



## RACE RULES

### Winter crossing of the Meuse 2025

These regulations are an adaptation of the IWSA winter swimming world championship regulations and the FFBN open water swimming rules, adapted to the Traversée de la Meuse

#### 1. The organization's leadership

1.1 For this competition, only a race jury and an organizing committee are appointed.

1.2 The organising committee is composed of all the members of the administrative body of Cool Huy asbl.

1.3 The Race Jury shall consist of at least:

- 1 referee (volunteer/member of the Cool Huy club);
- 1 secretary of the jury (volunteer/member of the Cool Huy club);
- 1 course judge/swimming judge (volunteer/member of the Cool Huy club);
- 1 starter (volunteer/member of the Cool Huy club who can then ensure the safety of the swimmers);
- 1 or 2 timekeepers (volunteers/members of the Cool Huy club).

An official can hold multiple positions.

1.4 All officials are volunteers and therefore do not require a licence to perform their duties in this amateur competition.

#### 2. General provisions

2.1 This competition is an amateur competition and is not required to comply with all the rules imposed by the IWSA regarding cold water competition.

2.2 In case of doubt as to the correct application of the rules, the officials leave the advantage to the swimmer.

2.3 All designated officials are required to attend the briefing prior to the race.

2.4 All members of the jury shall communicate to the referee their remarks concerning the race awarded to them as soon as possible and by any means they deem necessary.

2.5 During the competition, all officials wear a distinctive sign. They receive it as a loan from the committee and hand it over after the competition.

2.6 The competition is only open to members of a cold water swimming club or federation or with a cold water section, whether or not they are regular competitors.

2.7 In the event that a swimmer is not a member of a cold water swimming club in Belgium, he or she must present an exercise electrocardiogram dated less than one year on the day of the competition and a medical certificate confirming his or her fitness to participate in the cold water competition.



2.8 The Organizing Committee may, at any time, prohibit participation in the competition of any person in a state of intoxication or similarity, or appearing to be under the influence of alcoholic beverages, drugs or any other substance influencing his behavior.

2.9 The Organizing Committee may, at any time, following the advice of the official medical personnel present, prohibit the participation of any person with a physical disability or illness incompatible with the activity and which may directly endanger him/her.

2.10 The Organizing Committee may, at any time, following an initial warning, prohibit participation in the competition of any person who, by his or her behavior, directly endangers himself and/or other participants.

2.11 To swim, it is advisable to cut your nails as short as possible and remove your jewellery so as not to risk injuring the other participants.

2.12 The competition may only take place under the conditions of a flow of the Meuse of less than 600 m<sup>3</sup>/s, a wind speed of less than 100 km/h. The event may also be cancelled or postponed by the organizing committee for any other reason related to the safety of the participants.

If cancellation or postponement is considered, the organizing committee may eventually move the competition to the pool. In such a case, the "pool" race rules will be applied.

2.13 The minimum age to participate in the event is 10 years old.

### **3. The referee:**

3.1 The referee shall be positioned above the finish area. He will have, at all times, a clear view of the finish.

3.2 After each finish, the referee records the ranking of the swimmers according to the assignment given to them.

### **4. The timekeeper:**

4.1 Every timekeeper shall start his stopwatch at the start of the race assigned to him and shall stop it at the finish of the last swimmer in the race concerned.

4.2 Every timekeeper shall record for each swimmer the time achieved for his race in hours, minutes and seconds.

4.3 In the case of the use of electronic timekeeping, the timekeeper's times shall only serve as reserve time.

4.4 The completed race sheets shall be presented after each race to the referee who shall check them, sign them and hand them over to the secretariat of the jury.

4.5 All timekeepers shall be present at the starting point 10 minutes before the start of the race assigned to them.



## 5. The course/swim judge:

5.1 The course/swim judge must be positioned in such a way that he or she maintains an overall view of the race field. His position is therefore not fixed. He can be helped by various volunteers and/or official first aiders along the route.

5.2 The course/swim judge shall position himself in such a way as to ensure that all swimmers pass through the designated places and landmarks.

5.3 The course/swim judge verifies that no swimmer:

- Do not use the shore, a buoy or a pilasse as a means of aid;
- Do not obstruct other swimmers.

## 6. Swimming styles:

6.1 Freestyle: The swimmer freely chooses his way of swimming his course. No stylistic error can be blamed. Changing swimming style is allowed at any time during the course.

6.2 Breaststroke: Only breaststroke can be swum without interruption. Any change in swimming style will result in disqualification. The "breaststroke" swimming style is defined on the FFBN website.

## 7. Categories:

7.1 Age categories are separate for men and women.

7.2 The distribution of the age categories is as follows:

- A: 2005 to 2015
- B: 1995 to 2004
- C: 1985 to 1994
- D: 1975 to 1984
- E: 1965 to 1974
- F: 1964 and before

7.3 All participants compete in their age category.

7.4 Participants can only compete in a maximum of 2 individual races per day.

7.5 If the programme does not include a race for a specific age category, the swimmers concerned must compete in the next higher category provided for in the programme.



## **8. The running distance:**

8.1 The minimum distance to be swam at this competition is 125m. The distance also depends on the trajectory taken by the swimmer.

## **9. Beanies:**

9.1 Each swimmer must start and swim the entire race with the official cap (colour and number) provided by the organising club and given to the swimmer at registration.

9.2 Wearing a numbered cap is mandatory for all swimmers. In the event that the cap is removed during the race, for whatever reason, the swimmer must put it back on without consequentializing the swimmer.

9.3 In the event that the cap has leaked and cannot be found, the swimmer may finish his race normally but must report to the referee at the end of his event.

9.4 The cup number should preferably be worn on the front of the head.

## **10. Other equipment:**

10.1 Wearing a jersey is mandatory. It should never go beyond the knee or shoulder.

10.2 Wearing a neoprene swimsuit is not permitted.

10.3 Goggles, a second cap worn under the official cap, a nose clip and earplugs may be worn and used.

10.4 The wearing of other equipment, neoprene or not, is not permitted.

## **11. Call Room and Departure Area:**

11.1 The call room is an area on the left bank, whether or not covered (delimited by barriers or an arbour depending on the weather), accessible only with permission, in which swimmers authorized to enter may keep their clothing on until they are then authorized to enter the starting area.

11.2 The starting area is the uncovered and enclosed area (by barriers) where swimmers are allowed to enter the water.

11.3 The call room and the start area are only accessible to swimmers, authorised members of the organisation and the press. No accompanying person or the public can have access to these areas.

11.4 In the call room, the starter will make the call 5 to 10 minutes before the start of the race. Swimmers are therefore required to be present in front of the appeal chamber 10 minutes before the scheduled time of their race.

11.5 Only the choke allows swimmers to move from the call room to the starting area. This is when the swimmers will have to undress to put on their swimming clothes. Their clothes will then be taken care of by members of the organisation in order to take them to the finish area, on the right bank.

## 12. The start:

12.1 The swimmer's usual starting position is standing on the wall, facing the water, in the starting area. During the start phase, at any time, the swimmer can continue to hold on to the metal railing placed on the wall with his hands.

12.2 The swimmer, once on the wall, must maintain a distance of approximately 1.50 m with the swimmer on his right and the swimmer on his left. For safety reasons, the Starter will check that these distances are respected.

12.3 For swimmers who do not feel able to jump from the top of the starting wall, it is tolerated that they enter the water through the launching ladder located in this starting area. He must imperatively report to the Starter who will warn the other swimmers of his prior presence in the water. He must be in the water during the departure procedure with at least one hand on the launching ladder or on the rope attached to it.

12.4 At the Starter's command "On your marks", all swimmers must get into the starting position.

12.5 The start shall be given by the choke by means of a whistle or pistol blast audible to all. At the same time, he operates a flag vertically downwards, or the arm.

Only then can the swimmer start by jumping or diving (or let go of the wall or ladder for the swimmer who has entered the water beforehand).

For safety reasons, it is important to start perpendicular to the wall and not towards the swimmer to his right or left.

12.6 The starter has the right to decide whether the start is correct. This decision is of course subject to the approval of the referee.

12.7 Any false start is noted by the starter (and his or her assistants) who communicates them to the referee. The latter penalizes the swimmer concerned by at least 10 seconds more than the total time of his course.

## 13. Race:

13.1 The race takes place from the planned start area on the left bank of the Meuse to the scheduled finish area on the right bank.

13.2 Swimmers may take any trajectory they wish between these two zones.

## 14. Arrival:

14.1 The finish area is located against the wall on the right bank of the Meuse. It is defined by the space between two wide yellow stripes arranged against the wall.

14.2 The swimmer shall be considered to have arrived when he touches the wall in the finish area with at least one of his two hands in freestyle and both hands in breaststroke.



#### **15. Rules for the relay:**

15.1 The relay is 4 x 1 bushing

15.2 Each team must be mixed "single" (at least one man and one woman) and composed of 4 swimmers in total.

15.3 Each team must provide four uniform hats for each member of its team. If this is not possible, the team must notify the president of the jury before the race and the organizing committee will distribute hats of uniform color to the team members.

15.4 Each team must have a team captain. It is mandatory for the team captain to register a team by providing the contact information of all team members.

15.5 Team members must agree on their starting order before the race.

15.6 Each participant may only participate in the relay if he or she has already participated in an individual race.

15.7 When called for the race, team members shall take up positions according to their starting order. The first and third swimmers start from the right bank while the second and fourth swimmers start from the left bank.

15.8 The area of the start of the first swimmer will be defined by the organizing committee at the time of the start of the race.

15.9 For other swimmers, they start when the teammate in front of them touches the wall. The starting area for the relay swimmers is less than 10 metres upstream from where the swimmer in front of them touches the shore.

15.10 A team finishes when the fourth swimmer touches the shore wall in the defined finish area (see 13.).

15.11 If the flow of the Meuse does not allow for 4 crossings, the relay may be reduced to 3 swimmers (3 crossings). In such a case, the first and third swimmers will start from the left bank and the second swimmer from the right bank.

15.12 Relay runs will be cancelled if the flow rate is greater than 300m<sup>3</sup>/s.

#### **16. Aid:**

16.1 No swimmer is permitted to use or wear a device that can accelerate their speed, increase endurance or buoyancy.

16.2 Shore coaching is permitted, provided that it is not provided by an official or security personnel.

#### **17. Standing:**

17.1 During the race, standing upright with the bottom is allowed.



17.2 It is not allowed for the swimmer to move with a support on the bottom.

**18. Refreshments:**

18.1 No refuelling is tolerated during the race.

**19. Out of competition:**

19.1 "Out of competition" participation in the event is not allowed except during "demonstrations".

19.2 In case of doubt as to the regularity of an entry, the organizer reserves the right to inform the referee. Original registrations (emails) are available for any useful verification.

**20. Complaints:**

20.1 Complaints about the competition or results must be lodged with the referee no later than 30 minutes after the publication of the official results of the race concerned.

20.2 Each complaint shall be dealt with by the Referee alone, who shall remain sovereign in his decisions.

**21. Awkward swimming:**

21.1 Obstructing, hindering or causing intentional contact with another swimmer may result in disqualification if the Referee considers such action to be unsportsmanlike.

21.2 In the event of an interference, the "interfered" swimmer and the "interfering" swimmer must be placed on an exclusion list which will be given to the referee. The Referee will make the decision whether or not to disqualify the participant(s).

**22. Outside the races (For participants):**

22.1 It is strongly recommended, for any travel on foot, to have shoes, slippers or sandals on your feet, to wear at least a bathrobe, a sweater or any other clothing so as not to cool down unnecessarily before the race.