



## 2026 Southern Zone Open Water Championships

April 24-26, 2026

Sanctioned by: GULF Swimming

Sanction # GU-SC-26-053



<b>SANCTION</b>	Held under the Sanction of USA Swimming, Inc., and issued by GULF Swimming		
<b>HOST LSC</b>	GULF Swimming		
<b>LOCATION</b>	Lake Longhorn - 2391 Gun Range Rd, League City, TX 77573		
<b>MEET REFEREE</b>	Herb Schwab	herb.schwab@gmail.com	
<b>MEET DIRECTOR</b>	Seth Huston	shuston@rice.edu	
<b>MEDICAL OFFICER</b>	Charyl Teal	coachcharyl@pearlandaquatics.org	
<b>INDEPENDENT SAFETY MONITOR</b>	Travis Sandifer	coachtravis@katyaquatics.org	
<b>ADMIN. OFFICIAL</b>	Davis Peden	davis@peden.family	
<b>COACH</b>	Charlie Fry	coachcfry@gmail.com	
<b>TIMING SYSTEM</b>	Ankle strap timing chips may be used on select events		
<b>ELIGIBILITY</b>	<p>Swimmer(s) must be registered with USA Swimming to be accepted into this meet. Age as of April 24, 2026 shall determine the swimmer's age for the Southern Zone Open Water Championships.</p> <p>Each LSC must have a representative to act as a liaison between the LSC, Meet Director, and Independent Safety Officer. This individual must be a fully registered USA Swimming Non-Athlete member. It's strongly encouraged that they be from their respective LSC. That person must be identified to the meet host at Registration/Check-In in order to receive the credentials. Please also email ahead of time to the Meet Director who this contact will be.</p>		



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FORMAT		
RULES	The current USA Swimming open water rules will govern the meet as outlined in Part Seven of the USA Swimming Rules and Regulations Handbook.	
	Per USA Swimming Rule 202.3.2 - At a sanctioned competitive event, USA Swimming athlete members must be under the supervision of a USA Swimming member coach during warm-up, competition, and warm-down. Athlete members who attend the meet without a USA Swimming member coach should contact the Meet Referee for assistance with making arrangements for supervision.	
	Each LSC may not have more than six swimmers listed per age group (11-12 / 13-14 / 15-16 and Open) and gender (female / male) for a total of 48 maximum athletes.	
Knock Out Races (FRIDAY)	AGE	DISTANCE
	15&O girls and boys	1.8km
	14&U girls and boys	1.8km
	Teams may have up to 6 athletes per gender per knock out race. 15&O boys and girls will go first, followed by 14&U boys and girls. Athletes will begin an 800m swim. Once the 20th athlete finishes, a ten minute timer begins. The top 20 athletes in each age group will advance to the 600m race. Once the 8th athlete finishes the 600m race, a ten minute timer begins. The top 8 athletes compete in the 400m race. After the ten minutes are up, the 400m race begins. The 400m race determines the order of finish.	
4x300M Relay	14&Under girls and boys	4x300m
(SUNDAY)	Open	4x300m
	Teams may enter a scoring A and B relay. Teams may also enter a C relay, which will be exhibition only. The first swimmers will have an in-water start at approximately waist-deep depth. The course proceeds in a counter-clockwise motion making a left-shoulder turn around the turn buoy and returning toward shore. All relay exchanges will occur on land in a transition zone.	
INDIVIDUAL EVENTS (SATURDAY)	AGE	DISTANCE
	11-12	2.5-km
	13-14	5-km
	15-16	5-km
	Open	5-km
MEETINGS		
TECHNICAL MEETING	There will be no in-person technical meeting for this event. There will be a mandatory virtual (Zoom-based) technical meeting for the event on	



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	Thursday, 4/23. Details will be sent to each LSC's coach. Participating coaches and swimmers are responsible for having knowledge of all information in the meet document, information shared during the Zoom meeting, and posted on the GULF Swimming event website.
<b>SCHEDULE – ORDER OF EVENTS</b>	
<b>RACE DAY SCHEDULES</b>	Schedules are subject to change depending on the number of entries and local conditions.
<b>FRIDAY, April 24</b>	<b>Check-in location is at the lake, starting at 11:30am</b> Participant numbering - assignment and inspection Ticket pick-up Nail inspection Uniform inspection
	12:00pm Course is Open for Warmups 1:15pm Course is Closed for Warmups and Pre-Race Briefing 1:30pm Knock Out Races Begin (15&O) 2:30pm (estimated - not before) Knock Out Races Begin (14&U)
<b>SATURDAY, April 25</b>	7:30am Check-In and Inspection 7:45am Course is Open for Warmups 8:10am Course Closed for Warmup 8:15am Roll Call and Pre-Race Briefing for Girls' 5k events 8:30am 13-14, 15-16, Open Girls 5k START 10:00am (estimated) Roll Call and Pre-Race Briefing for Boys' 5k events Not to start before 10:15am (estimated) 13-14, 15-16, Open Boys 5k START 11:15am (estimated) Roll Call and Pre-Race Briefing for 11-12 2.5k events Not to start before 11:30am (estimated) 11-12 Boys and Girls START
<b>SUNDAY, April 26</b>	7:00am Check-In and Inspection 7:15am Course is Open for Warmups 7:40am Course is Closed for Warmups 7:45am Roll Call and Pre-Race Briefing for ALL 14&Under Sprint Relay teams 8:00am 14&Under Sprint Relays 9:00am (estimated) Roll Call and Pre-Race Briefing for all 15&Over Sprint Relay Teams Not to start before 9:15am (estimated) 15&Over Sprint Relays
<b>COURSE DESCRIPTION</b>	
<b>4x300m RELAY COURSE</b>	The relay course will be a straight line of buoys 150m long. Fluorescent orange circular buoys will be turn buoys, placed at the nearest and farthest points of the course. Smaller intermediate buoys will serve as



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guide buoys. Swimmers will move counterclockwise around the course, remaining to the right of the orange guide buoys and making left turns around the turn buoys. Relay exchanges will take place in a transition area on the shore.





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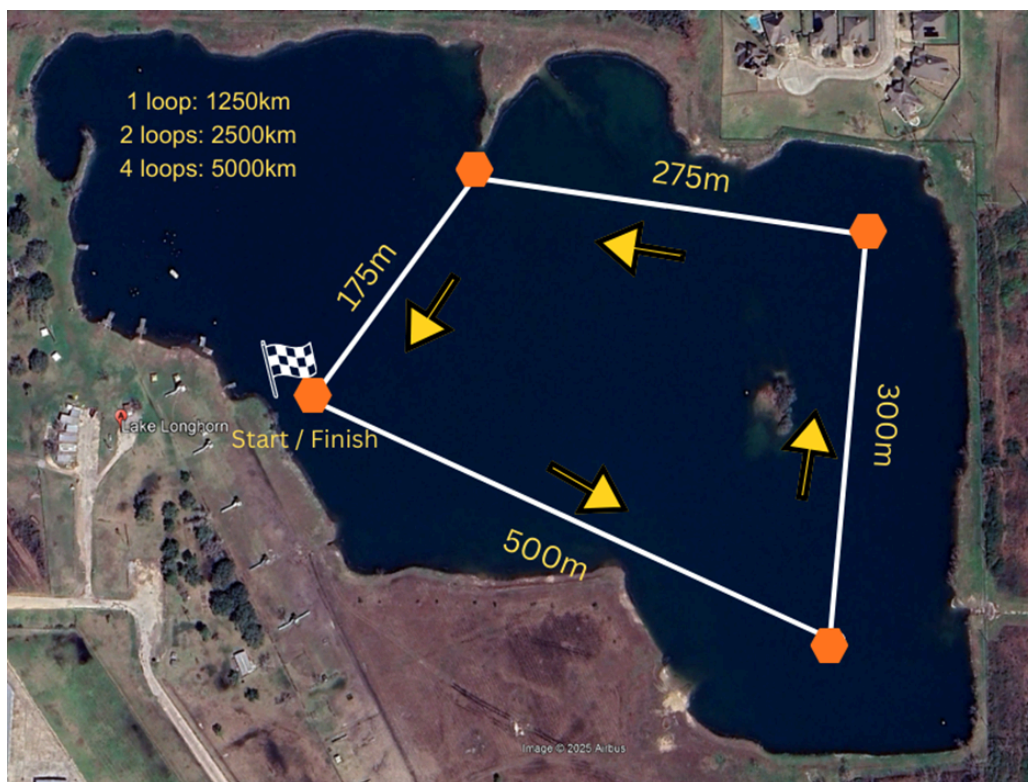
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### INDIVIDUAL COURSE

The dimensions of the course are a rectangle - 500m / 300m / 275m / 175m. All turns will be marked by large fluorescent orange buoys. Smaller intermediate buoys will serve as guide buoys. Swimmers will move counterclockwise around the course, making only left turns. 11-12s will complete two (2) laps, 13-14s, 15-16s, and Open swimmers will complete four (4) laps. Age group starts will be staggered in 3-5 minute increments based on the Meet Ref's decision.

Swimmers will have an in-water start. After completing the required number of laps, swimmers will finish the race by exiting the water and crossing the finish line on shore. The start may be modified per the discretion of the Meet Referee dependent upon local conditions.



### Knock Out Course

800m swim: Begin at the starting line, swim 375m, take a left turn for 50m, swim 375m back to the finish line. 600m swim: Begin at the starting line, swim 275m, take a left turn for 50m, swim 375m back to the finish line. 400m swim: Begin at the starting line, swim 175m, take a left turn for 50m, swim 175m back to the finish line. All turns will be marked by





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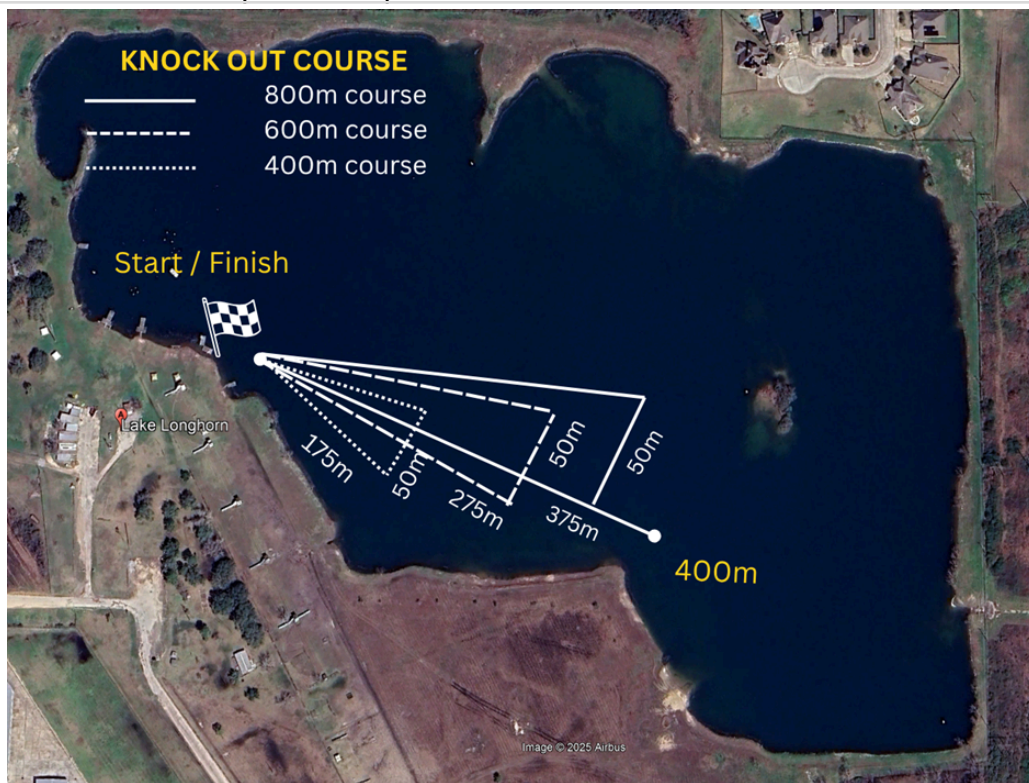
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large fluorescent orange buoys. Smaller intermediate buoys will serve as guide buoys. Swimmers will move counterclockwise around the course, making only left turns.

Swimmers will have an in-water start. After completing the specific distance, swimmers will finish the race by running up on dry land and across the finish line. The start may be modified per the discretion of the Meet Referee dependent upon local conditions.



### MEET DAY INFORMATION

#### CHECK-IN

Swimmers must report to the check-in area for pre-race inspections of their nails, uniform, and numbering each day of the meet. Swimmers will receive their tickets for entry into the race once all check-in inspections are successfully completed.

#### NUMBER MARKING

Swimmers shall be marked with their race numbers on both upper arms, both hands, and their upper backs. The swimmers shall be numbered vertically down the arms and horizontally across the upper backs. Any swimmer failing to mark their body correctly will not be permitted to race.

#### TEAM CAPS

Athletes must wear his/her LSC-designated team cap as their outermost cap during races.



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WARMUP PROCEDURE	
<b>WARM UP/DOWN</b>	A designated area adjacent to the competition will be available for continuous warm-up and warm-down prior to and during the competition.
MEET PROCEDURE	
<b>START/FINISH</b>	<p>Athletes may ONLY enter or exit the course from the lake in the designated start/finish area. This area will be blocked off from spectators and any athletes not in the current heat.</p> <p>All races will have an in-water start.</p> <p>The finish line will be a clearly marked line. A swimmer will not be considered as having finished the race until his/her entire torso (shoulders to hips) has crossed the finish line, NOT an arm, hand, neck, head, leg, or foot.</p>
<b>TIME LIMITS</b>	Swimmers must finish within 30 minutes of the first swimmer to finish in their event to be eligible for scoring and an award. Any swimmer who does not complete the course within 30 minutes of the first finisher in the event may be asked to retire from the race.
<b>SAFETY CONDITIONS</b>	<p>In the event of adverse conditions that cause the meet to be deemed unsafe, the following re-scheduling priorities will be used based on weather predictions, and at the discretion of the Meet Referee.</p> <p>Priority 1 – Starting the meet later on the same day Priority 2 – Attempting to reschedule for the following day Priority 3 - Cancellation</p>
<b>ESCORT SAFETY CRAFT</b>	<p>The course will be patrolled by qualified safety personnel. Coaches, parents, and spectators are not allowed on the course with any escort safety craft. Only the Meet Referee can designate who is on the course at any given time.</p> <p>Lifeguards reserve the right to remove any swimmer from the course if needed. Safety watercraft and lifeguards on jet skis and kayaks will monitor the entire course.</p> <p>The following have the authority to stop the meet at any time for safety reasons: the Meet Referee, the Meet Director, or the Independent Safety Monitor.</p>
<b>SAFETY PROCEDURES</b>	The safety of swimmers is our primary concern. For this reason, participants should be adequately trained for open water competition.



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	For additional information, see the event safety plan document.
<b>MEDICAL FACILITY</b>	Clear Creek Emergency Room; (281) 407-4887; approx 3 mi from event site with an approximate transfer time of 7 minutes
<b>SAFE SPORT</b>	
<b>MAAPP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The USA Swimming Safe Sport program is USA Swimming's comprehensive abuse prevention program dedicated to creating a healthy and positive environment free from abuse for all its members. Components of the program include, but are not limited to, providing education and training, enforcing policies (such as the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy), rules and best practice guidelines, promoting healthy boundaries and mandatory reporting of violations.</li><li>• The Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy (MAAPP) prohibits Applicable Adults (as defined) from having one-on-one interactions with minor athletes which are not within an observable and interruptible distance from another adult. Applicable Adults are required to abide by this policy in full during this meet.</li><li>• Pursuant to USA Swimming Rules and Regulations and federal law, it is every member's responsibility to immediately (i.e., within 24 hours) report any incident of child abuse, including physical or sexual abuse, to law enforcement and the U.S. Center for SafeSport. Reporting must occur when an individual has firsthand knowledge of misconduct or where specific and credible information has been received from a victim or knowledgeable third party. A report to the U.S. Center for SafeSport may be made via telephone at 720-531-0340 or online at <a href="http://www.uscenterforsafesport.org/report-a-concern">www.uscenterforsafesport.org/report-a-concern</a>. Various state laws may also require reporting to law enforcement or to a designated child protection agency.</li><li>• All athletes aged 18 and older must complete Athlete Protection Training in order to be a USA Swimming registered member in good standing. Any athlete who turns 18 on or after the first day of the start of competition, who has not completed Athlete Protection Training by the first day of competition, will be prohibited from participating in the competition until such time as all membership requirements are completed. Times achieved by an athlete who turns 18 on or after the first day of competition, who competes in this USA Swimming</li></ul>





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	<p>sanctioned event without completing this membership requirement, will NOT count for qualification or recognition. This includes participation as a member of a relay.</p> <p>All participants and competitors shall follow the US Center for SafeSport rules for bullying found on USA Swimming and GULF Swimming sites. A violation will be grounds for removal of members from the facility.</p>
<b>COVID-19</b>	<p>We have taken enhanced health and safety measures for the swimmers, coaches, volunteers, spectators, and other meet workers. An inherent risk of exposure to COVID-19 exists in any public place where people are present. COVID-19 is an extremely contagious disease that can lead to severe illness and death. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, senior citizens and individuals with underlying medical conditions are especially vulnerable.</p> <p>Neither USA Swimming, Inc. nor Gulf Swimming, Inc., can prevent you (or your child(ren)) from becoming exposed to, contracting, or spreading COVID-19 while participating in USA Swimming sanctioned events. It is not possible to prevent against the presence of the disease. Therefore, if you choose to participate in a USA Swimming sanctioned event, you may be exposing yourself to and/or increasing your risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19.</p>
<b>RECORDING DEVICES</b>	The use of audio or video recording devices, including cell phones, is not permitted in changing areas or restrooms.
<b>CHANGING AREAS</b>	Changing into or out of swimsuits other than the designated restroom / changing areas is PROHIBITED.
<b>DRONES</b>	Operation of a drone, or any other flying apparatus, is prohibited over the venue (lake, athlete/coach areas, spectator areas and open ceiling changing areas) any time athletes, coaches, officials and/or spectators are present.
<b>ATHLETES 18 &amp; OVER</b>	<p>Athletes 18 &amp; over must complete or maintain a current USA Swimming Athlete Protection Training course credential.</p> <p><a href="https://www.usaswimming.org/resource-center/athlete-protection-training">https://www.usaswimming.org/resource-center/athlete-protection-training</a></p>
<b>SCORING &amp; AWARDS</b>	
<b>SCORING</b>	<p><b>Individual events</b></p> <p>Top 24 Finishers per Event Score: 32-28-27-26-25-24-23-22-20-17-16-15-14-13-12-11-9-7-6-5-4-3-2-1</p>
	<p><b>Relay events</b></p>



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	Top 16 Relays per Event Score: 40-34-32-30-28-26-24-22-18-14-12-10-8-6-4-2
<b>ENTRY FEES</b>	<p>\$90 per individual (2.5K or 5K) race participant (*includes lunch on Saturday); \$5 SZ surcharge per athlete; \$20 per relay team; \$20 per individual knock out race participant</p> <p><u>Checks should be payable to Gulf Swimming, Inc. and can be mailed to:</u> Gulf Swimming, Inc c/o Tom Hasz 1911 Shadow Forest Dr Katy, TX 77494</p>
<b>AWARDS</b>	<p><b>Individual Awards</b> Medals for Top 8 Individual Scorers for each gender of each age group.</p> <p><b>Relay and Knock Out Awards</b> Individual medals for the Top 3 Relays in each gender and age group for each relay event as well as the top 3 Knock Out winners from each gender and age group.</p> <p><b>Team Awards</b> <b>Trophy for Top 3 Combined Teams</b> (presented at the conclusion of the meet) The combined points scored by attached members of the team at Southern Zone Open Water Championship events shall determine the team score.</p>
<b>ENTRIES</b>	
<b>ENTRY PROCEDURES AND DEADLINES</b>	<p><b>The entry deadline is Tuesday, April 14, 2025 at 11:59 p.m. Central time.</b></p> <p>HYTEK entries only. The HYTEK entries must be sent via email to <b>tpc@gulfswimming.org</b>.</p> <p>Entering LSC teams need to check all data BEFORE submitting.</p> <p>The e-mailed Entry Report sent to you confirming your entries, along with all subsequent Entry Reports notifying you of changed or updated entries, shall be the official record of your entry. No other information will be considered if there is an entry error or discrepancy.</p> <p>The attached "Entry Summary and Waiver", "USA Swimming Membership Meet Entry Form", entry fees, and a hard copy of your LSC's entry report must be submitted by the start of the meet. If any</p>



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	team has unpaid fees at the start of competition, the entire team will be scratched.
<b>REGARDLESS OF ENTRIES SUBMITTED AND/OR INPUT ERROR, IT IS THE COACHES' RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE THE SWIMMERS ARE IN THE CORRECT EVENTS</b>	
<b>DECK ENTRIES</b>	<b>IMPORTANT REMINDER</b> - No deck entries will be permitted.
<b>DISABILITY ATHLETES</b>	<p>GULF Swimming welcomes all swimmers with disabilities as described in the USA Swimming Rules and Regulations, Article 105, to participate in our meets.</p> <p>Coaches entering swimmers with disabilities that require any accommodations are required to provide advance notice by completing the attached "Swimmers with a Disability Coach and Meet Referee Communication" form to the Meet Referee by the entry deadline accompanying their meet entry file, including the need for any personal assistants required and/or registered service animals.</p> <p>Failure to provide advance notice may limit the Meet Referee's ability to accommodate any requests.</p>
<b>ATHLETE CONDUCT</b>	
<b>ATHLETE CONDUCT</b>	<p>Athlete conduct will be governed by Part Seven of the USA Swimming Rules and Regulations Handbook. It is the athlete's responsibility to be familiar with the rules for open water swimming. Intentional obstruction, interference or intentional contact with another swimmer may be deemed "Unsporting Impedance" and lead to disqualification. Swimmers shall maintain clearance from other swimmers except at the start, turn, and the finish or where the course or race conditions dictate otherwise. Parents and swimmers should be advised there may be inadvertent contact with other swimmers when there are a significant number of entrants. It is important that swimmers keep a cool head while in the water.</p>
<b>SWIMWEAR</b>	<p>All swimwear must comply with USA Swimming 701.4. Specifically, suits may not cover the neck, extend past the shoulder, extend below the ankle, or have zippers or other fastening devices. Tie-back suits are not permitted. It is unlikely that water temperatures will allow for the use of wetsuits.</p>



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OFFICIALS	
OFFICIALS	We welcome all certified USA Swimming officials to work at this Championship. This is an excellent opportunity to achieve sessions as an Open Water Judge (OJ) and/or Open Water Referee (OR) for recertification, or sessions for apprentices.
OFFICIALS APPLICATION	An online application for officiating can be found <a href="#">HERE</a> . Officials are encouraged to apply as soon as possible, but no later than April 10th.
OFFICIALS UNIFORM	White polo shirt over khaki bottoms. Footwear (of any color) that is appropriate for water submersion is recommended. Those selected to work the event will receive one white meet polo shirt.
OFFICIALS BRIEFING	An in-person official briefing will be held on Friday, 4/24.
OTHER INFORMATION	
PROGRAMS	If possible, psych sheets will be posted on MeetMobile as well as emailed, and posted at the venue.
FINAL RESULTS	Final results will be posted on MeetMobile and Hy-tek Team Manager Results file will be posted at <a href="http://www.gulfswimming.org">www.gulfswimming.org</a> . The Southern Zone website, as well as emailed to the coaches of participating teams.
SPECTATORS	Admission is free. Restroom facilities will be available at the venue. Spectators may bring their own lawn chairs or blankets to sit on.
HOSPITALITY	Hospitality will be offered for coaches and officials during the meet. Per tradition, lunch will be provided for coaches, officials and swimmers on Saturday.
PARKING	There is parking available at the lake - \$5.00 per vehicle per day.

BOYS EVENT #	GIRLS EVENT #	AGE	DISTANCE	TYPE
1	2	14&U	1.8m	Knock Out
3	4	15&O	1.8m	Knock Out
5	6	13-14	5-km	Individual
7	8	15-16	5-km	Individual
9	10	Open	5-km	Individual
11	12	11-12	2.5-km	Individual
13	14	14&U	4x300	Relay
15	16	15&O	4x300	Relay



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### **ENTRY SUMMARY and WAIVER**

Please fill out the information requested below and submit with your payment. Payment and waiver must be received by the start of the meet.

TOTAL Individual Knock Out Races (x \$20) \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL Individual Races (x \$90) \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL Sprint Relays (x \$20) \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL Individuals for surcharge (x 5\$) \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL \$\$ Due: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY / STATE / ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

HEAD COACH EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

HEAD COACH CELL: \_\_\_\_\_

LSC REP NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

LSC REP EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

ASSISTANT COACH NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ASSISTANT COACH CELL: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Release and Hold Harmless Agreement

In consideration of being permitted to participate in this swim meet, and for other good and valuable consideration, the undersigned, for himself, his successors and assigns, hereby releases and forever discharges GULF Swimming Inc, and its Board of Directors, Southern Zone Swimming, USA Swimming Inc., Lake Longhorn and each of their respective officers, agents, employees, members, successors, and any other persons in any way connected with this meet, from any and all liabilities, claims, demands, actions, or causes of action of whatever kind of character arising out of or in connection with said event.

Further, the undersigned shall indemnify and hold harmless GULF Swimming Inc, Southern Zone Swimming, USA Swimming Inc., Lake Longhorn and the officers, trustees, agents, employees, and members of the foregoing and all other persons in any way and claims arising out of or in connection with any injury, including death, or alleged injury of damage to property sustained or alleged to have sustained in connection with or to have arisen out of said event.

**Signature of LSC**

**Official/Coach**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_





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Did you include?

☐  
☐  
☐

Entries Printed

Check for entries

This completed form and (below) membership meet entry form

### USA SWIMMING MEMBERSHIP MEET ENTRY FORM

**Meet Name:** 2026 Southern Zone Open Water Championships

**Location:** Lake Longhorn - 2391 Gun Range Rd, League City, TX 77573

**Date:** April 24 - April 26, 2026

BY ATTENDING OR PARTICIPATING IN THIS COMPETITION, YOU VOLUNTARILY ASSUME ALL RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH EXPOSURE TO COVID-19 AND FOREVER RELEASE AND HOLD HARMLESS USA SWIMMING, SOUTHERN ZONE SWIMMING, GULF SWIMMING AND EACH OF THEIR OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, AGENTS, EMPLOYEES OR OTHER REPRESENTATIVES FROM ANY LIABILITY OR CLAIMS INCLUDING FOR PERSONAL INJURIES, DEATH, DISEASE OR PROPERTY LOSSES, OR ANY OTHER LOSS, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO CLAIMS OF NEGLIGENCE AND GIVE UP ANY CLAIMS YOU MAY HAVE TO SEEK DAMAGES, WHETHER KNOWN OR UNKNOWN, FORESEEN OR UNFORESEEN, IN CONNECTION WITH EXPOSURE, INFECTION, AND/OR SPREAD OF COVID-19 RELATED TO PARTICIPATION IN THIS COMPETITION.

### PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM WITH YOUR ENTRY FORMS

The undersigned LSC representative certifies by his/her signature that all athletes participating for or entered by the team in this sanctioned swim meet are currently member athletes of USA Swimming, Inc. The undersigned further certifies that any person appearing in the capacity of coach is currently a coach member of USA Swimming, Inc.

**LSC:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PRINTED NAME:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**SIGNATURE:**

\_\_\_\_\_

No entrant will be permitted to compete unless the entrant is a member as provided in Article 302  
Held under the sanction of USA Swimming



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## SWIMMERS WITH A DISABILITY COACH AND MEET REFEREE COMMUNICATION

MEET \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

LSC \_\_\_\_\_ COACH \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL and PHONE# \_\_\_\_\_

Swimmer	Age Group	Event	Session

Necessary  
Accommodation

\_\_\_\_\_

Swimmer	Age Group	Event	Session

Necessary  
Accommodation

\_\_\_\_\_

Swimmer	Age Group	Event	Session

Necessary  
Accommodation

\_\_\_\_\_

Swimmer	Age Group	Event	Session

Necessary  
Accommodation

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



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### **Examples of Necessary Accommodations** (but not limited to)

- Special accommodations at the start - explain
- Special accommodations at the finish - explain
- Hand signals for the start

### **Safety Information**

#### **Safety Authority**

- Emergency Services will be provided by Lifeguards, Paramedics and Medical Staff on-site
- AEDs, First Aid kits, and Basic Life Support gear will be available on-site.
- Race Operations will be manned by the Race Director, Administrative Referee, and Lake Longhorn staff
- The race is held within League City, TX.

#### **Communications Plan**

**Primary** - There will be two separate radio networks using two different frequency plans. The radios are not interchangeable.

Communication across radio networks will be coordinated through Race Operations. Personnel using GCST VHF radios include the Race Director, Race Operations, Race Referees, Safety Officer, Course Officer, Spare vessels, Feed Station Referee, Administrative Referee, Turn Judges, and event announcers.

Staff will utilize their own radios, and will be in contact with Race Operations, Life Guard Supervisors, and On-Water Life Guard.

**Secondary** communications between all parties will be via cellular telephones. The following positions will be issued a phone number listing:

Race Director  
Meet Referee  
Safety Officer  
Race Referees  
Course Officer  
LG Supervisors

#### **Swimmer in Distress**

- Lifeguards will activate their water rescue protocols.
- Any swimmer withdrawing from the race must report to the Officials Tent for identification. Lifeguards will radio race-control with the competitor number and direct the swimmer to return to the start area.
- A First Aid tent will be maintained on site in the Start/ Finish area.
- Swimmers needing emergency medical care will be administered care in the nurse's



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station and if transportation is needed by utilizing EMS (on site) transportation.

- Swimmers requiring evacuation via ambulance will be transported to Clear Creek Emergency room, 3 miles away.

### Missing Swimmer

- All swimmers will be issued a "Race Ticket" with their competitor number during the registration process. This "Ticket" will be collected as the swimmers enter the water.
- All swimmers will be required to provide a personal cell phone contact and a coach/handler cell phone contact at registration.
- All swimmers will be videotaped during the final inspection/accounting prior to the start.
- If a swimmer is reported missing and last seen in the water: Lifeguards will activate their underwater search and recovery protocol. Concurrently, meet operations will attempt contact with the coach/handler and swimmer via cell phone. Meet Operations will also review the start list, withdrawal list, site race tickets, and view the pre-race video tape to confirm the swimmer actually started the race. All swimmers are reminded before the race start that they must report to the nearest lifeguard if they withdraw from the race. All swimmers who depart from the water will be identified by their race number.

### Support Vessels

The following vessels will be used:

- Jet Ski
- Kayaks
- All vessels Captains will attend a briefing by the Safety Officer.
- Spare vessels will remain clear of the vessel exclusion zone unless summoned on to the course by race control.
- Once the course has been set, the Course Officer vessel will remain clear of the vessel exclusion zone unless summoned to the course by the Referee or race control.
  - All official's boats will be equipped with VHF radios on the race control network.

### Parameters for Abandoning the Race

Any one of the following individuals are empowered to independently order the race abandoned due to unsafe course or other conditions.

- Meet Referee
- Safety Officer
- Meet Director

If the race is to be abandoned, Race Control will relay via radio to all vessels to signal abandonment. Simultaneously, the Lifeguard Supervisor will signal via their radio net to signal abandonment. The abandonment signals will be:

- From Officials Boats – 5 short blasts followed by one long blast.
- From the Lifeguards – 5 short blasts of the whistle followed by one long blast.
- Swimmer actions are to:
  - \* Discontinue swimming
  - \* Look for directions from the Officials or water safety personnel
  - \* Once safe on land, proceed to the start/fish area and check-in.



## 2026 Southern Zone Open Water Championships

**April 24-26, 2026**

Sanctioned by: GULF Swimming

**Sanction # GU-SC-26-053**



### **Contingency Plan**

- Due to venue restrictions, it is unlikely any change to the shape of the course will be possible.
- If weather conditions require, the directions of swim (CW/ CCW) and the location of the start/finish structure may be changed.
- If the race is abandoned, it will be postponed until later the same day. If the race must be abandoned for the entire day, the race will be cancelled.