

# **Cedar Park Swimming Kid's Triathlon**

## **Weather Plan**

10/16/2010

In the event of inclement weather, there are four options, listed in order, with the recommended implementation of the first option causing the least disruption and the final option causing the most disruption to the athletes and race community:

- Change of race start time on the schedule date
- Modification of race format
- Change of race date
- Cancellation of event

Major weather conditions will include:

- Lightning
- Heavy Rains
- Wind/ Tornadoes
- Extreme Heat

All of the above conditions may occur individually or in combination (hurricanes may result in heavy rains, lightning, wind and tornadoes) but each situation will be addressed individually.

## **II. Recommendations**

- A chain of command that specifies who is to make the call to remove individuals from the field of activity.
- A designated "weather watcher" (a person who actively looks for signs of inclement weather and notifies the chain of command if conditions become unfavorable). This person should be checking weather reports a minimum of 10 days out from the event date.
- A means of monitoring local weather forecasts and warnings. This may include the use of weather radios, internet web sites, and local radio and television stations.
- A listing of safe locations to remove participants from the hazardous weather
- The use of specific criteria for resumption and suspension of activities.

### **A. Considerations**

- The skill level of the athletes involved. This a beginner/intermediate friendly event with athletes hoping to complete the event
- The emergency services being used at his event and if they will be called elsewhere in the event of inclement weather.
- The volunteer groups being used and if they will still come in inclement weather
- The parking areas and if these will be accessible in the event of inclement weather
- Any other areas of the event that may be affected by the occurrence of inclement weather

## **III. Communication**

In the event of inclement weather clear and concise communication with all parties involved with the event is paramount. These parties include but are not limited to: race participants, race staff, local law enforcement, volunteer groups, spectators and emergency services. If the possibility of inclement weather exists each of the above groups should know exactly what will happen in the event of inclement weather. This clear communication will limit dangerous situations and will increase the comfort level of all involved. Athletes who are aware there is a plan and what will happen in each

situation are more likely to understand the decisions and follow them accordingly. The same may be said for all parties associated with the event.

Several means of communication to these groups before the event include email, web page postings, phone calls and face to face meetings. Several on-site means of communication include cellular phones, and public address systems. Regardless of the means used, all parties must be aware of the Inclement Weather Plan and the actions to be taken under a given set of guidelines.

It also should be noted that early and clear notification of the parties involved is key when making any decision. Should a decision be warranted to alter an event in ANY way, all parties should be clearly notified as to what the change has been and how it will affect their particular duty at the event.

It is up to the Race Director to make certain all parties involved are clear on the changes before proceeding with the start of the event.

### **III. Lightning**

Lightning is perhaps the most common, and potentially dangerous, inclement weather condition. With most triathlons occurring during the summer months, lightning storms are likely to appear quickly and without warning. Lightning is one of the Top 3 causes of weather-related deaths in the US. It should be noted that certain areas have a higher propensity for thunderstorm activity including the Central Texas area. In the event of lightning, guidelines by the NCAA and NSSL (National Severe Storms Laboratory) will be followed during events, practices, outdoor conditioning sessions and any USA Triathlon sanctioned event. The NCAA and NSSL strongly recommend terminating activity when the lightning is six miles away. There is a 7-% chance that the next cloud-to-ground strike will occur in a circular area within a six-mile radius from a previous strike.

### **Flash to Bang Method**

It unsafe to begin any event when lightning is present in the local area. Thus, if lightning is visible at or near your race location the first step is to delay the start of the event. This delay should last as long as is necessary to insure the lightning is no longer in the vicinity. The National Athletic Trainers' Association recommends the flash-to-bang method for determining distance of the lightning strikes from your current location as it is the easiest and most convenient method for doing so (<http://www.nata.org/publicinformation/files/lightning.pdf>). This method states that one should begin counting on the lightning flash and one should stop counting when the associated clap of thunder is heard. Then divide the time to thunder (in seconds) by 5 to determine the distance (in miles) to the lightning flash. For example, an observer obtains a count of 30 seconds from the time he spots the flash to when the thunder is heard. Thus, that lightning flash was 6 miles from the observer. The 30 second flash-to-bang count is recommended as the shortest allowable time to consider resumption of activity. As the count approaches 30 all activities should be postponed and all persons should be seeking a safe location. One other recommendation is that one uses the 30-30 rule. This rule states that if an event is suspended due to the 30 second flash-to-bang method, one should wait at least 30 minutes from the sound of the most recent thunder to resume activities.

### **Evacuation Plans**

Evacuate to the nearby parking areas and get into cars (not convertibles) or into clumps of shrubs. Stay away from metal objects.

### **Points to Remember**

- There can be thunder without lightning (thunder is noise resulting from the lightning discharge)
- Lightning can strike up to six miles away from the base of a thunderstorm
- Retreat to a building or car (not a convertible)

- If unable to get to a safe location, find a grove of trees (never a single tree) similar in height and crouch low on the balls of your feet with your head tucked down
- Get at least 50 feet away from metal objects
- Get away from tall objects
- Avoid small sheds that are isolated in the open
- Don't huddle together, spread out at least 100 feet
- In your hair stands on end, you hear a high pitched or cracking noise or you see a blue halo around objects there is electrical activity present that could precede a lightning strike in the area

### **First Aid**

Cedar Park EMS is the first responder in any emergency situation if they are not injured themselves. If someone is hit ensure they are not charged before contact with them. Begin the emergency plan (CPR if necessary, call 911) and retreat to safety if possible. If the victim is charged stay back and call 911 immediately.

### **References**

The above information is taken from the "Guidelines for Event Management to Use Regarding Lightning", NCAA Sports Medicine Handbook and NCAA Championships Severe Weather Policy. Also excerpts taken from the National Athletic Trainers Association Position Statement on Lightning Safety for Athletics and Recreation.

**IV. Heavy Rains** Heavy rain is a very real possibility at nearly all outdoor events, especially in the summer months. While rain itself is not a danger to athletes and volunteers, rain slicked roadways, standing water and poor visibility are all dangers that may result from heavy rain fall. There is no set standard on how much rain is too much rain; the Race Director will rely on communications from the course monitors to make the decision on when the conditions are no longer safe. Local law enforcement is often a very good liaison on making the decision as to when a course is no longer safe.

#### **Safe Locations:**

Milburn Pool & Office area:

- Boys Restroom
- Girls Restroom
- Pool Office-several rooms within the office (2-entrances to the building)
- Cover under Through-way
- Multipurpose Restroom on west side of Pool Office-on the outside of the building
- Cars in Parking Lot-no convertibles
- Covered Pavilion on Park Grounds, west of the Pool Office
- Stand of Trees outside the Pool area fencing, north of the Pool area

### **V. Heavy Winds/ Tornadoes**

Tornadoes and heavy winds cause a very serious threat to any outdoor activity. As with most inclement weather scenarios there is no set rule about how much wind is too much wind. It is up to the Race Director to work with his staff and local agencies on when conditions are unsafe.

In the event of heavy winds the Race Director should make certain no race apparatus or equipment being used will topple and cause injury to anyone in the area. This includes scaffolding, speakers, finish/ start lines, bike racks, fencing, banners, etc.

In the event of a tornado the Race Director should communicate with all involved that a tornado warning has been issued. All parties at the race site should be instructed to move to a safe location and take shelter, ideally in a reinforced building. All should be instructed to stay out of their cars and move into the shelter. If a shelter is not available all should be instructed to lie flat in a ditch or depression and cover their head with their hands. Suggest to all athletes to wear their helmet at all times.

#### **Safe Locations:**

Milburn Pool & Office area:

- Boys Restroom
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- Pool Office-several rooms within the office (2-entrances to the building)
  - Cover under Through-way
  - Multipurpose Restroom on west side of Pool Office-on the outside of the building
- Several ditches within the Park: NE area of the Park, north of the Pool area
- Covered Pavilion on Park Grounds, west of the Pool Office
- Stand of Trees outside the Pool area fencing, north of the Pool area

## **VI. Extreme Heat**

For distance races, the chance for heat related issues increases dramatically. It is the responsibility of the Race Director to prepare for hot conditions even if past races have not seen high temperatures.

Preparations: 1) Alert your athletes before the event of the possibility of extreme heat via the web site or race info booklet

2) Provide adequate hydration options before the event to your athletes via water coolers, sports drink mix and electrolyte capsules.

3) Provide adequate hydration and fueling options to your athletes during the run leg. If your race ends with the run, and the temperatures are high, you **MUST** have adequate supplies on the run. Aid stations should be positioned no less than ¼- mile

4) Provide adequate medical services at the finish line for those who need it. Providing fuel and hydration to them on the course will limit trips to the medical tent, but it will not eliminate them.

## **VII. Ice and Snow**

The scenario of ice and snow should not be a concern.

## **VIII. Modifications to Event**

There are four options at the disposal of the Race Director in the event of inclement weather. These include:

- Change of race start time on the schedule date
- Modification of race format
- Change of race date
- Cancellation of event

**A. Change of race start time** This is by far the most ideal option to the athlete. The option of moving the race start time later on the scheduled date minimizes the need for athletes to alter their travel plans. It keeps the race itself intact and allows those that made the trip to that particular race site the opportunity to race. The major concern in this situation is on the Race Director and local jurisdictions (police, EMS, city, etc). Race permits are often granted based on an early race start and

finish with the understanding race activities will cease by a certain time. To move the race start time means all aspects of race planning must be moved with it.

In order for a race to be prepared for this situation an agreement must be reached with all local jurisdictions regarding the possibility of a delay. This can easily be addressed in pre race meetings. While it may be impossible to postpone a race for many hours, a one or two hour delay should be discussed as a possibility with all parties involved with the event.

#### **B. Modification of Race Format**

This option would be used if a certain aspect of the event is found to be unsafe on race morning. If the water or roadways are unsafe, a triathlon event may be changed to a Duathlon, Swim-Run event or any combination of the three events possible. This option does allow a race to start with minimal delay and without changing the original race plans on the course actually used. If a beginning event is changed the Race Director must consider a wave start or time trial start, but this is a very minimal change that can be handled quite easily.

In this situation it should be very easy for a Race Director to have a set plan on what to do if this need arises. Alternate courses for the swim, bike and run should be available. Also, the Race Director should devise a written plan on what he or she would do should the swim, bike and/ or run events need to be deleted from the event.

#### **C. Change of Race Date**

There will be no change of Race date.

#### **D. Cancellation of Event**

The Race Director must decide that it may be necessary to cancel the race, so as to keep the racers safe. If this is the decision, the Race Director will have a prepared statement and communication line to get the word out to the local community (racers, volunteers, law enforcement, etc.) on the decision and reasons behind it. Cedar Park Swimming will not be able to refund or transfer any registration fee's (see Registration Wavier form).