

“ON TRACK TIMES”

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“On Track Times” have been developed to better define development pathways for swimmers leading to potential Olympic podium performances.

HOW THE TRACKING TIMES WERE DETERMINED:

Swimming Canada introduced On Track times in 2013 as a tool to better identify developing swimmers. Performance data from international competitions and average progression rates of Canadian age group swimmers were used to develop a series of three tracks for each Olympic event. The three tracks were meant to capture everyone from early to late developers who had the potential to represent Canada internationally.

Since the spring of 2014, Swimming Canada has had the opportunity to work closely with a sports analytics group established by Canadian Tire Bank in collaboration with Own The Podium. As a result, Swimming Canada has gained access to a number of valuable resources and tools to further enhance the On Track times tool. The analysts worked with more than two million sets of results from world-class athletes to help provide insight into their career progression.

For the quadrennial leading into the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, Swimming Canada has developed the **World Class On Track Times 2017-2020**.

As with the original On Track times, this series of times will act as a tool to help identify developing swimmers who are tracking towards producing world-class swimming performances. The same basic principles from the original On Track times remain.

The objective is to identify a pool of athletes who are five to eight years away from podium potential performances at international competitions such as the FINA World Championships and Olympic Games. World Class On Track Times will be the key evaluation tool for Swimming Canada’s podium pathway and will be used in all aspects of the development program.

The entry point to world-class swimming has been defined as the Olympic Qualifying Time (OQT). Traditionally, the 16th-place time from the most recent Olympics is used as the OQT for the next Olympics. Therefore, the 16th place times from Rio 2016 have been used as the target times for each of the three tracks for all Olympic events.

Track 1 for each event sets the target time to be reached at an age that equals the average age of a finalist in the event minus four years. For example, the average age of a finalist in the women’s 400-m individual medley is 21, therefore the target time is set to be reached at age 17. Whereas the men’s 50-m freestyle has an average age for finalists of 26, which would set the age to reach the target time at 22. By achieving a world-class level of performance at these ages, the athletes would then have four more years to develop the skills and tactics necessary to reach the podium before they theoretically reach their peak performance. Using the progression rates developed by the analytics group, five years of times were then calculated for each event working back from the target time and age.

As with the original On Track times, Track 2 and Track 3 were then developed with the age to reach the targeted time progressively one year later with each track. The same progression rates were then used to develop times back to the same starting age as Track 1. The intent of Track 2 and Track 3 is to identify any later developers who are still tracking towards world-class swimming. This combined with the nine-year development window of Track 1 should capture all potential outliers who are five to eight years away from podium level performances.

RESOURCES

NAME	RESOURCE
On Track Times 2017-2020 (update September 2017)	on-track-times-2017-2020-update-september-2017.pdf