

# Open Water Swimming Officials

## What's it all about?

Yes, you really can enjoy the benefits of sun, sea, sand and fresh air while officiating at a swimming event!\*

Open Water swimming is an Olympic discipline and has become increasingly popular over

recent years, with more events being held all across Scotland and the UK, as well as abroad. Glasgow will host the 2018 European Swimming Championships, which will include Open Water events. Open Water Swimming, like other disciplines, needs officials to ensure events run smoothly and safely, so Scottish Swimming and British Swimming have programmes to develop officials for events throughout the summer season.



So what does an Open Water official do?

### Timekeepers, Judges and Starters:

Most of these duties are similar to what you might expect if you've officiated at a pool event, so Timekeepers, Judges and Starter. We work to the British Swimming officials' training scheme. There are two training levels, Open Water Judge 1 and Open Water Judge 2. Training is given in much the same way as in the pool, by a workshop, mentoring and a final assessment. There are no stroke judges, since everything is freestyle but Judges make sure swimmers don't foul one another. There also functions special to Open Water, of Course Officer and Clerk of the Course but these are OWJ2 duties – we don't throw you in at the deep end.



### Open Water Referee:

This is the top level qualification delivered by the British Swimming training scheme. You will be in control of all the officials, ensuring that the rules are applied and the result is fair and the event is undertaken safely. Your qualification will entitle you to officiate all over the UK and you may be asked to officiate at events abroad, so it can be serious stuff - if that's your bag.

The safety of the swimmers is the primary consideration of all Officials, most especially the Clerk of the Course and the Referee. However, in Open Water Swimming there's a further Official, whose duties are devoted entirely to the safety of the swimmers, officials and spectators: the Safety Officer.



### Safety Officer:

The training scheme for this is specific to Scottish Swimming and covers aspects of Risk Assessments, communication and control of water safety craft and shore-based medical stations, safe working plans and emergency plans. Both the Referee and the Safety Officer have the authority in Scottish Swimming events to alter or cancel any event for safety reasons.

If you don't feel the responsibilities of Referee or Safety Officer are right for you, then that's fine. Nobody is going to pressurise you into that. You can stay at OWJ1 if you want. However, the great thing about officiating in Open Water is that there's a job for everyone. Feeling sociable? – then you probably want to be in the guddle of Timekeepers, Finish Judges and Clerk of the Course at the finish line. Had a hard week at the office and want to be away from everyone for an hour or two in a boat without feeling guilty? – it's a Turn Judge for you.

The great thing about Open Water Swimming is the sense of camaraderie, not just between the officials but also between the swimmers. At the end of the day, the sense of achievement is immense for all swimmers, every time.

So, can we count on your help? If you're interested, simply contact your District Open Water Convenor, or one of the following. The minimum age to start training is 15 years.



Technical Officials Co-ordinator	Ralph Payne	RalphP26@aol.com
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Very fine print: \* neither sun, salt water nor sand are guaranteed. Fresh air is.