

Thank you for agreeing to be a Timer for today's meet! Timers are arguably the most important of all of the volunteers. The job is a bit involved, but once you get the hang of it, it's fun and fast paced. Plus, it's the job that lets you watch your own child's heats up close!

A timer's main job is to be a backup system to ensure that every swimmer's true score is recorded. Many swimmers' best times are important for qualifying events, so it is important that each has an accurate time recorded at every meet.

All of the information below will be reviewed the day of the meet before it starts. This information will also be printed and available for you to reference. In addition, there will be head timers and other experienced volunteers available THE WHOLE TIME to help you through this process! It is easier than it seems, so don't worry! It's a lot of fun to be on the deck with the kids during the meet and be part of the action.

Which lane to choose:

- You will be paired with another timer (two timers at each lane). If you are new, please try to pair with an experienced timer.
- New timers should try to stick to outside lanes which may not be as fast paced. Lanes 4, 5, and 6 are typically the busiest lanes and should be reserved for experienced timers or AT LEAST one experienced timer.

Each swimmer's time is protected by Three Lines of Defense:

1. Touchpad- most swimmers' times are recorded on the big screen when he/she touches the underwater touch pad. Notice I said MOST!
2. Plunger- some swimmers are "soft touchers" and may not hit the touchpad hard enough.
3. Stopwatches- once in a while (it happens at every meet), a swimmer does not touch the touch pad hard enough AND the plunger does not record the time. You and your partner will operate 2 stopwatches for each swimmer as a backup system.

As each heat begins:

1. Ask the approaching swimmer their name and match it to your sheet. For example, if Max Freestyle is your swimmer as listed, ask the child, "Are you Max?" Sometimes kids line up out of order or get confused about their heat or lane. If your swimmer is missing, put your hand out over the starting block to signal to the official that you have a no-show swimmer. You do not need to do this if your lane is empty as planned on your sheet. If you have a swimmer who is not supposed to be in your lane, signal a head timer right away.
2. Know what size event you are recording. This will help you grab the plunger and have your hand on your stopwatch at the right time. If it is a 25 meter event, your swimmer will be done with ONE length of the pool. 50s are 2 lengths, 100s are 4 lengths, etc).

3. Pay close attention during 25 meter events- they start at the OPPOSITE end of the pool, with swimmers ending at your end. You will still need to start your stopwatch when the light goes off and the swimmer dives in at the other end of the pool, so know when 25's are coming and plan accordingly. (Note- you will NOT be able to verify swimmers' names for 25's since they start at the opposite end of the pool, but try to ask them when they get OUT of the water at your end to make sure there's no mix ups. These are also the youngest swimmers.)

How to use the stopwatch:

- Ensure that the stopwatch is zeroed out. Press the button on the left to do this.
- Once it is zeroed, watch the announcer's booth once your swimmer is on the block.
- When the swimmer is on the block or next to the block and the LIGHT goes off at the announcer's desk (with the buzzer), hit the button on the RIGHT on ONE stopwatch
- When your swimmer is approaching the end of his/her heat, hit the button on the right AGAIN at the SECOND the swimmer touches the wall (you will need to lean over to see) AT THE SAME TIME you press the plunger (see below).

How and when to hit the plunger:

- You will grab a plunger in your hand as your swimmer approaches the END of their heat.
- Hit this plunger the SECOND the swimmer touches the wall (you will need to lean over to see) AT THE SAME TIME you stop the stopwatch. This will record the swimmer's time on the big screen if he/she did not touch the wall hard enough.

Why you have two stopwatches:

- As your swimmer finishes, DO NOT write down their time right away if you have another swimmer ready on the block. You will need to devote your attention to this new swimmer's start BEFORE recording time for the last swimmer.
- Zero out and start your SECOND timer without clearing the timer corresponding to the swimmer waiting to exit the pool. When the buzzer/light go off, start your SECOND timer for the starting swimmer.
- You will notice that your finished swimmer will remain in the water, waiting for the new swimmer to start before exiting the pool so they aren't in the way.

Recording times:

- Once your starting swimmer is in the water, then put your attention back on your FIRST timer so you can record the exiting swimmer's score on the sheet.
- Record YOUR time as well as the other person's time who is working the lane with you.

- A head timer will come around to collect your sheets at the end of each event. Please let them know right away if there are any discrepancies on the sheet.
- If the swimmer's time does not come up on the big screen, please check the box for Soft Touch.

If you miss a start or your timer malfunctions:

- Flag a head timer AS SOON AS you notice your timer is not working or if you miss the start. He/she will also be keeping time and will trade stopwatches with you on the spot.

Other important pointers:

- You CANNOT touch a swimmer to help them in or out of the pool or onto the block unless it is a LEGITIMATE emergency. Touching a swimmer will disqualify the swimmer and is considered unsafe. If you notice a swimmer is having trouble getting in or out of the pool, flag down the head timer or a coach immediately.
- Try to keep the swimmers behind the chairs so it doesn't get too crowded near the starting blocks. Not only is this confusing for the swimmers and timers, but it gets crowded for the officials who will need to move in and out of this area as well.
- Please do not eat, drink, or check your phone during the meet. If you need to make a phone call, please flag a head timer to relieve you. Please keep your attention on your swimmers.
- You are more than welcome to take a break to watch your swimmer. Please notify the head timer in advance if your child's event is approaching and you want to break from your position.
- Water is allowed and will be provided to you during the meet. Let a head timer know if you need more water.
- Let a head timer know if you need a break to use the restroom, make a phone call, etc.

Have fun and relax...in the end, it's all okay! There are lots of folks nearby to help. Just flag down a head timer or other volunteer if you have any questions.