

Technical Officials Role

Timekeeper (TK)

As a Timekeeper you are responsible for taking the manual (stop watch) times for the swimmer in your lane. You may also be required to stop the backup (semi-automatic) timing when the swimmer in your lane has finished the race.

Timekeeping is a very important role. To the swimmer you are the most important official on poolside. The following attributes make a good timekeeper: Good hearing, Good eyesight, Good concentration – Not too much talking during the race, Honesty – if you fail to start your watch on the start signal tell the Chief Timekeeper.

Information you need to know to be a Timekeeper:



Prior to the Meet

- Report to the Chief Timekeeper (CTK) at least thirty minutes prior to the start time for the meet. The CTK will assign a watch and allocate you to a lane. You may use your own watch providing it is in good working order.
- You will also receive a session programme from the CTK on the lane you have been assigned to.
- Check the watch you have been assigned is in good working order and that you are familiar with the functions of the watch. If you require assistance ask the CTK to help.
- You will require a pen to record your watch time on your session sheet.

Electronic timing: When electronic timing is being used you will need to decide with your Chief Lane Timekeeper which backup button you are to use and where you will position it after each race. Your backup button should be operated with the hand you write with. Your stop watch is held in the other hand. You may need to practice starting and stopping your watch in this hand. The backup timing equipment starts when the start signal is given by the Starter so you don't have to worry about it at the start of the race. However, you do have to start your watch.

During the Meet

- Do not talk to the swimmers prior to their race unless they talk to you first.
- Prior to the start of the race the Referee will signal to the swimmers to prepare for the start of the race either by getting up on the starting blocks or into the pool (in backstroke) by a long blow of his/her whistle. For backstroke, there will be a second whistle to bring the swimmers in the water up to the starting position. These whistles indicate to the Timekeepers that the race is due to start.

- At this point in time you should be fully concentrating and listening for the starting signal. It is recommended that you do not watch the Starter, concentrate on an object near you and listen carefully for the start signal. You may not always be able to hear the Starter say "Take your marks" so concentration following the Referees whistle is important to hear the start signal.
- The start signal is usually by electronic beep, but may be by air horn, gun, command or whistle.
- After the race has started inspect your watch and make sure it has started. If it has not started indicate to the CTK that you have missed the start by standing.
- During the race keep your watch in a safe position so that buttons cannot accidentally be knocked stopping the watch prematurely.
- If you are having problems with the function of your watch report it to the CTK.
- Keep track of the number of lengths the swimmer has swum. When the swimmer is about 15m (that is at the false start rope) from the finish of the race stand and position yourself at the end of the lane. If electronic timing is being used pick up your backup button. Take care not to stand on the top of the Touch Pads.
- When the swimmer has approx. 1.5m to go take your eyes off the swimmer and cast them down the finish wall of the pool and wait for the swimmer to touch the wall. When the swimmer has reached the False Start Rope (15 metres) stand up and set yourself over the pool edge and observe the swimmer coming in to finish. As soon as you see the swimmer touch the wall, simultaneously press your backup button and stop your watch.
- Return to your seat and write your time on your session sheet beside the event and heat. When asked by the Chief Lane Timekeeper for your time show him/her the face of your watch and say the time you have recorded.
- Your watch may be examined by the following people, the Chief Lane Timekeeper, Chief Timekeeper or the Referee.
- A swimmer may ask for their time which is okay but advise them it is unofficial.
- Do not clear your watch until you hear the Referees whistle indicating for the swimmers to prepare for the next race.
- If you see a swimmer make a technical error, do not stop your watch and backup button until the swimmer touches at the end of the race. This is the responsibility of the IOT, and JoS or the Referee.
- You may be asked to take split times for a swimmer in a long-distance race. Make sure you know how this function works on your watch, using the split time button. As the swimmer approaches the turn stand in the position you would stand in for the end of the race and wait for the swimmer to touch the wall (touch may be made by the feet), record the time by pressing the split button. Report the time to the Chief Lane Timekeeper for recording.

The Official Time: The official time for a swimmer is established by using the following rules:

- If all three watches disagree then the middle time is the official time.
- If all three watches agree then that is the official time.
- If two of the three watches agree then that is the official time.
- If there are only two good watch times for a swimmer at the end of the race, the times would be averaged. e.g. 1:24.60 & 1:24.66 = 1:24.63 official time, or e.g. 2:33.15 & 2:33.20 = 2:33.18 official time. (Note: Average up not down)



- If electronic timing is in use the electronic pad time is the official time. If the pad time fails the electronic backup button time is the official time. If both electronic pad and backup fail the hand-held stop watch time is the official time according to the above rules.
- Good timekeepers on a lane should record times within 0 to 15 one hundredths of a second of each other. However, a tolerance of up to 30 one hundredths of a second is acceptable.

At the end of the Meet

- Return your watch to the Chief Timekeeper and report any problems you experience with it e.g. fading display, sticking buttons. • You may keep your session sheet.

Additions/Feedback from Experienced Timekeepers

- “One very important point to note that is forgotten is for the timekeepers to make sure the swimmer that is supposed to be in your lane for the next race is in your lane. Tick them off. When it’s self-marshalling especially for the younger less experienced swimmers it can be very overwhelming, so that confirmation you are in the right lane at the right time I find is very reassuring and appreciated.”

Chief Timekeeper (CTK)

The Chief Timekeeper is responsible for:

- Allocating the watches and lanes to the Timekeepers and appointing the CLTK.
- Make sure all TKs know how their allocated watch functions and how to operate the backup button.
- Start 2 watches at the beginning of the race.
- After the start of the race check for any TK who is indicating their watch has not started or has malfunctioned. Replace the Timekeeper or their watch with one of yours or from a spare that has been started.
- Taking the time of the fastest swimmer in the race and checking that all the watches on that lane are within the tolerance.
- Checking with the Referee for any special instructions e.g. recording split times.
- Report any concerns to the Referee.
- Collect watches at the end of the meet.

