



BRITISH LONG DISTANCE SWIMMING ASSOCIATION
www.bldsa.org.uk

General Championship Rules

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A. Conditions of Entry

- A.1 All Association Championships shall only be open to eligible swimmers who are fully paid up members of the Association by the closing date for the championship concerned.
- A.2 All Association Championships shall be conducted under B.L.D.S.A. Rules.
- A.3 Each entrant shall complete the official entry form in full details for each championship.
- A.4 Under no circumstances shall any entry be accepted after the official closing date indicated on the entry form. Such date to be decided by the appropriate sub-committee.
- A.5 The Association shall reserve the right to refuse any entry, in which case the entry fee shall be refunded.
- A.6 Any entrant whose entry has been accepted but who is unable to attend shall have their entry fee, less an administrative fee of 20%, refunded provided the Swim Secretary receives a notice of withdrawal not less than fourteen clear days before the date of the Championship.
- A.7 If notice of withdrawal as specified is not received, the entrant shall forfeit all or part of the entry fee at the Championship Sub-Committee discretion.
- A.8 A junior competitor shall have attained the age of 12 years but be under the age of 16 years on the day of the Championship. A senior competitor shall be age of 16 years on the day of the Championship. No junior competitor shall be allowed to compete in a Senior Championship.
- A.9 All veterans (Male or Female) to be 45 years of age or over on the day of the Championship.
- A.10 Short events up to length of 1000 metres may be swum by persons aged 10 and above.

B. Information, Registration and Briefing Meeting

- B.1 An information sheet in connection with each championship shall be issued to every entrant and official at least seven days prior to the event and must be read by them before the briefing meeting. The sheet must contain an instruction to all swimmers, safety cover and officials that any injury, however small, must be reported to the Swim Secretary.
- B.2 Both a registration and a briefing meeting shall be held before each championship at a time and venue indicated on the information sheet.
- B.3 Entrants are expected to register and attend the briefing meeting. Failure to do so without adequate explanation, acceptable to the Swim Secretary, will result in disqualification. Any canoeist/boat crew providing safety cover for a competitor is required to attend the briefing meeting with the entrant.



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C. Postponement

- C.1 Postponement of a Championship shall only be considered under conditions considered to be dangerous or where a third party has presented a compelling reason as to why it cannot proceed. Whenever possible a postponed Championship shall be held on the following day or at a later date. In the event of abandonment the Association will reimburse competitors' entry fees to a level that takes into account costs incurred by the Association.

D. The Event

- D.1 Competitors, championship officials, pilot life-savers, oarsmen and life-savers shall assemble for the start of the race at the time and place indicated in the information sheet or, in the event of alteration, as announced at the briefing meeting, and shall follow all directions of the officials in charge.
- D.2 Boat crews shall comply with all instructions for the championship and in particular the directions of the Safety Officer and Referee and they shall ensure that their boat is properly cleaned and in good order before it is handed over after the event.
- D.3 Each competitor shall provide a whistle and a flag "alpha" approximately 40cm by 30cm (16" x 12") on a pole a least 1 metre long, or proportionate size for a canoe. This flag must be flown at all times by the escort boat or canoe while the competitor remains in the water but should be taken down in the event of the swimmer's retirement. In the event of any emergency, or of assistance being required, long continuous blasts on the whistle must be given and the flag waved vigorously.
- D.4 Unless otherwise specified, all Association Championships shall be freestyle championships.
- D.5 Where breaststroke event is held as part of an Association Championships all competitors must declare their nominated stroke on the entry form and no subsequent change will be allowed. Breaststroke swimmers must wear a pink cap: freestyle swimmers may wear any other colour except white or pink.
- D.6 To start the race audible and visible signals shall be given simultaneously.
- D.7 Competitors shall not receive support from any floating or fixed object.
- D.8 For any event over 2.0km in length, competitors shall not use any aids to swimming other than one sleeveless and legless costume, one cap and goggles. Sleeveless shall mean the costume must not extend beyond the end of the shoulder onto the upper arm and legless shall mean the costume must not extend lower than the crotch onto the upper leg. No neoprene or other insulating/buoyancy enhancing material may be used for any purpose, including caps.
- D.9 For any event up to or equal to 2.0km in length, where wetsuits are allowed there will be two distinct race categories one for swimmers wearing costumes as defined in D.8 and one for those wearing wetsuits.
- D.10 Competitors shall not consume, or so recently have consumed as to be still under the influence of, alcohol or stimulants. The use of banned drugs (as defined by the International Olympic Committee's Medical Commission) is prohibited. The Association reserves the right to arrange the screening of random urine samples for the detection of banned drugs. Failure or refusal to provide a sample will result in disqualification. Copies of the Medical Commission's list of banned drugs will be held by each Swim Secretary, from whom advice may be obtained.



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- D.11 Competitors shall be allowed to stand for the purpose of resting or to costume food and drink provided rules D.7 and D.10 are complied with. No steps may be taken.
- D.12 Competitors shall not be accompanied by any other swimmer in the water for the purpose of pace making.
- D.13 A Championship Referee shall order from the water any swimmer who has contravened any rule or whose condition is, in his opinion, unsatisfactory.
- D.14 All Championships shall have a time limit. That limit shall be specified in the information sheet and at the briefing meeting for the event.
- D.15 At the end of the time limit, the championship facilities shall be withdrawn. Any swimmer not leaving the water at that time will be deemed to be making an individual attempt on the course. This individual attempt may be recognised by the Association provided that the Rules for Recognition of Individual Swims have been observed. The Association accepts no responsibility for swimmers or boat crews continuing in this way and if the boat owner presents additional account for any boat so delayed this must be met by the swimmer.
- D.16 In the event of deteriorating conditions, the Championship Referee shall have the authority (which he/she may delegate) to vary the course or to order any swimmer or swimmers from the water and/or declare the race terminated. In such circumstances the allocation of awards shall be determined by the Championship Committee.
- D.17 Any competitor retiring from the championship must inform the delegated officials who will be located at the points detailed at the swim briefing of their retirement. They must provide a summary of their condition, their location and their planned destination. Any costs associated with the failure to report and any subsequent search for them will be charged to the competitor.
- D.18 Each competitor shall have his or her race number, as given to them at the registration, marked on both shoulders. In addition support crews shall carry their swimmers number marked on their hand.

E. Straight Line Courses

- E.1 The following section applies to swims deemed to be “Straight Line Courses” which at present comprise the following:

Coniston	Coniston Veterans	Derwentwater
Llyn Tegid 1-way	Llyn Tegid 2-way	Loch Lomond
Torbay	Ullswater	Windermere 1-way
Windermere 2-way		
- E.2 Every competitor shall be accompanied by a boat or canoe suitable for the purpose and crewed by a competent person or persons fourteen and over. Where the escort craft or the canoe/crew is provided by the swimmer the suitability and competence is the responsibility of the swimmer. Otherwise suitability and competence shall be determined by the Championship Committee.
- E.3 The number of entrants may have to be limited. Acceptance of entry may be dependent on the nomination of a qualified pilot life-saver or other competent crew and/or crewed boat. Any such conditions shall be determined by the Championship Committee and notified to prospective entrants with the entry form.



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- E.4 The number of entrants allowed to compete shall be limited to the number of suitable crewed boats provided by the entrants or the Association. (Entrants providing their own boats and crew will be given first priority, entrants providing their own crew will be given second priority, remaining entrants will be allocated boats and crews on a first come first served basis subject to availability). These priorities are subject to the final allocation of available resources by the Championship Committee. The principle consideration is that every competitor must have been allocated a suitable boat and competent crew before the start of the event.
- E.5 In the interest of safety and cleanliness, each competitor shall provide a large plastic body bag and cleaning material. Any competitor who fails to provide these articles shall not be allowed to compete.
- F. Other Courses**
- F.1 The following section applies “other courses” which at present comprise the following:
Llyn Tegid 3km Lynn Regis Champion of Champions
Wykeham Rivington
- F.2 Adequate crewed boats or canoes stationed around or along the course and/or observers from the bankside shall be available to ensure the safety of swimmers bearing in mind the nature of the course, weather conditions and the available power-boat cover. Ideally the spacing between each boat should not be greater than 50 metres. Suitability and competence shall be determined by the Championship Committee.
- F.3 The number of entrants may have to be limited by the safety provisions available.
- F.4 Entrants providing their own suitable crewed boats will be accorded priority. The entrant may be led and escorted by a canoe, kayak or moving boat provided that no obstruction is caused to other swimmers. This escort will be required to leave the swimmer in the approach to the start/finish point. This point to be marked with a green coloured buoy and its distance will be determined by the Championship Committee. In order to comply with Rule F.2 it would be helpful to the Championship Committee if some of these craft were stationed along the course.
- F.5 The course shall be adequately marked out by moored buoys sufficiently large and numerous to be visible to competitors to enable them to follow the course particularly at turns by swimming outside the buoys.
- G. Swim Secretary and Committee**
- G.1 Each Championship shall be promoted and organised by a Championship Committee whose Secretary shall be elected by the Annual General Meeting.
- G.2 Each Swim Secretary will be required to undertake a Risk Assessment of the championship in conjunction with the event’s Safety Officer, following a site visit not more than six months before the date of the championship, and present it to the Honorary Safety Officer no later than one month prior to the start of the Championship.
- G.3 At least three members shall be appointed to each Championship Committee.
- G.4 Championship Committee members shall normally be available to attend the swim and to substitute for the secretary should an emergency arise.



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- G.5 The Championship Committee members shall plan the event in its entirety and conduct it up to the start of the briefing meeting. From the briefing meeting until the start of the Championship proceedings are the joint responsibility of the Referee, Race Controller, the Swim Secretary and the Safety Officer.
- G.6 The Championship Committee shall be responsible for the presentation and reception.
- G.7 Arrangements for the event (and in particular a budget and appraisal of the entry fee required) must be reported to the Executive (or Emergency) Committee before final implementation.
- G.8 The Championship Committee shall make the necessary judgements with regard to safety arrangements and to the number of participating competitors in accordance with these rules.
- G.9 The Championship Committee shall arrange for the first aid personnel (preferably 1 male and 1 female) to be present at the Championship.

H. Championship Officials - For all Championships there will be:-

- H.1 A Referee
- H.2 A Race Controller
- H.3 A Swim Secretary
- H.4 A Safety Officer
- H.5 A Starter
- H.6 Placing Judges if necessary
- H.7 Turning Judges if necessary
- H.8 Chief Time-Keeper
- H.9 Time-Keepers

In addition to the above officials someone is required to be responsible for Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection. The roles of some of the above officials may be combined. The Referee, Race Controller and Swim Secretary must not be combined.

H.1 The Referee shall:-

- H.1.1 Have overall control and be responsible for the observance of B.L.D.S.A. Rules as applicable and conditions of the competition.
- H.1.2 Have power to appoint substitutes for officials who are absent, incapable of acting or found to be inefficient, and if necessary, to appoint additional officials.
- H.1.3 Approve the starting, turning and finishing lines and ensure that the swimmers are notified at the briefing meeting accordingly.
- H.1.4 Give a decision where there is a difference of opinion between the appropriate officials.
- H.1.5 Disqualify any competitor for any violation of the rules that he or she personally observes or which are reported to him or her by other authorised officials and inform the placing judges, after consultation with the official concerned.
- H.1.6 To monitor the competency of crews during the event and to withdraw or replace crew members if necessary on grounds of safety.
- H.1.7 Have the power to delegate his or her power and duties and those of any other officials to ensure that the applicable laws and conduct of the swim are observed.



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H.1.8 Have power, after consultation where practicable with the Race Controller, Rescue Boat Coordinator and Safety Officer and Swim Secretary, to decide on postponement or abandonment of the event.

H.2 The Race Controller:-

H.2.1 To execute the Swim Secretary's plan to co-ordinate the event at all times when swimmers or crews are on the water.

H.2.2 To manage communications systems between officials and safety craft.

H.2.3 To co-ordinate the work of all other officials such as timekeepers, starters, judges and other helpers.

H.2.4 To at all times be aware of the identities and approximate locations of all persons on the water and to maintain a record of starters, finishers and retirements.

H.2.5 To be made aware of and to manage the response to all incidents or potential incidents on or around the water.

H.2.6 Shall be responsible for determining the location of all the race officials in the event of an abandonment.

H.2.7 Have the power with agreement from Referee, Rescue Boat Coordinator, Safety Officer and Swim Secretary to alter the course of the swim, provided a risk assessment for the proposed new course has been presented to the Honorary Safety Officer one month prior to the start of the Championship

H.3 The Swim Secretary:-

H.3.1 To ensure that the championship safety audit is completed and returned one month before the event, in conjunction with the safety officer.

H.3.2 To plan the swim in its entirety in conjunction with their committee.

H.3.3 On the day of the swim, to ensure that the briefing for officials takes place before the championship briefing to discuss the safe running of the event.

H.3.4 To ensure that swimmer and crew registration procedures are in place, and that all swimmers are clearly numbered.

H.3.5 To ensure that a swim briefing takes place.

H.3.6 To undertake and organise the efficient running of the event, including the organisation of the Presentation.



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H.4 The Safety Officer:-

- H.4.1 In advance of the championship, to liaise with the Swim Secretary that the safety audit is carried out.
- H.4.2 To liaise with other senior officials regarding the continuation of the event in case of changing conditions.
- H.4.3 To check that all accompanying boats are suitable for the championship course and prevailing conditions.
- H.4.4 To ensure that all boats and crews are properly equipped.
- H.4.5 To ensure that all accompanying craft and their crews are briefed and in place prior to swimmers entering the water.

H.5 The Starter shall:-

- H.5.1 Only start the event on permission of the Referee.
- H.5.2 Where necessary, ascertain that competitors are in the correct position.
- H.5.3 Have authority to recall or caution competitors at the start of the event.
- H.5.4 After caution, have power with the concurrence of the Referee, to disqualify competitors for delaying the start or for wilfully disobeying an order or for any other misconduct taking place at the start.
- H.5.5 Have absolute power to decide whether the start is a valid or false one.
- H.5.6 Ensure that the swimmers receive adequate warnings of the start of the event.

H.6 The Placing Judges shall:-

- H.6.1 Be positioned where they have a clear view of, and be in line with, the finish while it is taking place.
- H.6.2 Report any incidents of fouling to the Referee.
- H.6.3 Judge and report the order of finishing to the Chief Time-keeper.

H.7 The Turning Judges shall:-

- H.7.1 Record the number of each competitor at the turns.
- H.7.2 At the end of the event, liaise with the placing judges to confirm that each finishing competitor has completed the required number of turns.
- H.7.3 Report to the Referee any competitor who fails to comply with B.L.D.S.A. Rules

H.8 The Chief Time-Keeper shall:-

- H.8.1 Arrange for an accuracy check on the three watches to be used.
- H.8.2 Allocate the duties of the time-keepers.
- H.8.3 Ensure that all watches have been started simultaneously with the starting signal.
- H.8.4 At his discretion, discount any watch which is inaccurate.
- H.8.5 Ensure that no watch is stopped or interfered with during the event.
- H.8.6 Record the official time for each competitor.
- H.8.7 Ensure that an official record of all times is available for the Secretary.



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H.9 The Time-Keepers shall:-

- H.9.1 Ensure that their watches are not stopped or interfered with during the event.
- H.9.2 Take the time of the competitors assigned to them.
- H.9.3 Notify such times to the Chief Time-keeper.

I. The Championship Rules

- I.1 Certain of the foregoing rules may have to be varied by the Championship Committee. Notice of any such variation shall, whenever possible, be given in the information sheet and shall be announced at the briefing meeting.
- I.2 Any matter concerning any championship which is not covered by these rules or arises from them, shall be dealt with by the Championship Committee. Any matter not satisfactorily resolved shall be dealt with by the Executive Committee whose decision shall be final.
- I.3 The Association shall not incur any legal liability for anything done or omitted to be done by them and shall not be liable for any personal injury, damage to or loss of property sustained by any person in connection with any championship.