

Timer's Briefing

- 1) Timers, **THANK YOU** for volunteering to time. You are some of the most important volunteers at the meet. In pretty much every single meet, the timers' times are used to validate, adjust, and/or take the place of a pad time for one or more swimmers. And since every .01 of a second counts, this is a huge deal! (Especially if we have a pad(s) malfunction!)
- 2) Ask, "**Who has timed before?**" so you know who your experienced timers are and who might need additional information and/or instructions.
- 3) Remind the timers that because they are "working" the meet in an official capacity, they **must comply with all aspects of the MAAP (Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention) policy for USA Swimming**. As part of this compliance, they need to stay out of the swimmers' bathrooms and instead **use the bathroom that has been designated for adults who are working the meet**.
- 4) **Do not use your phone in any way while timing**. This is a SafeSport (MAAP) rule and is really important for keeping our swimmers safe. Do not take pictures, videos, text, call, etc. If you need to use your phone, please ask someone to replace you and then **walk away from behind the blocks**. Also, if you see someone else using their phone behind the blocks, please ask them nicely to step away from behind the blocks. Many parents and/or other spectators do not understand this rule, but we do not want our club getting in trouble for a SafeSport violation.
- 5) Please review the functions of your stopwatch. The center button sets the stopwatch mode. The left button resets the time. The right button starts and stops the stopwatch.
- 6) There will usually be one timer's sheet per event and lane. All the heats (1 or more) for that event will be recorded on that sheet. A "runner" will come by after the event is finished to pick up the timer's sheet from you and take it to the AO.
- 7) The event and heat will be announced at the beginning of each race. Please verify that you are recording times on the correct timer's sheet.
- 8) Prior to each race, ask the swimmer his or her name. For example, **do not ask**, "Is your name Jamie?" Swimmers (especially younger ones) tend to say "yes" to anything they do not hear clearly. Instead, ask the swimmer, "**What is your name?**" Then verify that the swimmer's name matches the timer's sheet. If it does not, promptly notify the Deck Referee and Starter.
- 9) **Do not prohibit a swimmer from swimming** if his or her name does not match the one on the timer's sheet or if the timer's sheet does not show a swimmer in your lane for that heat. If you're able to get the Deck Ref's attention, try to do so. But if the race is about to start and you cannot get his or her attention, let the swimmer swim and then have the Head Timer notify the Deck Ref of the discrepancy. Also, **record the swimmer's name on the timer's sheet** for that heat so the AO and Deck Ref know who has swum. Sometimes the AO or Deck Ref has changed a swimmer's heat/lane assignment after the timer's sheets were printed or had to insert a swimmer who missed his heat into an empty lane - and they do not always have an opportunity to inform the timers of this change. Let the swimmer swim, record the name and time, and then let the Deck Ref figure it out later.
- 10) If you are supposed to have a swimmer in your lane and he or she is not present for the race, write "NS" (No Show) for the time on the timer's sheet.
- 11) **Keep "on-deck" swimmers and all parents/spectators behind the blocks** and out of the way of the current heat, the officials, and the timers.
- 12) At the start of the race, step behind the blocks. Watch the strobe light on the Starter's microphone stand and **start your watch when the strobe light flashes**. Since light travels faster than sound, this will give a more accurate time than waiting to hear the starting buzzer and then starting your watch.
- 13) After the race has started, **verify your watch is running**. If you do not start your stopwatch on the strobe, or if there is any other malfunction with the watch, immediately raise your hand and ask the Head Timer for a backup stopwatch. (Just exchange watches with him or her.)

- 14) Make sure you **know the length of the race that is being swum** - 50, 100, 200, 500, etc. - so that you do not stop your watch early for a longer length race.
- 15) To stop your watch accurately, **be at the edge of the pool and looking down** so that you can see your swimmer touch the wall. Standing or sitting behind the blocks is not acceptable. **Stop your watch when any part of the swimmer touches the wall** - but **do not anticipate the touch** and stop your watch early.
- 16) One timer in each lane should record the times from all the stopwatches on the timer's sheet. Be sure to **write legibly** so the AO can read the times easily. The recorder should write his time in the first blank and his partner's time in the next blank. (This way if there is a question, the AO knows which timer they need to address.) All timers should **show the recorder their stopwatches** and allow them to write the time down. **Do not tell the recorder the time - show it!** This helps to prevent errors.
- 17) **Only record times from the stopwatches that have been started and stopped accurately.** Do not record a time if you know it is wrong. Do not estimate a time if you are not sure your watch is correct. Do not record a time from the scoreboard. Even if you only have 1 stopwatch time - or none - do not record anything from a watch that wasn't run correctly.
- 18) **Record the minutes, seconds, and hundredths of a second (.01 sec) from each stopwatch.** If the hundredths digit is a "0", record it so the AO knows you didn't just leave it off. Remember - swimmers fight hard for each .01 they drop - so don't take it away from them by failing to record the time fully.
- 19) **Always start your stopwatch on the strobe light, even if you do not have a swimmer in your lane for that heat.** At any time, your watch may be needed as a backup for another lane.
- 20) **If you have two stopwatches, you will alternate the watches for each heat** - 1) start one for the current race. 2) When the race finishes, and if you don't have time to record the time before the next heat starts, drop that watch and pick up the other one. 3) Start the second watch for the next heat. 4) Go back to the first watch and record the time for the previous heat. Clear the watch. 5) Pick up the second watch again so you are prepared to stop it for the current heat.
- 21) If you have one **backup button** - the timer who is NOT the recorder should run the backup button. **You will ONLY press the button at the END of the race.** DO NOT press it at the beginning of the race. The button will reset and start automatically when the electronic timing pads start. The backup button should be pressed at the same time and under the same conditions as when the stopwatch is stopped. If you have two backup buttons, both timers will need to have a button in addition to their stopwatches.
- 22) **If we are using backstroke ledges**, and the swimmer in your lane has pulled the backstroke ledge down into the pool for the start, please pull it back up on deck after they have left the wall. This way they won't get tangled in it when they come back to the start end.
- 23) **If we are doing flyover starts** and the swimmers are not staying in the pool after their swims, **please tell them to stay in the pool when they finish until the next heat has left.** If we are doing backstroke, they stay in the pool until the first long whistle is blown - this is when the "exchange" of swimmers occurs. We are trying to teach the swimmers good race habits at the local meets so they are prepared for the larger meets when they attend them.
- 24) Ask the **timers who have never timed before to pair up with someone who is experienced** so there is a greater chance of mistakes being prevented by the experienced ones. Also, **ask more experienced timers (especially pairs of experienced timers) to take the middle lanes (3-6) and less experienced timers to take the outer lanes (1-2 and 7-8)** as the lanes are filled from the middle out and the fastest swimmers will always be placed in the inner lanes.
- 25) If you are timing and your child(ren) are younger, please consider asking another parent to help your swimmer(s) throughout the meet so that you do not have to worry about them missing swims, staying hydrated, etc.