



Marathon Swimming Rules and Regulations

July 28, 2020, v1.0.1

1. General Rules for All Swims

- 1.1. The master of the escort vessel (*Captain*) shall have full control and authority over the vessel, vessel crew, *Observer(s)*, swimmer(s), swim crew, swim support vessels, and passengers. (S)he may, either before embarkation or at any time thereafter call off a swim attempt at any time because (s)he perceives that the safety of the those aboard is at risk, (s)he perceives that the escort vessel is at risk of loss or damage, or because of any maritime necessity.
- 1.2. In addition to the rules and regulations prescribed herein, the **Lake Tahoe Open Water Swimming Association** (LTOWSA) *Course Description* shall specify each swim course, identifying route details, swim configurations, start and finish locations, and special situations, including any rule exclusions, inclusions, and modifications. In all cases, *Course Description* rules and regulations shall take precedence over the rules herein, where applicable.
- 1.3. Swim Observation
 - 1.3.1. The *Observer's* sole responsibility is to observe and document the swim attempt. All other responsibilities such as swim support and escort vessel pilotage should be performed by others.
 - 1.3.2. The *Observer* shall have sole and full authority to interpret and apply the *Marathon Swimming Rules and Regulations* of the **Lake Tahoe Open Water Swimming Association** documented herein, in addition to the rules contained in the *Course Description* for a particular attempt. (S)he shall disqualify any swimmer for any violation of the rules that (s)he personally observes or is reported to him/her on good authority. All disqualifications are subject to the sole decision of the *Observer*.
 - 1.3.3. The *Observer* shall provide independent, objective supervision and documentation about the facts and other aspects of the swim attempt.
 - 1.3.4. In the event that there is a need for clarification about an aspect of the actual conduct of the attempt that is not covered in the rules, the *Observer* shall make the final determination. Any such questions and decisions shall be documented thoroughly in the observation log.

- 1.3.5. The *Observer* may intervene in the attempt at any stage to ensure that the rules and regulations are observed, and shall adjudicate all protests related to the swim attempt in progress and ensure that the swim attempt honors the spirit and traditions of marathon swimming
- 1.3.6. If a swim attempt is cancelled or disqualified by the *Captain* or *Observer(s)*, the swimmer(s) must immediately exit the water and the vessel shall return to port.
- 1.4. If not an *Alternate Stroke* attempt, any combination of swimming strokes may be employed during a swim attempt, including but not limited to the front crawl, butterfly, breaststroke, sidestroke, and backstroke. *Alternate stroke rules are documented under separate cover.*
- 1.5. During the swim attempt, a swimmer may not make supporting contact with any person or object, including escort and support vessels.
- 1.6. Swimmer(s) may be supported by one or more oar driven vessels in addition to one or more escort vessels.
- 1.7. Any device, equipment, or apparel that benefits speed, improves buoyancy, relieves discomfort or pain, or retains or boosts warmth, other than those allowed in Section 2, shall be considered an artificial aid and are prohibited, resulting in disqualification.
- 1.8. Swimmer(s) may be escorted by one or more support swimmers at the discretion of the Pilot, but not within the first three hours of an attempt. Support swimmers may swim for up to one hour at a time, at which point they must exit the water for at least two hours before re-entering the water as a support swimmer. There shall be no contact made between the swimmer and any support swimmer(s).
- 1.9. Swimmer(s) may not intentionally swim in the slipstream of, align in a close grouping of, or draft off of an escort vessel, support vessel, or support swimmer(s) for the purpose of taking advantage of the reduced water resistance created by the former's wake. Furthermore, the employment of any other hydrodynamic performance improvements during an attempt shall result in disqualification.
- 1.10. For any part of the swim attempt that occurs during restricted visibility or between sunset and sunrise, swimmer(s) must wear a minimum of (2) illuminated, different color, cyalume chemical lights or LED lights, one of which shall be attached to the back of the head (often the goggle strap), and the other at the back of the waist.

- 1.11. The timing of the swim attempt starts when the swimmer enters the water at the specified start of the course, and ends when the swimmer clears the water at the specified end of the course. The *Observer* is in sole charge of timing the swim attempt and determining when these events occur.
- 1.12. Swimmer(s) must be aged 14 years or older on the day of the swim attempt unless approved in advance by LTOWSA.

2. Standard Equipment for All Swims

Identified below are the only acceptable swimsuits and equipment that may be worn or used during a 'Marathon' swim attempt. Any of the following may be used, exchanged, or replaced at any time, if necessary, during a swim attempt.

2.1. Swimsuits

- 2.1.1. Swimsuits are optional and their use (or lack of use) is at the sole discretion of the swimmer.
- 2.1.2. All swimsuits must be porous and made from textile materials. Only one suit may be worn at any time.
- 2.1.3. Women's swimsuits may be in one or two pieces, but must not cover the thighs, legs, neck, or extend past the shoulder. Women may swap between one and two-piece suits during an attempt if the swimsuits meet all of the requirements of Section 2.1.
- 2.1.4. Men's swimsuits must not extend below the thigh or above the waist.
- 2.1.5. Swim caps must be standard-style and constructed from latex or silicone. Only one cap may be worn at a time.

2.2. Additional Equipment

- 2.2.1. Standard swim goggles, nose plugs, ear plugs, and basic digital or analog watch w/any combination of current time, elapsed-time, stopwatch, date, alarm and backlight functions *only* may be worn.

IMPORTANT: SMARTWATCHES, INCLUDING GPS RECEIVER WATCHES ARE NOT ALLOWED AND MAY NOT BE WORN OR CARRIED DURING AN ATTEMPT. (e.g., Garmin, Apple iWatch, Fitbit, etc.)

- 2.2.2. LED or 12-hour cyalume chemical lights (glow-sticks) are allowed for periods of restricted visibility or swimming between sunset and sunrise. It is not required that they be removed during daylight.

- 2.2.3. [NOT APPLICABLE] Electronic shark shields, if utilized, may not trail off the body.
 - 2.2.4. Body grease and similar balms, sunscreen, and zinc-oxide may be applied before or during an attempt, although no one may touch the swimmer in the application of grease during a swim.
 - 2.2.5. Medically necessary devices may be used/worn during a swim attempt (e.g., insulin meters, pumps, etc.) if they cannot be considered an artificial aid as defined in Section 1.7 above. All such devices must be disclosed on the *Swim Application* and documented by LTOWSA.
 - 2.2.6. If the swimmer is uncertain whether a device or apparel item is allowed under these rules, he or she shall seek clarification from LTOWSA well in advance of the swim attempt. *Observers* do not have the authority to evaluate or interpret acceptable equipment outside those specifically and clearly identified in Sections 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3.
- 2.3. Before or during a swim attempt, a swimmer may substitute any of the swimsuit(s) and/or cap(s) identified in Section 2.1 with an increased-coverage swimsuit of any material or thickness (including racing suits, technical/drag reducing swimsuits, full-body suits, compression suits, and neoprene wetsuits), and/or substitute a strapped cap (of any type). **Employment of any such substitutions, in either solo or relay attempts, by any swimmer, shall change the classification of the swim attempt from 'Marathon' to 'Assisted'.**

3. Use or Attempted Use of a Prohibited Substance or a Prohibited Method

- 3.1. No alcoholic beverages may be consumed by anyone associated with the swim attempt or on the escort vessel at any time during an attempt, port to port.
- 3.2. The use of cannabis in any form, including all CBD based medicines, is not allowed by anyone associated with the swim attempt or the escort vessel either during or 96-hours prior to a swim attempt.
- 3.3. It is each swimmer's personal duty to ensure that no prohibited substance enters his or her body and that no prohibited method is used. The complete list of prohibited substances and methods for may be found within the [International Anti-doping Code, Standard Prohibited List, \(January, 2018\)](#).

4. Support Crew

- 4.1. It is the swimmer's responsibility to recruit a support crew capable of handling feedings and other needs of the swimmer. The *Captain* and escort vessel crew responsibilities are not typically the ones to act in a swimming support capacity, unless specifically contracted to do so.
- 4.2. Support crews of more than two people, shall designate one crew member as the *Crew Chief*, the single point of contact for all attempt communication with the escort vessel *Captain*, crew, and *Observer(s)*.
- 4.3. The minimum age for a support crew member is 14 years.

5. Pollution

- 5.1. The swimmer or crew may not pollute a course waterway with trash, debris, or contaminants of any kind, including but not limited to food scraps, feed cups, gel packs, or other waste at any point before, during, or after their swim attempt.
- 5.2. Swimmers and crew must take appropriate precautions to prevent the loss of all food/beverage containers by the use of ropes, floats, or other devices that prevent pollution during feeds.
- 5.3. Everyone involved in a swim attempt shall take their responsibility to protect the environment seriously due to the sensitive nature of LTOWSA's course locales and environments. As a result, failure to respect and adhere to this obligation may result in an immediate disqualification of a swim attempt.

6. Application Acceptance, Ratification Rules, Pilots/Escort Vessels, Relays, Multiple Crossings, and Alternate Strokes Rules

- 6.1. Rules related to these options are documented under separate cover and, when applicable, shall be read aloud and agreed to prior to a swim attempt.

The Northern California Open Water Swimming Association (aka, Lake Tahoe Open Water Swimming Association) Rules and Regulations are derived and adapted from multiple sources, including: the '[Official Swim Rules](#)' by [Catalina Channel Swimming Federation](#), the Code of Federal Regulations: [46 CFR § 11.467](#) & [46 CFR § 15.1111](#), and the United States Code: [46 U.S. Code § 2101, \(42\)\(B\)](#). '[Rules of Marathon Swimming](#)' by the [Marathon Swimmers Federation](#), the '[Swim Rules and Logistical Guidelines v.2015-1](#)' by the [Santa Barbara Channel Swimming Association](#), 'Stroke Definitions' as prescribed in [2018 U.S. Masters Swimming Rules, Part 1](#), and the '[Open Water Swimming Rules](#)' as defined by [Fédération Internationale de Natation](#)