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NOTICE

Memo from Dan McAllen, Chair, Rules & Regulations Committee regarding: Effective date of Rule 102.24.4D (Adjustment for the Timing System Difference)

Due to technical difficulties, the Rules & Regulations Committee is postponing the effective date of Rule 102.24.4D until further notice. Those who may have downloaded the update to Hy-tec Meet Manager 4.0 sent out on April 30, 2012 should revert to their previous version of Meet Manager.

Online test are now reactivated to coincide with the 2012 rulebook.

To take your test click [here](#). Plus, we are excited to introduce NEW certification tests for Open Water Judge and Open Water Referee

Are you familiar with the new breaststroke interpretation? If not, click [here](#).

Welcome to the new e-newsletter for USA Swimming Officials. The purpose of this newsletter is to provide a foundation that allows for direct on-going communication with each of you. We plan to have articles that cover the technical rules and interpretations, situations, application deadlines for upcoming meets, news from the officials committee, etc. If you have any feedback, comments, or suggestions for stories (or even want to submit an article), please e-mail us at officials@usaswimming.org.

Additionally, The Official's Committee Athlete Representatives created a Facebook page last fall. It's a great way for you to stay up to date and engage in our community. If you haven't signed up yet, we hope you will. Click [here](#) to sign up.

Look forward to hearing from you.
Clark Hammond, National Officials Chair

Determining the Official Time - Timing Corrections

By Jay Thomas

During 2010 and 2011 the Chair of the Rules and Regulations Committee commissioned a Times Correction Task Force. The mission of this Task Force was to examine the methodology for correcting backup system times when integrating them into the final results. After extensive study, the Task Force concluded that the methodology that existed in our rules was sound and did not need to be modified. The purpose of this article is to give the reader some background and practical application of our timing processes as it applies to timing corrections.

Understand the Timing "System" Being Used

A timing "System" is defined by the rules. The system will consist of Automatic, Semi-automatic or manual components. Each will be designated as a Primary, Secondary or Tertiary part of the system and will be used in that order of preference when determining the official time. It is very important that the Referee understands how the timing system is configured for each race. In a perfect world, the system configuration probably won't change throughout a session, or even an entire meet – but it may. Under the rules, the end result of our timing efforts is an "Official Time" which is valid for all purposes (with certain limitations for World, American and U.S. Open Records.)

The Primary System

The Primary system may consist of a device which starts automatically at the start signal and stops automatically when a swimmer touches a pad at the finish. The Primary system may also be a semi-automatic system that starts automatically at the start signal and is stopped manually by two or three (never one)

buttons by individual lane timers at the conclusion of the race. Finally a Primary system may be three manual watches, started and stopped by three individual timers.

The Secondary System

The Secondary system is a backup for the Primary system. The configuration of the Secondary system will depend on the configuration of the primary system. If the Primary system is a touchpad, the secondary system usually consists of one, two or three semi-automatic button devices each operated by separate timers. If the Primary system consists of buttons, the Secondary system consists of one, two or three manual watches each operated by separate timers. If the Primary system consists of three watches, there is no Secondary system.

The Tertiary System

The Tertiary system is a backup for the secondary system. It always consists of one, two or three manual watches. The Tertiary system is not required if the Primary or Secondary system consists of watches.

Determining the Official Time - an Overriding Premise

The overriding premise should be that the Primary system time should always be used as the official time unless the Referee determines that the Primary time is missing or is invalid. This determination should be made by examining all available information: Secondary and Tertiary timing data, manually recorded order of finishes, reports from timers or officials (missed touches), etc. Unless there is clear evidence of a malfunction – the Primary system should be used as the official time.

Don't Perpetuate a Bad Situation – if something isn't right – STOP – get it fixed!

During a meet, a Referee will likely encounter instances where timing corrections become necessary. Some of the causes of these corrections can be head off through preventative measures thereby limiting the number of corrections required.

Pre-Meet – Always check your equipment so make sure it is operating correctly. Any known problems with one or more lanes pads or buttons should be addressed and corrected. Possible solution: encourage facility to acquire replacement equipment or borrow spare equipment. Consider reverting to a semi-automatic system for the meet if a fully automatic system is chronically unreliable, i.e. pads not working properly. If there is an unrepairable problem with one or more lanes, consider seeding the meet excluding those bad lanes or choose a Primary or Backup system which does not rely on the malfunctioning equipment.

During Meet – Recognize problems early and get them fixed. Ensure pre-meet equipment checks are completed, any

issues are noted and corrected. Ensure timers are thoroughly briefed and appear to be attentive and competent. When there appears to be a pad, button or manual timing malfunction occurring during the meet, the meet staff should alert the Referee of the situation so he / she can determine if the situation requires for the meet be stopped until the situation is corrected.

Effects of Human performance on Semi-Automatic and Manual Timing

Any time a human starts or stops a watch, or manually activates a backup button device at the finish, there is the possibility of error. A perfect timer (one who does not anticipate the finish) will have reaction time error – they will be late activating their timing device – and that is OK and expected. In the case of a watch, this reaction error happens at the finish AND at the start. A very attentive timer's watch time will probably be very close to a properly functioning pad time. The timer starts the watch slightly late at the strobe – and stops the watch slightly late at the finish – resulting in a fairly accurate representation of the pad time. In a button system, the start is automatic, and the manually activated finish will be slightly late resulting in a time that is slightly slower than the pad time. The purpose of timing corrections is to attempt to remove the error from that backup timing system prior to the integration of that backup time into the final results.

A Second Overriding Premise – NEVER use suspected INVALID data when performing a computation of a timing system correction.

Determining whether some data may be invalid involves examining a variety of information regarding the race such as – experience of timers, apparent attentiveness of timers, location of start strobe, configuration of pool deck, stroke being swum, condition of equipment, order of finish data, etc. In many situations, simply discarding suspected invalid backup timing data resolves the possible timing system malfunction. Discarding invalid data when calculating timing system corrections will prevent the bad information from skewing correction factors. For examples of timing corrections involving invalid or missing data, look at Appendix 1-A in the 2012 Rule Book.

Conclusion

There are times when, determining the official time can be as much art as science. There are occasions where the process involves determining the best possible solution based on reliable information. There are instances that there might not necessarily be a correct answer – just a best answer. The Referee is responsible for working with the meet host and within the rules to implement processes and procedures to ensure each swimmer receives the time they achieved.

OTS UPDATES - Effective April 12, 2012

You Can Now Verify Background Checks and Athlete Protection Training Status in OTS

Search for Officials Functions for Meets and Reports will now include Background Check Status (expiry date and level) and Athlete Protection Training (expiry date) in addition to Non- Athlete Registration (expiry date) in the returned list of officials.

LSC Officials Chairs will be able to select officials with expired, non-existent or incorrect Registration, Background Check or Athlete Protection Training for inclusion in Officials Detail Reports. The reports will also include the information for all selected officials in all formats.

Please note that officials cannot be added into Meets (Meet Referee, Meet Administrators, Evaluators and officials) if the Registration, Background Check or Athlete Protection Training have expired, or will expire during the proposed meet, are non-existent or the BGC is not level II.

Also, Officials whose Registration, BGC or APT have expired, will not have access to the Officials Tracking System. Data will not be lost -- the official will just not have access until everything is in order.

Officials can review the expiry dates of these items on their USA Swimming Membership Card or by logging into the OTS and viewing "My Certification Card".

NATIONAL CERTIFICATION PROGRAM UPDATES

At the February 2012 USA Swimming National Officials Committee meeting three adjustments were made to the National Official Certification program.

No Starter Evaluations at National Championship Meet Time Trials -

Time Trials at National Championship meets will no longer be used for Starter Advancement or Re-certification evaluations. In the future, experienced N3 Starters (and N3 Deck Referees) from the officials at the meet will be used for time trials. Once selected, they may request "educational" feedback; however, the desire for feedback will not be a consideration for selection.

Rationale – all swimmers at the meet should expect the same standard of officiating and the legacy use of time trials for evaluating of starters has been superseded by the evaluation

and certification procedures.

With this change, the only exception to not using time trials at OQMs for evaluations has been removed.

A Minimum of eight (8) sessions must be worked in a position between evaluations in that position.

This applies to any evaluation/mentoring experience whether “passing” or not. If data in the OTS recorded by meet referees or meet administrators does not show 8 sessions, then sessions at “other meets” recorded by the official (subject to verification) may be considered. The sessions must be at USA Swimming or LSC sanctioned (not observed or approved) meets.

This requirement applies to second and subsequent N2 evaluations, N3 ST evaluations after N2 certification, N3 initial evaluations after N2 certification, and second and subsequent N3 initial evaluations, N3 final evaluations after a satisfactory N3 initial evaluation and second and subsequent N3 final evaluations for each position. There are also other “time served” requirements before applications can be submitted which have not changed.

See the “[National Official Certification Summary](#)” under “NATIONAL CERTIFICATION PROGRAM SUMMARY” on the USA Swimming website.

Rationale – practice after mentoring is an essential part of an official’s knowledge and experience base.

□□□□□□□□ Additional requirements to use evaluations in one position to also re-certify in other positions:

If a Nationally Certified official uses a re-certification (or advancement) evaluation in one position to also re-certify in other positions, the official must also have worked at least 3 sessions in each of the other positions in the 36 months prior to the application.

For example, a Deck Referee re-certification evaluation may be used to also satisfy the evaluation requirements for CJ and Admin Referee re-certification if the official has worked at least 3 sessions as a Chief Judge and 3 sessions as an Administrative Referee (at a meet using National Championship procedures and protocols) at USA Swimming sanctioned meets in the 36 months prior to the recertification application.

Starter re-certification still requires a starter evaluation. Stroke and Turn Judge re-certification does not have the “sessions worked requirement” to use other position evaluations; however, it is strongly recommended that all Nationally Certified officials frequently work as a Stroke or Turn Judge at LSC meets. See the “[National Official Re-Certification](#)”

[Summary](#)” under “NATIONAL CERTIFICATION PROGRAM SUMMARY” on the USA Swimming website.

Additional information on these new requirements, and on many other aspects, of the National Officials Certification program can be found in the” [National Certification FAQs](#)” in the Testing and Certification section of the USA Swimming website.