

## **Rough guide to Aquathlon**

This is meant as a quick guide to aquathlon for the complete beginner. The aim is to give basic information to complete and enjoy a first event.

### **Definition:-**

Aquathlon, which is often spelt aquathon, is a sport which combines swimming and running in one non-stop event.

### **Aquathlon in Scotland:-**

Aquathlon has been steadily growing in Scotland with more events and competitors each year: some races include heats for adults. The sport is seen as an introduction to triathlon, where young athletes can develop the key swimming and running skills for racing, before moving on to triathlon. There is a series of races around Scotland, where competitors may gain points in each race, the series winners being decided at the end of the season when the points are added up. There is also a Scottish championships held at Portobello each year, where youngsters race in the swimming pool and along the esplanade. Whilst the adults race in the sea [wearing wetsuits!] and run along the same esplanade.

### **At an Aquathlon:-**

Aquathlons held in swimming pools normally have a number of heats, with competitors of similar age and swimming ability in the same heat. Competitors tell the organisers how fast they can swim. From this time competitors are assigned to a lane. Normally four or five swimmers are in each lane starting off every 5 seconds. If swimmers catch up with someone in front they touch their feet to let them know they would like past. At the end of the length the slower swimmer pauses to allow the other swimmers to overtake. Competitors can get time penalties if they do not allow other swimmers to overtake or if they try to overtake in the middle of a length.

After the swim, competitors quickly climb out of the pool and run to a transition area where they leave their swim cap and goggles and put on their running shoes. Most competitors pull on a t-shirt with their race number already pinned to it. Putting on shoes and a t-shirt might not seem like a race, but in aquathlon and triathlon the clock is still running whilst competitors change from one sport to another.

Once changed and ready, competitors run around the run course. The stopwatch finally stopping once competitors cross the finish line.

**Training:-**

Training for aquathlon is down to swimming and running. Obviously you need to be able to swim and run the distances for your age group. However the really important thing is technical skill, being able to swim and run with good technique. Normally competitors develop their skills in swimming clubs, athletics clubs or triathlon clubs. However running ability can be developed playing football, rugby, hockey or similar sports.

**Equipment Checklist: -**

During an aquathlon you will need the following equipment.

swim suit

goggles

trainers [running shoes]

t-shirt [you can use a one piece swim suit / triathlon suit instead]

swim cap [given to you at registration]

safety pins [given to you at registration]

race number [given to you at registration]

**Tips: -**

Don't use new gear for your event. Use your regular goggles, wear your regular swimming costume. Make sure you have tried everything before the race day.

Don't use new trainers in a race - stick with what you are used to. If you do have new shoes wear them a couple of times before the event.

Wear a big loose fitting t-shirt for the run. You will find it much easier to put on in transition.

Put some talcum powder [baby powder] in your running shoes before the event. It will make it more comfortable when you have wet feet and start running without wearing socks.

There is more to multi-sport than appears at first, so no matter how fast you can swim or run, relax, enjoy yourself and aim to finish in comfort. You can aim for the top in your next aquathlon.

**History:-**

Nobody seems to know when aquathlons started, but it appears that life guards on Australian beaches started to have races between each other in the 1950s. They would run along a beach, swim out to sea round a buoy and swim back to the beach, get out and then run back along the beach. By the 1960s the idea had

moved to California in the United States, becoming popular with runners and swimmers. In 1974 someone had the idea of adding a bicycle section in an aquathlon, and so triathlon the sport of swimming, cycling and running in one continuous event was established. Triathlons have kept growing in number and popularity ever since.

In warm countries aquathlons usually start with a short run, followed by a swim and then another short run. However in cool climates, like Scotland, aquathlon consists of a swim followed by a run.

**Stepping up a level:-**

With experience competitors can learn the “tricks of the trade” putting on shoes quickly or seamlessly adapting from one sport to the next. Some equipment can make a difference. For example, one piece triathlon suits or elastic laces in running shoes can save valuable time in transition: although it’s nothing compared to the improvements that can be made by joining a triathlon club or by joining both a swimming and an athletics club.

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