National Guidelines for the Assessment and Management of Event Water Safety

Adam Wooler, Dave Walker, Connor Moss, John Clark

Do we know there is a problem?

Unless there is a death or a serious near death accident, there is no requirement to report the rescues, first aid cases and near misses

So........

We are not sure, but some high profile cases and verbal reports from clubs and lifeguards suggest there is a problem
The problem?...........

In the UK, Health & Safety Executive (HSE) provide the national guidelines for event safety management

But it does not include the provision of water safety at events

Sporting governing bodies have own risk assessment and safety management practices

Are Governing Bodies doing enough?

Triathlon is the fastest growing mainstream sport in the world

London Triathlon - 13,000 entrants

50% of people taking part each year are new to the sport
Open water swimming is the fastest growing mass participation sport in the world

Lorne Pier to Pier swim – 4000 competitors!

British ‘Great Swim Series’ – 7000 competitors

Hundreds of Charity Swims now being organised
American Open Water swimmer Fran Crippen dies during 10k race

American Fran Crippen, one of Open Water swimming’s top stars, died on Saturday after losing consciousness during a 10k race in Fujairah, United Arab Emirates.

Recent temperatures were one of the factors investigated by authorities following the shock death.

Crippen, 28, a 2008 world championship bronze medalist, was the first swimmer to die in any FINA-sanctioned competition, the world body’s president Julio Maglione said.

He was found unconscious two hours after falling to the last leg of the world cup. 10km open water swim event in Fujairah, in the United Arab Emirates after other marathonists had been ruled to heat exhaustion. The temperature of the water was above 26 degrees Celsius.

Three other swimmers, one male and two female swimmers, were taken to hospital and treated for heat exhaustion from the same competition.

The event was caused by Crippen’s team mate, Alex Meyer, who realised Crippen hadn’t finished. His body was found near the finish line of the competition.

REPORT

The Task Force realised that there has been growing concern over the safety of the sport as it increases in popularity and competitiveness. The Task Force realises that the swimming community has responded with a commitment to ensure that the risk of future harm to athletes is minimised to the fullest extent possible given the risks inherent in the sport of Open Water Swimming.

The Task Force is of the opinion that the Open Water Swimming Rules have not always been amended to establish clear requirements with regard to safety at Open Water Swimming events in closed areas like bays, rowing basins and small lakes, where "the one safety craft per swimmer rule" is impossible to achieve.

The FINA Rules state that the Organising Committee has to provide safety boats as required, having regard to the course. No mention in the Rules however is made on the quantity of boats, the requirements of the people that are handling the boats and their lifesaving/lifeguarding certification and/or background and their positioning.

The Task Force concludes that safety measures were not addressed or properly implemented at the Fujairah Event by the Organising Committee and the FINA representative. Overriding all these factors are the Open Water Swimming safety Rules and Regulations that in some instances are too vague, leaving room for interpretation.

The Task Force concludes that the inadequate surveillance and safety measures made it difficult, and at times impossible, to recognise and act upon an athlete in distress.
Commercial & Charity Events

Private event organisers only need to satisfy the requirements of the Local Authority where their event takes place, normally NOT the Governing Body

Most Local Authorities don’t know anything about Open Water Events!

= variable levels of event water safety provision, often inadequate

The Solution........

The research, compilation and publication of;

National Guidelines for the Risk Assessment and Management of Event Water Safety

Led by SLSGB and RoSPA, in partnership with the University of Derby, the only University in the UK to offer a diploma in Event Safety Management

Sponsored by Sportscover Insurers of SLSGB, SLSA and ILS
New standards will include the requirement to lodge all reportable incidents in the national Water Accident and Incident Database (WAID)

**Scope**

Any event involving swimming and/or **human powered** water craft

- Open water swimming
- Triathlons (swimming event)
- Lifesaving competitions
- Surfing competitions
- Rowing
- Canoeing
Contents

- Legal considerations
- Principles of running a water based event
- Developing the Health and safety plan
- Hazard identification, the assessment and control of risk
- Guidance on suitable water safety provision
- Case studies to illustrate current best practice
- Suggested Training & Qualification Competencies

Potential Users

- Private Companies
- Charities
- Local Authorities
- Sports organisations
- Clubs
Stakeholder engagement

Anticipated launch date

March 2012 @ RoSPA National Water Safety Congress, UK

Next steps

Help please!

Best practice from ILS Federations, other international sporting Federations

Examples and lessons learned.... All gratefully received
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