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International Surf Festival Taplin Relay Rules

DESCRIPTION: Judge Irvin Taplin conceived the Lifeguard Medley Relay in 1936 and presented the idea to Los Angeles County. The event is a 16-Person Lifeguard Medley Relay consisting of four swimmers, four paddlers, and four two-person dory crews. The event has become best known as simply the “Taplin Relay.”

ELIGIBILITY: Lifeguard teams from Agencies/Chapters in good standing. Los Angeles County Fire Department Lifeguard Division will be divided into Southern Section, Central Section, and Northern Section teams. Larger Agencies/Chapters may have “B” teams if they have enough participants.

GOAL: Display the skills and challenges of the lifesaving profession to the general public in a competitive environment that is positive, friendly, and fair.

PURPOSE: To define the rules of the event and establish participation expectations.

DEFINITIONS:

Beanies – Team beanies are required on all Swimmers and Paddlers. Failure to comply will be subject to disqualification.

Helmets – Required headwear for all dory crews and their handlers, beanies NOT required.

Handler – A person who assists a dory crew in launching and catching a dory in the surf. There may only be one handler per team at a time.

Start/Exchange/Finish Line – Lane markers, poles placed in a horizontal line on the beach parallel to the waterline.

Start of the Race – The Head Official/Starter will verbally confirm with each lane to make sure the first swimmer is ready. The Head Official/Starter will blow a whistle to indicate the race is about to begin. The Head Official/Starter will then shoot the starter pistol to start the race.

Start – All competitors are to be positioned behind the Start/Exchange/Finish line before they begin their leg of the race.

Turn Flag Line – Ten distinctive colored flags stretched in a horizontal line.

Turn Flag – A right shoulder turn is recommended, but not required. If making a left shoulder turn, the competitor must give way to another competitor who is making a right shoulder turn.

Skin-to-skin Tag – A physical touch person-to-person.

Exchange – A competitor who is completing their leg of the race **MUST** skin-to-skin tag the next competitor who is standing **BEHIND** the Start/Exchange/Finish line.

Paddleboard Exchange – If using the same paddleboard, the competitor who is completing their leg of the race **MAY** hand the paddleboard to the next competitor who is standing **BEHIND** the Start/Exchange/Finish line. (This would be the only exception where a skin-to-skin tag is not required.)

Lane – The area on either side of the Team's assigned lane pole.

Team Captain – The person responsible for the team and the contact for the Officials, Lane Judges, and ISF Committee. The Team Captain must be available for the Captain's meeting prior to the start of the Taplin Relay for any final instructions and/or questions. Team Captains are to submit their contact information to the ISF Official listed on the entry form along with a completed entry form. The entry form must include competitors full, legible, first and last names, and in the discipline they are competing. This is to be submitted no later than five days prior to the event.

Officials – Individuals who **VOLUNTEER** their time to make sure everyone is enjoying a fair and honest competition.

Lane Judges – Individuals who **VOLUNTEER** their time to issue beanies, rash guards, keep track of the event progress, turn the flipcharts, and approximate the finish order of their respective team. They are then responsible to collect **ALL** of the beanies from the Team Captains. Once **ALL** beanies are received, issue the Team's T-Shirts to the Team Captain for distribution. Lane Judges are responsible for turning in and retrieving all of the beanies, flipcharts, and clipboards to the ISF Committee

Disqualification – Elimination from the competition results due to a rules infraction, unsportsmanlike conduct, or inability to complete the race.

“Down in Front” – The Announcer, Lane Judge, and Officials will use this term for any teams that are standing in their area and blocking the public's view of the event. All competitors have a responsibility to ensure the spectators have an unobstructed view of the competition. Team Captains should assist in this endeavor.

RACE RULES:

Each Taplin Team consists of a 16-Person Relay Team:

4 Swimmers

4 Paddlers

8 Rowers (4 x 2-person dory crews)

No team member may compete more than once per relay team.

No team member may compete on more than one team.

Each 16-member team is assigned a lane. ALL exchanges (skin-to-skin tags) must be in their respective lane behind the lane marker Start/Exchange/Finish line.

However, the final dory competitor can cross the finish line in any lane.

All Swim and Paddle competitors must wear their team beanie when competing. All Dory Crews and Handlers must wear helmets when competing.

Team Captains are responsible for the conduct of their team members during the event. They are responsible for knowing the rules and making sure their team members follow said rules. They are responsible for all issued beanies and for turning in ALL beanies to their lane judge. Team Captains are responsible for distributing their teams T-Shirts once all beanies are accounted for.

START:

The first Swimmer shall be in their respective lane behind the Start line wearing their assigned beanie and rash guard. The Head Official will call out each lane to make sure they are ready. The Head Official will blow the whistle to indicate the race is about to start. The Head Official will fire the starter pistol to start the race.

COURSE:

Lane Marker Line - Start/Exchange/Finish Line

Flag Line - Turn buoy

A Competitor must start in their lane at the Start/Exchange/Finish line, go around the flag on the flag line, and execute a skin-to-skin tag (exception paddlers using the same paddleboard) on the next competitor who is behind the Start/Exchange/Finish line in their respective lane.

The final Dory Crew finish may be completed by crossing the Start/Exchange/Finish line in ANY lane.

RULES:

A competitor may NOT purposely interfere with another competitor. When rounding the flag line, all precautions must be taken to avoid any collisions.

During the race, all team members must remain seated to allow the spectators an opportunity to view the race. The Team Captain shall assist in team compliance.

Exchanges are to be a skin-to-skin tag with the next competitor standing behind the Start/Exchange/Finish line. The only exception would be in the paddleboard exchange if the same board is used, a skin-to-board would be acceptable when the upcoming competitor is standing behind the Start/Exchange/Finish line.

Any team member may assist in carrying the dory to the waterline when the next leg of the event is the dory leg. Once in position, only one person may assist in the handling of the dory. The handler must wear a helmet while handling the dory. One dory team member may enter the dory while the handler is holding the dory. The last paddler must make a skin-to-skin tag with the first dory team crewmember standing behind the Start/Exchange/Finish line. The tagged dory crewmember runs to the dory and jumps in with his partner already in place. The handler may push the dory into the race.

In the event of an overturned dory, the entire Taplin team may enter the water for the safety of the dory crew and surrounding competitors. Once the dory crewmembers are safe and the dory is righted and the oars are retrieved, the Taplin team must exit the water and return to their lane. The handler may assist by pushing the dory into the race.

A team member is permitted to direct a competitor exiting the water to their respective lane as long as they do not interfere with any other competitors.

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