

Welcome to Swim Meet Timing

We Are Glad You Are Here



For those of you that have never timed at a swim meet before, and for those of you that are old pros, this guideline is the 'who, what, why and how to' to all things related to swim meet timing. Everyone should take a few moments to review these notes, to help assure that all our BCH timers know what is required, know that they are not alone, and know that they are appreciated and supported!!

First and foremost, timing is FUN!! You have the best seats in the house !! You get to see starts and finishes up-close and personal. You feel the energy and occasional nervousness, of swimmers first hand. Nothing beats the excitement of team mates jumping up and down cheering as the final leg of a relay comes in !!

Timing is an important job because **IT SUPPORTS THE SWIMMERS**. Swimming is somewhat of a unique sport in that winning races is great, but most often it is the swimmers times that determine how far they go in their sport. Swimmers can win at novice meets, win at local meets, and still not qualify for the Junior Olympics because they do not meet the qualifying times. That is what makes timing so important, not only to the team, but to each and every swimmer.

Having all that behind us, remember timing is fun, often wet, but very easy.

There are many individuals on the pool deck at a meet:

- Swimmers – most important
- Timers
- The Starter
- Stroke and Turn Judges
- Administration Table
- Runners
- Head Timer
- Coaches



All of these people volunteer for these roles. The swimmers say they want to swim and the coaches say they want to coach. The officials, judges, admin staff, runners, and timers all volunteer their time each meet to ensure the meet is "official" and the times achieved by the hard working kids are valid !!

All levels of meets, including novice, age group, high school, college and even National events like the Grand Prix require volunteer timers.





Instructions for Timers

1. When you arrive at the pool, the swimmer has responsibilities like checking in for the meet, checking in with their coach, warm-ups, and starts all to get ready for the meet. You, as a supportive parent, have responsibilities too. First, find a place to sit, organize your stuff, purchase a meet program, and then **FIND THE TIMING BOARD** for BCH.
2. It is very important to write your name down in a timing slot. The Booster Club gathers the timing boards at the end of each meet and logs volunteers that are timing. This information is provided to the Head Coach after each meet.
3. Don't be late for your assigned shift (normally 1 hour) ! The meet can not start without timers in the chairs. Likewise, if you are late to your shift, that means another volunteer is covering extra time for you!!
4. Once you get to your assigned lane, you will either have a pickle (stops the electronic timing for your lane), a watch, or the clipboard - or you may have a combination of two of those items.
5. If you are not familiar with your role, ask the person next to you!! Remember, they started this sport not knowing what a pickle was either!! Also, if you have any questions before you time, ask your Pool Representative - they are here to assist you!!
6. After the start of each heat, call out the swimmer's name for the next heat. This ensures no delays in the meet while looking for swimmers. If a swimmer doesn't respond, stand up and yell their name!! You can even ensure they are lined up 2 heats a head of time!!
7. Be focused on the start and finish of each race. Timing is what swimmers are judged upon. Focus - - it is only for a split second !! Please do not be on your cell phone or talking to someone around your area. You can still have your child come to you before or after their event to wish them good luck or discuss their swim.
8. If you miss the start on the watch, raise your hand high or stand up and signal the Head Timer (normally standing by the starter) that you need a new watch. The head timer will come over and bring you a watch that was correctly started. Don't be ashamed if this happens, watches malfunction and no one is perfect. It is more important to get an accurate time for the swimmer.
9. Provide the time to the person with the clipboard and timing sheet.
10. Get ready for the next heat!!

Thoughts on Timing from the Parent Booster Club

1. Timing is very important part of running a swim meet. While one always hopes the major timing system works, and that manual back up systems are never needed, there are times when the computer will post an error, requiring the admin table to pull the manual times from the watches.
2. All swim parents time at swim meets!! It is just the nature of the sport. Besides, they are the best seats available.
3. We all started out the same, wanting to be by our kids, wanting to assist them in getting ready (putting on cap, goggles, etc), wanting to “coach” them into doing well. This does not develop the self-sufficiency of the swimmer, which in turn fosters self-esteem. The quicker the swimmer develops their self-esteem in these small tasks, the quicker they become self-motivated to improve, and the quicker they will progress to the higher levels of swimming. This ultimately allows the swimmer to gain more satisfaction from their sport.
4. As a general rule, swim meets are WET. Sandals, sports shoes, or flip-flops are recommended and wear nothing that will be damaged by pool water.
5. Whether you are punching a pickle or stopping a watch, it is very important that you stand at the edge of the pool looking straight down the wall to see the swimmer actually touch the wall in order to get an accurate time.
6. When operating a pickle or stopwatch, it is best to push the buttons with your index finger, not your thumb. Your index finger has the fastest and most consistent reaction time of all your digits.
7. When operating a stop watch, always start and stop the watch with the same finger. That way no matter what your reaction time, it tends to balance out.
8. When starting a stopwatch at the beginning of a race, always start it on the flash of the strobe on the top of the starting horn. Starting lines, especially during relays and enclosed facilities, are noisy places and it is very easy to miss or be late on the horn.
9. Most importantly, have **FUN**, encourage the kids, enjoy your view !!!

