

SKA¹⁸IA LAKE ULTRA SWIM

STRENGTH, ENDURANCE, FEARLESSNESS

Open Water Safety Manual

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1.0 INTRODUCTION OF TEAM

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1.1 Overview:

Ensuring the safety of the Skaha Lake Ultra Swim participants while on the swim course is our number one priority. The strategy being proposed will ensure course integrity, allow for rapid identification of swimmers in distress with rapid response and rescue if required.

Our main goal is:

- Be seen
- Be ready
- And available, but not distracting to the swimmers.

1.2 Core Objectives:

To ensure the health and safety of the swim participants by:

1. Maintaining the integrity of the swim course during the event until the Race Director officially closes the course at 6.5 hours from the start time.
2. There will also be a time cut-off at 8 KM (Ponderosa Point) which must be reached within 4 hours 25 minutes. If your swimmer is not close to reaching Ponderosa Point within the cut off time, a support motor boat will pick them up and take them to the finish. The overall finish cut-off time will be 6 hours and 30 minutes. The paddler will continue to paddle to the finish to check in with race officials.
3. Providing an effective medical and rescue response capability utilizing both professional and volunteer services.
4. To ensure that any potential risks are mitigated to the swim course safety team through clearly identified, roles, procedures, effective communication and onsite support during the swim event.

1.3 Race Instructions

The Skaha Lake Ultra Swim is an 11.8 km course that will start on the Main Beach of Skaha Lake in Penticton and end at Kenyon Park in Okanagan Falls.

Swimmer Instructions (see Athlete & Paddler Manual)

Paddle Craft Instructions (see Athlete & Paddler Manual)

2.0 The Course

2.1 Schedule for Race Morning

5:30 am - 6:15 am - Swim - Check-in – Prerace Preparation
6:30 am - 6:35 am - Final Instructions on Beach (Athletes and Paddlers)
6:35 am - 6:50 am - Final Dry Strip Drop Off
6:35 am - 6:50 am - Swimmer Warm-up Opportunity
6:50 am - 6:55 am - Support boats move into position
6:55 am - 6:59 am - Ceremonial Opening – National Anthem (All swimmers on Beach)
7:00 am - Swim - Start
1:30 pm - Swim - Cut-off - Okanagan Falls – Kenyon Park

2.2 Start and Finish guidelines

- Entry & exit points will be marked with Swim buoys and flags.
- The Swim course is an open water course and boat traffic cannot be prevented from entering the course. The swim will have power boats, Fire/Rescue Sea Do's and an RCMP boat to monitor motorboat traffic. The power boats will patrol the course and will be equipped with Radios and Lifeguards
- Support crafts will be provided instructions on how to summon help from the motor boats if required and how to support their swimmer.
- The swim goes from Skaha Beach in Penticton to Kenyon Park in Okanagan Falls

SWIM START & FINISH INSTRUCTIONS

- Athletes/Swimmers will be issued a numbered swim cap at race package pick-up which will be colour coded according to anticipated swim time. **White caps are available** for those who are anxious about their swim; these will allow us to keep a closer eye on them!
- Paddlers will be issued a matching numbered paddle to their athletes swim cap number at Race Morning Check-in. This will allow organizers to verify who has checked in to start the event. This paddle will be used during the race in the case of an emergency to identify the swimmer. Also at the finish line to indicate who is finishing.
- There will be **3 rows** for the start based on the following swim times:

Row 1 - under 3 hours; **Row 2** - 3 to 4 hours; **Row 3** - over 4 hours.

- Athlete and Paddler will line up in the water side by side in the appropriate assigned row. Row 1 will be closest to the buoy line with the other rows behind them leaving a slight gap between rows.
- Once athletes and paddlers are in position the Race Course Director will give the signal to the starter to begin the count-down.
- This is a mass start and on the signal all swimmers and boats must start moving forward.
- In the event of an emergency we need to know who the swimmer is, paddlers will hold the numbered paddle up to help us with identifying the athlete in need as a rescue boat approaches.
- As athletes approach the finish the numbered paddle will be help up to ensure the athlete is identified and their time is recorded.

3.0 Safety Plan

3.1 Swimmer in Distress requiring a rescue:

- The support paddler will wave his/her arm and numbered paddle in the air.
- Watercraft will approach the paddler with caution and maneuver into position.
- The athlete will be loaded onto the watercraft.
- The watercraft will transport the swimmer to the medical tent located in Okanagan Falls. The Medical Director will establish treatment needed.
- If a swimmer is removed from the race – the Race Director needs to be contacted and advised of the swimmer’s number so that they are accounted for.
- If it is a life threatening removal 911 will be called and the swimmer will be taken to the Skaha Marina, where the ambulance will meet them.

3.2 Incident De-Briefing: (Serious Incident)

In the event that a serious incident occurs the Race Director along with the directors will assess if a Critical Incident Stress De-briefing is required.

A Critical Incident Stress Debriefing has three main objectives:

- 1) The mitigation of the impact of a traumatic incident,
- 2) The facilitation of the normal recovery processes and a restoration of adaptive functions in psychologically healthy people who are distressed by an unusually disturbing event.
- 3) A CISD functions as a screening opportunity to identify group members who might benefit from additional support services or a referral for professional care.
- 4) To debrief the incident and learn ways to improve in the future.

3.3 Communications

- Radios will be issued by the Race Director to all the motor boats on the water and the medical team on shore
- All boats will sign for and receive handheld radios.
- All Radios will be returned to the Race Director
- Phone numbers will also be exchanged.

4.0 Motor Boat Safety

4.1 Basic Pleasure Craft Inspection Checklist:

- Ensure you have your (pleasure Craft Operator Card (PCOC) in advance of race day.
- Inspect your pleasure craft's hull and check for cracks or other damage.
- If you are operating a power-driven pleasure craft check its electrical, fuel, propulsion and cooling systems and make sure the throttle is operating smoothly and is not sticking or binding.
- Make sure the steering is working properly.
- Check the oil and fuel levels. A good rule of thumb for fuel is: one-third for the trip out, one-third for the return and one-third as reserve.
- Check all hoses and lines for leaks or cracks and replace if necessary. Make sure all clamps and belts are secure and in good shape.
- Inspect, clean and replace spark plugs if necessary.
- Check and change oil and water filters if necessary.
- Check the battery's charge and its fluid levels. Be certain the drainage plug is in place. Verify the load on your boat is well distributed.
- Are there enough flotation devices of appropriate size for everyone on board?
- Is all of the required equipment in good working order?
- Do you have ample reserves of fuel for the trip or will you need to refuel?
- Do you a course map?
- Is your VHF radio working properly?
- Do you have a first aid kit, basic tools and spare parts?
- Take a minute to consider your safety preparedness
- Are there any local hazards or boating restrictions?
- Operators including personal watercraft, should brief all guests and about safe operation before heading out. Guests should be told where the safety equipment is kept and how to use it.

