

How to Run a Lifeguard Competition



The LifeguardHome
www.lifeguardhome.com

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I. INFORMATION ABOUT COMPETITIONS

To many people the idea of a “lifeguard competition” tends to bring views of slow-motion runs down a beach and pose-offs with a rescue can. On the contrary, competitive lifeguarding is a dynamic and challenging sport that competitors take very seriously and thoroughly enjoy. Competitions provide the ultimate test of a lifeguard’s knowledge, skills, fitness and judgment. A proper competition will test a lifeguard’s mental ability just as much as his or her physical. From a management stand–point, competitions will provide excellent training and practice opportunities for your staff. They will also allow you to showcase your facility to other lifeguards from around the province, or even the country.

Guard teams are made up of 3-4 members per team. A 3-guard competition often gets more teams to register and may be used for some smaller pools or competitions. However, the majority of competitions run with 4 lifeguards per team. The Branch Championships at the end of every summer always uses 4 team members for all the simulated events; therefore most teams prefer to do other competitions using this format.

A competition can be challenging to run, especially for the first time; therefore we decided to create this manual on how to run a competition. This manual was created in British Columbia, Canada and therefore may have some competition specifics to this province.

The biggest tip we can give you when running a competition is **don’t try to organize the whole thing yourself**. The more people you get to help out, the easier things will be. Delegate, delegate, delegate!!

II. SETTING THE DATE

The regular competition season occurs during the summer with competitions being scheduled on weekends. Most competitions run all day on a Saturday, however other days may also work. Saturday’s tend to work best because it allows for travel time on the Friday night and Sunday to get to and from your competition for non-local teams.

Although the turn out may not be as high, “off-season” comps (September through June) can be an excellent way to experience running your first comp. The registration will usually be lower and typically there are much fewer (if any) prizes/t-shirts so your work as an organizer is drastically reduced. Off-season competitions are great for getting new guards involved in a competition. You may not get any non-local teams because of driving conditions, etc. however don’t be surprised if one or two pop up.

Pick a date that works well with your pool’s schedule (ie. watch for special events, swim meets, etc.). You may want to avoid holiday weekends as many people will have other travel plans already in place. A competition will usually start at 8:30am and finish around 5:00pm. However this can all change based on the number of teams, and organization

during the day. We will discuss the actual events later, but you will need to have an empty pool at one point during the day for approximately 1 hour to run PAA. It is also nice, but not required, to have an empty pool to do the fitness event. These two events are usually the first ones scheduled.

You will need to get approval from the programmer/manager of your pool in order to run the event. In particular you want them to help support some of the costs involved. Put together a proposal giving general information about competitions, who is responsible for organizing the event, a timeline and pool space involved, a budget that shows a small loss/break-even and does not include sponsorship unless money is already in hand, your marketing strategy, and reasons for the pool to host the event. Putting together this document looks great for your management and helps organize your own thoughts and make the rest of the planning go smoothly.

Here is an excerpt from a sample competition proposal - these are pre-answered questions for possible concerns about the event. Often times the organizer may receive pay for the day of the competition (this ensures a member of the facility is accountable and in charge at all times) as shown in number 1. However, many organizers will simply be volunteering their time.

1. Why pay someone for 8 hours of time rather than offering a free event?
 - ▶ It will take a lot of time and effort organizing everything
 - ▶ To ensure that the event is done well, and that I am accountable
 - ▶ It is an extension of the lifeguarding courses (which generate a lot of revenue) that we offer
 - ▶ It forces the teams to make a monetary commitment to coming
2. Who is the target group of this event?
 - ▶ 16-17 year olds who have recently finished NLS
 - ▶ Teams who wish to practice for summer events
 - ▶ Staff members and other lifeguards
 - ▶ Experienced lifeguards to come and judge
 - ▶ Bronze Cross students, Junior Lifeguards, lifeguard siblings as volunteers
3. Why does our pool want to host a Lifeguard Competition?
 - ▶ To promote the facility to other lifeguards
 - ▶ Excellent training (better than any inservice) for staff (and future staff) at no cost
 - ▶ To encourage high standards in the lifeguarding profession
 - ▶ To make lifeguarding positions at the facility more competitive
 - ▶ To complement lifeguard training courses to develop higher quality lifeguards
 - ▶ To promote safety, and ultimately to save lives
 - ▶ To promote the larger competition that usually is put on in the summer
4. Why would lifeguards want to pay to compete?
 - ▶ To compete in a fun activity
 - ▶ To learn new things about lifeguarding

- ▶ To meet other lifeguards
- ▶ To get a job
- ▶ To win

5. Why would experienced competitors want to volunteer to help out, and judge?

- ▶ To promote the sport of lifeguarding
- ▶ To encourage more future competition
- ▶ To learn more about competing and lifeguarding
- ▶ To socialize with other judges and competitors

Once you have a date for the competition picked out, you should “register” it with the Lifesaving Society (and the LifeguardHome webpage if in BC) to make sure it is not on the same day as another competition. Then start your advertising!

III. BUDGETING/COST

It is important to create a budget for your competition. Hopefully your pool will donate the use of the pool and a classroom (for lockup). If not, this will be the major cost. Other things you may want include food (lunch and/or dinner), prizes, trophies/medals, misc., and t-shirts or keepsake. These are all optional, however the more stuff you can get, the better your competition will be. Your costs will be determined by how much sponsorship you can get. Often times you can ask local fast-food places, grocery stores, or restaurants within your community to donate food and drinks for your competition. The misc. is more of a nice thing you can do, such as supplying pens and clipboards for all your judges, photocopying costs, having drinks for them, and so forth. Prizes can be bought or (more realistically) donated by sponsors. Obviously go after any local first aid supply companies (everyone loves winning a first aid kit, pocket mask, etc.), but you can also get some great stuff from all sorts of local businesses. Write up a letter introducing the potential sponsor to the idea of lifeguard competitions, let them know what you would like from them (this does not need to be very specific) and let them know what they will get for sponsoring your comp (this could include putting their logo on your shirts, giving out stickers/flyers for their company, putting a company banner up at the pool, etc.). Sponsors want to know how sponsoring your comp will help their business. Another nice follow-up is to take a picture of all the competitors, volunteers, and judges, put it in a frame, and give it to the business with a thank you card. Little things like this can help you get repeat sponsors from year-to-year.

Most summer competitions offer some sort of memento for competitors included in their entry cost. Common ones are t-shirts created for the event. Other things given out have included custom hats, bandanas, face-shield keychains, flashlights, etc. T-shirts seem to be the preference.

Generally, if you are running a competition that includes a keepsake, you should charge anywhere from **\$10-\$15/person (\$45-\$60/team)**. Anything more than this and people may start to think it's a little steep. Remember, sponsorship will help keep your costs low.

Ordering t-shirts or other keepsakes is the major cost for a competition as you have to put out the money to order them upfront. So before you make the order, you want to make sure that your competition is going to run. Teams don't tend to register very far in advance, but you want to have several teams that have at least expressed interest in the competition and be committed to run with only a few teams if necessary.

IV. ADVERTISING

The worst thing that can happen is to have no one register for your competition after you've done all this work for it. So you'll want to advertise it as much as you can. Put together a one-page document with all the details including date, time, location, cost, events, how to register, what they get, etc. You may also want to include a registration form. Once you've got this done, talk to the Lifesaving Society. When it comes to advertising competitions, they are very good about it. Most times, they will do a "fax-out" to all affiliates in the branch. In addition, you can send your information to the LifeguardHome website and it will get posted with all your information, pictures of your pool, full description of events, etc.

Make sure that you promote your competition to all recent NLS candidates, volunteers, and others wanting to get hired at your pool. With a little convincing, these people are quite likely to want to try a competition. You can email former students if you are an NLS instructor, or you can go into your facilities registrations manager and print labels for all former NLS students and do a mail-out.

V. REGISTRATION

There are basically two ways to offer your registration. 1) You can have people pay on the day of with cash or 2) you can use your pool's computer registration system ("Class," for example) so that people can (and should) register in advance over the phone. If the pool is donating their space, most likely they will want to have all the registrations taken in through their system. Make sure you have figured out a way that you will be able to get reimbursed from the pool for expenses you have paid out of your pocket.

Lifeguard teams tend not to register early (this holds true for recertification clinics as well). Make sure that you encourage any teams that you know are interested to register, as you may need some to satisfy your pool management that everything is going as planned. You could even introduce an incentive such as a cost break if teams register more than 10 days in advance if you really need to achieve a minimum ahead of time.

VI. JUDGES

Without judges you have no competition. Unless you get an obscene amount of money from sponsors, your judges will be volunteering their time. Therefore, you want to be

very, very nice to them and do everything you can to keep them happy. You should try to book your judges several weeks before the competition begins. Make phone calls, send emails, talk to people, and so on. Expect that judges may have to cancel out (often time, last minute) so always try to get more than you think you might need). For the PAA event, ideally you should have one judge per victim plus 1 judge to mark overall. For fitness, you should have 1-2 judges per team to be timing and watching for deductions. For the First Aid event, you'll need at least one judge per victim (do NOT try to get one judge doing 2 victims; it's too complicated) plus one for overall/EMS. For Pool Sims, you can have a little overlap if you're short on judges, but again, aim for one judge per victim, plus one for overall/EMS. Also, keep in mind you may want to be running First Aid and Pool Sims at the same time (teams go straight from the First Aid event into the Pool Simulation) to save time. If this is the case, you'll need twice as many judges.

You'll probably have a variety of experience within your judges. For the major victims and the overall sheets, I would recommend putting on your most-experienced judges. People with less experience can do the minors and PR's. Depending on how many judges you can get, you may be forced to use people who have never competed, or barely even guarded. If this is the case, just make sure you go through the mark sheet with them and let them know exactly what is expected of them. From a competitor stand point, there's not much more frustrating than a judge that doesn't know what they are doing. In addition, you should be making sure that each judge is able to stay for all the teams to go through. By switching judges half-way through, you lose consistency. If you have an abundance of judges (this may happen for first aid if you are running pool sims and first aid separately), try putting two judges on the major patients (one experienced, one novice). You can then average their scores together.

When you're setting up your budget keep in mind that judges should be getting their keepsake and food for free.

VII. VICTIMS/VOLUNTEERS

You'll need to get a pretty good number of victims for the day's events. Try pooling the volunteers from your facility, talking to the regulars that always come swimming, and get in touch with students from recent advanced courses. Print out class lists from recent courses and get someone on the phone and for current courses have instructors offer bonus marks to their students for coming. For the most part, you can't have enough victims/volunteers. You can always use extra people to be distractions, bystanders, or friends of the victim(s). You can also use volunteers to do mark sheet pickup from the judges after each team competes, to guard lock-up, score verification and inputting, and general runners for anything else you can think of.

Typically, volunteers don't get a free t-shirt (unless you have a lot of extras), but you should try to at least get them some lunch for helping out for the day.

VIII. THE EVENTS

Currently, there are two avenues of competition styles. There is the “lifesaving,” fitness-oriented events (International) which run very similarly to a swim meet and there is the “lifeguarding” competitions which involve more technical events. In BC, we are continuing to promote and run the traditional technical events. These events typically include Priority Action Assessment or PAA, Fitness, First Aid Simulation, Pool Simulation, and possibly an Individual First Aid. The following gives a brief description of each event (taken from the 2003 BC & Yukon Branch Championship Competitor’s Manual):

a) PAA

Teams will enter the pool area and will have ninety (90) seconds to assess and treat patients in varying degrees of distress in and around the water. The emphasis of treatment is on maintaining basic life support while treating as many patients as possible in the allotted time. To receive full marks, teams should assess and treat those most seriously injured first.

A partial lock up system is in effect, with each set of simulations repeated several times within one grouping. All teams within the same division will receive the same simulation. The general public will not be admitted to the event site during this event. The area that the competing teams are responsible for will be restricted to simulated victims and event officials.

Patients are divided into three categories:

Priority One: Patients in an immediately life-threatening situation.

Examples include:

- Drowning non-swimmer
- Airway obstruction
- Arterial bleeding
- Cardiac or respiratory arrest

Priority Two: Patients with serious injuries who, while not in an immediately life-threatening situation may progress to become life-threatening if left un-treated.

Examples include:

- Unconscious patients on land with breathing and pulse
- Conscious patients with head injuries
- Serious burns
- Moderate bleeding
- Compound fractures
- Progressive shock

Priority Three: Patients with minor injuries, or public relations problems.

Examples include:

- Minor first aid such as small cuts, simple fractures, nose bleeds, slivers, sprained ankles, or stubbed toes.
- Public relations situations such as: towel fights, running on deck, smoking or eating on deck.

Teams are not required to verbally identify which category a patient is in.

Scoring for the event is divided into two parts, Priority Points and Treatment Points:

Priority Points: These points are based on how quickly a team assesses and begins effective patient management. To receive full marks, teams must begin assessment/treatment of Priority One patients within 30 seconds, Priority Two patients within 60 seconds, and Priority Three patients within 90

seconds. Teams do not need to treat patients in any order, however if teams delay in treating higher priority patients they will score lower than teams who identify and treat these patients earlier. For the purpose of Priority points, timing will stop when the lifeguard begins to perform an effective assessment and takes appropriate action to deal with the situation. Many lower priority patients can be effectively managed without the lifeguard making physical contact with them.

Treatment Points: These points are awarded for the appropriate assessment, care and handling of a patient. Points are also awarded for personal safety including the correct and appropriate use of barrier devices. Teams can achieve full marks with no supplies other than their own personal protective equipment.

The total number of patients in the simulation will not be known to competitors. The event is a drill and is not intended to present a realistic situation. Teams are not required to make an emergency phone call, complete incident reports, clear the pool, or any other similar actions.

b) Fitness

The fitness event gives you a certain degree of creativity. All fitness events involve some sort of relay so that each competition on the team is responsible for something. Some competitions will have a custom event based on the layout of their facility while others will simply use the main pool for some sort of a 4x50m (for example) relay. The current branch fitness is as follows:

With a dive start the first competitor swims 50 metre freestyle without fins.

With a dive start after the first competitor touches the wall, the second competitor swims 50 metre freestyle with fins.

With a dive start after the second competitor touches the wall, the third competitor swims 50 metre freestyle towing a rescue tube. After touching the turning edge, the third competitor passes the harness of the rescue tube to a fourth competitor in the water wearing fins with at least one hand on the turning edge. The third competitor, playing the role of "victim" holds the rescue tube with both hands, while being towed 50 metre by the fourth competitor to the finish.

Both the fourth and third competitor (victim) must leave from the turning edge. The victim must be in contact with the rescue tube before passes the 5 m-line.

The event is complete when the fourth competitor touches the finish edge of the pool with the victim in contact with the tube.

The victim may kick while being towed but no other assistance is permitted.

The victim must grip the main body of the rescue tube – not the rope or clip.

No artificial means of propulsion, unless specifically provided for, may be used in competition (e.g. hand webs, wetsuit sleeves, and arm bands)

Organizers may wish to create more of a "fun" or unique fitness event. In the past, some fitness events have had team members transporting bricks, recovering submerged objects, removing unconscious patients from the water, swimming into a wave pool, swimming against a lazy river current, sliding down a waterslide, towing victims on a mat, jumping from a tower, and pulling themselves across an underwater ladder to name a few. Be creative and have fun with it.

c) First Aid

Teams will enter a staged accident scene and must assess and manage simulated patients and bystanders. Teams will not be told where the scene will be staged and it may be located indoors or outdoors. In the past, teams have had the opportunity to respond to car accidents, boiler room

explosions, chemical leaks, camping accidents, gang fights, and much much more. This can be a very creative event. For lots of ideas of different scenarios check out pictures from the last few years of competitions on the LifeguardHome website.

Teams will enter the accident scene one at a time at staggered times. Competitors will not know the order in which they will enter until they are in the marshaling area, immediately prior to the start of the simulation. The order in which the lifeguards will enter the scene will be determined by draw. Teams will not know when the second, third and fourth guards will enter the scene. The first guard entering the scene is not permitted to bring any equipment other than personal protective equipment such as gloves, a pocket mask, or protective goggles.

The “trigger” for back-up guards to enter the scene will be consistent for all teams. The “trigger” may be a predetermined time from the start of the simulation, or may be based on the time that back-up was requested by the first guard.

A partial lock-up system is in effect, with each set of simulations repeated several times within one grouping. All teams within the same division will receive the same simulation. The simulation will last between 5 and 10 minutes.

In the event that a judge concludes that a competitor’s action or inaction would result in their own death, the competitor will be immediately retired from the event. The competitor will be asked to lie down on the spot. The competitor’s teammates will be expected to assess and treat their “downed” teammate. Competitors will only be retired if they reasonably would be killed in the situation. In the event that more than one competitor on a single team is “downed”, marks will only be available for the first competitor. Officials will immediately notify a team if they are providing treatment to a competitor who is not worth any marks.

Skills taught and equipment used in the NLS and AEC programs will be sufficient to achieve full marks.

d) Pool Simulation

All four team members will guard the pool for eight (8) to twelve (12) minutes during which time they must recognize and manage public relations incidents, water distress situations and aquatic and first aid emergencies. This event mirrors the pool simulations that are a standard part of the NLS program.

A partial lock-up system is in effect, with each set of simulations repeated several times within one grouping. All teams within the same division will receive the same simulation.

Teams are provided one minute to set up prior to the start of the simulation. This time is for set up only. Teams are not expected to, nor should they, respond to anything they observe during this time.

Major simulations are designed such that they may not be prevented. Some minor incidents may be prevented. Teams preventing a minor incident will receive full marks for that incident.

Teams are to assume the actual bather load at the time of their simulation. The team should not assume the pool is clear at anytime if it isn’t. If a scheduled incident cannot occur because a team has cleared the pool, the incident will not occur and no points will be awarded to the team for the incident. The decision of when to clear the pool is variable and depends on many factors including facility design, bather loads, and guarding levels. For the purposes of this competition, competitors should be aware that event organizers have designed their simulations such that if a patient is unconscious in the water, or non breathing anywhere in the facility, they are expecting the pool will be cleared.

Facility specific information such as the location of emergency phones, water feature control shut offs, etc. will be clarified for competitors at the Competitors’ meeting.

IX. MARK SHEETS

Once you have actually created your simulations for the competition, the next stage is to create your mark sheets. The mark sheets can take a long time to do up so do them well ahead of time so you're not staying up to all hours the night before. Rather than starting from scratch, try to contact someone who has ran a competition before to see if they have some templates you can use (the LifeguardHome has sample mark sheets on the website, and will also send different styles out to you on request).

The biggest issue around technical events is that there is a degree of subjectivity. There can be (and are) "easy" judges and "hard" judges. Unfortunately, this is the nature of these events. Mark sheets set up clearly can help reduce the amount of discrepancy around a victim's scoring.

There are generally two forms mark sheets take (the categories are the same, the scoring system itself is different). Your first aid victims' evaluation criteria should be based on the Priority Action Approach (ie. Scene Evaluation, Primary Survey, Critical Interventions, etc.). Each step of the rescue (airway management, RBS, blanket, pulse rate, medications, etc.) is worth "x" amount of points. The "x" is where you come in. *Pool simulations follow the same general guidelines, however there should be specific categories for things such as recognition, entries, education, signaling, etc.)*

The first way of scoring is to simply give each step of the score sheet an arbitrary value based on importance. Let's use the example of a conscious victim who is bleeding from the leg but displays no other major injuries or problems. The airway, breathing, and circulation initial assessment may be worth 10 marks each. As you continue, the RBS may also be worth 10 with blanket, oxygen, and R&R each worth 5. As the treatment begins, you may assign 20 points for direct pressure/bandaging, 15 for elevation, 10 for ice, and 7 for assessment of circulation past the point of bandaging. There would also be smaller point values for parts of the secondary survey (maybe 2 points for doing each section of a vitals check or head-to-toe). The important thing is to give proper weight to each item. For example, if the victim has a bleeding leg, don't make 75% of all the marks from doing a proper secondary survey (because there are so many items in a complete secondary survey, many novice organizers inadvertently give more overall points to that area). The biggest chunk of points to this victim should be the initial assessment and treatment. The biggest chunk of points for a pulseless victim should be continuous and correct CPR procedure.

The biggest disadvantage of this system is how wide open it tends to be. If direct pressure/bandaging is worth 20 marks, what is the difference between getting a 3, an 11, a 17, an 18, and a 19. Some judges will have no problem determining this, however MOST

people find it can be a little unfair at times. This leads to the second (and more standardized) version.

SHEET EXAMPLE #1 FOR A CONSCIOUS VICTIM WITH BLEEDING LEG:

| SCENE EVALUATION | |
|--|----|
| Assesses scene for dangers (<i>notes knife and blood on ground</i>) | /5 |
| Removes dangers appropriate (<i>knife removed to safe location</i>) | /5 |
| Number of Victims correctly identified (<i>3 plus bystander</i>) | /3 |
| History of Accident Determined (<i>gang fight led to stabbing; other gang ran off</i>) | /5 |
| SCENE EVALUATION TOTAL | |
| /18 | |

| PRIMARY SURVEY | |
|--|-----|
| delicate spine (<i>none, no history of trauma</i>) | /10 |
| Level of Consciousness (<i>alert, screaming in pain</i>) | /5 |
| Airway (<i>clear</i>) | /10 |
| Breathing (<i>present; shallow and rapid</i>) | /10 |
| . . . | |
| TREATMENT | |
| Direct Pressure Applied (bandaging or other means) | /20 |

The other scoring style of mark sheets use a Rubric system. Again, the categories of what the lifeguard is expected to do for a victim remain the same. Instead of arbitrary numerical score values assigned, each category is marked on a “0-1-2-3” scale. After some years of playing with this, the general acceptance of values is as follows: 0-Item not performed; 1-Item performed but at an unacceptable level or below NLS standard; 2-item performed to the NLS standard; 3-item performed exceedingly well with attention to details ... may demonstrate skills above the NLS standard. Judges determine to what level a competitor performed each skill and circles a number. Each category has a multiplication factor which gives appropriate weight to each category. For example, in an obstructed airway patient the multiplication factor for the Critical Intervention of Clearing the airway may be 15 (total points = 45). However the multiplication factor for doing a pulse rate assessment for the same patient may only carry a multiplication factor of 1 (total points = 3). The multiplication factor value should take into consideration the importance of this item to the victim’s well-being and the time it takes to perform.

SHEET EXAMPLE #2 FOR A CONSCIOUS VICTIM WITH BLEEDING LEG:

| SCENE EVALUATION | SCORE | MF | Tot |
|--|---------|-----------|-----|
| Assesses scene for dangers (<i>notes knife and blood on ground</i>) | 0 1 2 3 | X3 | /9 |
| Removes dangers appropriate (<i>knife removed to safe location</i>) | 0 1 2 3 | X3 | /9 |
| Number of Victims correctly identified (<i>3 plus bystander</i>) | 0 1 2 3 | X1 | /3 |
| History of Accident Determined (<i>gang fight led to stabbing; other gang ran off</i>) | 0 1 2 3 | X3 | /9 |

| |
|---|
| SCENE EVALUATION TOTAL /30 |
|---|

| PRIMARY SURVEY | SCORE | MF | Tot |
|--|--------------|-----------|------------|
| delicate spine (<i>none, no history of trauma</i>) | 0 1 2 3 | X5 | /15 |
| Level of Consciousness (<i>alert, screaming in pain</i>) | 0 1 2 3 | X3 | /9 |
| Airway (<i>clear</i>) | 0 1 2 3 | X5 | /15 |
| Breathing (<i>present; shallow and rapid</i>) | 0 1 2 3 | X5 | /15 |
| . . . | | | |
| TREATMENT | | | |
| Direct Pressure Applied (bandaging or other means) | 0 1 2 3 | X8 | /24 |

Both types of marking systems are quite similar, however the latter can reduce the amount of leeway by many judges compared to the open-ended point value style.

X. RULES FOR LOCK-UP

Once teams are in lock-up, the following rules are generally enforced:

- No cell phones
- No walkie-talkies. If a team wishes to use walkie-talkies as a communication device during simulations, they must provide an extra one to the overall judge prior to the event start.
- Competitors cannot leave lock-up without an escort (unless a bathroom is nearby that competitors can get to without seeing the pool or first aid simulation)
- Competitors cannot re-enter lock-up once completed their event without an escort.

XI. TIMELINE OF THE DAY

Whether you're running your first or your tenth competition, you'll just have to accept the fact that you are going to be VERY busy the day of the competition. Generally, a full competition is about 12 teams, so the timeline will be discussed as if that's how many you will have (with smaller numbers you will have much more time to breath).

Sample Timeline

- 8:15am – Judges/Volunteer Meeting + Setup
- 8:30am – Competitors in Lockup
- 8:45am – Competitor Meeting #1
- 9:00am – PAA
- 10:15am – Fitness
- 11:00am – Competitors in Lockup/Competitor Meeting #2
Lunch (if not provided in lock-up)
- 12:00pm – First Aid/Pool Sims
- 5:00pm – Awards/Social

The Morning

Ideally, you should be having a judge and volunteer meeting as competitors are arriving to lock-up (start time around 8:15am). This will give you a chance to give judges their t-shirts (if applicable), thank everyone for coming, go over the timeline, and start getting the first event organized. Assuming you are going to run PAA first, you should have a completely empty pool booked for about 60 minutes. Designate which judges will be marking which victims and pair the volunteer(s) with their appropriate judges. Hand out a clipboard and marksheets to all your judges (make sure you have made enough copies of each marksheet.... If you have 12 teams registered, make 15 copies of everything! Always have a backup copy with you). Once all the judges have a pretty good idea of where their victims will be located in the pool for PAA, they can start setting them up (training them, getting out props, applying makeup/blood, etc.). Keep in mind that if you are short on judge, you may have to judge as well.

Meanwhile teams will have started to arrive. You will probably want to have all teams in lock-up by 8:30am with the first event (usually PAA) starting at 9:00am. Once teams are all there, welcome them and let them know they are in lock-up and where they are allowed and not allowed to go (you may have an extra volunteer that can escort people to the bathroom, etc.). Before each event, offer a question and answer period for competitors. **STRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF WHERE COMPETITORS ARE NOT PERMITTED TO DIVE.** Once competitors are ready, draw numbers to determine the order. Each event takes 90 seconds, with about 3-5 minutes turnaround time per team (marshalling next team into the event, sending runners to pick up marksheets from the judges, re-setting up the victims each time, etc.). Make sure teams that have just finished their event know where they can go to watch the following teams. Once a team has done an event, they are not permitted back into lock-up without an escort. It is vital to stay organized with all the marksheets. After each event, get a runner to collect the sheets from each judge, put them into the same order for everyone, staple them, and (ideally) start inputting them into your overall results (this can be done later if necessary).

The next event is usually fitness. Fitness shouldn't take much longer than 15 or 20 minutes. Once all teams have done the PAA, let all competitors know the fitness event will be next. Go over exactly what the fitness will be and what will constitute penalties. Let the teams know what the heats will be (if necessary) and give them a time of approximately 10-15 minutes to get changed, get goggles, warm-up, etc. There should be once judge per team timing and looking for potential deductions. After each heat, get judges to report to you with the team they watched and their time. The organizer should keep this information with them. Again, the sooner you can input these numbers into your overall results the better.

The next 2 events are the ones that will take the most time to setup and to run through. If you have food supplied for your teams, tell them they have 15 minutes or so to get back into lock-up; you can bring all the food into lock-up and competitors will have their lunch there. Make sure you have saved some of the food for your judges and volunteers (give them first dibs). If you do not have any food supplied, you will have to

give the competitors a lunch break and let them know when they must be back in lock-up.

The Afternoon

Once competitors are back in lock-up, you need to start prepping for first aid and pool sims. Depending on how many teams are registered, this is where you need to decide to run the two events at the same time or independently. If you have any more than 8 teams, you will need to run them at the same time or else you won't be finishing until very late. To do this, you will need enough judges. Basically, what happens is that in lock-up (after the question and answer session) teams draw numbers. When it is their turn to go, teams must take all their equipment they need for both first aid and pool sims (typically the first aid event is held first). As soon as the team has finished the first aid sim, they have several minutes to grab all of their equipment (and their sanity) and go straight into the pool sim. Meanwhile, as soon as this team BEGINS the pool sim, the next team from lock-up is escorted down to begin the first aid event. The events run simultaneous until the final team has completed the pool sim. If you have a low number of teams (or you're stuck because of a low number of judges), you may run the events separately. Meaning, once all teams have completed the first aid event, all teams will go back to lock-up, draw for a new order and get ready for the pool simulations.

Regardless of which way you end up running your events, give yourself enough time to set the event up properly. For the first aid event, have a quick meeting with all your judges and victims to explain to them what the history of the accident is, and specific things you might be looking for. Then designate which judges will mark which victims, and give each judge a volunteer to setup as need be. Similarly do the same thing for pool simulations. Keep in mind that the pool simulation will have certain time designations when each victim is supposed to go (eg. Deep DNS at 3:25). If time permits, try to run a full pool simulation BEFORE THE FIRST TEAM enters to make sure all judges and victims know when and how they are supposed to go. Remember, if something "wrong" happens for the first team to compete, the same thing MUST happen for all following teams to ensure consistency. Make sure all of your judges/victims have any props they may need such as make-up, blood, medications, and so on.

As soon as a team has completed an event, try to get the marksheets from each judge collected, stapled, and begin inserting the results into your scoring system. No one wants to be waiting for an hour after the last team has finished waiting for the organizers to finish compiling everything. The sooner you can finish results, the better.

XII. SCORING & TABULATIONS

Before setting up any tabulation systems, you'll need to determine the relative value of each event for the overall results. The normal breakdown goes as follows: PAA – 15%, Fitness – 10%, First Aid – 35%, and Pool Sims 40%. However, you may choose to alter the weightings anyway you see fit. When it comes to tabulating everything, you once again have two ways to do it. Both work well, so use whichever makes the most sense.

The easiest way to prepare for tabulations is to make your entire competition out of 100 marks, with each event carrying its corresponding value as shown above. Therefore in a 100-point competition, PAA would be worth 15 points (15% of the total), Fitness would be 10 points, First Aid 35 points, and Pool Sims 40 points.

NOTE: If you are comfortable with a spreadsheet, you can make the tabulations VERY easy for yourself. The LifeguardHOME website also has a complete lifeguard competition tabulator for MS Excel available for download.

a) Relative Values (Preferred Methods)

This system of tabulation compares all teams RELATIVELY against once another, and not against the mark sheets. It is done by giving the top placing team of each event 100% of the total value. Let's say there is a total of 215 points for the PAA event. It is very unlikely that anyone will actually "ace" it and obtain all 215 points. If the top ranking team gets 176/215, you get that team to obtain maximum points (a total of 15 out of the overall 100 for the competition). You then compare the remaining teams to the top ranking team. *To do this, simply divide each teams' scores by the top ranking team's score.* So if the 2nd place team received 164/215 points, you would take their total score (164) and divide it by the top ranking score (176). This gives $164/176 = 0.931$ (or 93.1% score). Then, simply multiple this percent by whatever the weight of the event is. In this case, PAA is worth 15 points. Therefore, the team in 2nd place would receive $0.931 \times 15 = 13.97$. This method is done the same for First Aid and Pool Sims as well.

The fitness event can be a little tougher. The simplest way that some organizers score fitness is to set 1st=10 points, 2nd=9 points, 3rd=8 points, etc. The problem is that this does not account for teams that are very close to one another. If 1st place gets a time of 1:00.0 and the 2nd place team gets a time of 1:01.5, and the 3rd place gets a time of 1:10.6, it doesn't seem fair to have 1 point increments separating them when the actual fitness level shows much less increment. Therefore, convert all times to seconds, and use a modified version of the method above. Give the 1st place team 100% of the total available fitness points (10). Divide each team's total time by the fastest time. Then take the reciprocal value of this to convert to a relative percentage of the fastest time. (Reciprocal value is dividing the number 1 by the relative value). See Table 1A below for clarification:

Table 1A: Relative Scoring System for Fitness Event Example

| Team Name | Fitness Time (mm:ss.ms) | Converted Time (sec) | Relative Value (values divided by fastest time = 60.0) | Reciprocal Value (1 divided by R.V.) | Overall Value (/10) (10xRec. Value) |
|-----------|-------------------------|----------------------|---|---|--|
| Team #1 | 1:01.5 | 61.5 | 1.025 | 0.976 | 9.76 |
| Team #2 | 1:00.0 | 60.0 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 10.00 |
| Team #3 | 1:10.6 | 70.6 | 1.177 | 0.850 | 8.50 |

The following is an example of this tabulation system with 3 teams competing in all 4 events

Table 1B: Relative Scoring System Example

| Team Name | PAA (15%) | | Fitness (10%) | | First Aid (35%) | | Pool Sims (40%) | | TOTAL |
|-----------|-----------|-------|---------------|-------|-----------------|-------|-----------------|-------|-------|
| | /215 | /15 | Time | /10 | /765 | /35 | /1024 | /40 | |
| Team #1 | 176 | 15.00 | 1:01.5 | 9.76 | 541 | 27.56 | 647 | 28.44 | 80.76 |
| Team #2 | 164 | 13.97 | 1:00.0 | 10.00 | 687 | 35.00 | 755 | 33.19 | 92.16 |
| Team #3 | 142 | 11.28 | 1:10.6 | 8.50 | 602 | 30.67 | 910 | 40.00 | 90.45 |

In this example, Team #2 wins the competition

The major disadvantage to this system is that every team could completely BOMB a sim, yet teams would still receive fairly high marks overall, because they are being compared to themselves and not directly to the standards.

b) Absolute Values

This system of tabulation compares all teams DIRECTLY against the mark sheets, and indirectly against one another. It is very similar to the first (in fact when taking the same competition and applying a different tabulation system to it, rarely will the results change, however it is possible). In this method all scores are tabulated compared to how many total points are available. The biggest disadvantage to this system is how low the scores “appear” to be in the eyes of the competitors.

Competitors need to understand that it is very difficult if not impossible to “ace” an event. An unconscious non-breathing c-spine, for example, may be worth 250 marks. It can be very difficult to obtain full marks on this patient in a limited amount of time. It is not strange to see top ranking teams only receiving 60-70% of the total marks of a given competition. This is the nature of the sport. When a rookie team, for example, receives a score of 340/900 on their pool sim, this can seem devastating. They need to understand that that does not necessarily mean they performed awful. Overall, this method of scoring tends to highlight how many points were missed, as opposed to how teams did compared to one another.

Like before, you are taking scores as a percent value and applying that to the weighting of each event. The difference is that you do not compare the results to the highest ranking team. Instead you compare it to the total amount of points available on the mark sheets. In the PAA example, Team #1 scored 176/215. *Simply take the percentage of this and multiply it by the weight of the event.* $176/215 = 0.818$ or 81.8%. $0.818 \times 15 = 12.28$. Therefore, the first place team in PAA only receives 12.28 of a total of 15. The bottom chart shows the same point values as the previous example but with this scoring system applied.

If using this system, the fitness gets even trickier to make the scoring spreads fair. The best method, is to compare all the times to an arbitrary time that would be

equivalent of “acing” an event. An example would be to use a Canadian Record or Olympic Pace to determine the best time someone could get. In the fitness example, let’s use a time value of 0:45.00 as our comparison standard. The fitness scores would therefore be as follows:

Table 2A: True Value Scoring System for Fitness Event Example

| Team Name | Fitness Time (mm:ss.ms) | Converted Time (sec) | Relative Value (times divided by Standard of 45sec). | Reciprocal Value (1 divided by R.V.) | Overall Value (/10) (10xRec. Value) |
|-----------|-------------------------|----------------------|---|---|--|
| Team #1 | 1:01.5 | 61.5 | 1.37 | 0.73 | 7.30 |
| Team #2 | 1:00.0 | 60.0 | 1.33 | 0.75 | 7.50 |
| Team #3 | 1:10.6 | 70.6 | 1.57 | 0.64 | 6.40 |

Table 2A: True Value Scoring System Example

| Team Name | PAA (15%) | | Fitness (10%) | | First Aid (35%) | | Pool Sims (40%) | | TOTAL |
|-----------|-----------|-------|---------------|------|-----------------|-------|-----------------|-------|-------|
| | /215 | /15 | Time | /10 | /765 | /35 | /1024 | /40 | |
| Team #1 | 176 | 12.28 | 1:01.5 | 7.30 | 541 | 24.75 | 647 | 25.27 | 69.60 |
| Team #2 | 164 | 9.36 | 1:00.0 | 7.50 | 687 | 31.43 | 755 | 29.49 | 77.79 |
| Team #3 | 142 | 6.17 | 1:10.6 | 6.40 | 602 | 27.54 | 910 | 35.55 | 75.68 |

Again we see that Team #2 has won the competition, but with a lower score than before. As mentioned previously, the choice of which tabulation system generally will not matter. It MAY make a difference when 1 event is VERY easy and another event is VERY hard within the same competition.

XIII. AFTER-COMP

Ideally you’ll have someone dedicated to doing score tallying, checking (can be very important), and inputting throughout the day. Even so, when the last team is done, chances are you’ll still have some first aid and pool sim sheets to plow through. Announce to all the competitors that scores are being compiled and, depending on how close you are to having them done, give the competitors a time to meet in a pre-determined location for the winner announcements and prizes.

Once the scores have been inputted, **DOUBLE CHECK THEM!!** There are often small little mistakes that pop up (it’s natural when you spend a long time punching numbers over and over again into a computer). When you are sure the results are correct, you can meet with the competitors and announce the winners. Provided you have prizes, you’ll probably want to do them now. It’s always nice to have something for the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place teams, however some organizers choose to simply do draw prizes for all the stuff.

Once everything is wrapped up, most competitors will want to go out and celebrate with everyone else. If you can find a good restaurant in town that can accommodate everyone

and may even give you a deal for food, book them and give them plenty of notice as to when you will be arriving. From there, it could go anywhere. We've had some epic evenings/adventures following competitions before. Hopefully you'll be awake to enjoy them!!

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Author:

Ryan Radford

Special Thanks to:

Ryan Coltura

Joel Sutcliffe

A. COMPETITION CHECKLIST

Pre-Competition

- Date Set and Confirmed by Pool
- Room booked for Lock-Up
- First Aid location determined/Booked
- Sponsors Contacted
- Sponsors Confirmed
 - Prizes
 - Food
- T-Shirts designed & Ordered
- Judges Contacted
- Judges Confirmed
- Volunteers/Victims Contacted
- Volunteers/Victims Confirmed
- Advertising Done
 - Fax-Out
 - Website
 - Emails
- Event Organizers Confirmed
- Sims Written Up
- Backup First Aid Sim Created (if necessary)
- Mark Sheets Completed
- Mark Sheets Copied (more than expected)
- Tabulation System Ready
- Liability Forms Created & Copied
- Signs made for public informing them about comp

Post-Competition

- Thank you letter written to pool management
- Thank you letter to all sponsors sent
- Report on what went well/what to improve on next time