



## RULES & REGULATIONS

**DATE OF SWIM:  
FRIDAY, AUGUST 28, 2026**

The MAUI CHANNEL SWIM is a legendary open water race, bringing swimmers together for competition and celebration for more than 50 years. The race course begins on Lana'i at Club Lana'i and finishes on Ka'anapali Beach (south of Black Rock) on Maui, across the Au'au Channel. Relay teams (6 or 3 swimmers) and Solo swimmers are accompanied by escort boats (contracted by the swimmers, see Boats section of MCS website). Relay teams of 6 will rotate each swimmer 1x through 30-minute legs and teams of 3 will rotate 2x through non-consecutive 30-minute legs for each swimmer, both followed by 10-minute legs for each successive swimmer until reaching the finish area. The race begins at 8am and the teams are expected to complete by 2pm to record official times. The total distance is at least 9.6 miles (depending on route and current). Ocean conditions vary, this is open water, and the race committee and safety team will monitor conditions continually, providing ongoing communication via **VHF71**. Safety is a shared responsibility among swimmers, boat captains, and race officials; all must exercise vigilance and safety discretion. The night before the race there will be a mandatory race safety meeting to be attended by boat captains AND representatives of each swim team.

### **1. Entrants & Eligibility:**

- 1.1. An official team may be entered by 3 or 6 individuals or a solo swimmer. All swimmers are cautioned that swimming the Channel can be very challenging due to winds and currents which can change during the course of the race. As such, a swimmer who cannot complete 2,000 pool yards or an Open Water mile in less than 30 minutes should not consider participating. If you have any doubts, please contact the Race Director.
- 1.2. All competitors must finish the race within 6 hours (8:00 AM to 2:00 PM) in order to have an official time and to be eligible for applicable awards. Teams not finished may be pulled from the water at the discretion of the Race Referee or Timekeeper. All teams finishing after 6 hours will be unofficial whether or not they complete the race and will not be eligible for any awards.
- 1.3. Date of birth for each team member will be listed on the registration/entry form. There are 3 or 6 swimmers to a team except for solo teams.
- 1.4. A team shall be comprised of 3 or 6 swimmers, or a solo swimmer. Teams can be comprised of a mix of members of different clubs.
- 1.5. An official registration/entry are available via a link on the race website. Registration includes (A) complete Official Entry and Roster Form; (B) Waiver/Liability Release Form executed by all participants; (C) Safety waiver signed by the team's escort boat captain; (D) Maui Channel Swim Rules signature page (page 3 of 3) executed by team captain and (E) entry fee. Partially complete applications will be rejected and returned.

### **2. Divisions:**

- 2.1. Divisions are determined by the combined age of all team members:  
The famed Maui Channel "DUKE BOWL" will go to the first team overall. Combined ages will determine the age division of a team. Thus some members of a team may be younger than the age total divided by 3 or 6 ( $150/6=25$ ). A "mixed" team consists of exactly 3 men and 3 women. A "Woman's" team must consist of ALL women. All other divisions are any combination of men and women competing against each other. Solo swimmers will be allowed on a case by case basis at the sole discretion of the Race Co-Directors, Michael Ritter & Brenden Hazlet. Interested swimmers must contact one of the Directors directly in order for their entry

to be accepted.

2.1.1. The MCS will follow the *Participation Policy for Transgender Student-Athletes* set forth by the NCAA.

### 3. Competition:

#### 3.1. General:

3.1.1. The first and finishing swimmers must have that team's number written on the swimmer's left arm and event swim cap in order to assist in identification at the start and finish. As such, each team will be responsible for purchasing a black waterproof marker. Race numbers & caps will be given out at the Pre-race Safety Meeting.

3.1.2. **ALL ESCORT BOATS** are required to monitor **VHF 71** frequency in order to allow timing and emergency and possible hazards communication with all boats and Race Officials throughout the race.

3.1.3. **TIMING:** The official race time is kept by the Timekeeper on Ka'anapali Beach using stopwatches and started by listening over the radio to the starter. Times are recorded to the nearest second when the final swimmer crosses the finish line up the beach. If race finishers are within a second of each other, the Timekeeper determines order of finish or a tie.

3.1.4. Each swimmer's first leg is 30 minutes (in the case of 3 person relay, 3 swimmers will rotate 2x through 30 minutes). Succeeding legs are 10 minutes per person, except for the Ka'anapali Beach finish leg. If the swimmer has passed or is close to the final orange buoys and has reached the end of their 30-minute or 10-minute leg, the team captain may elect to have this swimmer complete the race.

3.1.4.1. Official 30-minute change times will be announced on VHF 71, which all boats are required to monitor throughout the race. Relay changes must occur +/-30 seconds of the change time. Unless dealing with an emergency at the time, the Race Director will direct a race official to call out a 1-minute warning of the upcoming change point, 30 seconds prior to the change point, the change time, and 30 seconds after the change time.

3.1.4.2. Any team found changing team members outside the 30-second window (as best evidenced by videotape) will be penalized, at least, with a time penalty equal to how much time they changed outside the +/-30 second window. Any protests on this matter must be submitted to the Race Referee or Timekeeper within 30 minutes of race finish. Any penalty to be assessed will be determined by the Race Referee based on the evidence provided. Decision of the Race Referee is final and not subject to appeal.

3.1.4.3. If the team captain chooses to switch the swimmers near the finish triangle orange buoys, under no circumstances will the escort boat be allowed to enter the safety area between the orange buoys and the shore. Any escort boat that enters this restricted area will automatically disqualify the team. **No Exceptions.** See map below.

3.1.5. **PULLING SWIMMERS FROM THE RACE:** The starting relay rotation sequence of swimmers must be maintained throughout the race. If a swimmer cannot take his or her turn for any reason, he or she cannot be replaced by an alternate. In all cases, the Race Referee or Timekeeper must be notified of these conditions. See below for details and examples.

3.1.5.1. If a person cannot swim any part of his or her leg(s), the boat is allowed to keep its motor on only to maintain the present position for the duration of that swimmer's leg. In this case, if the next swimmer starts his/her relay leg before the proper time, the team will be disqualified. For instance, if a swimmer gets out for any reason, the boat stays in place until the next 30- or 10-minute relay change point. If the swimmer still does not swim his/her next leg, the boat stays in place during that swimmers rotation, until the next change.

3.1.5.2. If a team has to pull a swimmer for any reason, they may choose to motor sideways relative to the finish line to get away from that area, but **they may not motor forward.**

3.1.5.3. As stated above, competitors must finish the race within 6 hours (8:00 AM to 2:00 PM) in order to have an official time and to be eligible for applicable awards. Before 6 hours, it is up to boat captains to determine



whether a swimmer is pulled from the water due to, among other items, significant currents. After 6 hours, the decision to pull a swimmer can be ordered by the Race Referee or any other race official in addition to the boat captain. Any team finishing after 6 hours is not eligible for any award.

3.1.5.4. **TEAMS WITHDRAWING FROM THE RACE FOR ANY REASON MUST NOTIFY THE TIME-KEEPER AND RACE DIRECTORS ON THE EMERGENCY FREQUENCY, VHF 71.**

3.1.6. **DRAFTING & PACING BY SWIMMERS:**

3.1.6.1. **NO DRAFTING WILL BE ALLOWED** outside the Lana'i Channel (i.e.; the channel dug into the coral reef allowing boat access to the starting beach corresponding to the first 20 minutes of the race).

3.1.6.2. **NOTE:** While WOWSA rules allow drafting in Open Water races, this swim never has and does not. Further there is a safety component to this no drafting rule: Since boats have to escort swimmers for the entire race, a swimmer drafting puts the escort boat in a position to watch out for other boats and their swimmers – which becomes extremely dangerous as swimmers' positions change and related escort boats gain and lose right of way over one another. Consequently, the Race Director has dictated that any swimmer caught drafting will be disqualified that solo swimmer or relay team.

3.1.6.3. Drafting is defined as "the carrying of a swimmer by the wake of the escort boat (including such wake as may exist directly behind or to the immediate side of the boat – Note that for catamarans behind includes between, as well as behind the pontoons) or another swimmer."

3.1.6.4. Because of the nature of this race, a race official may not be direct witness to any drafting violations. As such, any complaints of drafting must be submitted to the Race Referee or Timekeeper within 30 minutes of the complaining team completing the race. **EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE PROTEST MUST BE PROVIDED, VIDEO BEING THE BEST EVIDENCE THAT DRAFTING OCCURRED. EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT A PROTEST MUST DEMONSTRATE THAT THE DRAFTING CAUSED ABSOLUTE OR RELATIVE DETRIMENT TO ANOTHER TEAM IN THE SOLE DISCRETIONARY JUDGMENT OF THE RACE REFEREE WHOSE DECISION SHALL BE FINAL WITH NO RIGHT OF APPEAL. THE RACE REFEREE'S DECISION SHALL BE MADE BY 6:00 PM. THE RACE REFEREE MAY DETERMINE WHETHER DETRIMENT WAS CAUSED TO A COMPETING TEAM AND ASSESS A SANCTION IN THE RACE REFEREE'S JUDGMENT COMMENSURATE WITH THE DEGREE AND EFFECT OF DRAFTING. THIS MAY RANGE FROM A TIME PENALTY TO DISQUALIFICATION.**

3.1.7. **BOATS & SWIMMERS:**

3.1.7.1. **NO PACING; NO PADDLEBOARDS:** Rubber rafts are allowed if fixed to the escort boat.

3.1.7.2. **EYES ON SWIMMERS:** Each team is responsible for having a Safety Spotter person(s) watching their swimmer at all times. This is absolutely critical at all times but none so more as at the start and finish of the race and during exchanges. While not required, it is recommended that each team purchase a small air horn that can be used to gain the team's swimmer's attention or that of other boats and swimmers.

3.1.7.3. Swimmers must swim on either the left or the right side of the boat except during changes or if this poses a safety risk due to ocean conditions. **NO DRAFTING** off the boat **WILL BE ALLOWED**. Drafting is defined as "the carrying of a swimmer by the wake of the escort boat (including such wake as may exist directly behind or to the immediate side of the boat) or another swimmer." The same procedure for drafting off another swimmer above applies to this section.

3.1.7.4. Support craft other than designated race craft "Escort Boat" are not permitted.

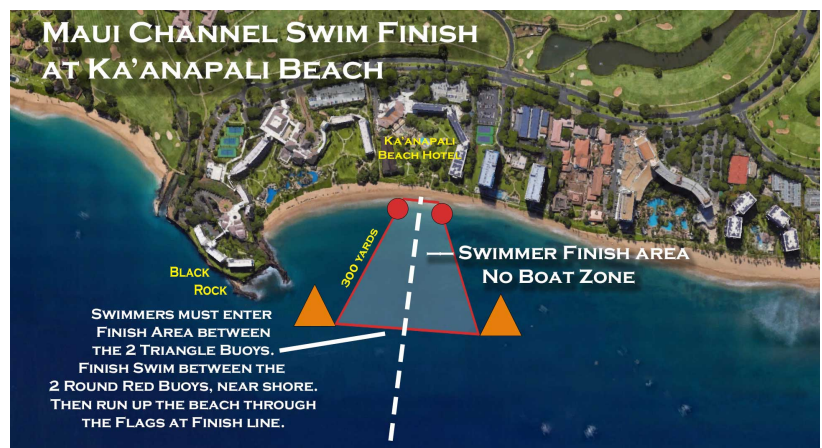
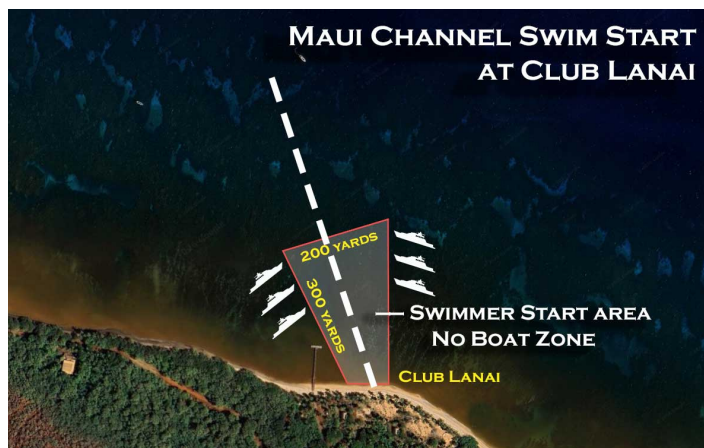
3.1.7.5. **SWIMMER'S RIGHT OF WAY: The swimmer's safety is the first priority.** In all cases, escort boats must give way to the swimmer(s). Boat captains are cautioned to maintain safe distances from all swimmers including those on other teams. If any team's boat becomes a threat to the safety of a swimmer and a complaint is filed with the Race Referee and upheld, the violating team will be disqualified.

3.1.7.6. If two swimmers are close to each other, the boat for the lead swimmer has the right of way over the boat for the following swimmer. However, in such case, both swimmers have the ultimate right of way and both boats must give way to the swimmers in order for them to follow their chosen path.

3.1.7.7. **SWIMMER CHANGES:** It is the team's responsibility to make sure that boats turn off power to, or disengage, the propellers when swimmers climb into the boat to prevent any possibility of injury. This also applies to individuals not competing such as support staff or swimmers not currently swimming their leg who are getting in/out of the boat (e.g.; for a bathroom break).

### 3.2. Start:

- 3.2.1. When escort boats arrive at the starting area, only the lead swimmer is allowed to swim to the beach on Lanai. All lead swimmers will meet on the beach for a review of safety rules prior to the start of the race.
- 3.2.2. Team members wishing to warm up must stay well away from boats arriving and positioning themselves and are to ask their escort boat to move further down the beach to an area determined to be clear of other boats. This is a safety concern to prevent any accidents from occurring. Even the lead swimmer who is swimming to the beach must be aware of other boats in the area.
- 3.2.3. All “non-lead” swimmers in the water must return to their escort boats by 7:45 AM for an 8:00 AM start.
- 3.2.4. All lead swimmers will meet on the beach to verify all teams are present and to review safety rules.
- 3.2.5. The starter will be in contact with the Timekeeper via radio at the start to start the official time. The race will start at approximately 8:00 A.M. from Club Lanai.
- 3.2.6. Team captains are to instruct the boat captains to position their boats at the start to create an “imaginary channel” expanding from 100 yards near shore to 200 yards wide to allow swimmers to swim out at the start without being obstructed by boats. Further, boat captains should be instructed to stay outside the various packs of swimmers for the first 20 minutes of the race. This will allow the swimmers to gain separation and allow all swimmers in the “imaginary channel” to have the benefit of clean water and clean air. Please be on the lookout for other swimmers in the water; SAFETY IS OUR FIRST PRIORITY.



### 3.3. Finish:

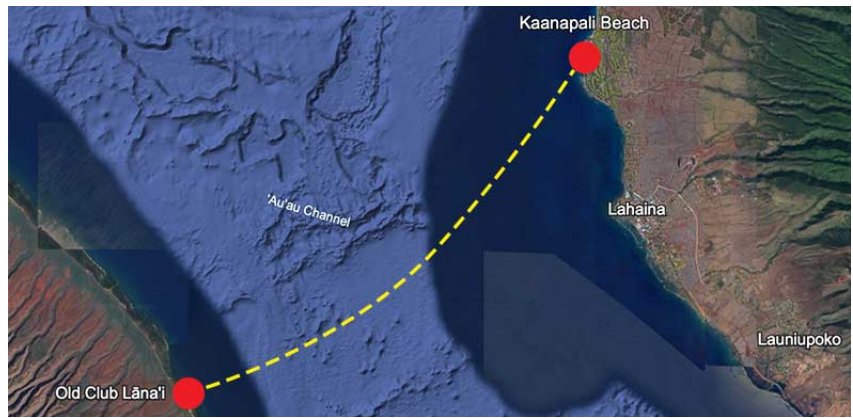
- 3.3.1. The finish line will be in front of the Ka'anapali Beach Hotel, immediately below the "MAUI CHANNEL" banner. At the finish line, the finishing swimmer shall give the team name and number to the race official.
- 3.3.2. A safety zone will be established at the race finish. The zone will be enforced by race personnel on surfboards and standup paddlers. At the finish there will be 2 orange buoys in the water fronting Ka'anapali Beach. Swimmers are to swim between the orange buoys. 2 Red tomato buoys will be near shore marking the swimmer's exit from the water to start their run up the beach. The official finish is on the beach under the banner. The finishing swimmer must have their team number on the left shoulder and be wearing an official race swim cap.
- 3.3.3. The area between the 2 orange buoys and the shoreline is to be restricted “No Boat Zone” in order to protect finishing swimmers and spectators. **TEAM CAPTAINS ARE TO INSTRUCT THE BOAT CAPTAINS THAT UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES ARE ESCORT BOATS ALLOWED TO ENTER THIS AREA. FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THIS RULE WILL RESULT IN DISQUALIFICATION OF THE TEAM.** Similar to the start, escort boats are to position their boats a safe distance apart in order to establish an imaginary channel to allow swimmers to approach the finish remembering that swimmers will be coming from the south as well as the north of the orange buoys. Escort boats may drop their other swimmers south of the orange buoys.

#### 4. Course:

The Maui Swim begins at Club Lanai, at approximately 8:00 AM, crosses the Au'au Channel between Lanai and Maui, and finishes at Ka'anapali Beach, after swimming at least 9.6 miles.

#### 5. Safety:

The following section outlines some of the basic safety practices and requirements. A full Safety Plan is posted on the MCS website.



The aquatic environment, especially open water, holds a potentially wide range of challenges to swimmer safety. These may include anxiety attacks, physical contact between swimmers, fatigue, weather, marine life, hypothermia, hyperthermia, cramping, heart attacks, strokes, and drowning.

5.1. Team captains must inform boat captains of the issues regarding the safety of all swimmers as well as rules pertinent to their operation of the boat as an escort.

5.2. When at sea, the boat captain is the ultimate safety officer responsible for his/her craft and the passengers on or near his/her boat. They also know ocean conditions and the limits of their craft in those conditions so their decision is final even to the point of disqualifying or stopping the race for his/her team.

5.3. No boats are allowed in the designated start or finish areas, inside the buoys from the time the first swimmer completes the race to the last swimmer finishes. Exceptions that do not result in disqualification can only be granted by the head timer or race referee.

5.4. ALL BOATS are required to monitor a frequency defined at the Captains' Meeting to allow timing and emergency communication with all boats throughout the race. The channel for boat or any race communication will be **VHF 71**.

5.5. Boats **MUST** turn off power to, or disengage, the propellers when swimmers climb into the boat to prevent any possibility of injury. It is the responsibility of the team to maintain visual contact of their swimmer at all times.

#### 6. Escort Boats:

6.1. Each team is responsible for securing and negotiating for the services of their escort boat. The Race Directors will only maintain a list of available boats but makes no representation as to the boat captain's abilities or the vessel's condition. The team has sole responsibility for making such determination and for the final selection and all arrangements with the boat captain. As an additional point of clarification, the Race Director has NO responsibility to insure that the boat will show up on time at a location specified. This is the responsibility of the team.

6.2. This race is sanctioned by WOWSA and, accordingly, escort boats must comply with the rules and regulations governing sanctioned Open Water swimming competitions. The following rules must be adhered to:

6.2.1. Propeller-Driven Motorized Craft – Propeller guard(s) are recommended for all propeller-driven watercraft (outboard motors) and should be designed to protect swimmers from strikes. However, it is solely the team's decision to require their escort boat to have propeller guards installed for the race.

6.2.2. Motorized Craft with Inboard Motors – There is an exception for boats with propellers forward of the rudder (e.g. inboard motors). Escort boats with inboard motors must comply with the following:

6.2.2.1. On swimmer changes the swimmer exiting may only approach the boat provided the engines are turned off.

6.3. Each team's official entry must include the name of the boat captain and related contact information; the name of the vessel and the boat registration number.

6.3.1. THIS INFORMATION IS ON THE WEBSITE, AND MUST BE Submitted TO THE RACE DIRECTORS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, BUT NO LATER THAN JULY 15.

6.4. Each boat captain is required to read the attached safety letter and indicate their review and understanding of the rules and regulations specified in the safety letter by signing and dating the letter. A signed Safety Letter must be received by the Race Directors prior to the race, but in no event later than the Pre-Race Safety Meeting (evening before race day), in order for the boat to be allowed to escort the team.

6.5. Safety of the Escort Boat – Each team is solely responsible for assessing the safety of its escort boat and insurance coverage. Such assessment should include, but not be limited to, assessing the presence of life jackets, in-

spection of evidence of liability insurance, etc. No visual inspection will be performed by race officials on the day of the race.

## **7. Registration/Entry:**

- 7.1. An official entry must include a complete Official Registration/Entry and Roster Form, executed Liability Waiver Release Form for all participants, the Safety Waiver signed by the team's boat captain, executed Maui Channel Swim Rules (page 3 of 3) and the Entry Fee. This is found on the official event website.
- 7.2. The package must be completed and submitted online. This is the Team Captain's responsibility.
- 7.3. The Race Directors reserve the right to refuse any entry. In particular, if an entry is received but is not legible or is not complete, the Race Directors will not accept the entry. Resubmission of the entry after the deadline will cause the entry fee to increase to the late fee. TBD
- 7.4. Entries submitted by facsimile will not be accepted, you must use the electronic portal/link.
- 7.5. It is recommended that each team print a copy of their entry.

## **8. Swimwear:**

- 8.1. All suits and equipment must conform to current USMS open water rules for water temperature above 78°F. Wet suits are NOT permitted. Swimwear shall be made from textile materials. For both men and women, the swimsuit shall not cover the neck and shall not extend past the shoulder nor below the ankles.
- 8.2. Swimwear shall include only a swimsuit, cap or caps (non-neoprene), and goggles. Swim caps shall be defined as head gear conforming to a traditional swim cap design, may have a chin strap, and shall not extend to protect the neck and/or shoulders. Nose clips, earplugs, and wristwatches are also allowed.
- 8.3. The swimmer shall wear only one swimsuit in one or two pieces.
- 8.4. Exemptions to these restrictions may be granted to a swimmer, on a case by case basis, by the race Committee or designee. Exemptions will be granted only for conflicts due to the swimmer's verified religious beliefs or verified medical conditions.

## **9. Miscellaneous Information:**

**ENTRY FEE:** The entry fees for a teams and Solo swimmers are listed on the Registration/Entry form. Entry fees include the price of the buffet banquet for each member of a team and one official Maui Channel Swim T-shirt for each team member. The entry fee will be submitted electronically when entering the registration in order to complete registration.

**ENTRY DEADLINE:** All entries must be received by July 15, 2026. If received after July 15, the entry fee may incur a Late Fee to be determined by Race Directors.

**TEAM CAPTAIN:** Each team shall have an appointed team captain who is responsible for knowing all the rules, details of the race, and insuring that all prerace documents are completed. The channel for boat communication will be **VHF 71**. Please call in if you are pulling out of the race.

**WOWSA/USMS MEMBERSHIP:** While not required, WOWSA or USMS membership is encouraged. Membership in WOWSA or USMS provides you with secondary insurance for sanctioned events and supervised practices of member clubs. This event is an approved "Partner Event" by WOWSA and is not "sanctioned".

- Registration for WOWSA can be done online at [www.openwaterswimming.com](http://www.openwaterswimming.com).
- Registration for USMS can be done online at [www.usms.org](http://www.usms.org).

**SANCTION:** This event is an approved "Partner Event" by WOWSA. The event is not "sanctioned" by WOWSA or USMS at this time. The MCS Committee has secured a comprehensive insurance policy.

**CAPTAINS' MEETING:** There will be a mandatory organizational meeting at the Airport Beach Pavilion, at 5:00 P.M. on the evening of Thursday, August 27. **TEAM CAPTAINS OR OTHER REPRESENTATIVES FROM EACH TEAM ARE REQUIRED TO BE AT THIS MEETING** to review any last-minute changes, instructions for the start of the race and to pick-up official t-shirts, swim caps, and team race number. Team cap-

tains or the designee will be required to sign in indicating their attendance at the meeting.

*NOTE:* Additional t-shirts and other gear will be available for purchase at this meeting and during the banquet on Friday evening.

**BANQUET:** The banquet on Friday night will be held at the **Royal Lahaina Resort**, beginning at 5:00 P.M. The team's entry fee covers the cost of the banquet for each participant. Non-participants who wish to attend the banquet may purchase banquet tickets for an additional fee of \$175 per person. Please indicate the number of additional tickets on the Official Registration/Entry and Roster Form and include the additional fee with the team's entry. If you plan to have extra people attend the banquet, you can pay ahead of time with the entry, at the Captain's Meeting or the evening of the banquet.

**RACE DIRECTORS:** The Race Directors with ultimate authority over the conduct of the competition are:

Michael Ritter

email: [tex@hawaii.rr.com](mailto:tex@hawaii.rr.com)

Cell: 1 (808) 298-1743

Branden Hazlet

email: [Bhazlet@gmail.com](mailto:Bhazlet@gmail.com)

Cell: 1 (808) 222-3258

**Email Address:** [info@mauichannelswim.com](mailto:info@mauichannelswim.com)

**Web Site:** [www.MauiChannelSwim.com](http://www.MauiChannelSwim.com)

### **GRIEVANCES, COMPLAINTS, PROTESTS AND APPEALS:**

17.1. Protests, or intention to file protest, over any infraction or race rule or conduct must be submitted within 30 minutes of the team finishing the race (e.g., within 30 minutes of the team accused of an infraction OR of the team making the protest). Protests should be filed with either the Timekeeper or the Race Referee. A written protest must follow within the hour.

17.2. The Race Referee will either rule on the protest, gather more evidence and then rule, or put together a race committee consisting of the Race Referee and 4 other members (consisting of 4 other members including the Race Referee, Timekeeper, and members of 3 teams participating in the race but not party to the incident) to hear evidence and render a decision.

17.3. A written reply to the protest will be delivered before the awards presentation and delivered to the person making the protest, the person/team who the protest was filed against, and the Race Directors. If no decision is made, the results of that race cannot be presented until resolved.

17.4. Any grievance or appeal of the decision of the Race Referee or race committee shall be filed with the Race Director. There is no appeal on the decision regarding rules listed earlier in this document.

### **Race Officials:**

18.1. The phone number for the Race Director:

Michael Ritter (808) 298-1743

Branden Hazlet (808) 222-3258

18.2. The phone number for the Race Director's escort boat: (808) 298-1743

18.3. Harold Teshima is the Safety Director, and will have 3 Jet Ski's patrolling the course. He is an Ocean Safety Officer III, First Responder. Contact information is as follows: Harold Teshima (808) 451-6520

**OTHER QUESTIONS:** If you have further questions about anything not covered here, or about anything that remains unclear after reading all of this, please email the Race Directors ([info@mauichannelswim.com](mailto:info@mauichannelswim.com)). Or text to (808) 298-1743, please text between 8:00 A.M. and 7:00 P.M. HAWAIIAN TIME (be courteous; HST is 3 hours earlier than California). Please text or email only, and we will respond ASAP.

