

The Water Rats Parents' Club

Meet Manager Guide



Written 2006 | Revised 2015

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Water Rats Parents' Club Meet Manager Guide

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Water Rats Parents' Club Meet Manager Guide

Introduction

Unlike most youth sports, competitive swimming requires many adult volunteers. A swim meet needs officials, timers and computer operators to name just a few. Preparing and managing a swim meet can be labor-intensive and that is why we created this guide. We want to make it as easy as possible for volunteers. But more important, the Water Rat Parents' Club hopes that this guide will help organizers run a safe and fun event.

Meet managers and their assistants are responsible for many tasks, but they cannot do them alone. What and to whom they choose to delegate will depend on the working relationship between the meet manager, assistant meet manager(s), coaches and anyone else involved in the planning process. (You can learn who can help you by reading the Parents' Club's bylaws and the volunteer section on page 12 of this guide.)

The majority of Water Rat-sponsored meets are held at the Westport Weston Family YMCA. However, the team sometimes rents other venues so it can hold large meets. For example, Water Rat Swimming typically holds at least one meet per year at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut. These off-site meets require a lot of advance planning but they are fairly easy to manage, because most volunteers have a lot of prior experience. A one-day YMCA dual meet is easier to prepare, but meet managers may find they have to do more on meet day because some volunteers are new to the team and need to be trained.

This manual is separated into the main tasks that meet managers must perform before, during and after a meet. Most Water Rat meets are one- or two-day meets with one or two sessions per day. Meet managers can adapt this guide to adjust for the size and complexity of the meet they are managing.

The Water Rats' Parents Club thanks Andrea Boissevain, who wrote this guide in 2006. The Club also thanks Adrienne Williams and Andy McNab for revising the guide in 2009 and again in 2015.

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Before the Meet

USA Swimming Non-Athlete Membership

All meet managers and safety marshals must be registered as non-athlete members of USA Swimming. If you are not a member, ask the coaches to provide you with the USA Swimming Non-Athlete membership form and fill it out. You can either mail it yourself or return it to the coaches, who can send it to USA Swimming.

Order Ribbons and Heat Awards

Meet managers must purchase meet ribbons (place awards) and/or trophies (particularly for the Pentathlon). They also may need to buy heat awards, although the Parents' Club frequently orders heat awards once a year (prior to the first meet of the short course season), so check with the Club's meet coordinator to see if there are heat awards for your meet. If not, you will need to order them. You also will need to contact the Parent Club treasurer to determine the awards budget for your meet and then order place awards or trophies.

The **heat and place awards** must be ordered **at least six weeks** prior to the meet (to ensure that they arrive in time). With the exception of the Pentathlon, we typically give the first six placeholders of each event ribbons or medals. (Pentathlon winners receive trophies.) The first three relay teams are awarded place awards as well. Every winner of a heat receives a heat award.

In the past we have ordered place ribbons from Metro Swim Shop in New Jersey (1-800-526-8788) and Hasty Awards (affiliated with Swimoutlet.com). The coaches may know other vendors as well. Heat awards can be ordered from Oriental Trading, yourcompanystore.com or any organization that has reasonably priced items, which are appropriate as heat awards. Those items include WRAT-labeled cups, hacky-sacks, playing cards, highlighters, etc.

All ribbons and heat awards can be shipped to the Westport Weston Family YMCA, marked to the attention of the Water Rat Swim Team (14 Allen Raymond Lane, Westport, CT 06880). Tell the coaches that you have placed the order so they can look for the shipment and store the boxes in the swim office. Alternatively – especially if the order is large and bulky – you can pick up the shipment at the Y and store the boxes at your home.

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Inform the Y About the Meet

The director of competitive swimming at the Westport Weston Family YMCA is responsible for reserving the pool for a Water Rat swim meet. But the meet manager should verify early on that the meet is on the Y's schedule. (The Y cannot have two special events during the same weekend.) Later, about a month before the meet, either the coaches or meet manager should notify the senior director of member services that the Water Rats are hosting a home meet. This will allow the Y to alert maintenance staff that the swim parents may need help setting up tables, etc.

Volunteer Registration on Team Unify

Every Water Rat swim meet – whether home or away – needs to be posted on Team Unify, the Parents' Club's volunteer registration website. Meet managers should consult with the coaches, the Club's meet coordinator and officials' chair to determine the jobs that will be required during their meet. Then the meet manager works with the Club's volunteer coordinator, who creates the meet volunteer web page.

A typical volunteer web page includes positions for officials, computer operator and assistant, timing system operator (if we do not hire a third party to run the system) and assistant, head timer, timers, runners, heat award distributors, awards labeler, safety, concession helpers, and cleanup. (See the glossary of volunteer job descriptions, which is attached.) There is no need to include a concessions manager for the meet on the volunteer web page, because we now appoint a volunteer to run concessions for every Water Rat home meet (and we don't have a concessions stand when we hold a meet in a rented venue).

The Parents' Club's concessions chair and concessions meet manager should advise on how many concession helpers are needed per session at the meet. The meet manager should contact the officials' chair to find out how many officials will be needed. We usually ask for 14 timers per session for home meets (two timers per lane and two backup timers). You need at least one, possibly two runners, two heat award distributors, and one person to label ribbons per session. Last, you will need one or two people to help with the cleanup at the end of every session.

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Review Meet Supplies

The coaches are very good about organizing the computer system and supplies, but it never hurts to double check that the team will have everything it needs. The supplies required for the computer include:

- Box of paper
- Extra toner cartridge
- Flash card for backing up data

The computer will also need cables, including computer-to-printer and computer-to-timing system. A 50-meter computer-to-timing system cable is required for long-course meets at Wesleyan or other university venues. The Water Rats must borrow this cable so the meet manager should ask the meet referee and/or coaches if they can get one.

The coaches also have a black box and another receptacle with desk supplies and clipboards that are needed on-deck for timers, officials, and the runners. These supplies include:

- Staplers
- Staples
- Masking tape
- Pencils
- Pencil sharpener
- Scissors

Other necessary meet-day items are:

- The first aid kit
- AED defibrillator
- A spray bottle with disinfectant
- Brown paper bags or Ziploc bags for meet ribbons
- Paper towels to clean up floor messes and dry off the computers

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Hospitality

The Water Rats always provide hospitality during a meet. This includes food for the coaches and on-deck volunteers as well as a coaches' luncheon. (Lunch is typically provided if there are two sessions back-to-back.) The meet manager should consult with the Parents Club treasurer to learn what is budgeted for hospitality. The budget should then be allocated based on the number of sessions and number of lunches required. Previous meet managers, the meet coordinator, and/or the concessions chair can provide menu suggestions and recommend delis that can cater lunch.

Snacks for the coaches and volunteers may vary depending on the time of day. During the morning sessions, we usually provide coffee, juice, bagels with butter or cream cheese, and/or muffins. We frequently get day-old bagels free from one of the local bagel shops. They give us a lot of bagels that can be distributed for snacks on-deck and sold at the concession stand. During the afternoon sessions, we typically provide chips and salsa, M&Ms, Swedish fish and fruit. For all sessions we have water bottles on deck to hand out to volunteers and coaches. The meet manager should arrange to have lots of ice and coolers for drinks.

Volunteer Roster

The meet manager should frequently check the volunteer registration web page on Team Unify during the month leading up to the meet. If two weeks before the meet, critical positions are not filled, the meet manager will need to call Water Rat parents seeking volunteers. The critical positions that should be filled early include computer operator and assistant, timing system operator and assistant, head timer and safety.

The meet manager should confer often with the Parents' Club officials chair (to see if a sufficient number of Water Rat officials are registering to officiate) and with the concessions meet manager (to discuss logistics and to ensure that progress is being made in the purchase of concession items).

Two to four weeks before a Water Rat-hosted meet, the meet manager should ask the WRAT web editor to announce the need for volunteers on the team website. A week before the meet, the meet manager should ask the WRAT web editor to send out an e-mail blast to parents, reminding them to volunteer. If these methods do not have sufficient results, the meet manager will need to call parents, asking (imploring) them to volunteer.

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TIME	TASK	PERSON
6 weeks before swim meet	Verify that safety marshals and meet managers are registered with USA Swimming	Meet chair
	Remind awards chair to order heat and place awards	Meet chair and/or meet manager
	Verify that swim meet is on YMCA schedule	Meet manager & coaches
	Remind YMCA senior director of programs of the meet date(s) and time(s)	Meet manager & coaches
<hr/>		
4 weeks before	Ask officials chair for number of required officials	Meet manager
	Ask PET-WRAT coordinator to request volunteers	Meet manager
	Verify budget for hospitality	Meet manager & coaches
	Check volunteer registration page	Meet manager & PET-WRAT coordinator
	Check supplies, including printers, backup drives, first aid and defibrillator kits, and clean-up supplies	Meet manager & coaches
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2 weeks before	Ask WRAT communications chair to post/email request for volunteers	Meet manager
	If necessary, phone and ask parents to volunteer	Meet manager
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1 week before	Check all stopwatches and batteries	Meet manager & coaches
	Remind treasurer to prepare cash box(es)	Meet manager
	Distribute Coaches Packets to visiting coaches	Coaches
	Test the timing and computer systems	Coaches
	Divide up meet day tasks with assistant manager	Meet manager
	Buy and/or order food for hospitality	Meet manager & assistant
	<hr/>	
Meet Day	Follow Meet Manager's Checklist	Meet manager
	Give cashbox(es) to concession chair	Treasurer
	Collect cashbox(es) from concession chair	Meet manager or treasurer

Check Stop Watches

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A few days before the meet, the meet manager should make sure the team's stop watches are working and if necessary purchase batteries and/or new watches. (The WWFY will pay for these purchases.) During a home meet, we use at least 14 watches, one for each of the 12 timers (two per lane) plus two back-up timers. But the Parents' Club should have at least 26 watches in working order. Watches may fail and need to be replaced, and some meet referees like to have one in reserve for every lane timer.

Cashbox

Prior to the meet, the meet manager should request two cashboxes from the Parents' club treasurer (one for programs/heat sheets and one for concessions). The treasurer will put seed money in both and make them available on the day of the meet.

Coaches' Packets & Sign-In Sheets

The Water Rat coaches usually put together a packet for visiting coaches. It includes a welcome letter, the warm-up schedule, timer assignments and a meet evaluation form. A day or two prior to the meet, the meet manager should verify that the coaches are creating the packets.

The meet manager should provide sign-in sheets for meet timers. (You can print out copies of the model version which is attached to this guide.)

Computer and Timing System

A few days before the meet, the meet manager should ask the Water Rat coaches to test the team's timing and computer systems. Doing so can avoid technical delays at the start of the meet. (The Parents' Club notes for running the computer and Colorado Timing System are attached to this guide.)

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Water Rat Swim Meet Preparation Schedule

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Meet Day

Set Up

On the day of the meet, the meet manager must arrive at least 30-45 minutes before the first warm up. You must set up and have the pool deck ready before the coaches, officials and swimmers arrive. If possible, you should ask the Water Rat coaches to have the Senior and/or Age Group swimmers set up chairs on the pool deck the night before the meet. This will save you a lot of time on meet day.

The meet manager should divide set-up tasks with the assistant meet manager (perhaps by phone the night before the meet). For example, the assistant meet manager can copy and distribute heat sheets, help with setting up the coaches' lunches, or sign in the timers and other volunteers while the meet manager is doing other things.

Meet-Day Checklist

- Bring printed versions of the Team Unify volunteer page to check in volunteers.
- Get the cashboxes from swim office and give them to the concessions meet manager.
- Set up hospitality on deck.
- Check the contents of the coaches' packets and tell visiting coaches when their scratches must be given to the computer operator.
- Check in visiting coaches and hand out the coaches' packets. Ask visiting coaches for their USA Swimming coaches' card to verify they are current. If they do not have their card, CT Swimming requires them to fill out a Coach Attestation Form and file it within 48 hours of the meet to certify proof of coaches' credentials. The form, which is attached to this guide, is available at www.ctswim.org. The Meet Referee normally has copies. If a coach does not have his or her ID card, and if an Internet connection is available, you can go online and verify his or her credentials. If there is no Internet connection or the coach's credentials have lapsed, he or she must fill out the Coach Attestation Form. If coaches do not provide proof of certification within 48 hours their team will be fined \$100.00.

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- Check the contents of the first aid kit and defibrillator kit. Make sure they both are on deck and advise the coaches, safety marshals and head timer of their location. Also make sure that the Occurrence Report Forms are on deck in case of an accident during the meet. (A copy is attached to this guide.)
- If the coaches have not already done so, bring the black box with the meet supplies and the containers holding the timers' and officials' clipboards. All the officials need a clipboard as does one timer per lane. Each lane will have one head timer that will be the custodian of the heat sheets and write down the swimmers' times.
- Make sure that the head timer has arranged the timers' meeting with the meet referee. Also, make sure that the head timer checks in timers and informs them of the timers' meeting (typically it is 20 minutes before the start of meet). The head timer must attend the beginning of the timers' meeting to take attendance. (An official runs the timers' meeting.)
- Ask the meet referee how many heat sheets are required for the officials. After the computer operator has printed the final version of the heat sheets, copy and distribute them to the meet referee, officials and coaches (in that order). If printing is too slow, you can use the copier in the WWFY main office. You need office keys and the copier code for the machine, but the Water Rat coaches should have keys and codes.

Because it takes time to copy and distribute the heat sheets, it's advisable to post a note (on the glass wall behind the bleachers), telling spectators that the Parents' Club will sell heat sheets at the end of warm ups. Post the first copies of the heat sheets on the back wall of the observation deck and in the corridor. This will give parents a chance to see the events while the sheets are being printed for sale. Concessions sells heat sheets for \$3.00. They should keep the money they collect for heat sheets separate from the funds raised from selling food and drinks.

- Once the food arrives, set up the coaches' luncheon.
- During the meet, help out as needed.
- The meet manager and volunteers should pick up trash, discarded water bottles, etc. during the meet session. A final clean-up should be done after the last event. Chairs should be put back under the staircase after the final session of the day (or the final session of the last day of a two-day meet).

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After the Meet

Follow Up with Volunteers

Write thank you notes via e-mail to all the volunteers. You also can ask the WRAT web editor to post a thank you entry on the website

Review Meet with PET-WRAT Volunteer Coordinator

The meet manager must inform the PET-WRAT Volunteer Coordinator if any changes need to be made to the volunteer registration page on Team Unify. Sometimes parents do not work even though they signed up to volunteer, so they should not be given volunteer points. Other times, parents volunteer at the last minute and they should be added to the Team Unify page so that they get credit for their efforts.

Post-Meet Reports

The Water Rat coaches fill out post-meet reports, which are sent to Connecticut Swimming. The meet manager should check with the coaches to see if they need any information before they fill out their reports.

Submit Receipts

The meet manager must submit all meet receipts to the Parents' Club treasurer along with a detailed explanation and a Check Request Form (available on the team website). The Club carefully tracks meet costs so expenses need to be broken down as much as possible.

Occurrence Reports

If there was an accident or injury during the meet, the meet manager must insure that the safety marshal prepares an incident report (which is attached to this guide). After the meet, the occurrence should be reported via USA Swimming's website.

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Volunteer Job Descriptions

Awards Labeler

During each session, a volunteer places labels on the award ribbons or trophies. The computer operator prints out labels as time permits. The awards labeler then affixes the labels to the back of place ribbons. Later, the labeler puts the ribbons in (pre-marked) bags so that visiting coaches can take them home at the end of the day (or session).

Clean-up

One to two volunteers clean up at the end of the meet. They put chairs under the stairs, collect garbage and help the coaches dismantle the computer and Colorado Timing System.

Computer Operator

Runs the computer that seeds the swimmers in their events and runs the meet in conjunction with the Colorado Timing System operator. The computer operator prints out heat sheets, meet results and award labels. The computer operator requires an assistant to help input scratches and generate print outs.

Concessions Manager

Sells concessions at Water Rat meets, which are held at the Westport Weston Family YMCA. The Club does not budget

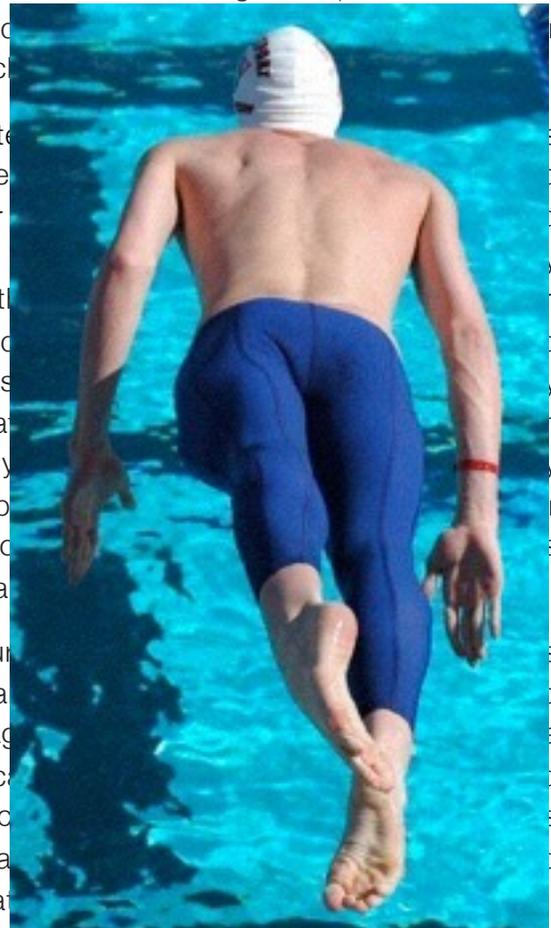
for concessions because it expects the concessions manager, meet manager and assistants to make back any money spent purchasing food and drinks. Hopefully, they can even turn a profit.

Every home meet has a concessions manager, who works with the meet manager on staffing concessions volunteers and setting up the concessions stand. The concessions manager determines what is in the team inventory by asking the concessions chair. Alternatively, the concessions manager can check the Parents' Club storage bin (the head coach

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Quaker Oats bars, fruit, hot dogs and Airheads. The concession manager sometimes gets pizza from Westport Pizzeria. (The owner frequently gives the team a discount for large orders.)

If a lot of food is left over from the coaches' lunch and/or hospitality table, the meet manager may give the concessions manager the leftovers to sell.

At the end of the meet, the concessions manager should take an inventory of leftovers and then clean up the concessions area. Any remaining nonperishable items (drinks, snacks) should be stored in one of the bins that the coaches have reserved for the Parents' Club.

Concession Helper

Helps the concessions manager run the concessions stand. Volunteers sell food, drinks and programs or heat sheets. (We currently only sell heat sheets for \$3.00 each.)

Head Timer/Volunteer Coordinator

A job that combines two important functions: the volunteer coordinator checks in volunteers before the meet. The head timer checks in timers, assigns watches, informs volunteers of the timers' meeting. Later, the head timer takes attendance at the timers' meeting, which is run by an official, and fills in on deck if needed.

Heat Award Distributor

Two heat award distributors are assigned at every session of 8/Under and Age Group meets. These volunteers, who should both stand at the heat end-side of the pool, give out heat awards to the swimmers.

Officials Chair

The Water Rats Parents' Club has an officials chair to help staff our home meets with officials (parents who have been trained and certified by USA Swimming to act as starters, referees, and stroke and turn officials). The meet manager should work with the officials chair while preparing for a home meet. In particular, the officials chair should evaluate the volunteer web page to make sure it lists the correct number of officials.

Runner

One, or two, volunteers are needed at each session to post and distribute heat sheets to coaches and officials on deck. Runners also provide drinks and food to volunteers and coaches working on deck. They collect the timers' sheets after each event and take them to the computer operator, and they post meet results.

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Team Safety Coordinator

The Parents Club has a Team Safety Coordinator, who typically works as safety marshal at one or more sessions of a home meet. The safety chair should help recruit other volunteers to work if she cannot attend all or part of the meet.

USA Swimming requires all swim teams to have safety marshals, who are responsible for safety and first aid. At a minimum, safety volunteers must be non-athlete members of USA Swimming. And it is preferable, but not required, that safety marshals have first-aid training and CPR certification. Although many of our safety volunteers are health care professionals, it is not necessary. All Westport Weston Family YMCA lifeguards have CPR and first-aid training. However, please note all safety marshals must wear a vest so they can easily be identified.

In the event of an accident, the session safety marshal must fill out an Occurrence Report (a copy of which is attached to this guide) and the meet manager should submit it to USA Swimming.

Timer

Timers use stop watches to time swimmers. Although the Water Rats have a Colorado Timing System, the team has two timers at each lane and two backup timers in case the swimmers fail to hit the touch pads. The 8/Under swim meets don't have touch pads because the children are too light to register a touch.

Timers should check in with the head timer/volunteer coordinator during warm up.

Timing System Operator

Runs the Colorado Timing System. (This position frequently is filled by an outside contractor at both the Westport Weston Family YMCA and Wesleyan University.) The Colorado Timing System consists of the touch pads, a timing control board and a laptop computer which integrates the CTS to the main computer.

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Computer and Timing System

Computer Operation

1. Entering Scratches

A. Set Up Team Reports

- i) Click reports
- ii) Click Team (It should read BASIC – Hit OK)
- iii) Print the Teams

B. Scratch Athletes

- i) Click ATHLETES
- ii) Click SORT BY TEAM
- iii) You sort by alphabet on top of screen to find team
- iv) Click on SWIMMER and check scratch boxes as necessary

C. To ADD and EVENT or AMEND an entry – DOUBLE CLICK and change accordingly

2. Seeding Swimmers

A. Click SEEDING

B. Click SELECT ALL

C. Click START SEEDING

NB: Use discretion on how many events to seed. The number will depend on how much time you have before the start of the meet.

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3. Setting Up Time Lane
 - A. Click REPORTS
 - B. Click SESSIONS
 - C. Click on you particular SESSION and hit CREATE REPORT
NB: Give one copy to the meet referee and one copy to the Water Rat head coach

4. Generating Reports (heat sheets or programs)
 - A. Generating Meet Programs
 - i) Hit REPORTS
 - ii) Click MEET PROGRAMS
 - iii) Click SELECT ALL
 - iv) Click CREATE REPORT
NB: Copies should be given to all officials and coaches.
Also have runner post copies on the wall.

 - B. Generating Heat Sheets
 - i) Hit REPORTS
 - ii) Click LANE/TIMER SHEETS
 - iii) Create REPORT
 - iv) Print and give to Head Timer

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5. Moving Events from the Colorado Timing System
 - A. Click RUN
 - B. Select the event you will be pulling times into the computer
 - C. Click HEAT #1 through the number heats you want
(the number blocks in middle of screen)
 - D. Click GET TIMES
Do this for all heats in the events
 - E. Click HEAT for any DQs and enter DQ
 - F. Click HEAT in numerical order and adjust the times with time sheets – either accept or reject adjustments ON HIGHLIGHTED SWIMMERS
 - G. Click SCORE EVENT
 - H. Print
 - I. Go to file and hit backup during the meet and at the end of meet

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Colorado Timing System

Laptop

Get floppy disk from computer operator and insert into drive. Then do the following:

- Pull down meet and download all events.
- Go to Library and select swimming; select name/affiliation. There should now be names on the scoreboard.
- Open Swimming and delete "Event #" and click SAVE. Go to next event and repeat until all events are finished. Eject the floppy and return to computer table. Scoreboard is set.

Once the laptop is set at the start of the meet, there is very little else that needs to be done to it.

During the meet you may want to display a message on the scoreboard. To do so:

- Go to Template and Quick Message.
- Type message and click send. You have the option to loop it and have it play continuously or not to loop.

Before the meet — during warm-ups — you can run a slide show. Open display link and click on designer. Press loop for continuous play and press send all to start. For other shows — open Library. To stop a show that is playing, click on the active display.

For events that are 25 yards only, click on auto switch for each event. This will display the swimmers' names but not the time. We do this because we do not have touch pads on the bulkhead. Remember to click auto switch off when the events change back to 50's or greater.

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Colorado Timing System Console

Once the meet begins, you'll use the CTS console to control most everything. There are three buttons that have to be pushed after each heat: store print, reset, next heat or next event. (Use double fingers, because these last two are a two-unit button.)

Mark each heat by crossing it off your heat sheet (as it is being swum).

Remember to turn lanes off when they are empty. And remember to turn them back on for the next heat.

Each heat has a unique four-digit number, located in the upper left console (upper right on printout). The computer operator may need this information, so note it on the heat sheet.

If you forget to advance to the heat or event, don't panic. The console will flash at you. Press edit, event #, enter, and then heat # and enter, or you can just hit next heat while the kids are swimming.

Young children tend not to hit the pads hard enough to register a touch. This means that the CTS will not advance the lap count automatically. When this happens, you will need to press "+ touch" for the appropriate lane. You may also need to do this for the older kids when they are swimming a 500 free (because fatigue keeps them from touching the wall hard enough to register a lap).

Water Rat Swim Team

Lane Timers Sign-In Sheet

Name

Team

Lane 1: _____

Lane 2: _____

Lane 3: _____

Lane 4: _____

Lane 5: _____

Lane 6: _____

Water Rat Swim Team

Lane Timers Sign-In Sheet

Name

Team

Lane 7: _____

Lane 8: _____

Lane 9: _____

Lane 10: _____

Back-Up: _____

Back-Up: _____
