



Top 10 Things Pool Officials Should Know Before Officiating Open Water Events

Things they may not teach you in officiating school!

#10: Understand there is more acceptable risk in open water than in pools

- ▶ ...this is just the nature of the beast.
 - ▶ Natural tides, currents, and conditions are inevitable.
 - ▶ Swimmers know this, you should too!
 - ▶ Insuring safety is the #1 priority.



#9: Know the course!

► how it will start?



mass start in water



time trial



run into water



jump off boat

#9: Know the course!

- ▶ how it will be navigated?



swimming off course will not only lengthen their swim, but it could get them disqualified.

#9: Know the course!

▶ how swimmers will finish?



#8: Know the difference between buoys

▶ ...and how each one should be negotiated



Turn Buoys – always required



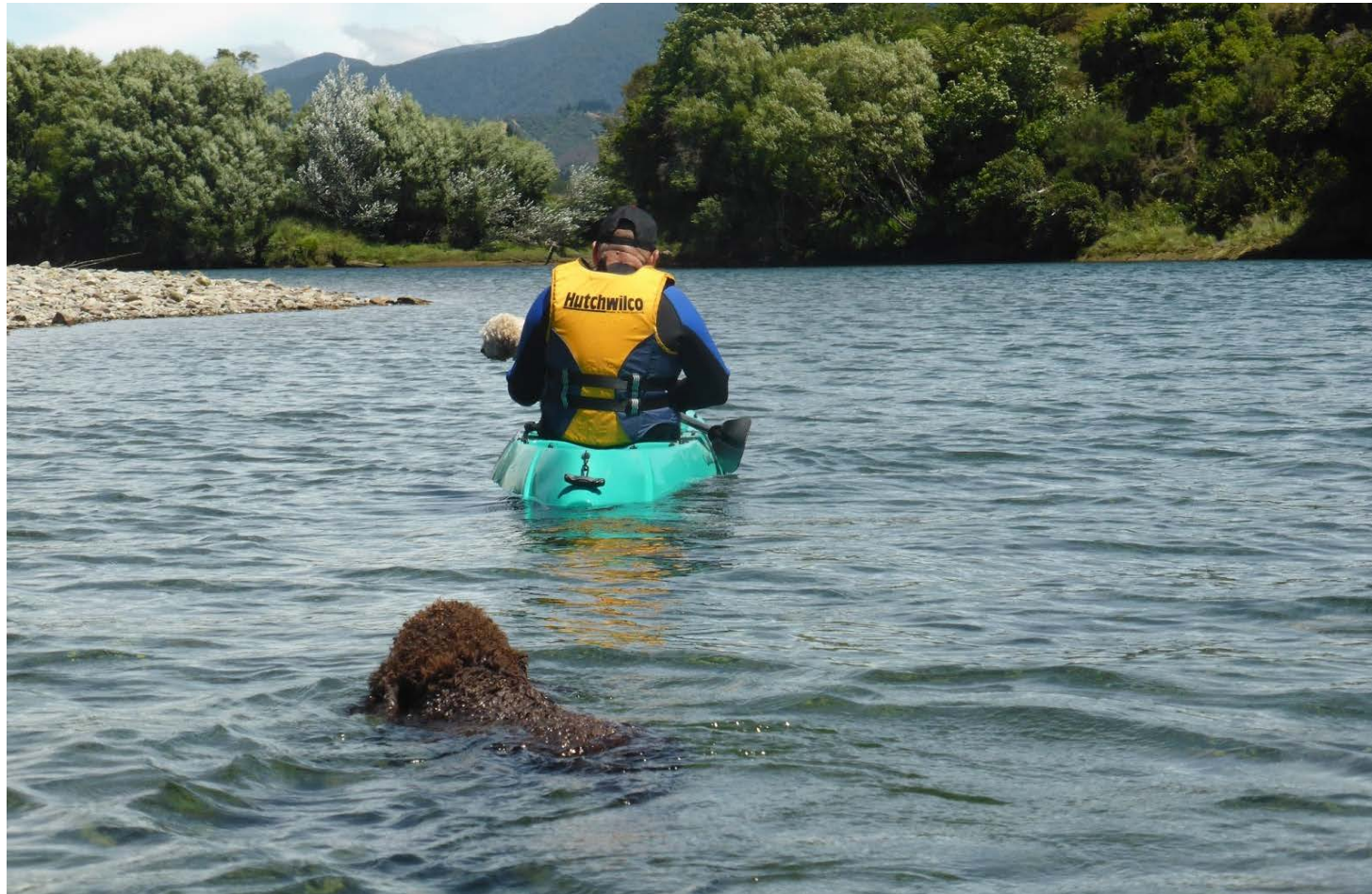
Sighting/Guide buoys

#7: Drafting other swimmers is allowed



Just make sure drafters aren't impeding other swimmers by constantly touching/bumping/grasping those which they are drafting

#7:...but drafting boats is NEVER allowed



#6: Are conditions safe & swimmable for the level of athletes involved?

- ▶ Race directors have the power to delay or cancel events if conditions are unsuitable

OW Referees and Safety Directors can delay or stop swims once they have started



In USA Swimming/dual sanctioned events, all three can cancel or delay events, or stop swims once they have started

#6: Are conditions safe & swimmable for the level of athletes involved

- ▶ Safety is the primary focus as the situations can change very quickly.

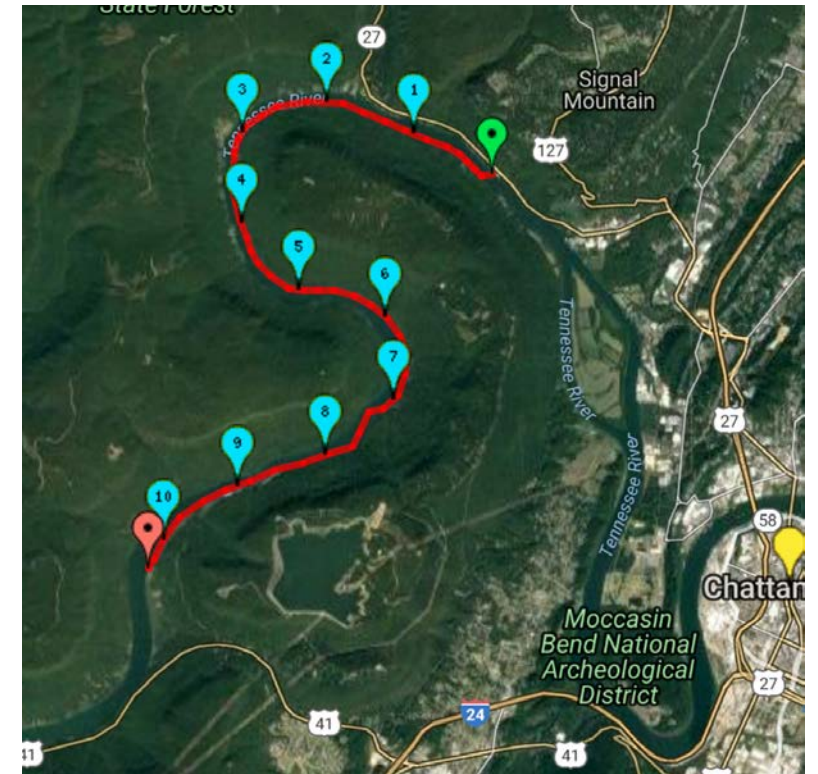


#6: Are conditions safe & swimmable for the level of athletes involved

- ▶ Officials should always communicate any concerns to the OW Referee.



#6: Are conditions safe & swimmable for the level of athletes involved



- For longer point-to-point races, conditions may vary greatly in different parts of the course too.

#5: Things you cannot do...



No pushing off the bottom (sans beach starts/finishes)



No pulling on tree limbs or rocks,



No holding on to kayaks/SUPs/boats,



No touching people in boats!



There's no touching dry people in open water

#4: If your event has kayakers/SUPs, know their signals!

- ▶ Pat your head—all is good



#4: If your event has kayakers/SUPs, know their signals!

► Paddle up—come check on us

A Kayaker may need

- ❖ a short break
- ❖ someone to cover their section of the course/
swimmer
- ❖ a second opinion on a swimmer's status—
potentially stay close in case they need help



#4: If your event has kayakers/SUPs, know their signals!

- ▶ Paddle waiving—come quickly but safely!!

May need medical attention for swimmer (or kayaker)



#3: Keep powerboats away from swimmers

- ▶ Powerboats should be at a safe distance from swimmers and off the course!



- ❖ In a collision between powerboats and swimmers, powerboats always win.
- ❖ Power boats have fumes and often leave oil trails. No one wants to swim through that or breathe in those fumes if it can be helped.

#3: Keep powerboats away from swimmers

- ▶ Powerboats should be at a safe distance from swimmers and off the course!

Most non-championship sanctioned events often have kayakers/SUPs between the swimmers and the powerboats. USA championship events do not. In either case, officials/boat pilots should do their best to maintain a safe distance and minimize fumes when possible.



#2: There will be contact...and probably lots



Thoroughly understand overarching principles and current definitions/interpretations of incidental contact vs impeding

#2: There will be contact...and probably lots of it



❖ Incidental contact is part of open water.

❖ Impeding, interfering, or restricting a swimmer gets them a warning/yellow card.

❖ If it's flagrant, or bad enough, it could get them an immediate disqualification/red card.



... and the #1 thing pool officials should know
before officiating an OW event...

#1: Let the Swimmers Race!

- ▶ You are there to ensure fairness and safety.



Thank yous & Acknowledgments



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