



# **Master Swimming Australia Open Water Swimming Rules**

Revised October 2025

**MASTERS SWIMMING AUSTRALIA**

ABN 24 694 633 156

MSAC, 30 Aughtie Drive, Albert Park, 3206

w: [www.mastersswimming.org.au](http://www.mastersswimming.org.au)

## Table of Contents

OWS 1	OPEN WATER SWIMMING	3
OWS 2	OFFICIALS	3
OWS 3	DUTIES OF OFFICIALS	4
OWS 4	THE START	8
OWS 5	THE RACE	9
OWS 6	THE FINISH OF THE RACE	11
OWS 7	SWIMWEAR & TECHNOLOGY	12
OWS 8	IDENTIFICATION OF COMPETITORS DURING A RACE	13
OWS 9	OPEN WATER SWIMMING FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT	13

### NOTES:

Masters Swimming Australia Open Water Swimming Rules (MSA OWS Rules) are applicable to sanctioned events organised and conducted by Masters Swimming Australia and its States and Clubs. This includes co-sanctioned events.

**“MSA”** refers to Masters Swimming Australia Inc.

**“OWS”** refers to open water swimming.

**“Not applicable to Masters”** next to a rule number indicates a World Aquatic rule number that does not apply to Masters.

**“Incorporating World Aquatics Masters rules”** next to a rule number indicates a World Aquatics rule that has been modified to include the World Aquatics Masters rule. The applicable World Aquatics Masters rule (e.g.; OWS Rule x.x will be shown).

**“M”** after a rule number indicates that the rule is unique to/or has been modified for Masters Swimming Australia.

Gender specific words in the World Aquatics rules have been replaced with non-gender specific alternatives.

## **OWS 1      OPEN WATER SWIMMING**

**OWS 1.1M**      Masters Open Water Swimming shall be defined as any competition up to and including 10km that takes place in rivers, lakes, oceans or water channels, dams or rowing courses.

**OWS 1.2**      The course should be in water that is subject only to minor current or tide.

**OWS 1.3M**      At all Masters Open Water events the safety of the competition shall be of paramount importance. (*World Aquatic Masters OWS Rule 4.5*)

**OWS 1.3.1M**      Before the event can commence, the officials and the organisation providing water cover shall confirm that the conditions are such that all competitors can complete the course safely.

**OWS 1.4M**      The Event Director appointed by the organising body shall:

**OWS 1.4.1M**      have jurisdiction over all matters not assigned by the rules to the Referees, Judges or other officials.

**OWS 1.4.2M**      have the power to cancel or postpone the event prior to the start

**OWS 1.4.3M**      after consultation with the Event Referee and Safety Officer, change the course or swim distances prior to the start of the event for safety reasons

**OWS 1.4.4M**      give directions consistent with rules adopted for conducting any event

## **OWS 2      OFFICIALS**

**OWS 2.1**      The following officials shall be appointed at MSA National Championships Open Water Swimming competitions:

- Event Referee (one per race)
- Referees (additional Referees proportional to race entries)
- Chief Timekeeper plus 2 Timekeepers
- Chief Finish Judge plus 2 Finish Judges
- Safety Officer
- Medical Officer
- Course Officer
- Clerk of the Course
- Turn Judges (one per alteration of Course)
- Race Judges
- Feeding Platform Judge (when feeding platforms are used)
- Relay Judge
- Starter
- Announcer
- Recorder

**OWS 2.2M**      Smaller Branch sanctioned events shall appoint a minimum number of officials as listed below:

- Event Referee
- Chief Timekeeper plus additional Timekeeper/s.

- Chief Finish Judge plus additional Finish Judge/s
- Safety Officer.
- Medical Officer.
- Clerk of Course
- Starter
- Recorder

NOTE: The duties of some roles can be combined. (E.g. Referee and Starter, Starter and Finish Judge) No official can act in more than one role simultaneously. They may only undertake a new role after all of the obligations of their previous role have been fulfilled.

**OWS 2.3M** The Organisers of the competition shall appoint sufficient officials to ensure the fairness, integrity and safety of the competition.

## **OWS 3 DUTIES OF OFFICIALS**

### **OWS 3.1 Event Referee**

The Event Referee shall:

- OWS 3.1.1** 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 Event Referee shall enforce all the MSA OWS Rules and decisions of MSA 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.
- OWS 3.1.2** have authority to intervene in the competition at any stage to ensure that MSA OWS Rules are observed.
- OWS 3.1.2.1** in case of hazardous conditions that jeopardize the safety of the competitors and the officials, in conjunction with the Safety Officer, they can stop the race.
- OWS 3.1.3** adjudicate on all protests related to the competition in progress.
- OWS 3.1.4** give a decision in cases where the Finish Judges' decisions and times recorded do not agree.
- OWS 3.1.5M** signal to competitors, by raised flag and verbal command, that the start is imminent and when satisfied indicate by pointing the flag at the Starter that the competition may commence.
- OWS 3.1.6** disqualify any competitor for any violation of the MSA OWS Rules that the Event Referee personally observes, or which is reported to the Event Referee by other authorised officials. Notwithstanding the provisions of OWS 5.3 hereof, the Event Referee may decide to enforce the disqualification at the end of the race.
- OWS 3.1.7** ensure that all necessary officials for the conduct of the competition are at their respective posts. The Event Referee may appoint substitutes for any who are absent, incapable of acting or found to be inefficient. The Event Referee may appoint additional officials if considered necessary.

- OWS 3.1.8** receive all reports prior to the start of the race and at the conclusion of the race from the Clerk of the Course, Recorder, Course Officer and Safety Officer to ensure all competitors are accounted for.
- OWS 3.2 Referees**
- The Referees shall:
- OWS 3.2.1** have authority to intervene in competition at any stage to ensure that MSA OWS Rules are observed.
- OWS 3.2.2** disqualify any competitor for any violation of the MSA OWS Rules that they personally observe.
- OWS 3.3 Starter**
- The Starter shall:
- OWS 3.3.1** start the race in accordance with OWS 4 following the signal by the Event Referee.
- OWS 3.4 Chief Timekeeper**
- The Chief Timekeeper shall:
- OWS 3.4.1** assign at least two (2) Timekeepers to their positions for the start and finish.
- OWS 3.4.2** ensure that a time check is made to allow all persons to synchronise their watches with the official running clocks 15 minutes before start time.
- OWS 3.4.3** collect from each Timekeeper the time recorded for each competitor, and, if necessary, inspect their watches.
- OWS 3.4.4** record or examine the official time for each competitor
- OWS3.5 Timekeepers**
- Timekeepers shall:
- OWS 3.5.1** take the time of each competitor/s assigned. One of the watches must have memory and printout capability and shall be certified correct to the satisfaction of the Management Committee.
- OWS 3.5.2** start their watches at the starting signal, and only stop their watches when instructed by the Chief Timekeeper.
- OWS 3.5.3** promptly after each finish record the time of each competitor 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.
- OWS 3.6 Chief Finish Judge**
- The Chief Finish Judge shall:
- OWS 3.6.1** assign each Judge to a position.
- OWS 3.6.2** record and communicate any decision received from the Referees during the competition.

- OWS 3.6.3** collect after the race, signed results sheets from each Finish Judge and establish the result and placing which shall be sent directly to the Event Referee.
- OWS 3.6.4** confirm to each race judge their escort boat and instruct them in their duties.
- OWS 3.6.5** collect after the race, signed sheets from each Judge of their observations during the race which shall be sent directly to the Event Referee.
- OWS 3.7** **Finish Judges**
- Finish Judges (two) shall:
- OWS 3.7.1** be positioned in line with the finish where they shall have at all times a clear view of the finish.
- OWS 3.7.2** record after each finish the placing of the competitors according to the assignment given.
- NOTE: Finish Judges shall not act as Timekeepers in the same event
- OWS 3.8** **Race Judges**
- Each Race Judge shall
- OWS 3.8.1** be positioned in an escort craft (where applicable), assigned by random draw prior to the start, so as to be able to observe, at all times, the competitors or their appointed competitor.
- OWS 3.8.2** ensure at all times that the Rules of competition are complied with, violations being recorded in writing and reported to a Referee at the earliest opportunity.
- OWS 3.8.3** have the power to order a competitor from the water upon expiry of any time limit so ordered by the Event Referee.
- OWS 3.8.4** ensure that their appointed competitor does not take unfair advantage or commit unsporting impediment on another competitor and if the situation requires instruct a competitor to maintain clearance from any other competitor.
- OWS 3.9** **Turn Judges**
- Turn Judges shall:
- OWS 3.9.1** be positioned so as to ensure all competitors execute the alterations in course as indicated in the competition information documents and as given at the pre-race briefing.
- OWS 3.9.2** record any infringement of the turn procedures on the record sheets provided, then immediately communicate the infringement to the Event Referee.
- OWS 3.9.3** promptly upon completion of the event deliver the signed record sheet to the Event Referee.
- OWS 3.10** **Feeding Platform Judge**
- Feeding Platform Judge shall:
- OWS 3.10.1** be responsible for the management of the activity and the competitors authorised representatives present on the platform, in accordance with the rules.
- OWS 3.11** **Relay Judge**
- Relay Judge shall:

**OWS 3.11.1** manage the activity on the Relay platform and change-over zone to ensure all changeovers occur in accordance with the rules whereby the arriving competitor completes their lap before the departure of the next competitor.

**OWS 3.12      Safety Officer**

The Safety Officer shall:

**OWS 3.12.1** be responsible to the Event Referee for all aspects of safety related to the conduct of the competition.

**OWS 3.12.2** check that the entire course, with special regard to the start and finish areas, is safe, suitable, and free of any obstruction.

**OWS 3.12.3** be responsible for ensuring that sufficient powered safety craft are available during the competition so as to provide full safety backup to the escort craft.

**OWS 3.12.4** provide prior to the competitions to all competitors a tide/current chart clearly indicating the time of tide changes on the course and showing the effect of tides or current on a competitor's progress along the course.

**OWS 3.12.5** in conjunction with the Medical Officer advise the Event 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.

**OWS 3.12.6** monitor temperature conditions periodically during the race.

**OWS 3.12.7M** certify the measured water temperature within 30 minutes of the start of the race.

**OWS 3.13      Medical Officer**

The Medical Officer shall:

**OWS 3.13.1** be responsible to the Event Referee for all medical aspects related to the competition and competitors.

**OWS 3.13.2** 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.

**OWS 3.13.3** in conjunction with the Safety Officer, advise the Event 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.

**OWS 3.14      Course Officer**

The Course Officer shall:

**OWS 3.14.1** be responsible to the Management Committee for the correct survey of the course.

**OWS 3.14.2** ensure the start and finish areas are correctly marked and all equipment has been correctly installed and, where applicable, is in working order.

**OWS 3.14.3** ensure all course alteration points are correctly marked and manned prior to the commencement of the competition.

**OWS 3.14.4** with the Referee and Safety Officer inspect the course and markings prior to the commencement of competition.

- OWS 3.14.5** ensure that Turn Judges are in position prior to the start of the competition and report this to the Event Referee.
- OWS 3.15 Clerk of the Course**
- The Clerk of the Course shall:
- OWS 3.15.1** assemble and prepare competitors prior to each event and ensure proper reception facilities at the finish are available for all competitors.
- OWS 3.15.2** ensure each competitor is identified correctly with their race number and that all competitors have trimmed fingernails and toenails and are not wearing any jewellery, including watches.
- OWS 3.15.3** be certain all competitors are present, in the assembly area, at the required time prior to the start.
- OWS 3.15.4** keep competitors and officials informed of the time remaining before the start at suitable intervals until the last five minutes, during which one- minute warnings shall be given.
- OWS 3.15.5** be responsible for ensuring that all clothing and equipment left in the start area is transported to the finish area and kept in safekeeping.
- OWS 3.15.6** ensure that all competitors leaving the water at the finish have the basic equipment required for their well-being should their own attendants not be present at that time.
- OWS 3.15.7** shall notify the Event Referee and Recorder of any withdrawals and DNFs (Did-Not-Finish).
- OWS 3.16 Recorder**
- The recorder shall:
- OWS 3.16.1** record withdrawals from the competition, enter results on official forms, and maintain records for team awards as appropriate.
- OWS 4 THE START**
- OWS 4.1** All Open Water competitions shall start with all competitors wearing an approved swim cap and standing on a fixed platform or in water depth sufficient for them to commence swimming on the start signal.
- OWS 4.1.1** When starting from a fixed platform competitors shall be assigned a position on the platform, as determined by random draw.
- OWS 4.1.2** *Not applicable to Masters*
- OWS 4.2** The Clerk of the Course shall keep competitors and officials informed of the time before start at suitable intervals and at one-minute intervals for the last five minutes.
- OWS 4.3M** When the numbers of entries dictate, the start shall be segregated into Men's and Women's competitions or divided into multiple waves.
- OWS 4.4** The start line shall be clearly defined by either overhead apparatus or by removable equipment at water level.



- OWS 4.5** The Event Referee shall indicate by a flag held upright and verbal command when the start is imminent and indicate that the competition is under Starter's orders by pointing the flag at the starter.
- OWS 4.6** The Starter shall be positioned so as to be clearly visible to all competitors.
- OWS 4.6.1** On the Starter's command "take your marks" all competitors shall take up a starting position immediately in line with the start line where a platform is not used, or with at least one foot at the front of the platform.
- OWS 4.6.2** The Starter will give the starting signal when they consider all competitors are ready.
- OWS 4.7** The start signal shall be both audible and visual.
- OWS 4.8** If in the opinion of the Event Referee an unfair advantage has been gained at the start the offending competitor will be given a yellow or red flag in accordance with OWS 5.3.
- OWS 4.9** All escort craft and safety craft shall be stationed prior to the start so as not to interfere with any competitor, and if escort craft are picking up their competitor from behind, shall navigate in such a way as not to manoeuvre through the field of competitors.
- OWS 4.10M** Although they may start together, in all other respects the men's and women's competitions shall be treated as separate events in five-year age groups. *(Incorporating World Aquatic Masters OWS Rule 4.2)*

## **OWS 5 THE RACE**

- OWS 5.1** All Open Water competitions shall be Freestyle events and competitors are required to complete the whole course, respecting all designated turning buoys and course boundaries.
- Clarification: Form strokes are not to be allowed except for short periods (such as for recovery during the swim). Breaststroke kicking in congested areas (such as at course markers where a change of direction is required) may be deemed unsporting interference and lead to disqualification.*
- OWS 5.2** Race Judges shall instruct any competitor who is, in their opinion, taking unfair advantage by pacing or slip streaming with the escort craft to move clear.
- OWS 5.3 Disqualification Procedure**
- OWS 5.3.1** If in the opinion of the Event Referee or Referees, any competitor, or competitor's approved representative, or escort craft, takes advantage by committing any violation of the rules or by making intentional contact with any competitor, the following procedure shall apply:
- OWS 5.3.1.1 1st Infraction:** A yellow flag and a card bearing the competitor's number shall be raised to indicate and to inform the competitor that they are in violation of the Rules.
- OWS 5.3.1.2 2nd Infraction:** A red flag and a card bearing the competitor's number shall be raised by the Referee (OWS 3.1.6) to indicate and to inform the competitor that they are for the second time in violation of the Rules. The competitor shall be disqualified.
- OWS 5.3.2** If in the opinion of a Referee, an action of a competitor or an escort craft, or a competitor's approved representative is deemed to be 'unsporting' the Referee shall disqualify the

- competitor concerned immediately. The competitor must leave the water immediately and be placed in an escort craft and take no further part in the race
- OWS 5.4** Escort craft shall manoeuvre so as not to obstruct or place them directly ahead of any competitor and not take unfair advantage by pacing or slip streaming.
- OWS 5.5** Escort craft shall attempt to maintain a constant position so as to station the competitor at, or forward of, the mid-point of the escort craft.
- OWS 5.6** Standing on the bottom during a race shall not disqualify a competitor, but they may not walk or jump.
- OWS 5.7** With the exception of OWS 5.6 above a competitor shall not receive support from any fixed or floating object and shall not intentionally touch or be touched by their escort craft or crew therein.
- OWS 5.7.1** Rendering assistance by an official medical officer or by water cover safety personnel to a competitor in apparent distress should always supersede official rules of disqualification through “intentional contact” with a competitor (OWS 5.3.1).
- OWS 5.8M** MSA does not allow the use of individual escort craft, except for swims over 5 kms, at the discretion of the event organiser. Visually impaired competitors who require a guide are an exception to this requirement.
- OWS 5.8.1** For races where escort boats are used, each escort craft shall contain: a Race Judge, a person of the competitor’s choice, and the minimum crew required to operate the escort craft.
- OWS 5.8.2** Each escort craft shall display the competitor’s competition number so as to be easily seen from either side of the escort craft.
- OWS 5.9** Each safety craft shall contain appropriately qualified safety personnel and the minimum crew required to operate the safety craft.
- OWS 5.10** No competitor shall be permitted to use or wear any device which may be an aid to their speed, endurance, or buoyancy. Approved swimsuit, goggles, a maximum of two (2) caps, nose clip and earplugs may be used.
- OWS 5.11** Competitors shall be allowed to use grease or other such substances providing these are not, in the opinion of the Event Referee, excessive.
- OWS 5.12** The pacing of a competitor by another person entering the water is not permitted.
- OWS 5.13** **Feeding**
- OWS 5.13.1** Feeding poles are not to exceed 5m in length when extended. No objects, rope or wire may hang off the end of feeding poles, except for the competitor’s identification, which is allowed to be attached to the feeding pole but may not exceed the size of 30m x 20cm.
- OWS 5.13.2** Coaching and the giving of instructions by the approved competitor’s representative on the feeding platform or in the escort craft is permitted. No whistle shall be allowed.
- OWS 5.13.3** When taking sustenance, competitors may use OWS 5.6 provided Rule OWS 5.7 is not infringed.
- OWS 5.13.4** No objects can be thrown from the feeding platform to the competitors, including sustenance. The competitors shall receive their feeding directly from their representative by a feeding pole or by hand.

**OWS 5.13.5** *Not applicable to Masters.*

**OWS 5.14M Time Limits**

In all events, time limits shall apply as follows:

- 30 minutes per 1km (or part thereof) be allowed.

**OWS 5.14.1** Competitors who do not finish the course within the time limit shall be removed from the water except that the Event Referee may allow a competitor outside the time limit to complete the course but not be eligible for any points or prizes.

**OWS 5.14.2M** Competitors should immediately leave the water if directed to do so by a Technical Official or Safety Personnel.

**OWS 5.14.3M** Competitors failing to complete the swim must report to race officials at the finish line before leaving the event as there may be no other record of them leaving the course.

**OWS 5.15 Emergency Abandonment**

**OWS 5.15.1** In cases of emergency abandonment of races of 10 km or less, the race will be restarted from the beginning at the earliest possible moment.

**OWS 5.15.1.1** Where a competitor/s has completed the race prior to abandonment, the final ranking will be as reported by the Event Referee having regard to those competitor(s) who have already finished.

**OWS 5.15.2** *Not applicable to Masters.*

**OWS 6 THE FINISH OF THE RACE**

**OWS 6.1** Safety craft should be stationed at the approach to the entrance of the finish lane to ensure that only the escort craft authorised to do so enter or cross this entrance

**OWS 6.2** The final places will be determined by the Event Referee based upon the finish judges' report and the finish video (if used).

**OWS 6.3** *Not applicable to Masters.*

**OWS 6.4M** The finish may be in the water or on the shore

**OWS 6.4.1M** For MSA National Championship swims, the finish shall be clearly defined in the water at a swimming depth to enable the competitors to touch a vertical surface or swim across a defined finish line.

**OWS 6.4.2M** For all other MSA sanctioned OWS's the finish shall be clearly defined in the water, at swimming depth where practicable, to enable competitors to touch a vertical surface or swim/walk across a defined finish line. Where a finish platform or overhead apparatus cannot be installed, competitors shall swim/walk across a defined finish line in the water, placed in order of finish, and given a numbered place token.

**OWS 6.4.3M** When out of water electronic timing is used, competitors should be put in order of finish at a defined in-water finish line and given a numbered place token, to walk to the timer in order of swim finish. The timing device should be as close to the water's edge as is practicable.

- OWS 6.4.4M** If an onshore finish is used, competitors will stand when unable to continue swimming and walk to the finish line. Once a competitor has stood, they should maintain their position relative to other competitors. Running to the finish is prohibited.
- OWS 6.5** 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.
- OWS 6.6** Every effort should be made to ensure that the competitor's representative can get from the escort craft to meet the competitor as they leave the water.
- OWS 6.7** Upon leaving the water some competitors may require assistance. Competitors should only be touched or handled if they clearly display a need, or ask for assistance.
- OWS 6.8M** The Medical Officer should observe the competitors as they leave the water. A chair, in which the competitor can sit while an assessment is made, should be provided.
- OWS 6.9** Once cleared by the Medical Officer, competitors should be given access to refreshment.

## **OWS 7 SWIMWEAR & TECHNOLOGY**

- OWS 7.1M** For open water swimming competitions, swimwear must comply with MSA General Rule GR 16.
- OWS 7.1.1** For open water swimming competitions with water temperature from 18°C and above, swimsuits (men and women) shall not cover the neck, nor extend past the shoulder, nor extend below the ankle.
- OWS 7.2M** For open water swimming competitions in water with temperature below 18°C, the use of wetsuits is compulsory. Wetsuits are not permitted in open water swimming competitions in water with temperature 18°C and above unless a separate wetsuit category is provided by the organisers. (*Incorporating World Aquatic Masters OWS Rule 4.3*)
- OWS 7.3 Wetsuits**
- Wetsuits (for both men and women) shall completely cover torso, back, shoulders and thighs. They shall not extend beyond the neck, wrists and ankles. The body parts after the shoulders and / or below the thigh do not necessarily need to be covered.
- OWS 7.4 Swim Caps**
- It shall be compulsory for all competitors to wear highly visible coloured swim caps. (*World Aquatic Masters OWS Rule 4.4*)
- OWS 7.4.1** In a team event all competitors from the same team must wear the same colour caps.
- OWS 7.5M Technology**
- Automated devices shall not be utilised to transmit data, sounds, or signals to the competitor and may not be used to aid their speed. No technology may be used that gives an advantage to a competitor such as "smart goggles", hearing devices, and the like.
- OWS 7.6M** Jewellery shall not be worn, including watches.
- OWS 7.7** As a consequence of injury, it is permissible to tape not more than one or two fingers or toes. Any other kind of tape on the body is not permitted unless approved by the Referee.

**OWS 7.8M** Competitors must declare all wearables when reporting to the Clerk of Course. Failure to declare may result in disqualification from the event.

## **OWS 8 IDENTIFICATION OF COMPETITORS DURING A RACE**

### **OWS 8.1 Numbering of Competitors**

The numbering of Competitors is to appear on the arms, or additionally on the upper back or hands of competitors. On the arms the numbers shall be arranged vertically. On the upper backs and hands, the numbering is horizontally. Numbering of the arms and backs shall be 100 mm high x 60 mm wide. The numbering of the hands of competitors is allowed by marking pens. For Competitors wearing full body wet suits a white marker pen will be required.

## **OWS 9 OPEN WATER SWIMMING FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT**

### **OWS 9.1 Open Water Swimming Facilities**

#### **OWS 9.1.1 Start**

**OWS 9.1.1.1M** For in water starts, the start line shall be clearly defined by either overhead apparatus or by removable equipment at water level, a line between two buoys minimum.

**OWS 9.1.1.2M** For on shore starts, the start line shall be clearly defined by either overhead apparatus or by removable equipment on the beach, as close to the water's edge as practicable.

#### **OWS 9.1.1.3 Start Platforms**

Start Platforms if used, shall be of sufficient size to allow 60cm space per competitor plus an additional 5m. Each competitor space should be identified and numbered with number 1 farthest from the entry to the platform. They shall be of sufficient width to allow for the necessary activities prior to the start and to support the weight of the competitors and officials at the start.

#### **OWS 9.1.2 Finish**

**OWS 9.1.2.1** The final approach to the finish shall be clearly defined with markers of a distinctive colour and shall comprise the boundary of the course.

**OWS 9.1.2.2** The area leading to the finish apparatus should be clearly marked by rows of buoys which narrow as they get closer to the finish line.

**OWS 9.1.2.3M** The finish shall be clearly defined and marked by a vertical face or by removable equipment at water level (a line between two buoys minimum), or by removable equipment on the beach, as close to the water's edge as practicable.

**OWS 9.1.2.4M** If electronic timing is used, 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 the force of a competitor striking the wall. The finish should be filmed and recorded from each side and above by a video system with slow motion and recall facilities including timing equipment.

**OWS 9.1.2.5** *Not applicable to Masters*

**OWS 9.1.3 Turns / Alterations**

**OWS 9.1.3.1** All turns/alterations of the course shall be clearly indicated. Directional buoys which are alterations of the course shall be of a different colour to guidance buoys. Wherever possible there shall be a long distance from the start to the first turning buoy to ease congestion at the turn.

**OWS 9.1.3.2** A clearly marked craft or platform, containing a Turn Judge, shall be positioned at all alterations of course in such a manner as not to obstruct a competitor's visibility of the turn.

**OWS 9.1.4 Feeding Platforms**

Feeding platforms shall be of sufficient size and buoyancy for the safe operation of the platform and the feeders and officials operating thereon. A minimum of 60cm of linear space per feeder plus 5m shall be required and of sufficient width to allow storage a preparation for competitor feeding. There needs to be sufficient space on one or more platforms to accommodate all feeders. Access to the platform shall be outside of the racecourse wherever possible.

**OWS 9.1.5 All Platforms**

All Starting Platforms, Feeding Platforms, Relay Platforms, turning apparatus and Turn Judges craft/platforms shall be securely fixed in position and not be subject to tidal, wind or other movements.

**OWS 9.1.6 Water Conditions**

**OWS 9.1.6.1M** Guidance on safe water quality should be taken from the Environmental Protection Agency. In general terms the Environmental Protection Agency will issue warnings relating to water purity and to physical safety from other considerations, especially after rain and the discharge of storm water into the open water course.

**OWS 9.1.6.2M** The minimum depth of water at any point on the course shall be 1.00 metre.

**OWS 9.1.6.3M** The water temperature shall be measured within 30 minutes before start of race and must be a minimum of 16°C and maximum of 31°C. The water temperature shall be certified by the Safety Officer as measured in as near to the middle of the course as possible at a depth of 40 cm.  
*(Incorporating World Aquatic Masters OWS Rule 4.3)*

**OWS 9.2 Automatic Officiating Equipment**

The operation of Automatic Officiating Equipment shall be under the supervision of appointed officials. Results recorded by Automatic Officiating Equipment shall be used to determine the winner, all placing and the time applicable to each competitor, The placing and times so determined shall have precedence over the decisions of judges and timekeepers. In the event that a break-down of the Automatic Officiating Equipment occurs or that it is clearly indicated that there has been a failure of the equipment, or that a competitor has failed to activate the equipment, the recordings of the judges and timekeepers shall be official.

**OWS 9.2.1 Microchip Transponders**

When Automatic Officiating Equipment is used for timing of competitions, microchip transponder technology capable of providing split times is mandatory and should be added to

the equipment. Microchip transponder timing technology will be recorded officially in tenths of seconds.

#### **OWS 9.2.2 Intermediate Timing Gate**

Where an intermediate timing gate is used it shall be placed such that it becomes part of the overall course within the swimming line of the course without deviation for the competitors. It shall be a minimum width of 6m wide at the swimming waterline.

#### **OWS 9.3M Automatic Officiating Procedure and Manual Timing**

**OWS 9.3.1M** Any timing device that is terminated by an official shall be considered a watch. Such manual times must be taken by two (2) timekeepers appointed by the organisers. Manual timing shall be registered to 1/10 of a second. Where no Automatic Equipment is used, official manual times shall be determined as follows:

**OWS 9.3.1.1M** If two (2) of the watches record the same time, the two identical times shall be the official time.

**OWS 9.3.1.2M** If both (2) watches disagree, the watch recording the slowest time shall be the official time.

**OWS 9.3.1.3M** With only one (1) out of two (2) watches working that time shall be the official time.

**OWS 9.3.2** When the Automatic Officiating Equipment fails to record the place and/or time of one or more competitors in a given race:

**OWS 9.3.2.1** Record all available Automatic Officiating Equipment times and places,

**OWS 9.3.2.2** Record all human times and places.

**OWS 9.3.2.3** The official place will be determined as follows:

- A competitor with an Automatic Officiating Equipment time and/or place must retain their relative order when compared with the other competitors having an Automatic Officiating Equipment time and/or place within that race.
- A competitor not having an Automatic Officiating Equipment place shall have their place established by the Event Referee from the video recording of the finish of the race.
- A competitor having neither an Automatic Officiating Equipment place nor an Automatic Officiating Equipment time shall establish their relative order by the place recorded by the judges.

**OWS 9.4** *Not applicable to Masters*

#### **OWS 9.5M Safety Craft and Personnel**

**OWS 9.5.1M** Safety craft can be paddleboards, kayaks and surf skis supported by jet skis, IRB's and power boats.

**OWS 9.5.1.1M** All safety boats used in conjunction with the event must meet local standards for equipment and loading capacity.

**OWS 9.5.1.2M** The ratio of safety paddle board/kayaks to be provided will be at a minimum of 1:20 competitors,

**OWS 9.5.1.3M** The backup of powered safety craft to be provided will be at a minimum of 1:50 competitors.

**OWS 9.5.1.4M** Prevailing weather conditions may necessitate additional safety craft.

**Note:** When an event is conducted close to shore or as a circuit, the ratio of safety craft can be too congested on water. A ratio of 1:50 competitor of safety paddle craft and 1:100 motorised craft is more practicable using backup of 1:50 safety personnel walking the shore, with access to motorised vehicle(s) on shore.

**OWS 9.5.2M** All support and safety craft personnel should be trained in close support techniques for supporting a competitor in difficulty until a rescue craft can attend.

**OWS 9.5.3M** All support and safety craft personnel should carry a whistle to alert competitors and safety craft to a safety incident.