



**WORLD
AQUATICS**

**TECHNICAL OFFICIALS'
EVALUATOR HANDBOOK**
OPEN WATER SWIMMING

In force as from March 2026

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1. Purpose of this Handbook

This handbook provides operational guidance for World Aquatics Evaluators conducting Technical Official evaluations at Open Water Swimming competitions. It explains the evaluator's responsibilities, the evaluation components, and the recommended workflow during an event.

The objective of the evaluation process is to assess the competence, professionalism, and decision-making ability of Technical Officials serving as Chief Referees (CR) and Referees (R), while supporting the World Aquatics Technical Officials Pathway.

2. Components of the Evaluation

Each evaluation consists of three complementary components:

- Practical On-Site Evaluation (primary component)
- Written Test (verification of applied rule knowledge)
- Oral Situational Q&A (assessment of judgement and decision-making)

The practical on-site performance remains the primary and decisive element of the overall evaluation.

3. Events – Evaluation Scope and OWSWC Example

OWS Events considered for evaluation (in both genders):

- 3km Knockout Sprint
- 5km
- 7.5km
- 10km
- Mixed 4x1500m

Number of Technical Officials to be evaluated per event:

Race	Chief Referees	Referees
Men 3km Knockout Sprint	1	3
Women 3km Knockout Sprint	1	3
Men 5km	1	3
Women 5km	1	3
Men 7.5km	1	3
Women 7.5km	1	3
Men 10km	1	3
Women 10km	1	3
Mixed Relay 4x1500m	1	3

Example of OWS World Cup competition programme:

- Men 10 km
- Women 10 km
- Men 3 km Knockout Sprint

- Women's 3 km Knockout Sprint
- Mixed 4x1500 m

For each race there will typically be (*):

- 1 Chief Referee
- 3 Referees

Because Technical Officials rotate roles during the event, evaluators must ensure that each official is observed and evaluated while performing their assigned role.

Race	Chief Referees	Referees (*)
Men 10 km	1	3
Women 10 km	1	3
Men 3 km Knockout Sprint	1	3
Women 3 km Knockout Sprint	1	3
Mixed 4x1500m	1	3

Total Technical Officials to be evaluated in this example: 20.

() It could happen that in case of a reduced number of entries, the Technical Delegate decides to shorten the number of Referees in order to simplify the number of boats in the water. In this scenario, only the Chief Referee and the remaining Referees will be evaluated.*

4. Role and Responsibilities of the Evaluator

- Observe officiating performance during races
- Conduct the written knowledge test
- Conduct the oral situational discussion
- Complete the official evaluation form
- Provide professional feedback where appropriate
- Submit completed documentation to World Aquatics

Evaluators must remain objective, independent, and free of conflicts of interest.

5. Practical On-Site Evaluation

For Chief Referees, evaluators should observe:

- Conduct of the final athlete briefing
- Leadership and coordination of Technical Officials
- Decision-making authority and rule application
- Safety management and incident response
- Handling of sanctions and race incidents
- Finish procedures and race control
- Professional leadership and communication

For Referees, evaluators should observe:

- Observation skills and rule recognition
- Correct yellow/red card procedures
- Communication with the Chief Referee
- Accurate reporting of incidents
- Handling of course infractions
- Conduct in the finish funnel area
- Professional behaviour during race operations

6. Written Test

The written test verifies applied rule knowledge beyond the annual multiple-choice exam.

Format:

- Short written answers (bullet points allowed)

Scoring:

- Each question scored from 0–2 points
- Chief Referee: 10 questions (20 points total)
- Referee: 8 questions (16 points total)

A minimum of 50% of the total available points is required to pass the written test.

If a candidate is marginally below 50%, the evaluator may ask one or two short clarifying follow-up questions to verify the candidate's understanding of the core rule principle.

7. Oral Situational Q&A

The oral component evaluates practical judgement and decision-making in realistic competition scenarios. The discussion should remain conversational and professional rather than exam-like.

- Unsporting conduct situations
- Feeding violations
- Course infractions
- Safety incidents
- Finish funnel situations
- Appeals procedures

Note: The evaluator does not need to ask all scenarios. A selected number is sufficient to form a professional judgement. Additional scenarios may be used where necessary to remove doubt.

8. Oral Assessment Outcome

- Demonstrates sound judgement
- Generally sound judgement with minor gaps
- Significant knowledge or judgement gaps

Only significant deficiencies should affect the overall evaluation outcome.

9. Practical Workflow for Evaluators

Before the Event:

- Review of the evaluation framework
- Review written test questions and rubric
- Review oral scenarios
- Study the competition schedule and Technical Officials' assignments

During the Event:

- Observe Technical Officials during races
- Record observations and examples
- Conduct written tests during suitable breaks
- Conduct oral discussions with evaluated Technical Officials

After the Event:

- Complete evaluation forms
- Record written test scores
- Record oral assessment summary
- Submit documentation to World Aquatics

10. Professional Approach

The evaluation process should remain constructive and developmental. It should not create an unnecessarily stressful examination atmosphere. The objective is to support high-quality officiating and maintain fairness and safety in Open Water Swimming competitions.