

RIPON N

TRIATHLON CLUB

SITE RISK ASSESSMENT 2025

OPEN WATER SWIMMING – RIPON RACECOURSE LAKE

Location	Activity	Sessions	Participants
Ripon racecourse lake This site has good access for emergency vehicles if required	Open Water Swimming	Tuesday 1800-2000 Thursday 1800-2000 Saturday 0700-1000 Times are amended to suit daylight hours at the start and end of season	Members of Ripon Triathlon Club Mixed ability Unaccompanied from 18+ Competent juniors from 12 (accompanied by 18+) following assessment by an accredited coach/OW Committee Member.
Assessors	Assessment signed off by	Assessment date	Risk assessment review date
			April 2025

Ripon Triathlon Club has carried out this risk assessment and implemented control measures to ensure that risks are minimized so far as is reasonably practicable. However, due to the nature of open water swimming, an element of risk remains. Participants are informed that these sessions are not coached, nor are there safety boats therefore all participants are at their own risk.

Hazard	Who may be Harmed	Control measures in place	Further control measures for consideration
<p><i>Slips and falls.</i> (Entry/exit point. This can become slippery due to build-up of slime)</p>	<p>Participants/ Spectators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swimmers reminded to take care when entering/exiting the water. • Visual checks to ensure the area is kept clear of clutter/debris and slime. • Matting placed at the entry and exit point at each session to reduce risk of slips 	
<p>Drowning due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak/inexperienced swimmer – causes various from panic attack to exposure. • Over exertion • Illness (heart attack, respiratory distress) • Affected by drugs/alcohol. • Adverse weather 	<p>Participants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every swimmer must have read and signed stating they have read and understood the EAP, health advisory document and induction briefing. • Every swimmer must be able to swim 1500m or 60x 25m lengths unassisted without stopping in a pool. • All swimmers must adhere to the OW swimming rules as stated. • Novice and timid swimmers will have a buddy and mandatory tow float, keeping to the shorter course. • All swimmers to keep to lake edges where possible. • All swimmers are strongly advised to swim with a buddy. • Wetsuits must be worn if the water temperature is below 18 degrees. 	

Drowning – Lost swimmer	Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every swimmer must register with the COWS and exchange their membership card or photo ID for a swim band (worn outside of the wetsuit), this must be returned and swapped on exiting the lake. • All swimmers are strongly advised to swim with a buddy. • COWS have a detailed EAP with them at all times and are trained in how to react in case of an emergency 	
Cold Leading to hypothermia, inability to swim and the risk of drowning if unconscious)	Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COWS will cancel the swim if the temperature is below 11° C. • Swimmers only permitted to swim with a COW on duty and between the designated dates of 1st April and 31st October, temperature depending. • Wetsuits, tow floats and swim hats must be worn. • Participants advised to get out and dress in warm clothing if they feel cold. • The health advisory document covers the signs and symptoms of hypothermia and what action to take, all swimmers must familiarise themselves with this 	
Entanglement (weeds)	Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swimmers warned of weeds and if concerned/novice advised to swim with a buddy. • Swimmers instructed to roll onto their backs and raise an arm in the air if assistance is required 	
Impact (collision with objects in the lake)	Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All swimmers to use the designated entry/exit points. • All swimmers to be advised strictly no diving or jumping into the water. • No known hazards for impact in the lake • Swimmers advised to report hazards so they can be removed. • All swimmers to swim clockwise in the designated direction of swim 	

Impact (other lake users)	Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swimmers to swim clockwise • Bright coloured hats to be worn to aid visibility. • Tow Floats Mandatory • All swimmers to be briefed on the importance of sighting at induction. 	
Impact (other users, craft)	Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access restricted to swimmers only at times of swimming. • Fishermen are allowed to fish, and they are aware of swim times – new courses from 2023 and onwards avoid fishing areas. • No sail or power boats allowed during swim session. • Notice is displayed at the entrance advising of this 	
Weil's Disease	Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The health advisory document clearly states the signs and symptoms of Weil's disease and what actions to take if a swimmer were to develop any symptoms. • Swimmers should shower as soon as possible after swimming. • Not to swim if any open wounds • To not eat food until hands have been thoroughly washed. • To seek medical advice if concerned 	
Poor water quality leading to illness	Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ripon Tri Club will conduct regular water testing to ensure water quality is acceptable. (Prior to lake opening, pre Ripon Triathlon in July) • Swim time limited to session length. • Swimmers to report any illness so any possible contaminants can be identified and dealt with • Any visible signs of pollution are reported immediately to the committee/racecourse. 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sightings of algae will be reported to all members via the Ripon Tri Club Closed Member Forum; Email to all members; Sign at Entrance to the Lake 	
Swans (physical assault)	Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Swimmers made aware of waterfowl and to avoid antagonising them. Swimmers to be especially aware during breeding season 	
Poor weather (strong wind, poor visibility, lightening)	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COWS to cancel the session in the case of adverse weather. NO SWIMMING IN THE CASE OF LIGHTNING 	

THIS IS A DYNAMIC RISK ASSESSMENT AND WILL BE UPDATED AND CHANGE ACCORDINGLY

THE MOST RECENT COPY WILL BE AVAILABLE IN THE COW BOX LAKESIDE AT EACH SESSION AND EACH MEMBER OF THE SENIOR COMMITTEE AND OWS REPRESENTATIVE

ANY CONCERNS SHOULD BE RAISED IN A TIMELY FASHION TO AVOID INJURY OR INCIDENCE