

## **PART 3 –MASTERS OPEN WATER SWIMMING RULES 2013-2017**

Age groups for Canadian Open Water Swimming shall be in accordance with CMSW 10.1.1 and CMSW 10.4. Management of an OWS event shall comply with CMGR 7 where applicable. The Management Committee shall be responsible for booking the venue if required, obtaining the services of a Chief Referee and with him, or her, the services of other qualified officials and personnel, also sanctions and permissions for the event. They shall assist the Chief Referee with the event and shall ensure results are sent to MSC and their Provincial Masters body within seven days. The Management Committee may also keep a listing of course records for each age group and stroke over the courses. For swimsuit rules see CMGR 5.

### **CMOWS 1 DEFINITIONS**

**CMOWS 1.1** Canadian Masters Open Water Swimming shall be defined as any event held in open water and covering a maximum distance of ten (10) km, sanctioned by the PMO's sanctioning officer.

**CMOWS 1.2** A Masters Open Water Swimming event may be designated as a Masters Swimming Canada (MSC) OWS Championship by MSC or a Provincial Masters OWS Championship by a PMO.

**CMOWS 1.3** A Canadian Masters Open Water Swimming event shall be an independent event restricted to registered Masters swimmers. When a Masters sanctioned event is held in conjunction with another Open Water Swimming event the start for the Masters should be at a different time than all others. Swimmers wearing wetsuits may be included in Masters OWS if noted in the meet package, however, such swimmers shall have separate results and awards. Results submitted to MSC and the PMOs shall list only registered Masters swimmers. PMOs may disallow the use of wetsuits in sanctioned OWS events—See also CMOWS 5.5 and CMOWS 6.6.

### **CMOWS 2 OFFICIALS**

**CMOWS 2.1** Depending on the nature of the course and the number of swimmers, the following officials shall be appointed, by the chief referee at Open Water Swimming competitions. Depending on the duties, it is possible that one person may perform more than one function. The appointment of an announcer is at the discretion of the Management Committee.

- A Chief Referee
- Referees (one per race or wave)
- Starter
- Chief Timekeeper plus 2 Timekeepers
- Chief Finish Judge plus 2 Finish Judges
- Turn Judges (one per each alteration of Course)
- Safety Officer

Medical Officer  
Course Officer  
Clerk of the Course

### **CMOWS 3 DUTIES OF OFFICIALS**

*(Note: For the 2013-2017 Rule Book, some sections were reorganized into appropriate sequencing. Officials were assigned to ensure all issues and concerns were covered, in particular those related to safety and the integrity of the results. The positions of Race Judge and Recorder have been absorbed elsewhere.)*

#### **THE CHIEF REFEREE shall:**

**CMOWS 3.1** have full control and authority over all officials and shall approve their assignments and instruct them regarding all features or regulations related to the competition. The chief referee shall enforce all the Rules and decisions of MSC and shall decide all questions relating to the actual conduct of the competition, where the final settlement of which is not otherwise covered by these Rules.

**CMOWS 3.2** ensure that all necessary officials for the conduct of the competition are at their respective posts. The chief referee may appoint substitutes for any who are absent, incapable of acting or found to be inefficient. The chief referee may appoint additional officials if considered necessary.

**CMOWS 3.3** receive all reports prior to the start of the race from the clerk of course and at the conclusion of the competition from the referees, turn judges, chief finish judges and safety officer to be sure all swimmers are accounted for.

**CMOWS 3.4** appoint the referees and turn judges and allocate them to their respective races, waves, or alterations of course.

**CMOWS 3.5** signal to swimmers by blasts on the whistle at one minute intervals from five to one minute prior to the start. Then by raised flag and short blasts on a whistle, that the start is imminent and when satisfied the swimmers are ready indicate by pointing the flag at the starter that the competition may commence.

**CMOWS 3.6** have authority to intervene in the competition at any stage to ensure that MSC Rules are observed. Adjudicate on all protests related to the competition in progress.

**CMOWS 3.7** disqualify any swimmer for any violation of the Rules that the chief referee or referees personally observe or which is reported to them by other authorised officials.

**CMOWS 3.8** in case of hazardous conditions that jeopardize the safety of the swimmers or the officials, in conjunction with the safety officer, stop the race.

**CMOWS 3.9** receive a report after the start of the race from the Clerk of Course giving a list of those who started. Receive reports during the race from the Safety Officer or others of all who withdraw from the race. Receive reports from the Referees, Turn Judges or others on any disqualifications. Receive reports from the Chief Finish Judge and Chief Timer on the results at the end of the race. Give a decision in cases where the judges' decision and times recorded do not agree. Ensure that results are submitted by the Chief Finish Judge to MSC and the PMO for posting within one week of the event.

**THE REFEREES shall:**

**CMOWS 3.10** have authority over the race or wave, or component thereof, assigned to them by the chief referee, including initiating the start if so instructed.

**CMOWS 3.11** where necessary, be positioned in an escort safety craft, which will accompany the race or wave they are assigned to.

**CMOWS 3.12** judge the race and ensure at all times that the Rules of competition are complied with, violations being recorded in writing and reported to the chief referee at the earliest opportunity.

**CMOWS 3.13** have the power to order a swimmer from the water upon expiry of any time limit so ordered by the referee.

**CMOWS 3.14** ensure that the swimmers do not take unfair advantage or commit unsporting impediment on another swimmer and if the situation requires instruct a swimmer to maintain clearance from any other swimmer. Indicate to the swimmer and others an infringement by blasts on a whistle. Disqualify any swimmer for any violation of the Rules that the referee personally observes and report same to the chief referee.

**THE STARTER shall:**

**CMOWS 3.15** be stationed in such a position as to be clearly visible to all competitors.

**CMOWS 3.16** on signal of the referee raise a distinctive flag into the vertical position.

**CMOWS 3.17** to initiate the start simultaneously bring the flag holding arm down, with arm kept straight, and activate an audible signal.

**THE CHIEF TIMEKEEPER shall:**

**CMOWS 3.18** assign at least two timekeepers to their positions for the start and finish.

**CMOWS 3.19** ensure that a time check is made to allow all persons to synchronise their watches with the officials running clocks 15 minutes before start time.

**CMOWS 3.20** collect and examine cards from each timekeeper showing the time recorded for each swimmer, and, if necessary, inspect their watches.

**CMOWS 3.21** With the Chief Finish Judge prepare final results including times and order and submit to the Chief Referee.

**TIMEKEEPERS shall:**

**CMOWS 3.22** take the time of each swimmer assigned. The watches must have memory capability and shall be certified correct to the satisfaction of the Management Committee.

**CMOWS 3.23** start their watches at the starting signal, and only stop their watches when instructed by the chief timekeeper. Where the course involves more than one circuit, timekeepers shall record each lap time of the assigned swimmer.

**CMOWS 3.24** record the time and swimmers' number on the timecard 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.

**THE CHIEF FINISH JUDGE shall:**

**CMOWS 3.25** assign each finish judge to a position, race or wave of swimmers.

**CMOWS 3.26** receive from the Clerk of Course the list of swimmers who started each race or wave. Record and communicate any decision received from the referees during the competition. Receive from the Safety Officer and Referees or Judges all reports of withdrawals from the race or disqualifications.

**CMOWS 3.27** collect after the race, signed results sheets from each Turn Judge, Finish Judge and results from the microchip transponder technology, if used, and with the Chief Timer establish the result and placing and submit these to the Chief Referee.

**CMOWS 3.28** in tabulating final results ensure that men's and women's events are separated and listed by age group and distances swum, that strokes are indicated, with separate results for wetsuit swimmers if applicable. These results shall be separate from any other, non-Masters' sanctioned event, and shall be submitted to MSC and the PMO for posting within one week of the event.

**FINISH JUDGES (three, one of whom shall be the Chief Judge) shall:**

**CMOWS 3.29** be positioned in line with the finish where they shall have at all times a clear view of the finish.

**CMOWS 3.30** record the placing of the swimmers according to the assignment given.

**Note:** Finish judges shall not act as timekeepers in the same event.

**TURN JUDGES shall:**

**CMOWS 3.31** be positioned at every alteration of course so as to ensure all swimmers execute the alterations in course as indicated in the competition information documents and as given at the pre-race briefing.

**CMOWS 3.32** record any infringement of the turn procedures on the record sheets provided and indicate the infringement at the time of infringement by blasts on a whistle, then immediately communicate the infringement to the chief referee.

**CMOWS 3.33** promptly, upon completion of the event, deliver the signed record sheet to the chief referee and inform the Chief Finish Judge of any disqualifications.

**THE SAFETY OFFICER shall:**

**CMOWS 3.34** be responsible to the referee for all aspects of safety related to the conduct of the competition. Obtain the services of sufficient qualified safety personnel for the event. The safety officer shall not act in any other capacity at an event.

**CMOWS 3.35** check that the entire course, with special regards to the start and finish areas, is safe, suitable, and free of any obstruction.

**CMOWS 3.36** In co-operation with the Course Officer ensure that sufficient powered and other safety craft are available during the competition so as to ensure that all swimmers are within view and can be reached quickly by safety personnel. Boats shall be stationed about the course, if necessary, to ensure that no boat, jet-ski, windsurfer, etc. encroaches on the course. All diesel and gasoline powered boats up wind to the course should be anchored and not start their motors except in an emergency situation.

**CMOWS 3.37** if relevant, provide prior to the competition to all swimmers a tide/current chart clearly 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.

**CMOWS 3.38** pass on all reports from safety personnel or other sources all withdrawals from the race of competitors, to the Chief Referee and Chief Finish Judge.

**CMOWS 3.39** in conjunction with the medical officer advise the chief referee if, in their opinion, 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.

**THE MEDICAL OFFICER shall:**

**CMOWS 3.40** be responsible to the referee for all medical aspects related to the competition and competitors.

**CMOWS 3.41** inform the local medical facilities of the nature of the competition and ensure that any casualties can be evacuated to medical facilities at the earliest opportunity.

**CMOWS 3.42** in conjunction with the safety officer, advise the referee if, in their opinion, 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.

**THE COURSE OFFICER shall:**

**CMOWS 3.43** be responsible to meet management for the correct survey of the course.

**CMOWS 3.44** ensure the start and finish areas are correctly marked and all equipment has been correctly installed and, where applicable, is in working order.

**CMOWS 3.45** ensure all course alteration points are correctly marked and manned prior to the commencement of the competition.

**CMOWS 3.46** with the chief referee and safety officer inspect the course and markings prior to the commencement of competition.

**CMOWS 3.47** In co-operation with the Safety Officer ensure the necessary craft are provided for the referees and turn judges and that turn judges are in position prior to the start of the competition and report this to the referees.

**CMOWS 3.48** provide and staff water/feeding stations if required, See CMOWS 5.11.

**THE CLERK OF THE COURSE shall:**

**CMOWS 3.49** assemble and prepare competitors prior to each event.

**CMOWS 3.50** ensure each competitor is identified correctly with their race number and is not wearing sharp jewelery, pacing or musical devices, or a watch. Hand out microchip transponders if used.

**CMOWS 3.51** be certain all swimmers are present, in the assembly area, at the required time prior to the start. Check each swimmer into the water and provide Chief Referee and Chief Finish Judge with a list showing those participating in each race or wave and those who have scratched or not shown up.

**CMOWS 3.52** keep swimmers and officials informed of the time remaining before the start at suitable intervals until the last five minutes. See **CMOWS 3.8**.

**CMOWS 3.53** be responsible for ensuring that all clothing and equipment left in the start area is transported, if necessary, to the finish area and kept in safekeeping.

**CMOWS 3.54** ensure that all competitors leaving the water at the finish have the basic equipment required for their wellbeing. Ensure proper reception facilities at the finish are available for all competitors.

**Note:** In this context “reception” means facilities for changing, showers, toilets, to provide nourishment and for keeping the participants dry and warm after their swim.

## **CMOWS 4 THE START**

**CMOWS 4.1** All Open Water competitions shall start with all competitors standing or treading water in a depth sufficient for them to commence swimming on the start signal, or on a fixed platform perpendicular to the course.

**MOWS 4.1.1** When starting from a fixed platform, competitors shall be assigned a position on the platform as determined by random draw.

**CMOWS 4.2** The clerk of the course shall keep competitors and officials informed of the time before start at suitable intervals until the last five minutes before the start. At this point the referee will count down at one-minute intervals.

**CMOWS 4.3** When the number of entries exceeds fifty swimmers the start may be segregated by gender, age or submitted times or combinations thereof into two or more waves, starting at least ten minutes apart; the men's, youngest or fastest waves shall always start before the women's, older or slower waves.

**CMOWS 4.3.1** Where space does not permit a single row of swimmers on the starting line, it is recommended that the swimmers arrange themselves in rows according to their starting speeds - the faster swimmers positioning themselves in the front row, etc.

**CMOWS 4.4** The start line shall be clearly defined by either natural or manmade features or by removable equipment at water level.

**CMOWS 4.5** Subsequent to the last one minute warning 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.

**CMOWS 4.6** The starter shall be positioned so as to be clearly visible to all competitors.

**CMOWS 4.6.1** On the starter's command "take your marks" they shall take up a position, treading water or standing immediately in line with the start line where a platform is not used or, with at least one foot on the front of the platform.

**MOWS 4.6.2** The starter will give the starting signal when he considers all swimmers are ready.

**MOWS 4.7** The start signal shall be both audible and visual.

**MOWS 4.8** If in the opinion of the referee unfair advantage has been gained at the start the competitions shall be stopped and restarted.

**CMOWS 4.9** All safety and officials craft shall be stationed prior to the start so as not to interfere with any competitor.

**MOWS 4.10** Although they may start together, in all other respects the men's and women's competitions shall be treated as separate events.

## **CMOWS 5 THE VENUE**

**CMOWS 5.1** Canadian Masters Open Water Swimming events will be up to 10km, conducted at a venue and course approved by MSC.

**MOWS 5.2** The course shall be in water that is subject to only minor currents or tide and may be salt or fresh water.

**CMOWS 5.3** A certificate of suitability for use of the venue shall be issued by the appropriate local health and safety authorities. In general terms the certification must relate to water purity and to physical safety from other considerations. It is important that the Chief Referee, Safety Officer and Medical Officer consider the relevance of this material should there have been storms or rainfall which could have contaminated the course since the tests were carried out.

**MOWS 5.4** The minimum depth of water at any point on the course shall be 1.40 metres.

**CMOWS 5.5** The water temperature should be a minimum of 18°C and a maximum of 31°C. It should be checked the day of the race, 2 hours before the start, in the middle of the course at a depth of 40 cm. This should be done by the course officer in the presence of the referee. Wetsuit only races should be considered for water temperatures below 18 C. Wetsuits should not be allowed for water temperatures over 22 C.



**CMOWS 5.6** The course should ideally be marked by buoys every 100 metres. Where a course has adjacent lines of swimmers swimming in opposite directions, closer than fifty metres to each other, there shall be a continuous floating line supported by buoys a maximum of 3 metres apart. All turns/alterations of course shall be clearly indicated by a larger buoy appropriate in size to the distance between the turns.

**CMOWS 5.7** A clearly marked craft, platform or position on land, containing a turn judge, shall be positioned at all alterations of course in such a manner as not to obstruct a swimmer's visibility of the turn.

**MOWS 5.8** All feeding platforms, turning apparatus and turn judges craft/platforms shall be securely fixed in position and not be subject to tidal, wind or other movements.

**CMOWS 5.9** The final approach to the finish shall be clearly defined and shall comprise the boundary of the course.

**CMOWS 5.10** The finish shall be clearly defined by a natural or man-made feature or marked by a vertical face.

**CMOWS 5.11** Water/feeding stations should be located approximately every 2 km in all OWS events over 5km. They should be located so that swimmers cannot push off in the direction of the swim.

## **CMOWS 6 THE RACE**

**CMOWS 6.1** Canadian Open Water competitions may be swum with any stroke. Results may list the stroke swum and separate records may be kept for each stroke. If a stroke other than freestyle is swum the complete race must be swum in accordance with the rules of that stroke. Individual Medley shall only be recognized if the course can be divided into four equal distances.

**CMOWS 6.2** Race judges shall instruct any swimmer who is, in their opinion, taking unfair advantage by pacing to move clear. Drafting off another swimmer is not permitted.

**CMOWS 6.3** Disqualification Procedure

**CMOWS 6.3.1** If in the opinion of the chief referee a referee, or turn judge any swimmer takes advantage of another swimmer by interfering with that swimmer, by making intentional contact with that swimmer, by pacing or by drafting, the following procedure shall apply;

**CMOWS 6.3.2** The official shall blow several times on a shrill whistle while pointing at the swimmer, indicating to the swimmer that they are violating the rules.

**CMOWS 6.3.3** Should the swimmer persist with the infraction they shall be disqualified and ordered from the water.

**CMOWS 6.3.4** If in the opinion of the official the action of a swimmer is deemed to be “unsporting” the official shall disqualify the swimmer concerned immediately and order them from the water.

**CMOWS 6.4** Holding onto a dock or fixed raft or standing on the bottom during a race shall not disqualify a swimmer but they may not walk or jump in the direction of the swim.

**CMOWS 6.5** Swimmers shall not receive support from a craft or paddle board which is moving in the direction of swim. This does not include an official medical officer or lifeguard assisting a swimmer in distress who is withdrawing from the competition.

**CMOWS 6.6** 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. Wetsuits may be worn if allowed as per CMOWS 1.3.

**CMOWS 6.6.1** The referee shall make the final ruling on the acceptability of any swim suit or device worn by a swimmer in accordance with CMGR 5.3.

**CMOWS 6.6.2** Prosthetic limbs or limb attachments shall not be worn during a race. Physical or medical conditions that require modifications to suits, taping or other considerations may be allowed by the referee on presentation of a letter from a medical practitioner.

**CMOWS 6.6.3** Watches, sharp or dangerous jewelry, pacing and musical devices, bracelets with the exception of medical alert bracelets, taping or power bands, are not permitted to be worn by swimmers.

**MOWS 6.7** Swimmers shall be allowed to use grease or other such substances providing these are not, in the opinion of the referee, excessive.

**CMOWS 6.8** The pacing of a swimmer by another person is not permitted.

**CMOWS 6.9** All swimmers shall have their competition number clearly displayed in waterproof ink on their upper back, arms and caps. Swimmers shall wear highly visible coloured swim caps at all times during the race. These caps shall be of different colours to differentiate between swim distances, waves, genders, ages, strokes or swimmers with disabilities.

**CMOWS 6.10** The Management Committee in consultation with the referee and subject to advice from MSC are to designate in advance the cut off time for each Masters’ race. As a rough guide, a time of 30 minutes per kilometer could apply.

**CMOWS 6.11** Competitors who do not finish the course within the time limits shall be removed from the water except that the referee may allow a competitor outside the time limit to complete the course.

## **CMOWS 7 THE FINISH OF THE RACE**

**CMOWS 7.1** Where required, the area leading to the finish line should be clearly marked by rows of buoys which narrow as they get closer to the finish line. The need for, and extent of, such buoys shall be determined during sanctioning of the event.

**CMOWS 7.2** The finish line shall be a natural or manmade feature which defines the finish or a vertical panel fixed above the water which the swimmer can strike with their hand.

**CMOWS 7.2.1** When automatic officiating equipment is used for timing of competitions in accordance with rule CMSW 11, microchip transponder technology should be added to the equipment.

**CMOWS 7.2.2** Where microchip transponder technology is employed it is mandatory for all competitors to wear a microchip transponder as required by event officials. Any competitor who finishes the race without a transponder may be disqualified.

**MOWS 7.3** 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.

**MOWS 7.4** 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.

**MOWS 7.5** 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.

**MOWS 7.6** Once cleared by the medical member, swimmers shall be given access to refreshments.

## **NOTES**