical facilities.

## LAST GASP OF SUMMER OPEN WATER SWIM SAFETY PLAN

When the rescue is complete, notify to Race Director/Safety Officer that rescue concluded and boat returned to position or has ferried swimmer to extraction point if medical emergency is determined. Note that swimmer has withdrawn, restate swimmer's name, number and condition, time of rescue.

If required by Race Director, fill out incident report at conclusion of race.

### 3.6.2 Tired swimmers

A rest is different than needing help. Ask the swimmer if they need a rest or need help.

If the swimmer just needs a rest, offer a flotation device but let the swimmer know if they hold on to the kayak or other flotation device, according to the rules of the competition, they are out of the race and will not be counted in the official results. The swimmer may accept the flotation device, and when ready, continue the swim or quit the race. If the swimmer opts to quit the race, the lifeguard or kayaker will follow swimmer to the observation boat or to shore where swimmer must inform officials that he/she is out of the water, and turn in their timing chip.

A swimmer needing to hang onto the kayak can hang onto the bow (preferably) or stern, but not the sides.

Whether the swimmer quits the swim or continues with the swim, lead lifeguard should inform head lifeguard, who will in turn, inform officials of situation.

### 3.6.3 Pulling a swimmer

When to pull a swimmer

1. If a swimmer demands you paddle next to them.
2. If a swimmer is incapable of staying on course and you are spending all of your time corralling one individual
3. Safety Officer/Race Director/Head Lifeguard determines if the last swimmer needs to be pulled, and if so will radio that information to either lead lifeguards or officials in kayaks.
4. Use your best judgement.

Procedure for pulling swimmers should generally follow that for non-medical emergencies. Swimmers pulled from the race will remain with the pick-up boat until the end of the race. Notify the Safety Director of pulled swimmer noting swimmer's name and number and approximate time.

1. Clearly explain your decision. Tell, don't ask. And don't argue.
2. Direct the swimmer to follow you to shore, to an observation boat, to a long board lifeguard, or to the EMT boat.
3. When swimmer is on boat, move back to your place on the edge of the course.

### 3.6.4 Swimmers abandoning the course:

If a boater sees a swimmer heading toward shore and clearly abandoning the race, notify the Safety Director of the location and time. Attempt to get the swimmer's name and number.

If unable to obtain name and number, direct the nearest kayak to attempt to do so.

Notify safety and Race Director if swimmer's ID unknown.

### 3.6.5 Slow Swimmer Cut-Off

Swimmers that will clearly finish outside of the 1:30 hour time limit, you will be pulled from the event.



## LAST GASP OF SUMMER OPEN WATER SWIM SAFETY PLAN

### 3.7 Race Finish

The finish of the race will require the swimmers to exit the water and cross a timing mat near the water's edge on the beach. Once the race chip crosses the mat, the competitors will have completed the race.

2 orange buoys will be set up on the water, designating the finish area. The finish line is on the beach

Volunteers will also manually record the number of each finisher. Manual and electronic finisher lists will be cross-checked to assure a complete count.

### 4 Swimmer Tracking

At Check-in/registration, each swimmer will be given a ticket and an electronic ankle chip with their race number. Swimmers' bodies will be clearly marked with their numbers.

All swimmers will provide their own cell phone number, as well as the name and cell number of the person (handler) remaining on land and accompanying that swimmer to the event.

Before the start of every swim event, the swimmers will line up in front of the entry area. The swimmers will affix the chip to their ankle and will turn over their ticket to a designated race volunteer who will verify that their ticket number matches the number on the swimmer before entering the water. The sole purpose of the ticket is to know who exactly has entered the water. If the swimmer does not have their ticket they may not enter the water. These numbers will be recorded and confirmed upon exit at the swim finish. Start volunteers observe the start area to confirm all swimmers cross the start sensor and do not inadvertently enter the water without their starting chip being registered in the automated count.

Once exiting the swim, the swimmer will be required to cross a timing mat which will also track competitors as completing the race. Volunteers will also manually take the number of each finisher. Manual and electronic finisher lists will be cross-checked to assure a complete count.

When swimmers voluntarily withdraw or are removed from the race, they must notify a race official as soon as possible. Their chip numbers are relayed to the safety director who informs operators of the timing service after which they will be checked off the list.

If a swimmer is reported missing, the announcer, over the PA system, will ask the swimmer to come to the registration table. The race director will call the swimmer's cell phone. If the swimmer cannot be reached, the next call will be to the swimmer's handler. If the swimmer cannot be located, 911 will be called by the medical staff and the lifeguards will start an under-water search.

### 5 Cancellation Plan

Cancellation triggers are conditions that would make it unsafe to proceed with the swim, and may either be present at the start of the swim or have a high probability of developing during the swim. Cancellation triggers include:

Visibility: Factors may include fog, rain, smoke, or haze.

Rain: Hard rain that affects course visibility, makes sighting/navigation difficult for swimmers, or affects ability of crew to monitor swimmers.

Wind: Wind that makes sighting/navigation difficult for swimmers, or affects ability of crew to monitor swimmers.

Traffic: Swimmers will be pulled from water if immediate danger from private boating is present. Swimmers may resume swimming after hazard is removed.

Other: Severe weather, such as lightning; Thunderstorm activity in the area will be tracked for potential time of arrival at the race site.

# LAST GASP OF SUMMER OPEN WATER SWIM SAFETY PLAN

## 5.1 Prior to the event start

The race director is responsible for determining and announcing event cancellation after consultation with the safety director.

Check in the athletes and hand out any caps and shirts.

Announce plans for rescheduling if possible.

If cancellation is due to something completely beyond the control of the event hosts (i.e. weather), any refund will be calculated from any funds saved with cancellation.

## 5.2 During the event

The Race Director and Safety Officer are responsible for determining and announcing event cancellation. Race Director and Safety Officer will also determine if an alternative finishing area is needed.

Notify lifeguards and officials on the water immediately by radio that the event has been canceled.

Lifeguards and officials shall inform swimmers of cancellation.

Guards, kayaks shall direct and follow swimmers to start/finish area, observation and EMT boats, or the north side of the course.

Verify that all entrants have been accounted for.

## 5.3 Parameters for Abandoning the Race

- Any one of the following individuals are empowered to independently order the race abandoned due to unsafe course or other conditions: Meet Referee, Meet Director or Safety Officer
- If the race is to be abandoned, radios will be used to communicate to all water craft.
- From the Referee, the abandonment signals will be 5 short blasts followed by one long blast.
- From the Lifeguards, the abandonment signals will be 5 short blasts of the whistle followed by one long blast.
- Swimmers are to discontinue swimming and look for directions from the Officials or water craft personnel. Once safe on shore, make sure they get checked off as being safely out of the water

## 5.4 Race Alteration

The race conduct may be altered to accommodate inclement weather, change in course conditions or insufficient personnel to conduct the event as planned. The objective will be to ensure that there is adequate coverage by race officials and safety personnel for a safe event. Options for alterations include shortening the course and/or changing the timing and number of swimmers starting in each wave. The Meet Director, Referee and Safety Director shall agree on the final alteration plan. In the unlikely event that water temperature is projected to rise above 78° or falls below 60°, race entrants will be notified by email that wetsuits will be required in the case of cold water or prohibited in the case of warm water. Facilities to mitigate these conditions (warming tent, cooling station) will also be put in place.

## 6 Insurance Certificate Information

Insurance for USMS swimmers is provided through US Masters Swimming upon sanction of the race by that body.

# LAST GASP OF SUMMER OPEN WATER SWIM SAFETY PLAN

## 7 Handouts and Briefings

### 7.1 SWIMMER RESPONSIBILITIES HANDOUT reviewed at Safety Briefing

The event's success requires the swimmers accept certain responsibilities. In addition to recognizing the risk inherent to exercise in cold water (e.g., heart attack, hypothermia, drowning), every participant is expected to abide by the following:

- No guide is available. The kayaks, boats and paddleboards are there for the safety of the group, not as individual escorts or safety marshals. Expect to follow the course with the help of adjacent swimmers and buoys, not with the personal aid of the boaters.
- Do keep an eye out for your fellow swimmers. Help them stay on course. If you see another swimmer clearly in distress, summon a kayak or paddleboard and stay in contact with the swimmer.
- If you decide to abandon the event midway, DO NOT swim to the closest shore. Rather, notify a kayak and they will escort you to the observation boat, the EMT boat, or to shore.
- If you are tired or injured and need assistance, summon help from a kayak or paddleboard; this is why they are here.
  - When a lifeguard or official approaches, clearly explain the nature of your problem. Be accurate when assessing your condition or circumstance. Don't sugar coat it, don't cry wolf.
  - If you are injured or have a medical emergency, enlist the help of a lifeguard. They are trained in first aid and lifesaving. If unable to reach a lifeguard, explain your situation to the nearest kayak or swimmer. If urgent, BE VERY EXPLICIT.
  - If you need a rest or simply want a break and require a flotation device, raise and wave your hand, look for and get the attention of a kayaker.
  - Listen to whatever direction or instructions are provided by the lifeguard or official in the kayak.
  - If injured or needing medical attention, you will be transported to an EMT boat or to shore, whichever is more expedient. If uninjured but withdrawing from the race, a kayak or long board will escort or transport you to an observation boat or to shore.
- If you are showing signs of distress, are obviously unable to follow the course, or will clearly finish outside of the 1:30 hour time limit, you will be pulled from the event.
  - If you are pulled, do not argue with lifeguards or officials. They are looking after the safety of all the swimmers, not one.
  - You will either be escorted by a kayaker, or transported by a long board as appropriate.
- If transported or escorted to an observation boat, you will remain on the boat until that boat is authorized to return to the finish area. While on the boat, the boat crew will radio or call in your location and that you are out of the race. When you return to the finish area, **you must check in with a race official** and return your electronic timing chip.
- If you start the race and subsequently abandon it for any reason, you must report to a race official and return your chip. If you start the race but do not check in at the finish, we will conclude you are still on the course. If the race is over and your time chip has not been returned, we will assume the worst and we will begin search and rescue procedures for you.
- If you have sustained minor injuries and are able to remain at the race venue (ashore), notify the Race Director or Safety Officer. You will be expected to complete an incident report describing the nature of your accident, illness, or condition.
- If the race is to be abandoned, , the abandonment signals will be 5 short blasts of the whistle followed by one long blast. Swimmers are to discontinue swimming and look for directions from the Officials or water craft personnel. Once safe on shore, make sure they get checked off as being safely out of the water

# LAST GASP OF SUMMER OPEN WATER SWIM SAFETY PLAN

## 7.2 Kayaker/Lifeguard Briefing

### 7.2.1 Communication

Kayaks and lifeguards will have whistles and flags. Use both only if they need assistance with a swimmer. Use them to flag down errant swimmers, or to get the attention of lifeguards, other kayakers and paddleboards. Bring a cell phone if you have one. Race Director's (Mike Murphy) number is 206-316-0234. Safety Officer's (Scott Lautman) number is 206-669-6695. Meet referee (Connie Sholdra) 425-255-2608. All three are able to communicate by course radio and/or safety radio.

### 7.2.2 General Course Patrol

You are here to (1) keep swimmers from swimming outside of observed area, (2) watch for swimmers in distress, and (3) escort any swimmers withdrawing or needing rescue to EMT boat, to observation boat, or to shore.

- Kayakers should be watching for any swimmers in distress and alert your radio operator so that he/she can notify the Head Lifeguard/Safety Officer/Race Director.
- Keep an eye out for other boats (There should be no other boats other than kayaks, observation boat(s) and the EMT boat).
- If you see a swimmer heading outside the observed area or into a dangerous situation (i.e. swimming into a dock, etc.), use your flag, paddle, or shout to get their attention. Do not be shy about herding them back to safety, but please try your best to not harm the swimmer in your attempt to redirect them
- Avoid following swimmers off the course unless necessary to redirect them back to safety.
- If someone wants to abandon the race, please ask them to hold on to your boat (stern or aft – never the sides) and signal a lifeguard for assistance. If they are able to swim back to shore or an observation boat, follow them. Get their name and race number and relay that information to an official on shore, or to a lead lifeguard with a radio.
- Please remember that you are watching all the swimmers in your area. Unless directed by a race official or lead lifeguard, do NOT follow one swimmer, *you are not a personal escort*.
- When to pull a swimmer from the competition:
  - If a swimmer demands you paddle next to them.
  - If a swimmer is incapable of staying on course and you are spending all of your time corralling one individual
  - Safety Officer/Race Director/Head Lifeguard determines if the last swimmer needs to be pulled, and if so will radio that information to either lead lifeguards or officials in kayaks.
  - Use your best judgment.
- Pulling a swimmer from competition
  - Clearly explain your decision. Tell, don't ask. And don't argue.
  - Direct the swimmer to follow you to shore, to an observation boat, to a long board lifeguard, or to the EMT boat.
  - When swimmer is on long board, boat, or shore, go back to your assigned position.
- Action for Aiding a Distressed Swimmer: If a DS requires assistance, the lifeguard making first contact will determine the type of assistance to offer. In each case the lifeguard will wave their flag to get the Lead Lifeguard's attention. Lead Lifeguard should make their way toward DS and inform Head Lifeguard of situation by radio. If DS requires immediate medical assistance, lifeguard making initial contact will wave flag and blow whistle. Long board lifeguard should proceed immediately to DS location.

## **LAST GASP OF SUMMER OPEN WATER SWIM SAFETY PLAN**

- If DS is tired but in relatively good shape. Offer a flotation device but let the swimmer know if they hold on to the kayak or other flotation device, according to the rules of the competition, they are out of the race and need to swim directly to an observation boat or the finish line. Swimmer may, when ready, continue with race or accept flotation device. If the swimmer opts to quit the race, the lifeguard or kayaker will follow swimmer in observation boat or to shore where swimmer must inform officials that he/she is out of the water, and turn in their timing chip. Whether the swimmer quits the swim or continues with the swim, lead lifeguard should inform head lifeguard, who will in turn, inform officials of situation.
- If DS requires medical assistance and cannot swim out on their own, the long board lifeguard will take the swimmer to either the EMT boat or in to shore.

### **7.2.3 Swimmer rescue**

- If a swimmer is panicking or appears in trouble, whistle and signal with the flag for lead lifeguard and long board.
- Lifeguards are intended to be the first response to rescues if they are available. The lifeguard making first contact will determine the type of assistance to offer. In each case the lifeguard will wave their flag to get the Lead Lifeguard's attention. Lead Lifeguard should make their way toward DS and inform Head Lifeguard of situation by radio.
- If a lifeguard is unable to reach the swimmer, quickly approach the swimmer, give them a flotation device (rescue tube, foam noodle). If reasonable, direct them to nearest observation boat (south side of course), dock or shore (north side of course).
- As a last resort, allow the swimmer to hold onto your boat. Use caution, a panicked swimmer can dump a kayak easily and quickly. Get them to the stern and tow them to nearest longboard lifeguard, EMT boat, observation boat, or shore (start/finish area).
- If a swimmer is rescued, contact the Head Lifeguard at the end of the race. It may be necessary to fill out an incident report.

### **7.2.4 Race Cancellation**

- If the race is to be abandoned, radios will be used to communicate to all water craft.
- From the Referee, the abandonment signals will be 5 short blasts followed by one long blast.
- From the Lifeguards, the abandonment signals will be 5 short blasts of the whistle followed by one long blast.
- Swimmers are to discontinue swimming and look for directions from the Officials or water craft personnel. Once safe on shore, make sure they get checked off as being safely out of the water

# USMS Open Water Guide to Operations

## Part 2: Open Water Safety Guidelines

Revision Date: February 2015

### Addendum B: Safety Directors Checklist

The following safety considerations and checklist should be followed for all USMS sanctioned open water swims. Please complete the checklist. The event director should keep it on file for one year following completion of the practice, clinic or event.

#### Event Information

Basic Information			
Name of Event:	Click to enter event name.	Sanction Number:	Enter sanction#
Event Location:	Click to enter location.	Event Dates:	Start Date through End Date
City:	Click here to enter text.	State: 2 character	LMSC:PNA
Expected air temp: Deg. F	Expected water temp: Deg. F	Wetsuits: Choose an item	
Length of Race(s):	Click here to enter text.		

Key Event Personnel		
Director(s): Race Director:, Safety Director:		
Phone: 000-000-0000	E-mail: Click here to enter text.	
Referee:	Phone: 000-000-0000	E-mail: Click to enter e-mail address
Safety Director: Steve Booth	Phone: 000-000-0000	E-mail: Click to enter e-mail address
Independent Safety Monitor: ISM name.	Phone: 000-000-0000	
Lead onsite medical personnel: Name.	Phone: 000-000-0000	

#### Checklist

##### Emergency Action Plans

- |    |  |           |
|----|--|-----------|
| 1. | Posted emergency plans for severe weather conditions or natural disasters?                     | Yes or No |
| 2. | Phone/cell phone/radios on-site for direct communication to emergency facilities?              | Yes or No |
| 3. | Licensed or certified EMT or medical assistance available on-site or within 10 minutes travel? | Yes or No |
| 4. | Route maps to emergency facilities and phone numbers posted and available?                     | Yes or No |
| 5. | Procedures for swimmers/officials/volunteers needing emergency care?                           | Yes or No |

#### About U.S. Masters Swimming

U.S. Masters Swimming, founded in 1970, is a membership-operated national governing body that promotes health, wellness, fitness and competition for adults through swimming. It does so by partnering with more than 1,500 adult swim programs across the country; promoting information via the bimonthly member magazine, SWIMMER, monthly e-newsletters, STREAMLINES, and website, usms.org; and by sanctioning and promoting pool, open water and virtual events and competitions. More than 55,000 adults are registered members of U.S. Masters Swimming.

# USMS Open Water Guide to Operations

## *Part 2: Open Water Safety Guidelines*

### Safety of On-Site Facilities

1. Locker rooms, showers and rest rooms free of hazardous conditions? Yes or No
2. Non-moveable obstructions clearly marked, rendered safe by cover and/or pointed out to officials/competitors? Yes or No
3. Docks/piers free of sharp edges, nails, broken/cracked boards? Yes or No
4. Swimmer start/finish areas cleared of rocks, glass, tin cans and other hazards? Yes or No
5. Competitive Course: (checked by Referee and Safety Director)
  - a. Course clearly marked? Yes or No
  - b. Course designed to avoid non-event boat traffic? Yes or No
  - c. Water free of debris, algae, contaminants (sample sent to board of health)? Yes or No
  - d. Water temperature safe for time and distance of competition? Yes or No
  - e. Emergency exit points, swimmer recovery, sheltered areas well defined? Yes or No

### Safety Personnel and Watercraft

1. Two-way radio to Safety Director, Event Director and Referee? Yes or No
2. Water rescue personnel in adequate numbers to cover all swims? Yes or No
3. Adequate personnel trained in first aid, CPR and the use of an AED (defibrillator)? Yes or No
4. Swimmer/officials/volunteer check-in/check-out system in place? Yes or No
5. Watercraft inspected for safety and equipped with adequate safety supplies? Yes or No

### On-Site Facilities

1. Designated safety/first aid area? Yes or No
2. First Aid Equipment:
  - a. Rigid spine board with a universal type CID (head immobilizer)? Yes or No
  - b. AED (defibrillator)? Yes or No
  - c. First Aid kit adequately stocked? Yes or No

### Additional Items for Cold Water Events

1. Posted emergency plans for treatment of hypothermic swimmers? Yes or No
2. Licensed or certified EMT or medical assistance available on-site experienced in the treatment of thermal injuries? Yes or No
3. Procedures for swimmers/officials/volunteers emergency withdrawal from area documented? Yes or No
4. Pre-race instruction about recognizing cold shock and hypothermic symptoms. Yes or No
5. Warming area provided (building, tent, showers)? Yes or No
6. Warm space to evaluate swimmers? Yes or No
7. Location for preparing and serving warming drinks? Yes or No
8. Designated area for the distribution of blankets, towels, warm clothing? Yes or No
9. Adequate personnel trained in hypothermia first aid? Yes or No
10. Watercraft inspected for thermal supplies? Yes or No
11. Adequate supply of warming blankets, towels, dry clothing, or other supplies? Yes or No

# USMS Open Water Guide to Operations

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## *Part 2: Open Water Safety Guidelines*

*Revision Date: February 2015*

### **Addendum C: Boat Operator Checklist**

The following safety considerations and checklist should be followed for all boat operators who are in support of USMS sanctioned open water swims. Please have one checklist completed for EACH motorized watercraft. The event director should keep it on file for one year following completion of the practice or event.

#### **Basic Information**

Name of Event: [Click to enter event name.](#) Sanction Number: [Enter sanction#](#)

Event Location: [Click to enter location.](#)

Event Dates: [Start Date through End Date](#)

Event Director: [Event director name](#) Phone: [000-000-0000](#) E-mail: [Click to enter e-mail address](#)

Boat Operator: [Boat operator name.](#) Phone: [000-000-0000](#) E-mail: [Click to enter e-mail address](#)

Swimmer Monitor: [Swim monitor name](#) Phone: [000-000-0000](#) E-mail: [Click to enter e-mail address](#)

#### **Checklist Items**

- |     |   |           |
|-----|---|-----------|
| 1.  | Did the boat operator provide a proof of insurance for the boat?                              | Yes or No |
| 2.  | Does the boat have a propeller guard?   | Yes or No |
| 3.  | Does the boat have a dedicated swimmer monitor on board (required without propeller guard)?   | Yes or No |
| 4.  | Did the boat operator attend the pre-race or pre-practice meeting?                            | Yes or No |
| 5.  | Did the swimmer monitor attend the pre-race or pre-practice meeting?                          | Yes or No |
| 6.  | Did the swimmer monitor and boat operator agree not to participate in the swim?               | Yes or No |
| 7.  | Does the boat have life jackets for everyone on the boat?                                     | Yes or No |
| 8.  | Is there two-way radio communication between the boat operator and the event director?        | Yes or No |
| 9.  | Are the boat operator and swimmer monitor aware of all restricted zones within the race area? | Yes or No |
| 10. | Does the boat have first aid supplies on board?   | Yes or No |

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