

British Universities Life Saving Clubs' Association

Competition Events Manual 2023-24 Season



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BULSCA Competition Manual.**



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2023-24 Season

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1. Competition Events Manual

The BULSCA Competition Events Manual defines the events which competitors will/may compete in during a BULSCA league competition.

The organisational and administrative procedures are defined within the Competition Manual.

A summary of all the disqualification codes is provided in the separate Disqualifications document for ease of printing for competitors, team managers and officials.

2. Simulated Emergency Response Competition

2.1. Overview

2.1.1 The Simulated Emergency Response Competition (SERC) tests the initiative, judgement, knowledge, and abilities of four lifesavers acting as a team, who apply lifesaving skills in a simulated emergency situation unknown to them prior to the start.

2.1.2 The purpose of the SERC is to encourage lifesavers to develop, maintain and demonstrate essential physical and mental skills required to save the lives of others whilst under pressure.

2.1.2.1. It should be reasonable to expect competitors to be useful during the SERC.

2.1.2.2. It must be possible for competitors to envisage what is happening in the SERC without unreasonable use of imagination.

2.1.2.3. The SERC should allow competitors to demonstrate a range of skills.

2.1.2.4. An effective SERC must give scope for teams/competitors to realistically perform in a discernibly differing manner.

2.1.3 All teams respond to the identical situation and are evaluated by the same Officials.

2.1.4 All members are assessed on the management of the incident as well as technical ability; additional assessment is made of the overall effectiveness of the team and the captain (see Section 2.12).

Further information on the details of these factors can be found in the BULSCA Guidelines for Simulated Emergency Response Competition.

2.2. General Conditions applicable to both the aquatic-based and land-based SERC:

2.2.1 Team management and competitors are responsible for being familiar with the competition schedule, and with the rules and procedures governing the competition.

2.2.2 The order of teams shall be determined by an independent (random) draw.

2.2.2.1. At the first competition of a new season, the chosen 'A-Teams' shall compete in the SERC after all other Teams. The order of 'A-Team' shall be determined by an independent (random) draw.

2.2.3 Competitors shall report promptly to security and lock-up before the start of the competition.

2.2.3.1. Any team that is absent from lock-up at the start of the competition shall be disqualified (**DQ003**).



- 2.2.4** Competitors must wear their team swimming hats at all times during this competition, in accordance with the rules laid out in the BULSCA Competition Manual Section **2.3.4.1.2**.
- 2.2.5** Rescue and first aid techniques will be judged in accordance with the latest published protocols from the Royal Life Saving Society (UK) National Lifesaving Academy Manual for Instructors and Life Support manuals.
- 2.2.6** Officials have the power to stop the SERC should they consider the actions of a competitor a danger to other competitors, actors, officials, or spectators (see Section **2.5.3**).
- 2.2.7** Competitors are permitted to enter the SERC upon the first acoustic signal created by an official (see Section **2.6.3**).
- 2.2.7.1.** Re-Entry into a SERC during the duration of the SERC (**2.6.3**) through 'out-of- bounds' sections of the SERC shall not (automatically) render any competitor as "dead". Instead, where possible, the SERC shall continue as if the competitor(s) had not entered the competition area (**P702**).
- 2.2.7.2.** SERC's can be set up so that competitors who re-enter the SERC competition area through 'out-of-bounds' sections shall/will score zero (0) for any rescues or first aid performed whilst in the competition area (**P702**). Unless stated otherwise to the officials. However, these competitors may leave the competition area and re-enter through the permitted entry point(s), and therefore score points for any actions taken after correctly entering the SERC.
- 2.2.7.3.** If a competitor enters the SERC through an 'out of bounds' section and provides assistance to another competitor(s), for example passing an aid they may not have had ready access to, a decision of its' effect shall be decided in accordance with Section **2.5.3.1**.
- 2.2.8** If a competitor 'kills' themselves during an incident they shall be informed as such by the appropriate Official. They shall then immediately be deemed to be, and act as, an unconscious and not breathing casualty, and shall therefore remain in the SERC area. Teams will receive no additional marks for treating a team member.
- 2.2.8.1.** Any communication from "dead" team members to their team will result in a penalty to be decided by the Lead SERC Official (see Section **2.5.3.1**). The offending team will be informed at end of the SERC. Any penalty will be communicated on the SERC results spreadsheet (**P701**).

2.3. General Conditions applicable to only the aquatic-based SERC

- 2.3.1** Subject to risk assessment of the venue glasses may be worn throughout the aquatic SERC. This information should be conveyed to all competitors prior to the start of the event. The Management Committee shall ensure that a large box is available and shall be clearly labelled, in a clear and obvious fashion, with the word "Glasses".
- 2.3.1.1.** The box is a receptacle for any competitors' corrective eyewear that they remove prior to entering the water.
- 2.3.1.2.** The box shall be given to the competitors requiring it immediately **before** entering the SERC. The competitor is allowed to carry the box around in the SERC area.

- 2.3.1.3.** The Management Committee shall ensure that sufficient boxes are available if there are multiple entry points to the SERC area.
- 2.3.1.4.** If the risk assessment disallows glasses in the pool, competitors may only wear corrective eyewear whilst they are on the poolside, placing it in the box provided before entering the water and reclaiming it upon exiting.
- 2.3.1.4.1** Any competitor using the box designated as a receptacle for corrective eyewear as a rescue aid shall score zero (0) for that rescue.
- 2.3.1.4.2** Loss of such eyewear shall not be grounds for protest or appeal. Any loss of or damage to any corrective eyewear is the sole responsibility of the competitor.
- 2.3.2** Neither goggles nor masks are permitted, regardless of their optical qualities. Contravening this rule shall result in disqualification from the event (**DQ302**).
- 2.3.3** All competitors **must** be aware of the risk of damage to hearing when diving below 1.5 metres. All competitors undertake such dives entirely at their own risk.
- 2.4. Security and lock-up:**
- 2.4.1** Before the start and throughout the competition, teams are isolated in a secure “lock-up” area (also referred to as “isolation”) out of sight and sound of the competition area.
- 2.4.1.1.** The scenario, actors, and any equipment shall be secret until competitors are locked up.
- 2.4.2** No competitor, whilst secured in lock-up, shall attempt to communicate with; or transfer information by any means to, any person not in lock-up. This includes whilst being escorted to each SERC (DQ303).
- 2.4.2.1.** The Marshall(s) responsible for escorting the competitors from lock-up to the competition area are entirely exempt from Section **2.4.2**. However, should any Marshall condone or aid any communication or transfer of information, other than required by their role, Section **2.4.4** shall apply.
- 2.4.3** No form of electronic device is permitted to be used in the secured lock-up. Examples of these include, but are not restricted to: mobile telephones, pagers, short-wave radios, devices with Bluetooth (or similar) connectivity, devices with Wireless networking capabilities (i.e., laptops, tablets, mp3 players, e-readers, and DVD/Blu-ray players) (DQ304).
- 2.4.3.1.** These devices must be kept switched off and secured within bags – they must not be removed or activated.
- 2.4.3.2.** At the discretion of the Referee, the use of electronic devices which do not have potential communication capabilities may be permitted in the secured lock-up. Examples of these include, but not are restricted to: wrist watches, stop watches, lights, calculators, and portable fans.
- 2.4.4** If any competitor is found in contravention of Sections **2.4.2** to **2.4.3.1**, all the teams from the Club that they are members of will be disqualified (**DQ303** and **DQ304**).
- 2.4.5** After competing, a team may observe subsequent teams compete, provided that a suitable spectator area is accessible as determined by the competition management committee.



2.5. SERC Management

2.5.1 The role and responsibilities of the SERC Manager are stipulated in the BULSCA Competition Manual Section 1.5.17.

2.5.2 Each SERC shall be assigned a Lead SERC Official (see the BULSCA Competition Manual Section 1.5.14.2). Typically, this Official shall judge the overall SERC scenario (as specified in Section 2.12.2).

2.5.3 In exceptional circumstances, such as actual injuries and emergencies, the Lead SERC Official has the power to stop the SERC (see Section 2.2.6).

2.5.3.1. Where unforeseen events occur during the SERC, including errors from Officials, the Lead SERC Official shall convene a committee of relevant Officials to adjudicate on the matter. This committee shall provide guidance and suggest resolutions to the Referee. The Referee may also wish to suggest a solution. The Referee shall then conduct a vote in accordance with the BULSCA Competition Manual Sections 4.3.4.5.1, 4.3.4.5.2 and 4.3.4.5.2.1.

2.5.3.2. The Referee shall record details of the actions taken during the event for inclusion with the competition results.

2.6. SERC start and timekeeping:

2.6.1 One at a time, teams shall be escorted from lock-up to an area where they are presented with a 'brief'. Once the brief has been delivered, an acoustic signal shall indicate the start of the SERC where they are confronted with "victims" in various locations who need various types of assistance.

2.6.2 Actors will begin their victim simulations immediately prior to the acoustic starting signal, and as the team enters the competition area. At the acoustic signal competitors respond to the victims in any manner they wish within the time limit.

2.6.3 An acoustic signal will indicate the start and finish of each team's emergency response.

2.6.4 The event will run for a duration of 120 seconds (2 minutes).

2.6.4.1. If the aquatic-based SERC uses the whole of a 50 m swimming pool as the scenario for the emergency situation, the time limit may be increased to either 150 seconds (2.5 minutes) or 180 seconds (3 minutes). Changes to the time limit shall be announced no later than seven (7) days before the first day of the competition.

2.7. Competition area:

2.7.1 The SERC may be held in a variety of indoor and outdoor aquatic and non-aquatic environments.

2.7.2 The competition area (including any 'out of bounds' sections) shall be clearly defined to all teams **in advance** of the event starting. There shall be a clear indication of the location of both entry and exit points from the scenario area (e.g., which pool sides can be used) – see Section 2.2.7.

2.7.2.1. Competitors shall be advised **in advance** if there are pool steps in the entry or exit area which may be removed or used.



2.7.3 Unless otherwise advised, competitors shall assume that the conditions in the competition area are “as found”.

2.8. Situation scenarios:

2.8.1 Simulated emergency scenarios, secret until the start of the competition, shall be designed using one or more of the following approaches:

- An amalgam of single or multiple-person situations which are related.
- A group of people involved in a number of situations which relate to a common theme, such as a pool party or an upturned crowded boat.

2.8.2 Simulated emergencies shall be staged as realistically and safely as possible, and not test the competitors’ imagination.

2.8.2.1. For example, a situation in which an actor complains of burned hands should be staged with simulated evidence of a fire, or electrical wire, or chemicals.

2.8.3 Real fire, live wires, or hazardous chemicals shall **not** be used.

2.8.4 The simulated emergency shall not require the competitors to know how to administer oxygen. If this equipment is available there shall be an actor who has sufficient knowledge to use the equipment effectively.

2.8.5 If the simulated emergency includes a casualty (or casualties) with a suspected spinal cord injury, the expected treatment is that of a **lifesaver** as described in “The Lifesaving Manual for Instructors”.

2.8.5.1. The response of a professional lifeguard is **not** expected.

2.9. Victims, manikins, and bystanders:

2.9.1 Victims shall be role-played by actors who present different problems necessitating different types of aid. In addition, competitors may be confronted by resuscitation manikins in the role of “victim” as well as by bystanders and casualties.

2.9.1.1. No actor in the SERC may wear any clothing or other adornment with images, or words indicating any allegiance to, or membership of a competing team.

2.9.1.2. No actor in the SERC may wear any clothing that could lead to them being confused with an Official; this includes but is not limited to a white t-shirt (blue for Referee(s)).

2.9.2 The role-playing may evolve (e.g., a conscious victim becomes unconscious) during the course of the scenario providing those marks reflect the change, that there is consistent timing in the change, and that the change is consistent for every competitor throughout the competition.

2.9.3 A manikin will be used to denote a casualty who is not breathing normally. No other indication will be given. Full checks should be made.

2.9.3.1. Where a live actor is used to denote an unconscious casualty, full breathing checks will be required to ascertain whether that casualty is breathing normally. A casualty that is not breathing normally, at the point where the breathing is adequately checked, will be indicated by the insertion of a manikin - the live casualty will then immediately leave the SERC area. If after a breathing check is performed, no manikin is inserted, competitors shall assume that the casualty is breathing normally.



2.9.4 Cardiopulmonary resuscitation may **only** be performed on manikins and **never** on a human actor.

2.9.5 No abdominal thrusts are to be performed on a casualty, if a choking victim is present only back blows will be necessary, the object blocking the throat will “clear” before abdominal thrusts are necessary.

2.9.5.1. If back blows are required as a treatment for choking, on a live casualty, they shall be simulated with intentions being clearly demonstrated to the Officials.

2.9.6 If a competitor performs cardiopulmonary resuscitation, abdominal thrusts, back blows and/or expired air ventilation on a human actor they and their team shall be instantly disqualified with no right to appeal (**DQ301**).

2.10. Equipment:

2.10.1 Competitors may use all material and equipment available within the clearly designated competition area and must not bring any non-designated equipment into the competition area (DQ065).

2.10.1.1. If instructed, competitors may bring their own ‘normal’ or ‘travel’ first aid kit into the competition area. All equipment in the first aid kit shall be deemed as sterile for the purposes of the SERC. The first aid kit shall contain only the items listed in [Table 1-](#)

Table 1 – Details of the maximum amount of equipment that may be included in both a normal and travel First Aid Kit for a SERC.

Item	Description	Quantity	
		Normal	Travel
Medium sterile dressing	Conforming bandage: min. 7.5 cm width and min. 2 m stretched length, with an absorbent pad: not less than 12 cm x 12 cm.	6	1
Large sterile dressing	Conforming bandage: min. 10 cm width and min. 2 m stretched length, with an absorbent pad: not less than 18 cm x 18 cm.	2	1
Triangular bandage	Min. of 20 gsm non-woven material or cotton, not less than 90 cm x 90 cm x 127 cm.	3	1
Safety pins	Min. length of 2.5 cm.	12	2
Eye pad dressings	Conforming bandage: min. 5 cm width and min. 1.5 m stretched length or elasticated looped bandage, with an oval pad: not less than 7 cm x 5 cm.	3	1
Sterile adhesive dressings	Water resistant, an island design, individually wrapped, min. surface area of 7.5 cm ² , dressing pad not less than 20% of the area.	40	10
Alcohol-free moist cleansing wipes	Individually wrapped, min. of 80 cm ² .	20	4
Adhesive tape	Roll, individually wrapped, min. 2.5 cm width, 5 m length	1	1
Disposable gloves	Conforming to BS EN 455-1 and BS EN 455-2, large size (8-9).	6	2
Finger sterile dressing	Conforming bandage: min. 3.5 cm width and min. 30 cm stretched length, with a dressing pad: min. 3.5 cm ² .	2	0
Resuscitation face shield/pocket mask	Includes a one-way valve. *	2	1
Foil blanket	130 cm x 210 cm	2	1
Conforming bandage	Min. 7.5 cm width and 4 m stretched length.	2	1
Plus, one (1) pencil and one (1) notepad.			
*The inclusion of the one-way valve is optional as they are too difficult to sterilise between uses.			

2.10.1.2. [Table 1](#) gives maximum amounts for both a 'normal' and 'travel' first aid kit.

There is no requirement for teams to have all the equipment.

2.10.1.3. Permitted first aid kits shall be no larger than 50 cm x 30 cm x 20 cm or 25 cm x 15 cm x 10 cm, for the Normal and Travel sizes, respectively.

2.10.2 The definition of "equipment" includes **any** items of clothing, excluding suitable swimwear as defined in the BULSCA Competition Manual Section **2.3**.

2.10.3 Any competitor(s) that use equipment that is not designated for use during the SERC will score zero (0) for any rescues or first aid performed using that equipment.

2.11. Response principles:

2.11.1 *Lifesaver versus lifeguard response*: Competitors in the Simulated Emergency Response Competition are expected to respond as a group of four (4) individual lifesavers acting in a coordinated team under the direction of an identified team leader.

2.11.2 Unlike lifeguards who often work as part of well-trained teams in controlled aquatic environments, lifesavers must be prepared to respond appropriately in unexpected emergencies without benefit of specialized equipment, back-up, or established procedures and communications systems. In such circumstances, the personal safety of the lifesaver is paramount at all times, and this shall be reflected in the marking sheets.

2.11.3 Competitors apply the following basic steps:

- recognition of a problem/emergency situation.
- assessment of the situation.
- plan a course of action to overcome the problem.
- action to affect the rescue/series of treatments.
- care of the victim.

2.11.4 When assessing the situation, competitors consider:

- capabilities of the rescuer/responder.
- number of victims.
- position/location of the victims.
- condition of the victims (e.g., panicking, non-panicking).
- rescue aids/equipment available.
- prevailing conditions.

2.11.5 On the basis of their assessment, competitors plan a course of action which may involve:

- seeking assistance.
- organizing assistance.
- informing an available helper.
- gathering any appropriate aids or equipment.
- performing the rescue as necessary.

2.11.6 The plan should establish **control of the situation** and **aim to preserve as many lives as possible**. The management of a rescue of multiple victims presents rescuers with choices.

2.11.7 Managing the situation - aquatic-based SERC

2.11.7.1. In brief, rescuers should manage the situation as follows:

- mobilize the mobile casualties.
- secure the safety of those in imminent danger.
- recover and resuscitate those in need of continuous care.

2.11.7.2. In aquatic-based emergency situations, the mobile may include those capable of assisting themselves to safety. Those in imminent danger may include panicking casualties and injured swimmers. Those in need of continuous care include unconscious, non-breathing, or suspected spinal-injured victims.

When carrying out a rescue, competitors must remember:

- Rescue from a position offering greatest safety to oneself.
- The management of rescue principles.
- Approach victims with extreme caution.
- Avoid direct personal contact with conscious victims.

If entering the water is inevitable, competitors select the most effective techniques for the situation without endangering their own life in any way.

2.11.8 Managing the situation - land-based SERC

2.11.8.1. In brief, lifesavers (in a land-based SERC) should manage the situation according to the four key aims of first aid:

- Preserve life.
- Alleviate suffering.
- Prevent the situation getting worse.
- Promote recovery.

2.11.8.2. In land-based SERCs, preserving life includes that of the rescuer, casualty and any bystanders whilst ensuring the scene is safe. Alleviating suffering is performed by providing appropriate treatment. Preventing the situation from worsening is performed by moving casualties to a safe area/removing the dangers. Promoting recovery includes quick action, calming and reassurance and summoning help (typically emergency medical assistance).

2.11.8.3. In land-based emergency situations it is more important to treat the most seriously affected first, life-threatening conditions must be attended to before less serious injuries. Thus, after life support through resuscitation, injuries are generally prioritised in accordance with the “[three B's](#)”:

- breathing difficulties (e.g., choking).
- bleeding.
- broken bones.

2.11.8.4. When prioritising multiple casualties, it is important to consider the severity of each condition/injury. For example, a life threatening, very serious bleed (i.e., arterial) may be considered a higher priority than a mild choke as the casualty is deteriorating quicker.

2.11.8.5. In the case of severe bleeds being combined with resuscitation, the bleed may need to be stopped before the resuscitation can become effective.

2.11.9 When a suitable plan has been devised, it should be put into action promptly. Competitors should be alert to changes in the situation and adapt their plan of action to respond to such changes.

2.11.10 When carrying out rescue/response, competitors must remember:

- Rescue/response from a position offering greatest safety to oneself.
- the management of rescue/response principles.
- approach victims with extreme caution.
- avoid direct personal contact with conscious victims.



2.11.11 For aquatic-based SERCs, if entering the water is inevitable, competitors should select the most effective techniques for the situation without endangering their own life in any way.

2.11.12 It is important that competitors clearly show their intentions and actions to the Officials.

2.12. Judging and marking:

2.12.1 Officials' scores are not subject to protest.

2.12.2 The marking sheets shall be prepared with one (1) Official marking the entire scenario and **not** focussing on particular groups of actors, including specific marks for:

- effective control of the scenario.
- effective communications.
- effective prioritisation of the casualties.
- effective captaincy.

while the remaining Officials mark **only** the treatment or rescue of particular groups of actors.

2.12.3 Before the competition start, Officials shall be briefed on the situation scenarios, scoring procedure, and marking priorities in accordance with the BULSCA Competition Manual Section **1.5.5**.

2.12.4 Each Official shall be assigned to an actor or group of actors and assess all teams in that part of the scenario for the entire competition.

2.12.5 Marking system:

2.12.5.1. The marking system used in this competition allows the Officials to use their skill in assigning marks and provides for a competitor offering an appropriate but unanticipated rescue/response.

2.12.5.2. Officials are to consider the following when allocating marks:

- victim type.
- victim's distance from safety.
- equipment available and used.
- speed of assessment.
- priority given.
- quality of action/task.
- victim care.

2.12.6 Early and accurate recognition of the victim's problem(s) is the essential first step to success in this competition. Successful recognition is closely related to the quality of the victim simulation and staging of the incidents.

2.12.7 Scoring shall reward the competitors' accurate assessment of which victims take priority. The competitors' assessment of which victims take priority will depend on the nature of the emergency.



2.12.8 Specific aspects of the scenario may be weighted to provide higher scores for a rescue/response performance requiring a greater degree of skill and judgement based on the following factors:

- The importance of the treatment.
- The skill required to perform a rescue/provide primary care.
- Complexities, to include secondary injuries, potential dangers, additional information, hindrances, etc.
- The time needed to deal with a casualty effectively.

Further information on the details of these factors can be found in the BULSCA Guidelines for Simulated Emergency Response Competitions.

2.12.8.1. Such weighting shall exclusively be known by the SERC setter and BULSCA Judges Panel and therefore remain **secret to both officials and competitors**.

2.12.8.2. Once lock-up has been secured, the weightings will solely be dealt with by the scorers and recorders.

2.12.9 All competing teams shall receive a detailed breakdown of the marks awarded to them during each SERC.

2.12.10 If a team contravene any of the rules detailed in Sections **2.13** and **2.14**, they shall continue to be marked as normal. The contravention of the rule shall be clearly described on the score sheet.

2.12.11 If during the SERC event, a casualty error, judging error or other unplanned event, affects the performance of a team, they shall continue to be marked as normal. The error shall be clearly described on the score sheet.

2.12.12 Should either Section **2.12.10** or **2.12.11** apply during a SERC event then after the completion of the SERC event, the Lead SERC Official and the Official concerned shall take the decision on how to penalise/compensate the team(s) appropriately.

2.12.13 Should any changes to the mark scheme or zero (0) marks occur in accordance with Section **2.12.12** then **all** teams shall be informed at the earliest possible opportunity.

2.13. Disqualification Codes for the SERC:

2.13.1 Any of the below will result in disqualification from the event:

Code	Description
DQ105	Failing to follow the instruction of a Marshall or Official may result in disqualification.
DQ106	Delaying the start, or wilfully disobeying an instruction, or for any other misconduct taking place at the start.
DQ301	Performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation, abdominal thrusts, back blows and/or expired air ventilation on a human actor.
DQ302	Corrective goggles or masks are not permitted in either SERC.
DQ303	Receiving outside assistance, direction, or advice.
DQ304	Taking any telecommunication device into the security area (applies to all teams from each club).
DQ305	Using any equipment not provided at the competition.
DQ306	Competitors who verbally or physically abuse a victim.

2.14. Penalty Codes for the SERC:

2.14.1 Any of the below may result in an adjustment of the SERC scores:

Code	Description
P701	Communication from "dead" team members and the team may result in a penalty to be decided by the Lead SERC Official.
P702	Entering/exiting through an 'out of bounds' section.

3. General Rules for Relay Events

3.1. In a deck-level swimming pool “Above the water line” should be taken to read as “on the poolside”.

3.2. Marshalling

A Competition organiser may choose to have designated areas that competitor must report to and remain within prior to their events.

Failure to report and register in this area or failing to follow the procedures put in place by the organiser to ensure a smooth running of the event, may result in disqualification (DQ003 and DQ105).

3.2.1 Disqualification codes during Marshalling:

Code	Description
DQ003	Competitors may not be permitted to start in an event if they are late reporting to the marshalling area.
DQ105	Failing to follow the instruction of a Marshall or Official may result in disqualification.

3.3. Starts for relay events:

3.3.1 Prior to the start of each race, designated officials shall:

- Check that all Officials and judges are in position.
- Check that competitors, manikin handlers and victims are correctly attired and in correct positions.
- Check that all equipment is in a safe and correct position.
- Notify competitors to remove all clothing except for swimwear and get ready to race with three short whistles.
- When competitors and officials are ready for a legal start, a designated official shall:
- Signal the official start of each race with a long whistle indicating that the competitors should take their position on the starting position.
- Signal the starter (that the competitors are under the starter’s control) with an outstretched arm in the direction of the course.

Note: See event description for start procedure for 4 x 12 m Line Throw Relay, see Section 6.1.

3.3.2 Dive start procedure:

- One-start rule shall be used.
- On the long whistle, competitors’ step onto the starting platform and remain there.
- On the starter’s “Take your marks” command, competitors immediately assume a starting position with at least one foot at the front of the starting platform. When competitors are stationary, the starter gives the acoustic starting signal.
- Competitors may start on the starting platform, or on the pool deck, or in the water with one hand in contact with the starting wall.

3.3.3 Disqualification during the start

- 3.3.3.1.** All competitors who start (i.e., commence a starting motion) before the starting signal has been given, shall be disqualified (**DQ010**).
- 3.3.3.2.** If the starting signal sounds before the disqualification is declared, the race shall continue, and the competitor(s) shall be disqualified upon completion of the race.
- 3.3.3.3.** If the disqualification is declared before the starting signal, the signal shall not be given, but the remaining competitors shall be called back and start again. The disqualified member may be given the opportunity of time trial at the discretion of the Referee or Deputy Referee.
- 3.3.3.4.** The signal to call back the competitors shall be the same as the starting signal but repeated, a false start rope may also be dropped. Alternatively, if the Referee (or Deputy Referee or Event Director) decides that the start is not fair, the Referee (or Deputy Referee or Event Director) shall blow a whistle, to be followed by the starter's signal (repeated).
- 3.3.3.5.** If an error by an Official follows a fault by a competitor, the fault of the competitor may be expunged.
- 3.3.3.6. Notes:**
- 3.3.3.6.1** The duty of the Referee (or Deputy Referee or Event Director) and starter is to ensure a fair start. If the starter or Referee (or Deputy Referee or Event Director) decides that a start is not fair, for any reason, including technical or equipment fault, the competitors shall be called back, and the race shall be started again.
- 3.3.3.6.2** Competitors shall be disqualified if they “commence a forward starting motion” prior to the starting signal. Movement by itself is not a disqualification. Anticipating the starting signal and commencing a starting motion is a disqualification.
- 3.3.3.6.3** The starter and Referee (or Deputy Referee or Event Director) use their discretion in determining whether a competitor – or more than one competitor – has commenced a starting motion. Commonly, the early starting motion of one competitor causes movement by other competitors. Such movements are not a disqualification.

3.3.3.7. Disqualification Codes during the start:

Code	Description
DQ004	A competitor or team absent from the start of an event shall be disqualified.
DQ010	All competitors who start (i.e., commence a starting motion) before the starting signal has been given shall be disqualified.
DQ106	Delaying the start, or wilfully disobeying an instruction, or for any other misconduct taking place at the start.

- 3.3.3.8.** Start decisions by the starter or Referee (or Deputy Referee or Event Director) are not subject to protest or appeal (**DQ004, DQ010, DQ106**).

3.4. Diving into water:

3.4.1 Team Managers **must** ensure that their team are **fully aware** of the dangers of diving into shallow water and are **all** capable of safely executing a shallow dive. Competitors who wish to start an event entering the water by diving must comply with one of the following control measures (as a minimum):

- Have completed the ASA preliminary Dive Start Award.
- Lifesavers Competitive Start Award.
- Be certified by their Club Coach who has personally evidenced that competence has been demonstrated.

The Club Coach/Team Manager for competitors entering the relay events will be asked to sign a document stating that the competitor has met the full range of competencies outlined in the RLSS UK Competitive Start Checklist.

3.4.1.1. The Management Committee should ensure that anyone diving into the pool is doing so into a depth of greater than 1.5 metres.

3.4.1.2. All starts at the end of the pool with a depth of less than 1.5 metres shall be **in** the water.

3.4.1.3. Team Managers **must** indicate to the Referee (or Deputy Referee) if a competitor is not able to dive safely into the water, the competitor will then be allowed to start all applicable events in the water, holding onto the starting edge.

3.5. During the event:

3.5.1 During the course of the race competitors shall remain within their designated lane and only swim within the heat that they have been allocated to (**DQ201**). They will swim whole length as described by the event description touching all turning walls where required (**DQ014**).

3.5.2 Throughout the race competitors should not be using any fixtures or fitting of the pool to gain advantage this may include but not limited to the pool floor, hockey goals, lane ropes.

3.5.3 The use of assistance devices such as lubricating, sticky, tacky, or adhesive substance/gels/aerosols, buoyancy aid, flippers, or gloves is not permitted, unless otherwise specified in the event description (**DQ007**).

3.5.4 A pair of goggles may be used.

3.5.5 Whilst competing in an event, competitors are not permitted to use watches or other timekeeping devices (**DQ205**).

3.5.6 Any competitors/Team Managers found passing on information regarding time or position of other athletes to a competitor during a race shall be disqualified along with the team they were attempting to aid (**DQ205**).

3.5.6.1. Other forms of pace-making are also prohibited. If deemed to be serious, the case may be referred to the BULSCA Secretary for disciplinary action.

3.5.7 Each member of the team may only swim once in each relay event, in accordance with the event description (**DQ040**).

3.5.8 Should a foul endanger the chance of success of another competitor, the Referee shall have the power to allow him or her to compete in the next heat or, should the foul occur in a final event or in the last heat, he/she may order it to be re-swum (or re-thrown).

3.5.9 At the end of their leg of a relay, competitors shall exit the water quickly and efficiently without impeding officials or other competitors.

3.5.10 Disqualification Codes during the event

Code	Description
DQ001	Not completing the event in accordance with the event description or general rules.
DQ007	Using sticky, tacky or adhesive substances (liquid, solid or aerosol) on hands or feet, or on the manikin or rescue tube to improve grip or push off the bottom of the pool.
DQ008	Competitors shall not take assistance from the pool bottom except where specifically allowed (e.g., 4 x 50 m Obstacle Relay, 4 x 25 m Manikin Carry Relay, 4 x 50 m Swim and 50 m Tow Relay).
DQ014	Failure to touch the wall during the turn.
DQ017	Taking assistance from any pool fitting (e.g., lane rope, steps, drains or underwater hockey fittings when surfacing with the manikin not including the bottom of the pool).
DQ040	One competitor repeating two or more legs of the event.
DQ041	Leaving the start before the previous competitor has touched the wall.
DQ050	A competitor re-entering the water after completing his or her leg of the relay.
DQ201	Not finishing or completing the event in the same lane in which he or she started.
DQ202	Obstructing another Team or Competitor.
DQ203	Entering the water during a heat for which they are not entered.
DQ205	Pace-making, providing feedback on positions of other teams, attempting to influence or coach an athlete during the race.
DQ206	Relay Team is not the same Competitors who took part in the SERC.

3.6. End of Heat

3.6.1 At the end of the race competitors must wait in the water (or in the throw zone) until they are informed that they may leave by the Event Director, Referee or Deputy Referee.

3.6.2 Whilst waiting competitors or other members of their team should not attempt to interrupt or alter the decision-making process of the Officials.

3.6.3 Competitors will normally be informed prior to being dismissed of any penalties or disqualification. If a competitor is not present to receive their penalties or disqualification, they will be disqualified from the heat in their absence (**DQ009**). However, the Referee, or Deputy Referee, can choose to inform competitors after they have been cleared from the pool, should it be required.

3.6.4 Disqualification codes at end of heat

Code	Description
DQ009	Leaving the water after an event before permission is given by the official.
DQ015	Failure to touch the finish wall.

3.7. Competition Area

- 3.7.1 Only competitors and Officials shall be allowed into the competition area.
- 3.7.2 All competitors and Officials must leave the competition area when no longer competing or officiating.
- 3.7.3 Flags designating the five-metre line shall be erected in all facilities that have the necessary equipment available. The flags shall **not** be in position for the duration of the 4 x 12 m Line Throw Relay.

3.8. Seeding

- 3.8.1 Relay events shall be seeded with Teams competing in descending order. However, at the first competition of a new season the Teams shall compete in ascending order. See Section [2.2.2](#) for the draw of the SERC.
- 3.8.2 Seeding shall be based upon the entry times submitted for the 4 x 50 m Swim and 50 m Tow Relay.

4. Timekeeping and Determination of Placing

4.1. Automatic officiating equipment:

- 4.1.1 If available, automatic officiating equipment shall be used for all pool events to record the time of each team and to determine the place of each team.
- 4.1.2 Any equipment installed must not interfere with competitors' start and turns. The automatic officiating equipment must be activated by the starter and must provide easy digital readings of the teams' finishing time.
- 4.1.3 Times recorded by automatic officiating equipment shall be used to determine the winner and all placings, and the time applicable to each lane. Times shall be recorded to 1/100 of a second.
- 4.1.4 The placing and times determined by automatic officiating equipment shall have precedence over the decision of officials and timekeepers.
- 4.1.5 The automated officiating equipment must be backed up by at least one manual timekeeper for each lane.
- 4.1.6 If the automated officiating equipment breaks down or fails, or if a competitor has failed to activate it, or if such equipment was unavailable, manual timekeeping shall be used.

4.2. Manual timekeeping and officiating:

- 4.2.1 Any timing device that is terminated by an Official shall be considered a watch.
- 4.2.2 Manual times shall be taken by three timekeepers per lane. If this is not possible, all available personnel will be spread evenly across the competition lanes.
- 4.2.3 Manual timing shall be recorded to 1/100 of a second.

4.2.4 Where no automatic equipment is used, official manual times shall be determined as follows:

4.2.4.1. Three timekeepers per lane:

4.2.4.1.1 If two (2) of the three (3) watches record the same time and the third disagrees, the two (2) identical times shall be the official time.

4.2.4.1.2 If all three (3) watches disagree, the watch recording the intermediate time shall be the official time.

4.2.4.1.3 With only two (2) out of three (3) watches working the average time shall be the official time.

4.2.4.2. Two timekeepers per lane:

4.2.4.2.1 If the two (2) watches record the same time, that time shall be the official time.

4.2.4.2.2 If the two (2) watches disagree, the mean time between the two (2) watches shall be the official time.

4.2.4.2.3 With only one (1) out of the two (2) watches working, that time shall be the official time.

4.2.4.3. One timekeeper per lane:

4.2.4.3.1 The time the watch records shall be the official time.

4.2.5 If the official times for that heat do not agree with the Official responsible for order-of-finishing, the Official's decision will stand. The times assigned to the competitors/teams involved shall be the mean average of their times. The slower competitor/team as decided by the place judges shall have 0.01 added to this average time.

4.2.5.1. Section **4.2.5** shall be applied by the Referee (or Deputy Referee) and Chief Timekeeper prior to any other penalties the competitor or team is due.

5. Officials

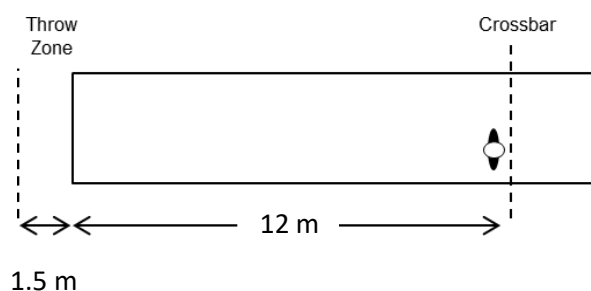
5.1. Technique Officials ensure that events operate fairly and within the applicable rules and procedures. The Officials also assess whether competitors' technique complies with specific event rules.

5.2. Officials must be positioned to ensure they have a clear view of the lane they are judging.

5.3. One technique Official is required for every two lanes.

6. 4 × 12 m Line Throw Relay

6.1. Event Description:



Competitor 1 stands on poolside holding the end of the rope, the three other team members are in the water at a crossline 12 metres away. Competitor 2 is in front of the rope with one hand on the crossline and one hand on the throw rope which is extended over and beyond the crossline.

On the starting signal, Competitor 1 coils the rope and throws to Competitor 2 who takes hold of the rope with both hands and is pulled through the water. On reaching the side, the Competitor must touch the end of the pool.

Competitor 1 then enters the water behind the crossline to become the catcher for Competitor 4.

The Competitor 3 replaces the Competitor 2 in front of the cross rope. Competitor 2 then coils the rope and throws it to the Competitor 3 who takes hold of the rope with both hands and is pulled through the water until they touch the end of the pool. The event continues in the same manner as above for Competitors 3 and 4.

The event finishes when the catcher for Competitor 4 touches the end of the pool.

6.1.1 The start: This event shall use the one-start rule as follows: On the long whistle, the Competitor 1 step into the throw zone and remain there. On the starter's "Take your marks" command, competitors immediately assume the starting position. When competitors are motionless, the starter gives the acoustic starting signal.

6.1.2 Starting position: The Competitor 1 stands facing the victim, motionless with legs together and arms beside the body. The end of the throw line is held in one hand.

Competitor 2 treads water on the near side of the crossline holding the throw line with one hand and at least one hand on the crossline. The surplus throw line trails in the water over and beyond the crossline.

6.1.3 On an acoustic starting signal: Competitor 2 releases the throw line, enabling Competitor 1 to retrieve and throw the line back to the victims and pull them through the water to the edge of the pool. The event is finished when the catcher for Competitor 4 touches the finish edge.

The final catcher remains in the water and the final competitor remains in the throw zone until the Referee (or Deputy Referee) signals completion of the event.

6.1.4 Fair throw: Victims may grasp the throw line with their hands only within their lane. The lane marker is not "within the lane". Victims may submerge to retrieve the throw line. Victims may not release the crossline before grasping the throw line with the other hand.

As long as victims remain entirely within their designated lane and do not release their grasp of the crossline, they may use their foot or other part of the body to manoeuvre the throw line within their lane to a position where they can grasp the line with their hand.

- 6.1.5 Pull through the water:** While being pulled to the edge, victims must be on their front holding the throw line with both hands, arms outstretched and keeping their heads up. Subjects may not “climb” the throw line hand-over-hand or provide any propulsion to the poolside (e.g., no kicking). For safety reasons, subjects may release the line with one hand for the sole purpose of touching the wall. This will not result in disqualification.

Subjects may wear swim goggles.

- 6.1.6 Throw zone:** Competitors 2 and 3 should leave the area immediately after handing over the rope. Competitor 4 must remain on the deck and in their allotted lane, poolside of a clearly defined mark 1.5 m from the pool edge until released by the Referee (or Deputy Referee). If there is a raised portion of the poolside, the line shall be 1.5 m back from the deck side of the raised portion.

Competitors must keep at least one foot wholly within the throw zone. Competitors, who exit the throw zone (as judged by both feet), while pulling the victim or prior to the 2 minutes 30 seconds completion signal, shall be disqualified.

On the condition that there is no interference with another competitor, and provided that at least one foot remains wholly within the throw zone, any part of the competitors’ body may touch or cross the throw zone line without penalty. Any part of the competitor’s feet may cross over the front of the “pool edge” of the throw zone without penalty.

Competitors may reach to retrieve a line dropped outside the throw zone as long as they maintain at least one foot wholly within the throw zone, and that there is no interference with another competitor.

Competitors who enter (or fall into) the water will be permitted to continue but first must recoil and re-throw the rope in order to do so.

- 6.1.7 Time limit:** The Team of Competitors must make fair throws and complete the event within 2 minutes 30 seconds. If a throw falls short or outside the allocated lane, competitors may recover the line and throw again as often as necessary up to the 2 minutes 30 second limit.

If a team fails to finish within the allotted time, they will be ranked according to the Calculation of Results Document. The number of competitors which complete their leg of the relay will be recorded.

6.1.8 Equipment

- 6.1.8.1. Throw Line:** The BULSCA competition ropes are the **only** ropes allowed to be used. These must meet the requirements as stated in the equipment specifications (see Section 9.5).

- 6.1.8.2. Crossline:** Where possible, the crossline shall be a rigid crossbar which is positioned on the surface of the water across each lane, 12 m from the starting end of the pool.

In the absence of a rigid crossline, a semi rigid or non-rigid bar may be used. The Referee will make it clear at the pre-event briefing if a rigid, semi-rigid or non-rigid bar is being used. If the crossline rigidity is not specified, it shall be assumed to be non-rigid. Competitors found pulling against a semi-rigid or non-rigid crossline will receive a penalty (P809). Competitors are permitted to pull against a rigid bar.

A tolerance of plus 0.10 m and minus 0.00 m in each lane is allowed for the crossline, irrespective of its rigidity.

6.2. Technique Officials:

6.2.1 At least eight (8) officials – two (2) either side of the twelve (12) metre crossline, two (2) either side of the throw zone (backline), and two (2) each side of the competition area – shall assess whether competitors' technique complies with event rules.

6.3. Time Penalties and Disqualification:

6.3.1 Teams will be informed of all time penalties and disqualification from Sections **6.3.2** and **6.3.3**.

6.3.2 The following penalties can only be applied to a successful throw and only one may be used against each leg, the competitor and infraction will be clearly marked on the results sheets.

6.3.2.1. Each penalty will result in discounting one of the "casualties" successfully pulled in.

Code	Description
P801	Victims releasing the crossline before grasping the throw line with the other hand.
P802	Victim grasping the throw line outside the lane.
P803	Victim not on his or her front while being pulled to the finish edge.
P804	Victim not holding the throw line with both hands while being pulled to the finish edge (victim may release the line with one hand for the sole purpose of touching the wall).
P805	Victim kicking legs whilst being pulled in.
P806	Victims head not being clear of the water during pull in.
P807	Victim "climbing" the throw line hand-over-hand.
P808	Thrower exiting the throw zone (as judged by both feet) at any time after the start and before the completion of their throw and rescue.
P809	Pulling on a semi-rigid or non-rigid crossline.
P810	Entering the water and not re-coiling and re-throwing the rope prior to completing the rescue.
P811	Casualty not in contact with the crossline and throw line at the start.

6.3.3 Any of the below will result in disqualification from the event.

6.3.3.1. Any disqualification listed in General Rules for Relays (Codes 1 to 300).

6.3.3.2. Additional offences within the 4 x 12 m Line Throw event, which shall result in disqualification are:

Code	Description
DQ053	Final victim exiting the water before the 2 minutes 30 second completion signal.
DQ058	Executing a practice throw.
DQ401	Wilful and deliberate pulling on a semi-rigid or non-rigid crossline.
DQ402	Deliberately interfering with another team's rope.
DQ403	Casualty swimming to reach the throw line or to reach the finishing edge.

7. 4 × 50 m Swim and 50 m Tow Relay

7.1. Event Description:

7.1.1 Start and Pickup: Competitor 1 completes a dive start and swims 50 m. Upon completing 50 m Competitor 2 shall be positioned at the 50 m edge holding onto the wall with elbows and shoulders below the surface of the water. Where a turn is required, the competitor must touch the wall and may use a tumble turn.

At the completion of the 50 m swim, the competitor will collect the casualty. During the collection of the casualty, the competitor is not required to touch the turning edge.

7.1.2 Tow: The competitor shall tow the casualty for 50 m. During the tow, the casualty shall be face up and moving headfirst, the rescuer shall be gripping the casualty's chin and not neck/throat, the casualty's face shall be clear of the water except during the turn, if required and the competitor shall be swimming on their back or side without overarm recovery.

The casualty shall provide no assistance to the rescuer during the tow. They will be permitted to tuck into a ball during the turn (if required), but must not scull, kick, use pool fittings or twist in such a way that will aid the turning motion or aid in their own propulsion.

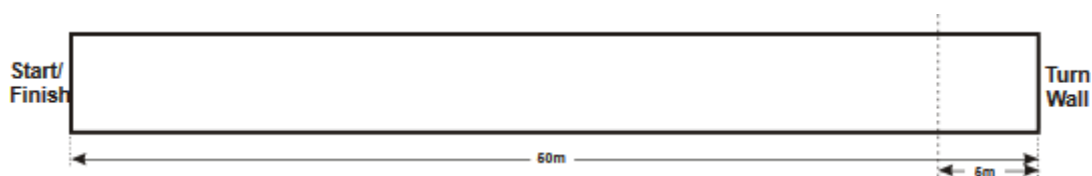
If a turn is required, only the rescuer is required to touch the turning edge. He or she may touch the floor but not use it to push off or walk on, in order to gain advantage.

7.1.3 Finish: Once within 5 m of the finishing edge, as judged by the casualty's head, the casualty may raise one (1) arm above their head.

On touching the turning edge, the rescuer will release the casualty and provide no further assistance to the casualty. Prior to releasing, the rescuer will not pull the casualty towards the wall.

On being released the casualty may choose to use the wall for assistance and will complete 50 m swimming and 50 m towing in the same way as the first competitor but with Competitor 3 being the casualty for Competitor 2. Competitor 4 will be the casualty for Competitor 3 and Competitor 1 shall be the casualty for Competitor 4.

The time shall be taken from when Competitor 4 touches the finishing edge on completion of their 50 m tow. Both Competitors 1 and 4 are required to stay in the water, unless released by the Referee or Deputy Referee or Event Director.



7.2. Technique Officials:

7.2.1 At least eight (8) officials: two (2) on each side of the pool, two (2) at the turning edge, and two (2) at the starting/pick-up edge – shall assess whether competitors' technique complies with the event rules.

7.3. Time Penalties and Disqualifications

7.3.1 Teams will be informed of all time penalties and disqualification from Sections 7.3.2 and 7.3.3.

7.3.1.1. DQ900 is applied during the calculation of results process and teams will be notified of its application in the published results.

7.3.2 Any of the following offences shall result in a fifteen (15) second time penalty per infraction to be added to the teams' time:

Code	Description
P900	Time was more than 10% outside the submitted time. For every additional 15 seconds past the 10%, results in a further penalty.
P901	Walking or pushing off the bottom after standing on the bottom.
P902	Not surfacing before 15 m off the start or turn.
P903	Failure of casualty to have elbows or shoulders below the water upon pickup.
P904	Failure of casualty to be holding the wall on pickup.
P905	Failure of casualty to be vertical in the water on pickup.
P906	Tumble turn preformed either on pick up or transition between competitors.
P907	Casualty not being towed headfirst through the water.
P908	Casualty not being towed by the chin.
P909	Towing technique contained overarm recovery.
P910	During the tow either Casualty or Rescuer rotated more than 90 degrees from the horizontal plane of the surface.
P911	Casualty's face was not clear of the water.
P912	Casualty was being pushed rather than towed, i.e., the casualty's head has passed that of the competitors.
P913	Casualty provided assistance to the rescuer other than those exceptions listed in the rules.
P914	Casualty raised arm outside of the last five metres of the tow, as judged by the casualty's head.
P915	Rescuer not immediately releasing the casualty upon touching the finish edge at the end of their 50 m tow.

7.3.3 Any of the below will result in disqualification from the event:

7.3.3.1. Any disqualification listed in General Rules for Relays (Codes 1 to 300).

7.3.3.2. Additional offences within the 4 x 50 m Swim and 50 m Tow Relay, which shall result in disqualification are:

Code	Description
DQ501	More than five penalties from the 900 Series codes in a single event, excluding DQ900.
DQ502	Tumble turn preformed whilst towing the casualty.
DQ503	Rescuer pulling casualty towards the wall in a dangerous manner.

8. Other Relay Events

8.1. The other relay events available to be chosen by the Management Committee are:

- 4 x 25 m Manikin Carry Relay.
- 4 x 50 m Obstacle Relay.
- 4 x 50 m Medley Relay.
- 4 x 50 m Pool Lifesaver Relay

8.2. These events will be run according to the International Lifesaving Federation (ILSF) Competition Rulebook 2023, as per the BULSCA Competition Manual Section **5.1.5**.

8.2.1 The same set of rules shall be used throughout the academic year, irrespective of any changes made by the ILSF UK during the year.

8.2.2 All distances, and references to numbers of lengths, will be adapted such that the event remains the same length for competitions held in a swimming pool of twenty-five (25) metres in length. See the BULSCA Competition Manual Section **5.1.7** for details for swimming pools that are not twenty-five (25) metres in length.

8.2.3 Rules for the 4 x 50 m Obstacle Relay will be directly adopted.

8.2.4 Rules for the 4 x 50 m Medley Relay will be directly adopted with the following alternations:

8.2.4.1. The fourth competitor may not tumble turn at the turning edge whilst towing the victim. This behaviour will result in a disqualification. (**DQ601**)

8.2.5 Rules for the 4 x 25 m Manikin Carry Relay will directly adopted with the following alteration:

8.2.5.1. Rules relating to the manikin handover, between Competitors 2 and 3, will apply to all handovers which occur at a turning edge.

8.2.5.2. In a short course pool, once a competitor (leg 1-3) has completed his or her leg of the manikin relay they are able to exit the pool providing they do not interfere with other competitors.

8.2.6 Rules for the 4 x 50m Pool Lifesaver Relay will be directly adopted with the following alterations:

8.2.6.1. In a 25 m pool, Competitors 3 and 4 cannot tumble turn whilst carrying the manikin

8.2.6.2. In a BULSCA league competition the 2 male and 2 female requirements shall be ignored, and the gender requirements outlined in the BULSCA Competition Manual Section 2.2.1 will be used.

8.2.6.3. There shall be no draw to determine what leg each gender must do. The teams can individually choose their order.

8.2.6.4. For a 25m pool, Manikin Carry technique shall not be judged 5m from the turning edge pool wall for Competitors 3 and 4.

9. Equipment Specifications

9.1. The organising committee, **Referee** and **Equipment Scrutineer** reserve the right to re-inspect competition equipment at any time during the **competition**.

9.2. Appeals against rulings of equipment ineligibility are permitted.

9.3. Unless otherwise specified below all equipment shall be in accordance with the appropriate specification, as detailed in the published rules by RLSS UK, for the relevant event for which it is to be used. See Section **8** and the sub-sections therein, for details on the relay events.

9.4. All competitors shall only use equipment which has been approved by the Equipment Scrutineer.

9.5. Throw Lines

9.5.1 For the 4 x 12 m Line Throw Relay event (see Section 6); throw lines shall be plaited and constructed from buoyant polypropylene to the following specifications.

- **Diameter:** 8 mm (\pm 1 mm).
- **Length:** minimum 15 m; maximum 20 m and all lines with 1 m of each other.

9.5.2 The BULSCA competition ropes are the **only** ropes allowed to be used at a competition.

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