

2025 Western Zone Open Water Championship Safety Plan

1 General Description

1.1 The August 23, 2025 Western Zone Open Water Championships is an open water swim competition that will be held at Coeur d' Alene Lake near City Park and Beach.

It will include:

- 1.25K (9 - 12)
- 2.5K (11 - 16)
- 5K (13 - O)

Please refer to the course map below. The course can be seen in its entirety from the dock and the shoreline.



The start will be an in-water start, just off Independence point. The swim is counterclockwise with left shoulder turns at the corners marked by orange cylindrical buoys. Two yellow guide buoys will be placed between the turn buoys. The finish line will be an in-water finish close to the start point. Water temperature is expected to be in the mid 70's.

1.2 Race Day Schedule

- 6:30 a.m. Check-in Opens
- 7:45 a.m. 5K Race Mandatory Safety Meeting
- 8:05 a.m. 5K Male Start
- 8:15 a.m. 5K Female Start
- 9:45 a.m. 1.25K Mandatory Safety Meeting
- 10:10 a.m. 1.25K Male Start
- 10:35 a.m. 1.25K Female Start
- 11:20 a.m. 2.5K Mandatory Safety Meeting
- 11:45 a.m. 2.5K Male Start
- 11:55 a.m. 2.5K Female Start

2025 Western Zone Open Water Championship Safety Plan

2. SAFETY PERSONNEL

2.1 Independent Safety Officer (Marz Everett)

Independent Safety Officer will be responsible for safe conduct of the race, to include:

- A. Weather and Visibility safety thresholds for the race;
- B. Communication coordination with in-water safety personnel before, during and at the completion of the race;
- C. Final accounting of all swimmers exiting the water; and
- D. Prime responsibility for any emergency water evacuation as necessary.

The Independent Safety Officer will complete the Safety Officer's Checklist.

2.1 Lifeguards

There will be 5 lifeguards on the course (on the water). Lifeguards are to provide a ready response to swimmers in distress, and to initiate rescue, provide first aid, and transportation to safety and advanced care, as appropriate.

- Safety boat/Safety Officer- Will give pre-race briefing to all lifeguards. Will be on the water with a safety radio coordinating lifeguards and, if necessary, rescue efforts.
- Zones 1-5 Lifeguards- will be on a paddle board with whistle, flag, safety radio and rescue tube. Zone 5 lifeguard will move to Zone 6 once all swimmers have exited the Start zone 5.
- Safety boat/Safety Officer is responsible for coordinating lifeguards in all zones, and may make first contact with distressed swimmers.
- Lifeguards- will be on a paddle board with whistle and flag. They will be spread out evenly throughout the zones under the direction of the Safety boat/Head Lifeguard. They are responsible for reaching and moving distressed swimmers to the safety boat or Sheriff Personal WaterCraft (PWC) or shore, whichever is most expedient. May make first contact with a distressed swimmer.
- Sheriff Personal WaterCraft- will be on the water to support quick extraction of distressed swimmers. 2 PWC's will be spread out evenly throughout the zones under the direction of the Safety Officer. They are responsible for supporting extraction of swimmers in distress, and preventing public boat traffic from entering the race course.

2.2 Swim Officials (4-8)

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 may be following and observing groups of swimmers. Swim officials may offer assistance in the way of flotation devices. If a swimmer is provided assistance by lifeguards or officials the swimmer will be disqualified and asked to exit the course

Swim Officials will also be in boats and will have a whistle and flag, extra flotation device, course radio, and cell phone. Swim officials on boats will be observing and following groups of swimmers. Swim officials may offer assistance in the way of flotation devices. The boat engine will be turned off if swimmers approach within 10 feet of the boat. The Captain will complete the

2025 Western Zone Open Water Championship Safety Plan

Boat Operator's Checklist. Any personnel on motorized boats has the authorization to have the engines turned off.

2.3 Safety Boat

There will be 1 official Safety boat, located near the West corner of the course, at least 50 feet away from the swimmers. The boat will be manned by the captain and the safety officer. The boat will have a whistle, flag, foam noodle flotation device, cell phone and warm blankets/towel. 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 10 feet of the boat. The Captain and Independent Safety officer will complete the Boat Operator's Checklist.

3. SAFETY MEETINGS

3.1 Safety Personnel Pre-Race Meeting

7:05 a.m. is the lifeguard and safety crew meeting conducted by Safety Officer, Marz Everett and local Sheriff personnel.

Any decision to delay, modify or cancel the race will be made at this meeting by the Safety Officer in discussion with the Meet Director, Meet Referee and local Sheriff's Department representatives. During this 20-minute meeting procedures will be reviewed for:

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

3.2 Swimmers' Mandatory Safety Meeting

20 minutes prior to the start of each race, all swimmers are required to attend a safety talk given by Meet Referees Jeff Walkley and Alex Herr. This talk will cover:

- Swimmer Accountability
- Course description and conditions
- Entry into the water
- Distressed swimmer
- Early exit/race abandonment
- Personal responsibility

3.3 Lifeguard Requirement to be in water

2025 Western Zone Open Water Championship Safety Plan

All lifeguards and kayakers must be in their zone ready to go by the start of the Mandatory Safety Briefing for each race.

4. SAFETY PRECAUTIONS/SWIMMER ACCOUNTABILITY

4.1 Assigned numbering

At check-in, all swimmers will be given a race/bib number in permanent marker on their shoulder (side and back) and both hands. Swimmers will also be given a ticket at Check-in with their number on it that must be presented to the water entrance official prior to entering the water. All numbers are used to verify swimmers' entry into, and exit from, the water. High visibility swim caps are recommended to help with visibility of swimmers.

4.2 Entry into water

Swimmers will check with the two numbering officials and must be recorded before water entry. Swimmers may warm up prior to the start of their specific race outside the start area. Swimmers will gather at the start line between two small green buoys. There will be 2-minute, 1 minute, 30 second and 15 second warnings prior to the start. 5 to 10 seconds prior to the start, the race official will raise a flag above his/her head indicating the start is imminent. The race official will bring the flag down and simultaneously sound a marine air horn to signal the start.

4.3 Normal Exit from water

As they reach the conclusion of their race distance, the swimmers will complete the race by hitting the finish board with their hand. Exiting the water- Swimmer must Check out with both numbering officials before leaving the water. The water entry/exit volunteers will assist in by steadying the swimmer as needed and manually record the swimmer's number. The swimmer may not return back into the water. Then the numbers will be reconciled at the direction of the Independent Safety Officer, Race Director and Administrative Official.

4.4 Premature Exit from water

Safety personnel will be on the lookout for any swimmer exiting the water prior to the finish line or getting assistance from safety personnel out of the water and attempting to get the name and number of the individual and radio that to the Safety officer. All swimmers that exit the race early must report to the safety tent so the medical team can clear them. At the medical tent, an official will provide the swimmer their initial race ticket.

4.5 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 and Safety Officer. The Safety Officer will carry a radio from each set.

2025 Western Zone Open Water Championship Safety Plan

Kayaks and lifeguards will have whistles and flags. They will 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, PWC, and paddleboards. The Race Director, Safety Officer and Meet Referee can communicate by course radio and/or safety radio.

Each swimmer must provide name and cell phone information for a handler/coach/parent/friend to be contacted in the event of an emergency. They must also provide their own cell phone number.

4.6 General Course Patrol

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

Kayakers should be watching for any swimmers in distress, other boats in the area, swimmers heading out of the observed areas or into dangerous situations. Alert your radio operator so that he/she can notify the Safety Officer, Race Director or Sheriffs.

Use a flag or paddle, or shout to get swimmer's attention and herd them back to safety, but swimmers must not be harmed in your attempt to redirect them.

Swimmers off the course should not be followed unless necessary to redirect them back to safety.

Safety personnel must watch all the swimmers in their area. Unless directed by a race official or lifeguard, NO one should follow one swimmer- - there are no personal escorts.

Swimmers asking to abandon the race should hold on to a flotation device, or the boat (stern or aft –never the sides) and signal a lifeguard for assistance. If a swimmer can swim back to shore or an observation boat, Safety Personnel will follow them. All swimmers abandoning the race are to report or be escorted to Medical Tent for clearance in accordance with Section 4.4. Get their name and race number and relay that information to the Race Director on shore, or to a Safety official with a radio.

Swimmers will be pulled from the competition:

- If a swimmer has not completed the race within 30 minutes of the first finisher in accordance with USA Swimming 701.2.5 and the meet sanction.
- If a swimmer demands Safety Personnel paddle next to them.
- If a swimmer is incapable of staying on course and Safety Personnel are spending all their time corralling one individual
- Independent Safety Officer/Meet Referee/Lifeguards determine if the lag swimmer/swimmers need(s) to be pulled, and if so, will radio that information to either lead lifeguards or officials in kayaks. Based upon the best judgment of the Safety Personnel.

2025 Western Zone Open Water Championship Safety Plan

Actions when pulling a swimmer from competition.

- Clearly explain the decision. Safety Personnel will tell, not ask and won't argue.
- Swimmer will be directed to follow Safety Personnel to shore, to an observation boat, or to a longboard lifeguard.
- When the swimmer is on a longboard, boat, or shore, Safety Personnel will return to their assigned position.

Action for Aiding a Distressed Swimmer:

- If a swimmer is panicking or appears in trouble, Safety Personnel will whistle and signal with the flag for lead lifeguard and longboard.
- The lifeguard making first contact will determine the type of assistance to offer and inform the Safety officer of the situation by radio.
- If a lifeguard is unable to reach the swimmer, other Safety Personnel will quickly approach the swimmer, give them a flotation device (rescue tube, foam noodle) and direct them to the nearest safety boat (west side of course), or shore (north side of course).
- As a last resort, the swimmer will be permitted to hold onto a boat, using caution, as a panicked swimmer can dump a kayak easily and quickly. Kayakers will get them to the stern and tow them to the nearest longboard lifeguard, observation boat, or shore (start/finish area).
- If a swimmer is rescued the Lifeguard will ensure that an incident report is completed at the end of the race.
- If a swimmer accepts any support during the swim, the swimmer may be issued a red flag and disqualified per USA Swimming 701.5.1.F
- If a swimmer is tired but in relatively good shape, offer a flotation device. If a swimmer accepts flotation support they must suspend swimming until they no longer are using flotation support.
- If the swimmer opts to quit the race, the lifeguard or kayaker will inform the race director that the swimmer is out of the water.
- If a swimmer requires medical assistance and cannot swim out on their own, the paddle board lifeguard will take the swimmer to either the Safety boat or into shore.

4.7 Race Termination

If the race is to be abandoned, radios will be used to communicate to all watercraft.

- 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. Lifeguards and officials shall inform swimmers of cancellation.
- Swimmers are to discontinue swimming and look for directions from the Officials or watercraft personnel. Once safe on shore, make sure all swimmers get checked off as being safely out of the water

2025 Western Zone Open Water Championship Safety Plan

5. Other Safety information

5.1 First Aid and Medical Assistance

There will be emergency medical personnel on site, on shore. All calls to 911 Emergency response or local hospitals will be made by the emergency 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.

5.2 Emergency hospital:

Nearest emergency hospital: Kootenai Health

Phone: 208-625-4000

Address: 2003 Kootenai Health Way

Distance from site: 2.1 miles

6. Meet Personnel Contact Information

- Meet Director - Melissa Stroh, lissa2843@yahoo.com, 208-626-2131
- Safety Officer - Marz Everett, marzeverett@gmail.com, 208-791-0745
- Head Lifeguard - TBD
- Co-Meet Referees -
 - Jeff Walkley, jwalkley@gmail.com, 509-999-3092
 - Alex Herr, alexmherr@gmail.com, 678-787-6270

7. Insurance Certificate Information

Insurance for the event is provided through USA-Swimming.