

OXFORD TRIATHLON CLUB - OPEN WATER SWIMMING SAFETY BRIEF – 2021

We would ask you to please read through the following notes thoroughly. By signing up to swim you are verifying that you have read these instructions and will adhere to them.

Personal Declaration – to be read by all pre swimming.

- I am aware of the need to seek appropriate medical advice if I have any concerns as to the state of my health. I have not been informed by any medical practitioner and I do not have any knowledge of any medical condition which would make it inadvisable for me to participate in Open Water Swimming events or any other associated activities. Accordingly I hereby certify that I am physically fit and well to participate in any such training and events.
- I am aware of and appreciate the inherent risks involved in such training and events including the possibility of injury and accident. I undertake to always conduct myself in a responsible and professional manner.
- I undertake at all times to use my best endeavours to train and compete in a safe and proper manner and not to do anything which would expose myself or fellow swimmers to unnecessary risk or injury. I further undertake at all times to take all reasonable safety measures for the protection of myself and fellow swimmers and to inform the duty Safety Officer of any concerns I may have with regard to safety.
- I acknowledge that at open water swimming training and events, Oxford Tri Club, British Triathlon Federation or any body affiliated thereto, Dorchester Sailing Club cannot be held responsible for any loss or damage to personal belongings and that I must take all reasonable steps against any such loss and damage.
- I hereby agree to abide by and be governed by the rules of the British Triathlon Federation and all other laws and regulations applicable.
- I acknowledge that I have read, understood and will comply with the club Open Water Swim Rules for swimming at Dorchester Sailing Club.
- I confirm that I am voluntarily engaging in an acceptable level of exercise, and that my participation involves a risk of injury. I accept that activities with Oxford Triathletes are at my own risk. If my health changes at any time, I understand that it is my responsibility to cease or modify my training and consult my doctor as to whether it is safe for me to continue training. I must also accordingly advise relevant club officials and coaches.
- I agree to abide by the club rules and regulations. I understand and agree that I participate in any club session at my own risk and that no responsibility whatsoever shall attach to any person involved in the organisation of such session for any injury, accidents, loss or damage suffered by me in or by reason of the session, however such may be caused. I agree to my details being stored and, when necessary, viewed by members of the Oxford Tri Club Committee (your data will be kept in accordance with the data protection act); I agree that video may be used for training purposes, and have no objections to my images being used.

Need to know/do.

- Open water swim sessions are strictly **FOR CLUB MEMBERS ONLY.**
- **NO SIGN UP = NO SWIM**
- We ask that you bring **no** spectators/children.
- BRING your tow float. **TOW FLOATS ARE COMPULSARY THIS SEASON**
- BRING your bright swim cap
- BE on time
- ENJOY - BE CONSIDERATE - BE SAFE - KEEP socially distanced from everyone at all times
- Sign in and out with the safety officers at the beginning and end of your swim
- PRACTICE ZIPPING YOUR WETSUIT UP BY YOURSELF.

DO NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCE ATTEND IF YOU ARE FEELING UNWELL OR YOU OR ANYONE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD HAVE ANY SYMPTOMS RELATED TO COVID-19

- Please cancel your swim online and let us know if you have been before, so we can let anyone you have been in contact with know too.
- **DO NOT BOOK ANOTHER SESSION FOR 2 WEEKS AT LEAST OR UNTIL AFTER YOU ARE WELL AGAIN***

Session details.

8am-9am Saturdays.

- The sessions take place at Dorchester Sailing Club, Abingdon Road, Dorchester, Oxfordshire, OX10 7LP (<http://www.dorchestersailingclub.org.uk/html/Map.htm>). There is plenty of parking there so please leave space between vehicles.
(Note: Covid-19 restrictions: The club house is currently out of bounds – you must get changed before and after swim by your vehicle/bike whatever the weather and do not wait around).

- We are limiting the number of swimmers to avoid gatherings at the lake, for you and the safety officer's wellbeing. You must sign up on the club calendar for open water swimming. Sign up will be opened 48 hours prior to swim.
- We will ask you to adhere to social distancing measures at all times including changing, signing in, whilst acclimatising to the water and swimming. Please do not gather in groups.
- We will be strict about our rules, as they are there to protect you and our safety officers and to make all members feel they should be able to come swimming safely. Anyone who isn't sticking to the rules will be asked to leave and not come back until this passes. Suggestions for even safer / better practices are always welcome.
- We will also ask you to keep all your belongings in your car. The only items allowed by the water's edge are shoes and keys or bags of those who cycle, but you might prefer to carry some of your stuff in your tow float bag. Safety officers will not be responsible for items left.
- You are primarily responsible for your own safety.

For safety reasons, prospective members cannot swim at these sessions. (**Note: Covid-19 restrictions: no new members or new open water swimmers are allowed to swim at Dorchester Lake until further notice. When situation allows, new swimmers should speak to the safety officers to arrange for you to be buddied until you are comfortable in the water.**)

- Wetsuits (under BTF ruling and to be updated as committee see fit) are compulsory.
- This is an uncoached session. You should (as a minimum) be confident of swimming at least 400m non-stop.
- Any relevant conditions on the day such as water temperature, weather conditions or surface visibility, will be explained prior to entering the water.
- Any potential hazards, such as other users of the Lake will also be explained prior to entering the water.

Procedure for getting in and out of the water:

- Arrive with time to get changed or ready to swim and leave ALL your belongings in your car (apart from shoes and keys)
- Put a **bright swim hat** on and **wear your tow float**! These are **compulsory** so the safety officers can spot you at all times and you can use your tow float to rest in the water should you need to. White, silver, gold, dark coloured hats are not bright! **You will not be allowed into the water without bright hat and tow float and we will not be able to allow kit exchange or loans.**

- Head to the lake side ready for briefing at 8am – main briefing will be sent by email with any updates and course information at lakeside. Always leave distance between you and the person in front of you. There will be a separate swim in and out area.
- Sign in with the Swim Safety Officer at the lake side
- Enter lake via the beach area that will be sign posted. Please don't enter the water until the person in front has moved away from the beach area.
- Don't spit in the water or in your goggles before rinsing them.
- Enjoy your swim and be considerate of other swimmers. **Always leave at least 2 m between you and other swimmers.**
- If you're fast and skilled, use your skills and judgement to **pass others wide and to the right** and reduce your kick temporarily, **give others space, don't cut people off....**you know....everything you'd like others to consider for you. **There is space for everyone to stay socially distanced by AT LEAST 2m** and enjoy their swim at their own pace.
- Don't draft - spread wide
- Do not stop or gather right by the buoys and if you need to stop, please swim out or into the loop slightly not to become an obstacle.
- Exit the water at the end of your swim via the beach area that will also be sign posted, unless you are experiencing problems then please use an exit point at the side of the lake. These will be marked. Be aware that, having been horizontal in cold water for a while, standing up might cause some dizziness.
- Sign out with the safety officer and return to your car to change and leave as soon as possible.
- Tell the Swim Safety Officer of any problems.

The swim route.

- There is a fixed loop for the swim course.
- Swimming anticlockwise, from the beach area head out to the Blue bouy and then slight right up to the orange bouy (7) turn slight left and head to our small yellow bouy, then slight right again to our next small yellow bouy, then straight down to our next yellow bouy then left to orange bouy (8) before either heading back to the beach area or turning left for another loop. If doing another loop head straight up to orange bouy (7)
- It's approximately 400m. each loop.

- It is important to sight frequently while swimming and to look regularly at the entrance/exit area
- Distress procedure:
 - If any problems arise, the first action is to attract the attention of the Swim Safety Officer who will blow the hooter and wave to attract the attention of all swimmers.
- If at any time you are in trouble, feel anxious or panic, put yourself on your back to float or take a rest holding your tow float and wave your arms or shout to attract the attention of the safety officers/other swimmers – **someone will come over to check but will stay at a safe distance to respect your safety – we ask that you offer them the same privilege. They are there to keep you safe, but we want them to be safe too. They will only approach closer if there was an emergency and risk to life.**
- In order to respect the safety of everyone, we ask you to swim within your limits and be out of the water by 9am at the very latest. Remember that you may not have not swum indoors or outdoors for a while so don't come over aiming to catch up on everything you missed. Take it easy and enjoy being back in the water.
- If you come across someone in distress, help them within your capability and as long as it does not endanger you. If they need more help than you can give, turn on your back and wave your arm. Shout for help.
- If you hear the hooter, stop and look around. If someone in distress and needs your help, help them within your capability and as long as it does not endanger you. If not, swim immediately back towards the Swim Safety Officer and exit the water. Group up (keeping a reasonable distance) with other swimmers and keep an eye on each other. The reason for this is to reduce the likelihood of a second problem arising while the Swim Safety Officer is dealing with the first one. It is not necessarily the end of the session.
- If you have any injuries or other problems likely to affect your swimming, please consider if it safe to swim at this time and if so make the safety officers aware of the issue.
- Please make sure you understand the route and emergency instructions.
- Ask the safety officers if you have any questions.

THINK BEFORE YOU DECIDE TO COME SWIMMING

As much as we have set up our sessions to stay within (or even beyond) the current government safety guidelines, we believe everyone should still have a think before they come swimming and evaluate the risks and benefit for themselves. Everyone's circumstances are different, and everyone's decision has to be right for them.

A lot of information, knowledge and scientific data has been gathered fast for Covid-19 dispersion on surfaces and in the air, however, very little is currently known about the dispersion and

potential transmission of the virus in water . So currently medical expert turn to the closest to covid-19 they know : SARS, which research has shown can survive in water between 4-25C for up to several days.

The thinking is that the least safe areas by a lake will thus be, the entry and exit point, and directly behind another swimmer. By those guidelines, the recommendation is to swim away from entry and towards exit with your head up, mouth out, not to hang around, not to draft, not to spit. This is because it's all we know for now.

We do not want to scare you, but we feel it is important to share with you what we DO know , as well as what we DON'T know.