

# International Open Water Swimming Association

Established 2009

## *Articles of Agreement*

### **ARTICLE 1    NAME**

The organisation shall be known as the **INTERNATIONAL OPEN WATER SWIMMING ASSOCIATION** and can be abbreviated to **IOWSA**.

Words imputing the singular only shall include the plural and vice versa.

Words imputing the masculine gender shall include the feminine gender.

Words imputing persons shall include organisations.

### **ARTICLE 2    OBJECTIVES**

- (i) To promote the sport of long distance open water swimming world-wide and assist organisations and swimmers to attempt such swims in all ways possible.
- (ii) To promote, assist, observe and authenticate swimmers and sports persons in their attempts to complete their chosen swim(s) where an existing authenticating body does not exist.
- (iii) To form a register of recognised pilots and assist with the professional requirements, advice, information and guidelines to enable them to operate on a professional basis. To act as a contact between the pilots, the government departments and sports persons requiring such services. To promote a standard that makes IOWSA a leading world authority, in co-operation with the government bodies, on organisation and safety requirements of such crossings.
- (iii) To formulate a set of rules and guidelines under which such attempts can take place and become a governing body for such attempts. To subscribe to or become a member of any association, club or governing body as deemed necessary to forward the aims of IOWSA. To allow other associations, charities, clubs, institutions and public bodies to become affiliated, subject to acceptance, to IOWSA if they can benefit from or assist IOWSA. To produce application forms, contracts, guidelines and any other information that is required to assist IOWSA and its members.
- (iv) To apply for any permissions and governmental requirements as are, or shall be required to allow such events to continue. To modify or adjust any of the powers of IOWSA to allow its best operation.

### **ARTICLE 3    MEMBERSHIP**

- (i) Membership is open to all persons, associations, clubs and other bodies who have an interest in open water swimming world-wide. A candidate for membership must complete the IOWSA enrolment form and be proposed and seconded by full members of IOWSA. They may then be elected by the Committee. The Committee can propose and second applicants for membership.
- (ii) All pilots must have IOWSA pilot membership and be qualified as required by the Authorities and IOWSA. Proof of current qualifications must be deposited with IOWSA and any changes and updates advised.
- (iii) Observers must be Members of IOWSA during the year in which they act as Observers.
- (iv) Honorary Life Members can be nominated by the Committee or a member and a vote taken at the Annual General Meeting. If accepted they will have full voting powers.
- (v) Full biennial & 10 year membership is available for each group.
- (vi) Each FULL member shall have one vote.
- (vii) All memberships will run from 1st January or later to the 31st December for the period selected, except for the initial period which will run from acceptance of membership to 31st December of the second year.

- (viii) Renewal reminders will be sent in November and are payable before 1st January.
- (ix) Full biennial membership for the period October 25, 2009 to December 31, 2011 = £20.00. 10 year membership is 4.5 x biennial membership fee = £90.00.
- (xi) Joint biennial & 10 year membership is available to couples. Only one vote per joint membership will be allowed.
- (xi) Joint biennial membership for the period October 25, 2009 to December 31, 2011 = £30.00. 10 year membership is 4.5 x annual fee = £130.00.
- (xi) Family biennial & 10 year membership is available to family groups (children up to 16 years). Only one vote per family membership will be allowed. Family biennial membership for the period October 25, 2009 to December 31, 2011 = £30.00. 10 year membership is 4.5 x annual fee = £130.00.
- (xii) Associate membership is available to clubs & individual members of relay teams. One vote per associate group of members will be allowed. At least one member of a club or a relay team must become a full member of IOWSA. Associate membership fee for the period October 25, 2009 to December 31, 2011 = £15.00.
- (xiii) IOWSA is a non profit making organisation. Any funds remaining after expenses, services, rents and running costs etc. have been paid and accounted for will be paid into IOWSA bank accounts and used solely to pursue the objectives of IOWSA except for 10% of these remaining funds which will be donated annually to a charity of the Chairman's choice. The 10% amount will be agreed on by the committee.
- (xiv) IOWSA information and news will be posted on the IOWSA web site : [www.iowisa.com](http://www.iowisa.com) and will only be posted to full members on request.
- (xv) All members will have access to the full IOWSA information service and chat group at: [www.members.iowisa.com](http://www.members.iowisa.com).
- (xvi) All members of the IOWSA committee will have access to the IOWSA committee services and chat group at [www.committee.iowisa.com](http://www.committee.iowisa.com).

#### **ARTICLE 4 SUBSCRIPTION**

Future subscription fees after December 31, 2011 shall be proposed by the Committee and set at the Annual General Meeting.

#### **ARTICLE 5 FINANCIAL YEAR**

The IOWSA financial year shall start on the 1st January end on the 31st December up to which date all accounts and reports shall be made.

#### **ARTICLE 6 MANAGEMENT**

- (i) The general management, conduct and direction of IOWSA shall be vested in the general committee which shall consist of a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Honorary Secretary, Honorary Assistant Secretary, Honorary Treasurer, Training Liaison Officer and five elected full members with power to co-opt up to three additional members.
- (ii) The officers of IOWSA shall consist of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Honorary Secretary, Honorary Assistant Secretary and Honorary Treasurer. With the exception of the inaugural year, all officers should have been members of IOWSA for a minimum of one year, and a member of the general committee for a minimum of one year. All officers are elected for a 3 year term, and are entitled to stand for re-election at the Annual General Meeting.
- (ii) The Committee members, excluding officers, to be elected by rotation with 1/2 being elected every year over a 2 year period. Nominations for the appointment of the Officers and to fill the Committee positions, each proposed and seconded by full members, shall be given in writing to the Secretary at least twenty one days before the date of the Annual General Meeting and made available to all full members. If the number of nominations exceeds the number of vacancies, then a ballot shall be

taken, each full member present at the meeting having one vote in respect of each vacancy. Elected members shall take office at once. Full members shall sign in at the beginning of the meeting giving their IOWSA number and collect a voting card. Postal votes will be accepted only by prior agreement with IOWSA.

- (iii) IOWSA shall elect a President who can attend and vote at committee meeting. The President should hold the position for no more than 2 consecutive 3 year terms then stand down for at least 1 term of office.
- (iv) The decision of IOWSA in all disputes, questions referred to them, or matters over which they have control, shall be final and binding upon the members. Members shall have the right to appeal, in person if desired, at the next full Committee or General Meeting. The Committee shall have the power to make, amend or suspend by-laws from time to time for the proper management and good order of IOWSA.
- (v) The Agenda of the business to be transacted at all General Meetings shall be sent at least 14 days before such meetings. No resolution, except such as relates to the adoption of the Reports at the Annual General Meeting, shall be moved at any General Meeting unless notice thereof, duly signed by a proposer and seconded, stating its terms, has been delivered to the Secretary at least 21 days before the meeting, for inclusion in the Agenda. The Chairman may at his discretion, however, accept amendments arising out of discussion of items of the Agenda, and he may also allow non-controversial matters which he may consider reasonable, to be raised and discussed.
- (vi) 75% of the administration fee for each swim registered in the current year to go to the Secretariat as an Honorarium.
- (vii) A quorum of at least five committee members including at least two officers shall transact the business of IOWSA.
- (viii) The IOWSA Committee's decision on the interpretation of these Rules and any other question is final and binding.

#### **ARTICLE 7 DUTIES AND POWERS OF THE COMMITTEE**

- (i) To carry out the rules and transact the business of IOWSA.
- (ii) To meet at least four times a year.
- (iii) To fill any vacancy that may occur among the officers and committee.
- (iv) To appoint sub-committees as may be appropriate which will report to the committee.
- (v) To exercise financial control over the funds of IOWSA and to present annual Accounts and Balance Sheet at the Annual General Meeting.
- (vi) To uphold and promote the objectives of IOWSA.
- (vii) To assist swimmers and sports persons in their enquiries and attempts at achieving their desired swim and authenticate claims of swimmers to have completed their swim in accordance with IOWSA rules and regulations.
- (viii) To recognised IOWSA pilots and pilot boats for escort duties.
- (ix) To record details of all swims, and retain documents used in connection therewith.
- (x) To take any other action to further the interests of IOWSA.

#### **ARTICLE 8 DUTIES OF THE HONORARY TREASURER**

The Honorary Treasurer shall oversee the IOWSA accounts and the banking of all monies received and deposited on behalf of IOWSA and delegate the responsibilities so involved. All IOWSA cheques shall be signed by any two of the appointed signatories who shall be the Honorary Treasurer, the Honorary Secretary, the Chairman and one other officer.

**ARTICLE 9 SWIMMING FEES**

Swimmers who wish to complete their chosen swim shall pay registration fees as fixed by the Committee annually and set at the Annual General Meeting. The fees are to cover the expenses of IOWSA. For the year commencing October 25, 2009 to December 31, 2010, this will be as follows:-

ADMINISTRATION FEE (payable with all swim applications) - £100.00 Plus the required swim fee.

The required swim fee will be determined by the committee after consideration of all costs involved to enable the swim to proceed, including the duties of the observer(s).

Any swim fees not used in the current year must be reclaimed by the 31st of December in that year. Any fees not reclaimed will be added to IOWSA funds.

Extra certificates may be ordered from the Honorary Secretary after ratification of a successful swim. Each swimmer will receive one certificate (included in the administration fee). Extra certificates may be ordered from the Honorary Secretary at a fee of £10.00 plus postage.

The swim will not be officially observed unless the appropriate IOWSA fees have been paid and the medical form and application form have been completed in full to the satisfaction of IOWSA.

**ARTICLE 10 SWIMMING RULES**

- (i) Swims will be categorised as Standard, Special or Assisted according to the method and/or aids used.

**Standard**

No person in a Standard attempt to complete their chosen swim shall use or be assisted by an artificial aid of any kind, but is permitted to grease the body before a swim, use goggles, ear plugs, wear one cap and one costume. The word "costume and cap" shall mean a garment, not made of neoprene or rubber or any other material considered by IOWSA to give a similar type of advantage, and not in any way designed to contain body heat, and/or aid buoyancy.

THE OBSERVER WILL HAVE TO APPROVE THE "COSTUME AND CAP". THE SWIMMER MUST MAKE SURE THEIR "COSTUME & CAP" ARE OF AN APPROVED TYPE BEFORE THE SWIM STARTS AS THE SWIM WILL NOT BE RECOGNISED IF THEY ARE LATER FOUND TO NOT CONFORM.

During a swim no physical contact with the swimmer shall be made by any person other than to pass food and drink or secure such items as light sticks for safety reasons.

The use of any equipment to provide music (e.g. an MP3 player) shall not be allowed to be used by the swimmer while attempting their chosen swim.

**Special**

A special category swim will be to the same rules as a standard swim except for the allowance, by prior arrangement with the IOWSA, of the minimum additional aids or contact as is deemed necessary for the safety of the swim on medical or other agreed grounds.

**Assisted**

An assisted category swim will only be accepted after prior agreement with IOWSA.

- (ii) For a swim to be officially recognised, the swimmer must walk into the water from the shore of departure, swim across the water and (a) finish on dry land, or (b) touch steep cliffs of the opposite coast with no water beyond. Swimmers may finish in harbour water provided they land as in (a).
- (iii) For a multiple crossing of a stretch of water to be officially recognised, the swimmer must, as soon as his feet touch the ground, land as directly as possible in accordance with rule 10(?). He must then return immediately to the water, where he may stand or sit for up to 10 minutes. During this time he must not be touched by any person, but may be handed food, grease, medicines or

swimming apparel to be administered by himself. He must then, in agreement with the Observer, make the most direct and reasonable way to water deep enough in which to swim, and commence swimming. In all the above conditions, the Observer's ruling will be final, subject to official ratification by the Committee. The time spent before the return swim starts shall be added to the time of the subsequent crossing.

- (e) Every application for recognition of a swim must be accompanied by the Pilot's chart positions and by the Observer's Report, recording incidents, time, tides, method of feeding, etc.. The Committee may call for additional evidence if they require it.
- (f) The appointed Observer(s) shall be in sole charge of the timing of the swim, and shall be responsible for observing compliance with the rules, subject to ratification by the Committee.
- (g) The timing of a swim shall start from the moment the swimmer enters the water until he completes the swim as laid down in Rule 10(c).
- (h) On their arrival in the town/city/area where the swim is to commence from, the swimmer must advise the Honorary Secretary and the Pilot of their place of residence and a contact number. All documentation must be completed by the time limits laid down in the IOWSA information and any changes in dates or arrangements for Pilots etc. must be reported as soon as possible but before the swim starts. The Pilots are required to give the Honorary Secretary a full 12 hours notice of the departure of the pilot boat. Failure to give such notice could mean that an Official Observer may not be able to be appointed and the swim will not be able to proceed.
- (i) IOWSA shall not observe solo attempts to swim their chosen swim by persons under 16 years of age on the 1st June in the year of the attempt. The Committee shall be empowered to examine and to refuse to accept if thought necessary, the applications of persons to attempt to swim their chosen swim especially when they are over 55 years of age.
- (j) Swimmers must be aged 12 years for at least 3 days before they can swim in a standard relay team, subject to correct registration and to their medicals being accepted. See relay rules 11.
- (k) All aspirants must satisfy IOWSA of their competence to make a realistic effort to undertake a successful attempt at their chosen swim.
- (l) The use of drugs by participants in open water swims performed through IOWSA, other than for therapeutic reasons in accordance with medical advice, is regarded with complete disapproval and is considered contrary to the spirit of the sport. Any swimmer unable to participate without the administration of banned drugs must submit their application to IOWSA with ample time for it's consideration. IOWSA reserves the right to make random drug tests on swimmers. The Observer may require a sample of any medication given.
- (m) Only IOWSA registered pilots who are members of IOWSA and hold the required qualifications will be recognised to pilot. Only IOWSA registered pilot boats with the required certification in force will be allowed to escort.

It is the responsibility of the pilot/owner of the pilot boat to inform IOWSA of any changes in circumstances which will invalidate the required qualifications.

- (n) Under no circumstances shall more than one swimmer at a time be allowed to make their attempt from the same pilot boat.
- (o) Only one dinghy or inflatable at a time shall be permitted to operate with a pilot boat.
- (p) During solo swims a swimmer maybe accompanied in the water by 1 person only & not accompanied at all until after the first 3 hours. This accompaniment will be for a maximum of 1 hour & cannot be repeated until at least 2 hour have elapsed after the cessation of the accompaniment.

The second swimmer may swim alongside, but not in front, of the solo aspirant & must not impede the solo swimmer.

For health & safety reasons the pilot must agree to any request for a support swimmer before they enter the water to accompany the swimmer.

The pilot may, at his or her discretion, request that a second swimmer join the solo aspirant outside of these times for a short period on the grounds of safety. (i.e. if a swimmer suffers severe cramps). Similarly the pilot may ask for accompaniment at the very end of a solo swim if the conditions dictate. This is to be allowed even if the request is within 2 hours of a previous accompaniment.

No support swimming is to be allowed on a relay swim.

## **ARTICLE 11 RULES FOR RELAY TEAMS**

Relay swims will be divided into the same categories as solo swims - Standard, Special, Assisted. Any alteration from a standard crossing must be agreed by IOWSA before the start of the swim.

### **Standard**

No person in a Standard relay attempt to swim their respective swim shall use or be assisted by an artificial aid of any kind, but is permitted to grease the body before a swim, use goggles, ear plugs, wear one cap and one costume. The word "costume and cap" shall mean a garment, not made of neoprene or rubber or any other material considered by IOWSA to give a similar type of advantage, and not in any way designed to contain body heat, and/or aid buoyancy.

THE OBSERVER(S) WILL HAVE TO APPROVE THE "COSTUME AND CAP". THE SWIMMER MUST MAKE SURE THEIR "COSTUME & CAP" ARE OF AN APPROVED TYPE BEFORE THE SWIM STARTS AS THE SWIM WILL NOT BE RECOGNISED IF THEY ARE LATER FOUND TO NOT CONFORM.

- (i) Each standard team shall consist of 6 swimmers each swimming for 1 hour. The names of the 6 persons shall be given to the official observer before the actual commencement of the swim. Thereafter there shall be NO changes in order or substitutions whatsoever.

Swimmers in relay teams shall be over 12 years old 3 days before the relay swim starts, and for registration purposes the beginning of the swim period their team is booked to swim in. They shall be under 16 years of age for at least 24 hours after the swim finishes for it to be classified as a Junior Relay team swim.

Junior swimmers (over 12 & under 16 years of age) will only be allowed to swim in standard 6 person relay team swims.

In no circumstances shall more than 1 team be allowed to make their attempt escorted by the same pilot boat".

- (ii) Each swimmer shall swim for one hour each time he/she enters the water.
- (iii) The change-over/takeover from one swimmer to the next in a relay should take place every 60 minutes with the new swimmer entering the water on a signal given by the observer. During the take-over the new swimmer must enter the water from behind & swim past the preceding swimmer. The previous swimmer must then exit the water as quickly as possible. The change-over should take no more than 5 minutes.
- (iv) Team members shall rotate in the same order throughout the swim. Pace-making is NOT allowed.
- (v) An official observer of IOWSA must be present on any Relay Team swim for it to be recognised.

### **Special**

A special category relay will be to the same rules as a standard relay except for the allowance, by prior arrangement with IOWSA, of the minimum additional aids or contact as is deemed necessary for the safety of the swim on medical or other agreed grounds.

### **Assisted**

An assisted category relay will only be accepted after prior agreement with IOWSA.

**ARTICLE 12 ADDITIONAL RULES AND ITEMS**

The General Rules of IOWSA shall apply at all times.

All swimmers must be paid up members of IOWSA before they can swim if they wish to have their swim ratified by IOWSA.

All relay team members must be either full or associate members of IOWSA with at least one member of each relay team being a full member if they wish to have their swim ratified by IOWSA.

These inaugural "***Articles of Agreement***" were drafted and approved by the founding members of the **International Open Water Swimming Association (IOWSA)**:-

---

**Paul Johann Hopfensperger – Chairman & Honorary Treasurer**

---

**Rebecca Vivienne Hopfensperger – Honorary Secretary**

At it's inaugural meeting held on the 25<sup>th</sup> Day of October 2009 at Risbygate House, 16 Risbygate Street, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP33 3AA, United Kingdom.