



TIMER

NVSL Timing Systems

Manual timing requires the use of hand-held, battery powered, digital read-out stopwatches. Human timers perform the "start" and "stop" actions.

An electronic pulse from a starting device activates semi-automatic timing. Timers push buttons to record the swimmer's finish touch. Semi-Automatic timing is used at All Star Meets only.

TIMING PROCEDURES:

In any race not timed with semi-automatic equipment, three Timers stationed at the finish shall take the time for each competitor. Each Timer operates a manual watch that is both started and stopped by the Timer. The times must be individually recorded to determine the lane's Official Time. Chief Timers may substitute for a Lane Timer only if a Timer's watch fails. Timers should concentrate on ensuring they get the most accurate time possible for their lane. Lane timers may operate a watch and the button from a semi-automatic system simultaneously; they may not operate two watches or buttons at the same time.

Chief Timer

1. Assigns Timers to their respective lanes and properly instructs them.
2. Selects one Timer on each lane as Head Lane Timer.
3. Starts two watches on every race, to be used only if a Lane Timer's watch fails.
4. Delivers, to the table, all official times as recorded by the Head Lane Timers,

including the times of disqualified swimmers.

Head Lane Timer

1. Determines that the proper swimmer or relay team is in the correct lane, heat and event, and that relay swimmers are swimming in the order listed on the Lane Timer's card.
2. Determines and records all manual watch times or the absence of a swimmer/relay team seeded in that lane.

Lane Timers

1. Shall be in a position to have an unobstructed view of the Starter's strobe light and start the watch at the instant of observing the visual-starting signal. If the visual signal is not observed shall start the watch upon hearing the sound of the horn.
2. Shall stand directly over their assigned lane at the finish.
3. Shall stop the watch and/or push the semi-automatic system's button immediately when, in the Timer's opinion, any part of the swimmer's body touches the wall.
4. It is not the Lane Timer's responsibility to judge if the swimmer's finish touch meets the requirements of the appropriate stroke finish rule or if a relay take-off infraction has occurred.
5. All Lane Timers shall promptly report their times to the designated recorder; present their watches for inspection, if requested; and, shall not clear them until given the command to "Clear watches" or the Referee signals the next race is ready to start.

6. The time of each watch is recorded on the Lane Timer's card, in the same order and the official watch time is recorded in hundredths. When the watch times are averaged to determine an official watch time, the digits representing thousandths are dropped with no rounding.

Official Time Determination

1. If two or watch times agree, that shall be the official time.
2. If all three watches disagree, the time of the intermediate watch shall be the official time.
3. If only two watch times are available, the official time shall be the average of those two. For watches, the digits representing thousandths of a second shall be dropped with no rounding.
4. If only one watch time is available, that time shall be the official time.

Tips and Techniques

1. **Know the watch.** Know how to start, stop and clear the watch. Fading numbers, blinking numbers, or decimal points usually indicate that the digital watch needs new batteries. There is NO rule that says which finger to use in starting and stopping a watch, but using the forefinger obtains the most accurate times. The technique for starting a watch might best be described as "squeezing" the button. A smooth motion of the finger is best.
2. **Reading the watch.** Hold the watch steady; stop and start it only with the movement of the finger. A sweeping motion with the hand or arm in starting or stopping the watch contributes to inaccuracy. Hold the watch in whatever plane and at whatever angle to the line of vision that avoids light reflections on the display and permits you to read the watch accurately.
3. **Check the accuracy of all watches.** The Chief Timer should request that the Starter conduct a time check before the start of the meet. If the time check indicates that the watch is inaccurate by more than 0.2 seconds, report the watch to the Chief Timer. Do not attempt to compensate for defects in the watch. Moreover, if, at any time, a watch fails to start or stops after starting, immediately tell the Chief Timer.

4. **Look at the Starter.** Hold your watch UP in front of you so your attention is focused on the Starter. Inaccurate timing is usually caused by not concentrating at the start.
5. **Concentrate visually.** When the Starter says, "Take your mark," focus on the strobe light and start your watch at the instant you see the flash of the strobe. If there is no flash to observe, start your watch on the sound.
6. **Verify the watch is running once the race begins.** If it is not running or you know you were late at the start, immediately stand up or hold up your hand **with the watch in it** and call for the Chief Timer.
7. **Be in position.** At the start, you may stand anywhere **behind the starting line** where you can clearly see the starting device, but back, so you do not obstruct the Starter's view of the competitors. Then remain far enough back from the race so you do not obstruct the actions of other officials. When the swimmer approaches the end of the pool on the final lap, however, you should step up to the end of your lane and position yourself upright, looking straight down over the edge of the pool so you can accurately see the touch at the finish.
8. **Stop the watch when any part of the swimmer's body touches the solid wall at the end of the pool.** Stop your watch even if the touch, in your opinion, is illegal and regardless of whether the touch is above, at, or below the water level. ***Watch your own lane!*** Do not anticipate the touch.
9. **Provide your time, no one else's.** Never change your time because it differs from the other Lane Timers. Read your watch thoughtfully and carefully, and state your time with conviction. If you were attentive and followed the procedures, your timing is correct!
10. **Record the times.** The Recorder should write the times in the correct sections of the swimmer's card.
11. **Do NOT clear your watch until told to do so.** You must be ready to present your watch for inspection if requested.
12. **Conduct yourself as an official.** Timers may not cheer for, or coach, swimmers during a race. You should not try to "be helpful" and provide unconfirmed information to the swimmers.