STRUCTURING YOUR OPEN WATER WORKOUT
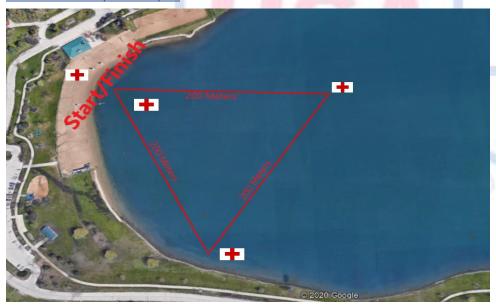
Before you get started…

➢ Develop a safety plan. Please see Safety Management for OW Workouts.
➢ COVID-19 Specific Disclaimers:
   o Start with a small group. Group sizes of 10 or less not only meet federal guidelines for gatherings but create a safe environment for open water training.
   o Use intervals to keep swimmers spaced apart. Adjustments to safety plans may be needed to make sure that swimmers are adequately covered throughout the course.
   o Keep training groups intact and limit the amount of crossover between training groups.
   o Always adhere to local, state, or federal guidelines.

Course Set Up Example

➢ Start with a small course. This example is a 600-meter triangular course and was mapped out using Google Earth. GPS watches, like Garmin or Apple Watch, can help dial in more exact distances when you are onsite for your course setup.
➢ This course is 3x200 meters. A simplified course can help you structure workouts better.
➢ Buoys are the best ways of identifying the course outline. Examples of inexpensive buoys can be found HERE.
➢ Buoys can be secured to the bottom using rope and a weighted anchor like a cinderblock or weight plate. 15-25 pounds is typically plenty of weight to hold a small buoy in place in lake environments.
➢ Don't have access to buoys? Coaches on kayaks or paddleboards can be use as turning points.

- ➢ Put your coaches and safety personnel in "Zone Coverage". The example above places a coach at each turning point, which gives you a response time of under 20 seconds. If you have extra coaches, they can be used to follow swimmers around the course.
- ➢ Have a start and end point near shore to allow for simplified breaks during training. This course has the apex near shore so swimmers can stand on the bottom between efforts.
- ➢ Always allow for more time to set up a course… it typically takes twice as long as you think it will!

Workout Ideas

Using the 600-meter course map above, here are a few workout ideas to help you get started!

Warm Up
3x200s Swim @ 10 seconds rest
2x [200 kick, 200 drill, 200 swim]
2x [3x200s @ 20 seconds rest. Descend 1-3]

"Sprint OW Workout"	**"Mid Distance/Stroke Workout"**	**"Distance Workout"**
3 Rounds…	3 Rounds…	Negative split each effort, descend 200s 1-3…
200 descend by round	**200 IM (10 cycles of each stroke)**	**600, 400, 200**
200 EZ	**200 Kick**	**400, 200**
200 (10 cycles fast, 20 cycles EZ)	**200 Swim**	**200**

- ➢ Rest intervals can be "10 seconds rest, 15 seconds rest…" based on effort level. If starting swimmers 10 seconds apart you can make the rest intervals based on when the swimmer behind them finishes their effort (Example: When "Swimmer B" reaches the buoy, "Swimmer A" can start for the next buoy).
- ➢ Don't be afraid to mix in your favorite drills, equipment, breathing pattern, etc. Each length of the course can be something specific that you would like to work on!

Open Water Specific Techniques/Tips

- ➢ **Sighting:** Without a black line to follow, swimmers will need to sight to maintain direction. Swimmers can initially sight every 4-6 cycles and increase the amount of cycles between each sighting as they get better at swimming in a straight line. The best technique for sighting can be done by briefly lifting the head out of the water in between strokes. Sighting will naturally drop the hips down so encourage your swimmers to minimize the head lift and maintain their stroke cadence as much as possible.
- ➢ **Maintain Stroke Technique:** Tempos change in OW workouts, not stroke mechanics. Encourage your swimmers to maintain their pool stroke as much as possible.
- ➢ **Colored Swim Caps:** Bright colored swim caps will help you maintain a visual of your swimmers.
- ➢ **Allow for Adaptation:** Swimmers will need time to adapt to a change in water temperature, lack of walls, etc. Don't get caught up with volume goals, focus on incrementally increasing the amount of time in the water with each session.