

The survey had 90 responses from GB which represents a sizeable proportion of GB competitors. Nearly all had competed in other international events (well over half had competed in 3 or more previous events) and so they had something to compare it with.

Overall, GB competitors were very pleased with the event: they rated it 8/10 overall. People were also happy with most aspects of the event. There were some particularly highly rated aspects, notably the excellent commentary, the results service, and the officials and volunteers. We would particularly highlight also the outstanding medal ceremonies which were timely, close to the competition pool and very well conducted. It would certainly be worthwhile trying to emulate that model in future events and maybe writing something into the LEN event procedures about this as it is much appreciated by medallists and their teammates and colleagues who like to watch the ceremonies.

On the other hand, from the survey and our further discussions, several areas stand out as in need of attention and we highlight these below with suggestions. We do not comment on information that we consider event-specific, but only on those matters that are significant for future events.

1. Communication before and during the event

47% of competitors rated communication as poor or very poor. The London survey also showed serious problems in this area. This is an area which we think needs attention, as a few simple improvements could greatly improve competitors' experience. Competitors need timely and relevant information on all the important mechanics of the competition itself. Re-entry for 400 and 800m free, where to find start lists, timing of individual daily sessions/event times, wet suit position on the day of open water events and the venue for the dinner were all areas where problems were mentioned. In general, a variety of communication methods - web site, social media, notices, email etc – was used for different things apparently at random, so no-one could be sure they had all relevant information.

There was some frustration with the fact that people felt bombarded with email information on matters that were not of interest but had insufficient essential information on the operation of the event.

Recommendations:

- There needs to be a clear and written communications policy in the LEN procedures whereby ALL communications on these matters (from both LEN and local organisers) are sent reliably and promptly in a specified form or forms. People should be able to pick a form of communication and know that they will be able to use that form or forms to find essential information without needing to look at other sources.
- This must include email. Where Wi-Fi is not adequate (as in Slovenia) during the event itself there must be always excellent information both on notice boards and through announcements, where information changes or is produced during the competition day itself. Ideally all this information should also be transmitted by additional means to give alternatives (specified social media, website etc).
- Competitors must be told clearly on entry and in other appropriate ways (e.g. notice on website, in confirmation information) what these "official" forms of communication will be

- The information distributed in this way needs to include all the matters we refer to above as well as many others. A list of events with the EARLIEST possible start time for each event would be a huge help for competitors.

2. Warm-up and swim down

Two-thirds of competitors found warm up arrangements good or very good but one third were not happy. The negative comments relate to the fact that warm ups are not organised but a "free for all".

Recommendations:

- Warm up/swim down lanes should be segregated by speed (e.g. Lanes 1 and 2 speed of 40 secs or faster, up to Lane 8 speed of 60 secs or slower for 50m).
- There should be one or two warm up lanes designated for starts and sprinting only, with no diving or racing starts allowed in other lanes
- There should be marshals to ensure safe warm up/swim down practices are maintained.
- The above all needs to be written into LEN's event procedures

3. Changing facilities

A sizeable proportion of competitors were dissatisfied with the changing arrangements, 34% rating them poor or very poor. Negative comments in the survey and elsewhere, often strongly worded, indicate serious concerns about lack of segregation and privacy. This issue was also raised in strong terms by many competitors in relation to London 2016. This seems to have been addressed in Slovenia by competitors themselves producing signs to segregate the changing rooms.

We consider this a serious issue that raises important safeguarding concerns.

Recommendations:

- Changing areas should be clearly segregated into male and female, and these should be clearly marked as such
- It should be made clear that competitors must adhere to the segregation instructions, with possible consequences for not complying
- This should be written into the LEN event procedures

4. Scheduling

While most people were happy with the scheduling for this event, some raised concerns that the schedule discriminated against women and older swimmers, as on all days but one the pool events started with female swimmers, with the oldest always first. Some commented that they were particularly disappointed to see discrimination again after British Swimming had signed a legal settlement over discrimination claims in London and undertaken to look at that data and learn from it. It might have been expected that LEN would also do this.

Recommendation:

- LEN procedures should include a requirement for an assessment of each event before the event to ensure that there is no discrimination in the arrangements made

5. Procedure for registration

About 75% of respondents found this good or very good, but a minority experienced a variety of problems, such as receiving confirmation of entries close to the entry deadline or trouble getting their entries accepted. It was also suggested that it could be improved by providing for confirmation once each stage is completed.

Recommendation:

- We think it worth looking at clear confirmations for each stage and the end of the process.

And finally.....we would like to reiterate the upbeat views of the majority of those we spoke to and who responded to our survey. The event righted a lot of wrongs from the past and we are sure there will be a renewed and re-invigorated interest in the next FINA and subsequent LEN Masters events. We hope that you will receive our comments in the spirit that they are intended, to be constructive and to help you in planning, with the local organising committee, your next event in Hungary

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