

## The Good Club Guide for Running an Aquatic Event

### Welcome

The Good Club Guide for Running an Aquatic Event has been developed to assist event and competition organisers to understand the requirements and best practice involved in planning, organising, running and evaluating an event. We wish you a fulfilling and enjoyable experience in your role. We greatly appreciate the time and commitment that you are giving to support the development of aquatics.

### How this resource will help you

This resource will provide:

- Top tips and good practice from experienced event organisers.
- Templates and resources to save you time.
- Useful links and information on additional learning opportunities available to you.

### Organising the event

Once you have decided who your participation target group is, e.g. a beginner taster session, a club gala or an open competition in any discipline, you need to start thinking about how you will plan and organise the event.

### Booking the venue

The first priorities for an event organiser are to choose a date and time and reserve the venue. Factors you may want to consider when choosing the venue are:

- Availability and suitability.
- Travel distance for participants and volunteers.
- Seating capacity for participants and spectators.
- Disability access.
- Back of House areas and rooms available.
- Parking access and access to public transport.
- Costs including VAT (what is included in venue hire fee and what is extra, e.g. security and cleaning).
- Health and safety.
- Equipment availability.
- Adequate insurance (check your ASA membership).

You may also want to make some enquiries about your chosen date to ensure that participants and volunteers will be able to attend. A good idea could be to check the date with other ASA and local competition calendars to ensure that it doesn't conflict with another event.

Some events will need licensing by the ASA, which should be done before committing financially. This applies to swimming and disability swimming events. Licensing can cover all levels of competition and allows competitors to get times entered into the ASA rankings. It is also a method of establishing minimum standards for an event and is a good way of providing competitors, parents and coaches with the confidence that the event is a quality competition. For further information on licensing and contact details for your Regional Licensing Officer, please visit [www.swimming.org/asa/clubs-and-members/licensed-meets/](http://www.swimming.org/asa/clubs-and-members/licensed-meets/).

## Writing the competition conditions

The next task you may want to consider is writing the competition conditions. This will ensure that everyone understands key information and the event procedures. Information that you may want to incorporate includes:

- Date, time and venue.
- Events to be included.
- Schedule (sequence of events).
- Entry criteria (e.g. age, minimum and/or maximum standards, geographical area).
- Entry procedure (e.g. open entry by qualification standards or invitational entry; online entry or paper form entry; how entry fees will be collected).
- Qualification period.
- Withdrawals.
- Medals/awards.
- ASA affiliated event.
- ASA licensed event.

If you do not want to write the conditions from scratch, you can ask your local ASA County Association for a guiding framework.

Please see Appendix A: Example of Rules and Conditions for further guidance on writing competition conditions. Appendices can be found on the ASA Volunteering Hub at [www.swimming.org/volunteering](http://www.swimming.org/volunteering).

## Writing an action plan

To help prepare for an aquatic event it may be useful to write an action plan. We have provided a template to help with preparing your action plan, which you can find in Appendix B: Action Plan Checklist. This includes a list of the different areas you may want to use in your action plan – you can choose what you do and don't want to include.

## Identifying, recruiting and supporting volunteers

An important factor about organising an event is the experience and enjoyment of the volunteers who will be involved. Aim to provide volunteers with a valuable experience so they will want to come back again and encourage others to participate.

There are many roles involved in organising and running an event and each role will be suited to a different person depending on the skills and experience required. Where possible it may help to specify the requirements for the different jobs that need doing to get the best volunteers for the roles. A good way of doing this could be by providing role descriptions.

A role description could include:

- The minimum number of hours for which your volunteers will be needed.
- The locations in which they will be required to work.
- The dates and times that you will need them.
- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

Example role descriptions for event volunteer roles are available on the ASA Volunteering Hub.

The key person to be identified at the beginning of organising any event is the Event Promoter; this is the person responsible for the event. The role description for the Event Promoter is available in the Extracts of ASA Laws or ASA Handbook (search for prompt cards under [www.swimming.org/asa](http://www.swimming.org/asa)).

You may also need to consider who will fulfil the following areas:

**Entry Administrator**

This person would be responsible for the circulation of entry forms and the collection and collation of competitor entries per event.

**Chief Recorder**

This person is responsible for managing the collation and distribution of start sheets and results.

**Technical Officials/Judges/Referees**

Licensed and qualified to officiate according to the competition regulations.

**Field of Play Manager**

This person would be responsible for managing and coordinating all activities on the field of play including the flow of athletes, medal presentations and managing the field of play team.

**Programme Administrator**

This person would be responsible for collating information to be included in the programme. This should include warm up and start times, order of events and approximate time of any breaks or presentations. It may also include acknowledgements sponsors/officials/helpers/VIPs, current record holders and a list of participants competing in each event. This person may also be responsible for printing and distributing the programme.

**Sponsorship Coordinator**

This person would take responsibility for seeking sponsorship, negotiating an agreement and coordinating the sponsorship programme.

**Front of House Manager**

This person would be responsible for managing the front of house desk and front of house team. They would manage the registration of competitors on arrival, distribute any accreditations or coach passes, manage sales of tickets or merchandise and also be the point of contact for any queries.

Appointing the team leaders in each area is an important task to do early on in the event planning.

Other roles that you may need to consider include:

- Timing operator/scorers/ recorders.
- Clerks of the course.
- Marshals.
- Warm up marshals.
- Lifeguards.
- First aiders.
- Security guard/s.
- Announcers/commentators.
- Printed results service.
- Music operator.
- Callers.
- VIP host.
- Runners.

If you are not clear what roles you will need for your event, you can ask your Local ASA County Association for guidance.

## Top tips for supporting your volunteers

- Choose people to help that have the right skills and experience.
- School events are a great opportunity to involve young volunteers; this enables the young volunteers to benefit from the knowledge of experienced volunteers and it is also a great way of keeping people in the sport.
- Leave plenty of time to check that everyone has insurance cover and that the necessary people have had a DBS check.
- Provide guidance about what is involved and the different roles that will be required.
- You may need to offer training or mentoring opportunities to ensure that enough people are involved with the appropriate skills and knowledge.
- Club and County Workforce Coordinators could be useful people to contact to discuss what volunteers you need and how you can recruit, train and reward them. Ensure that everyone feels part of a team and that they have a valuable role in making the event happen.
- Team Leaders could be appointed to oversee several tasks.
- Support Team Leaders to recruit their own teams so they create a team that they work well with.
- Ask Team Leaders to be available throughout the event to ensure their team is following agreed procedures and protocols.
- Have a clear communication plan that everyone understands about how event staff, volunteers, security, first aid personnel, and technical officials will communicate throughout the event.
- Arrange a rota so that people can swap and experience new roles.
- Offer mentoring and shadowing opportunities to develop your workforce and to build confidence in your inexperienced volunteers.
- There are lots of ways to recognise and reward people who have helped before and during an event.

Here are some examples of what other clubs are doing:

- » Provide clothing or equipment that will help them to do their roles.
- » Say a face-to-face thank you – probably the simplest method of all!
- » Make a phone call, the day after an event, to say thank you.
- » Send them a card – make it specific to the role they play.
- » Create a notice board dedicated to volunteers and volunteering.
- » Add a thank you note to the club website.
- » Provide a certificate (example available on the ASA website).
- » Take a group photo.

## Promotion and publicity

Once the event conditions are decided you need to make sure that the participants are invited and given enough information so they can enter. It is a good idea to use a range of publicity techniques to raise the profile of the event, such as your club, County or Regional website, local media, flyers and notice boards, or by circulating information at other events.

When promoting the event think about whether or not you need to provide information about:

- Who is eligible to enter.
- If it is a team or individual event.
- The date, time and venue.
- What the participant entry procedure will be.
- What the ticketing process will be.
- What the cost is.
- What trophies/awards are to be presented.
- If the event is part of a series.

If the event is licensed, check that the license meets guidelines to ensure that all documentation complies with the requirements.

### **Produce an event programme**

Once you have the entry forms submitted you need to collate the details to create an event programme. When writing the programme you may wish to think about including:

- A welcome address.
- An acknowledgement of the support/presence of volunteers, sponsors, VIPs.
- The venue, date and time.
- The full event title which may include licence number.
- A summary of the timetable.
- A subset of the conditions that cover the eligibility, the events and award process.
- A list of participants by event.
- A thank you to volunteers.
- Information about future events.
- A recognition of the sponsors.

### **Health and safety checklist**

To manage an event safely, it is necessary to understand who is responsible for ensuring health and safety standards are adhered to both in the set-up and throughout the event. The Promoter is ultimately responsible for the safe conduct of the event and it is important that they understand their role and how they will work with the Referee and the facilities management. Some Promoters may wish to appoint a representative such as the Referee with specific responsibility for managing safety. Please see Appendix C: Risk Assessment for Swimming Competition Events – Guidance and Information and Appendix D: Risk Assessment Check Sheet for help completing the risk assessment for your event.

### **Venue and equipment checklist**

Once you have booked the venue it may be helpful to run through a checklist to make sure that everything will be provided at the event. We have included a sample checklist in Appendix E: Venue and Equipment Checklist, which will help ensure you have thought of everything that you may need for your event. These lists include suggestions for all aquatic disciplines.

For further information about officials and event roles, general competition rules, discipline specific guidance, age of competitors at specific events and facility and equipment guidance please refer to the ASA Handbook which is available on [www.swimming.org/asa](http://www.swimming.org/asa).

### **Event evaluation**

Once you have hosted the event it may be useful to review what went well, what didn't go so well and to think about what you would do differently next time. The more people that can feed into the 'debrief' the better; this could be achieved at a meeting after the event, by email, telephone or by a questionnaire on the day. Consider asking people that were involved in the organising, running, participating or watching the event:

- What went well and why?
- How can we improve?
- Did the event achieve its goal or purpose?
- Did they enjoy the experience?

Areas that you might want to consider are:

- Venue suitability.
- Staff and volunteer recruitment, training and support.
- The volunteers' experience.
- Financial outcomes.
- Marketing and public relations.
- A review of any incidents (e.g. injuries, complaints, etc.).
- Recognition of records or special achievements.
- Effectiveness of communication prior and during the event.

### **Moving on from your role**

When you decide to move on, it's important to think about how you will ensure that all your knowledge and experience is passed on to the person taking over from you. Here are some suggestions to help ensure a smooth transition, and to ensure that the person taking over from you has the information and resources they need:

- Try to give as much notice as you can to the club that you are moving on, in order to allow the club to recruit or elect another volunteer.
- Assist in developing an up-to-date role description and advert for the post based on your experience in the role, and think of any people that may be interested.
- Think about the type of information you would like to receive if you were to volunteer for this position again, and the format you would like to receive it in, e.g. an email, paper file, a face-to-face hand over meeting, etc.
- Prepare an information pack for the new volunteer to assist them in their role, including a list of any outstanding work/issues, key contacts or people who can help and any top tips.
- Hand over hard copies of any files or important correspondence. Put electronic information onto a USB stick or disk.
- Offer to mentor the new volunteer in this role for an agreed period of time.

### **Summary**

We hope you have found this guide informative. Thank you for taking the time to learn more about how to run an aquatic event.

### **swim21**

swim21 is the ASA's quality mark for the development of effective, ethical and sustainable clubs. The opportunity to gain swim21 accreditation is available to all ASA affiliated clubs, across any of the aquatic disciplines, regardless of size or activity delivered. swim21 is about creating the best possible aquatic experience for all and raising the quality of aquatic provision across all areas. The swim21 programme enhances club management, strengthens the structures and unites the club with shared goals to ensure the best environment is available for all swimmers.

To find out more about swim21 and the associated benefits, please visit <http://www.swimming.org/asa/clubs-and-members/swim21-accreditation/>.

## **Equality and diversity**

Is your club as inclusive as it could be? Does your club truly reflect the local demographics? Aquatic sports can and should be made accessible to everyone, to the greatest extent possible. Opening your club to everyone will aid with sustainability, add new dimensions to the club's social element, and you may even find talent, in many different forms, where you least expect it.

Read more about the ASA's commitment to equality and diversity and find further support for clubs at this link: <http://www.swimming.org/asa/about-us/equality/>.

## **Further information**

The ASA accepts no liability for any errors or omissions in this resource, further, whilst it is hoped that volunteers will find this resource useful, no liability arising out of its use can be accepted by the ASA or the club.

This resource is not a contract of employment and the role you undertake as a volunteer will not create an employment relationship between you and the club or the ASA.

## **ASA Volunteering Hub**

Did you know that the ASA has a dedicated hub for volunteers? To access this hub, go to [www.swimming.org/volunteering](http://www.swimming.org/volunteering) or email us at [volunteering@swimming.org](mailto:volunteering@swimming.org).

## **Acknowledgements**

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## **Useful links**

Child Protection in Sport Unit  
[www.thecpsu.org.uk](http://www.thecpsu.org.uk)

ASA Running a Competition  
[www.swimming.org/asa/our-sports/entering-running-competitions/](http://www.swimming.org/asa/our-sports/entering-running-competitions/)