

Being a Lane Timer

USA Swimming rules state, “No swimmer shall be required to re-swim a race due to equipment failure which results in an unrecorded or inaccurate time or place.”

General

- You are performing one the most important jobs at this meet. All of the swimmers attending are here to achieve better times. They are depending upon you to ensure that accurate times for their race are recorded.
- Each lane is issued two electronic backup buttons and two stopwatches; one electronic backup button and one stopwatch per lane timer. *Please use all of them.*
- Please do not assume that the backup button and watch times are not important. Electronic timing malfunctions frequently occur. The timing judges need accurate backup button and stopwatch times in order to validate and reconstruct the race results.

Before You Begin

- Check out your location, know your lane assignment, where you will sit, and locate the starter strobe.
- Check your equipment: clipboard, pencil, lane-timer sheets, electronic backup button, and stopwatch (does it work and can you use it?).

Before Each Race

- Look for the next swimmer in your lane.
- Check name of swimmer before they step onto the blocks and match it to the lane-timer sheet. If the name of the swimmer does not match the name on the sheet, write the name of the swimmer and record their time.
- For relay races, check names of swimmers and the order in which they will swim. Write changes on the lane-timer sheet, if necessary.
- Keep other swimmers behind the timer chairs so that they do not block your view and do not distract you, the officials or other swimmers.
- Listen carefully to instructions from the officials.
- If necessary, help swimmers up on to the blocks and help them to step down safely if the officials ask them to do so.
- Ensure that your stopwatch is ready (stopped and zeroed).

At the Race Start

- Look at the starter strobe and wait for the flash.
- Start your watch when you see the strobe flash. If you miss the flash, start when you hear the beep.
- Verify that your watch is running correctly.
- If there is a problem with the watch or you missed the start, raise your hand and get the attention of the Head Timer for a replacement watch.
- Start your watch even if there is no swimmer in your lane. It may be used to record the time for a race in another lane if there is a stopwatch malfunction.
- If swimmer misses their race, make a note on the lane-timer sheet (“NS” or “No Swimmer”).
- It is NOT necessary to press the electronic backup button at the start of the race or in the middle of the race.

During the Race

- Pay attention to the swimmer in your lane.
- Count laps so you know when the finish will occur.
- Look for the swimmer for the next heat and check their name against the lane-timer sheet.
- Look for unusual situations and bring them to attention of officials or make a record on the lane-timer sheet.

At the Race Finish

- *Stand at the edge of the pool next to the block so that you have a complete view of the finish, the face of the pad, and the wall of the pool. If you cannot see the face of the pad clearly, you will not be able to record an accurate time. If you need to ask someone to move so you can do so, do not hesitate to ask him or her.*
- Simultaneously press the electronic backup button and stop your watch as the swimmer touches the pad; or if they miss the pad, the wall of the pool.

After the Race

- *Record the time from both watches to the 1/100th of a second (e.g. 1:23.45).*
- *Please write the stopwatch times clearly.*
- *If you miss stopping the watch at the end of the race, DO NOT write down the time from the electronic scoreboard. Just write a straight line, “NT”, or “No time” for the missed stopwatch time.*
- Write watch times for each heat in the same order. By doing so, if there is a problem with one of the watches, the timing judges will be able figure it out later.
- If you noticed that the swimmer missed the pad (soft-touch), write a note or check the soft-touch box on the lane-timer sheet. This helps explain discrepancies and prompts the timing judge to check if a correction is required.
- If the stopwatch times for your lane frequently differ from each other by more than 3/10ths (.30) of a second, work with your timing partner to figure out why and eliminate the discrepancy in future heats. Ask for assistance or advice from the Head Timer if necessary.
- If necessary, assist the swimmer exiting the pool.
- Get your next swimmer ready behind the blocks.

Head Timer Duties

- Responsible for all lane times, assignments and replacements.
- Start extra watches at start of race, in case lane timers miss start or other failure.
- Monitor lane timers after start and provide replacement watch if needed.
- Providing assistance to lane timers.

Other Things

- Officials will need to move around you and have clear sight of pool.
- We all make mistakes.