**Instructions for Timers**

CHECK IN with the head timer 20 minutes before your shift begins.  The head timer will assign you to your lane and instruct you of your tasks.  The head timer will give one person (the Recorder) a clip board with heat sheets for each event and will give timers a stop watch.

You should also know that the top-seeded swimmers in each heat are assigned to the middle lanes.  These are usually the "scoring lanes"!

Our team uses the COLORADO TIMING SYSTEM.  This system has 3 hanging cords in each lane with a button at the end of each cord.  All timers must hold one of the cords and push the button when their swimmer finishes the race.  Thus, the start is automatic.  The finish is manual.

In addition, two timers must also work a manual STOP WATCH.  The watch has one button for start and stop, and another button for reset.  Practice this before the race, to make sure the watch works properly.  Another timers must RECORD the stop watch time (this person is the RECORDER).  The stop watch is used as a back-up time if the Colorado System  malfunctions.  It is also used as a cross-check if the Colorado System time seems suspicious.  (It is also handy for answering the question, "what's my time?"-- ed.)

TESTING THE SYSTEM.  Before the meet starts, the starter will run one or more practice times, to test the system and make sure everyone and everything is working properly.

\*\*\*The timers need to BE CONSCIENTIOUS about getting times for every swimmer and making sure that the times are accurate.  If the timers are distracted and fail to start and/or stop the stop watch on time, or forget to push the plunger at the end of the race,  the swimmer may be cheated out getting a best time and the team may be cheated out of earning points.  The swimmers work very hard and they depend on the timers to get their correct times at the meets.\*\*\*

CHECK THE NAME.  Before each race, one of the timers should ask the swimmer for their name and make sure that this is the swimmer listed on the timer sheet.  For 8 and Unders, confirm their name at the end of the race, when they get out of the pool, as they will be starting on the other side.  If the swimmer‘s name is different than the name you have listed on your sheet for that particular heat,  cross off the name that was listed and write in the correct name and which team they‘re on.  If the swimmer listed does not show up and no one swims in that heat, cross off the swimmer‘s name on the list and do not enter a time.  Leave it blank or write "No Swimmer" in that space.  It is important that the recorder’s sheet clearly and correctly reflects who swam in each heat and what team they’re on.

"SWIMMERS STEP UP"  The swimmer steps up onto the starting block, or to the edge of the pool.  If your swimmer is delayed -- having trouble with their goggles, for example -- put your hand up so the starter can see you.

"TAKE YOUR MARK"  It is very important for the timers and everyone else in the starting area to STAND BACK, behind the blocks, and STAND STILL!  so the starter can call a fair start and not be distracted by movement in the crowd.

"FLASH/ HONK!"  The stop watch start button must be pushed when the starter starts the race.  There is a LIGHT that flashes and a HORN that goes off to start the race.  The stop watch timers should watch for the light to flash and push the start button when they see the light.  Light travels faster than sound and you will see it before you hear the buzzer.   I recommend holding the watch up in front of the light and let the light and the sound of the horn "scare" my finger to push the button.  The index finger is said to be more reliable than the thumb.

MISSED START.  If the stop watch timer forgets to start the watch when the race begins, he or she should put their hand up for the Head Timer to see.  The Head Timer will get the manual time for the swimmer in that lane.

FINISH.  All timers should push the Colorado System plungers and stop watch buttons at the end of the race.  The stop time is when the swimmer in your lane touches the wall or gutter, or crosses the plane of the wall, reaching over.  Timers should not be concerned if the swimmer does not do the correct touch.  It is someone else’s job to make that determination.  The important thing is to make sure that you are in position to see the finish by going to the edge of the pool, and to record it accurately.

Be careful NOT to push the Colorado System buttons at the START of the race.  They should only be pushed at the END of the race.  However, if you DO push it at the start, push it AGAIN at the end of the race!

KNOW THE NUMBER OF LAPS.  Remember that 15-18 year olds swim 4 laps, so wait until they finish the 4th lap before pushing the button.  Also, all 8 and Under relays and the IM are 4 laps, and 9 and Up relays are 8 laps, so don’t push the buttons until those races are completed.

At the end of every race, the person with the stop watches tells the Recorder the time on the watch.  The recorder writes it next to the swimmer’s name on the heat sheet.  The stop watch timer has to remember to reset the watch for the next race.

8 AND UNDER BACKSTROKE.  When the younger and/or less experienced swimmers are nearing the completion of the back stroke, one of the timers should watch to see if it looks like the swimmer might hit their head on the wall.  If so, put your hand or a kick board between their head and the side of the wall to prevent an injury.

If you have any questions, ask the HEAD TIMER.