

Triathlon England - South West

2022 AGM

October 2022

Technical Officials - South West

The restrictions imposed by COVID and the imposed national lockdowns seems to be a distant memory.

The 2022 season opened with a flurry of events being registered with British Triathlon, an increase when compared with 2021, with 96 events being listed. Sadly, however, this encouraging increase in the number of events for 2022 has been somewhat dampened by a lower than average number of competitors signing up and attending these events. It would be fair to say that on average competitor numbers are down by as much as a third, or more, in some cases. This has unfortunately resulted in a number of events being cancelled due to a low number of entries. Our final tally of events this year in the South West region, which went ahead, was 84. Which is still more than last year. It can only be assumed that the current financial turmoil and cost of living increase, which we all find ourselves experiencing, has played a major part.

Once again we strived to have a Technical Official in attendance at each of the British Triathlon registered events held in the South West this year. The geographical size and location of the South West will always be a challenge and we continue to struggle at times to attend all of the events over the season. This year we managed to be in attendance at 94% of the South West events, as well as supporting a number of other events outside of the South West. We have a particularly strong South West attendance at this year's World Para Triathlon, held in Swansea, South Wales.

We also continue to see positive returns linked to our 'recruitment drive' with a number of Technical Officials qualifying at the LTO and RTO level this year. We had a good attendance at the Local Technical Officials course held late last year in Chippenham, hosted by Richard Masling and Bex Stubbings, and I'm pleased to say that already a number of the attendees on this course have qualified as LTOs with others very close to completing.

We currently have 50 members of the South West Technical Officials team, understandably not all are active.

Our line-up consists of:

- 1 Continental official (CTO)
- 5 National officials (NTO)
- 21 Regional officials (RTO)
- 13 Local officials (LTO)
- 11 Trainee Local officials

We will be looking to host another Local Technical Official course later this year should we have a number of candidates interested.

The role of the Technical Official is relatively straightforward, so we are told. We are there to ensure that the race is both safe and fair for all competitors. However, the reality is a little more complex and at times rather more challenging but the personal satisfaction of seeing competitors, experienced and novice, achieving their goals is immense.

The role of a Technical Official is open to everyone over 18. You don't have to be a Triathlete, but there are some key requirements which we covered last year but are worth visiting again.

1. First and foremost, a TO enjoys a very early morning start, and is often on-site and hard at work, alongside the event crew, well before the first competitor shows up for registration.

2. To be gifted with a photographic memory with instant recall. Yep, it's assumed that the Technical Official is deemed to be the font of all knowledge, having read the rule book cover to cover and stored away each of the BTF and ITU rules and regulations, ready to be accessed at a moment's notice.

3. Have the patience of a saint and the ability to deal calmly with the wonderful competitors who, for some unknown reason, disagree with the penalty that you have kindly awarded them. And this is sometimes pushed to the limits.

And finally:

4. Physical endurance as we are on our feet all day, from the very start and often long after the event is closed and the competitors have departed.

And we do all of this as a volunteer and we all have our own reasons.

This could be as simple as contributing to the sport we love, or the feeling of satisfaction of being part of the world of Triathlon.

It can be hugely rewarding, regardless of the nature or grandeur of the event.

The level of satisfaction of being part of the Triathlon world as the competitors strive to reach and often exceed their personal challenge is immense.

Remember, be kind to the Technical Official!