# INTRODUCTION 

## TO SWIMMING



September 1, 2023

## WELCOME

Welcome to Swimming Canada and the world of swimming officials.

- This clinic is the first step on the Swimming Canada certification pathway for officials.
- Swimmers train to compete and officials are needed to provide these competition opportunities.
- Being an active official and volunteering your time will help our swimmers in their development.
- Working with other swim officials may encourage you to progress from the local and regional pool deck to officiating at higher levels of competition.


## WELCOME

The goal of any volunteer or official is to contribute to a fair, safe and positive environment.

The goal of this session is to:

1. Begin your journey as a swimming parent/official.
2. Understand the terms used at a swim meet.
3. Understand the role of the other officials on deck.
4. Understand the role of the coach.
5. Understand the key duties of a timekeeper.

## EXCELLENCE IN OFFICIATING

- To ensure fair competition, we follow the rules set by Swimming Canada. These rules are based on the rules from World Aquatics and World Para Swimming (WPS).
- Officials apply the rules in a fair and impartial manner and communicate their interpretation effectively.
- In addition, there is a code of conduct that all officials are expected to follow.
- Some Provincial swimming organizations have their officials sign and acknowledge additional consent forms.


## ROLES

ATA SWIM MEET

## OFFICIALS ON THE POOL DECK

Timekeepers are located behind the starting blocks of their respective lanes at the start/finish end of the pool.


- Timers are responsible for the timing of swimmers using the semi-automatic timing equipment (plungers) and/or watches.
- Two timers per lane are generally required for a session.
- After this clinic, you will be qualified to volunteer as a timer at the next swim meet.


## OFFICIALS ON THE POOL DECK



The Chief Timekeeper (CT) is there to help you as a timekeeper and provide backup as necessary.

- The Chief Timekeeper may be assisted by an Assistant Chief Timekeeper, with each taking responsibility for half the lanes.


## OFFICIALS ON THE POOL DECK

Inspectors of Turns (IT) and Judges of Stroke (JS) are charged with observing the swimmers and reporting infractions of the rules.

- Once you are comfortable as a timer, the next recommended clinic is the Inspector of Turns clinic. Several ITs are needed at a swim meet.
- It is recommended to take the Judge of Stroke clinic after you have had more experience on the deck as an IT.


## OFFICIALS ON THE POOL DECK



Inspectors of Turns are positioned at the start and turn end of the pool.

- ITs observe the starts, turns and finishes.


## OFFICIALS ON THE POOL DECK



Judges of Stroke are positioned along the side of the pool.

- JS observe the stroke portion of each race.
- They may also be responsible for the recall rope.


## RECALL (FALSE START) ROPE

- Located $15 m$ from the start end of the pool.
- Suspended across the pool and lowered into the pool to alert swimmers in the event of a recalled start.



## OFFICIALS ON THE POOL DECK



The Referee is the official with the most authority on deck (the official with the whistle).

The Starter, working with the Referee, is responsible for starting the race and judging the fairness of the start.

## ADDITIONAL OFFICIALS

As well as the officials on the deck, several other officials are needed to run a meet.

The Administration Desk (formerly Clerk of Course) is responsible for organizing the swimmers on the deck.

The Chief Finish Judge / Chief Judge Electronics determines the official times, results and placing of the swimmers.

The Chief Recorder is responsible for compiling the times and generating result printouts using swimming specific software.

## ADDITIONAL OFFICIALS

The Meet Manager is the general manager of the entire competition. They have duties before, during and after the meet. They may have a team to share in the responsibilities.

Other Volunteers - A fully staffed meet may also require an announcer, runners to collect paperwork and post results, and volunteers for food, awards, and fundraising activities.

A swim meet is a major undertaking that requires a significant number of volunteers and officials to get involved.

For a single session in an 8 lane pool, you could have $40+$ volunteers involved.

## OFFICIALS ATTIRE



Black Pants / Shorts / Skirt
Black Shoes


Red Polo
All Other Officials

## THE ROLE OF THE COACH

The role of the coach during a competition is to:

- Provide one-on-one feedback to the swimmer.
- Be the first and last contact with swimmer before and after their swim.
- Advocate for their swimmer.

The Coach will address any questions/concerns with the referee of the session.


## TIMEKEEPER DUTIES

## BEFORE THE SWIM MEET

- As soon as you know that your swimmer will be taking part in the meet, volunteer to help officiate.
- If your club is hosting the meet, parents will be expected to help even when their swimmer isn't swimming.
- Your Club Officials Chair (COC) may receive a request from the host club with a link or email address to sign up.
- Without timers and other officials, meets cannot run. Please sign up early and stick to your commitment.
- Every club needs and appreciates help from other clubs.


## THE DAY OF THE SWIM MEET

Arrive on time and check-in at the Officials room:

- "On Time" means at the start of warmup for the session you are or at the time requested by Meet Management.
- Let the organizer know you are present by signing in.

Attend the officials briefing:

- Conducted by the Referee and/or Chief Timekeeper before the session starts.
- At the briefing, you will find out what is happening during the session.
- Meet the Chief Timekeeper and the team assigned to your lane.


## BEFORE THE SESSION BEGINS

Sign out/pick up a watch (if necessary):

- Secure the watch with the lanyard around your neck.
- Make sure it is working properly.

Pick up your heat sheets and clipboard:

- Make sure that the paperwork you have been given shows the correct events, matches your assigned lane.

Ensure you arrive at your assigned lane at the time requested:

- Stay in that lane until the session is finished.
- Participate in a watch check if watches are being used.


## DURING THE SESSION

Unless advised differently, there is no cell phone use on deck.

- If you require your cell phone, please ensure it is set to vibrate.
- Step off the deck if you need to take a call.

If you have a problem or concern, let the Chief Timer know by raising your hand.

If you need to step away from your lane during the session:

- Let the Chief Timer know and wait for your replacement.
- Please return promptly.


## DURING THE SESSION

Our job as officials is to enable a good competitive environment for the swimmer's best performance.

Please remember:

- Minimize conversation with the swimmers.
- Do not touch the swimmers.

If an athlete requires assistance, please signal their coach or a lifeguard.

## THE TIMING TEAM

There may be 1, 2 or 3 officials assigned to a particular lane.

## Timekeepers

- Operate the stopwatch and/or plungers and may also record times.


## The Recorder

- Confirms the names of the swimmers in their lane.
- Writes the finish and split times accurately and legibly on the paperwork.


## Inspectors of Turns

- Trained to judge the starts, turns and finishes but may also be assigned timing duties.


## BEFORE THE RACE (II.2.9.1)

Swimmers will arrive behind the blocks and present themselves to you in advance of their race.

Ensure that you have the correct swimmer in the correct heat and lane by:

- Asking the swimmer for their name.
- Checking against the provided paperwork.
- Report any discrepancies to the Chief Timer by raising your hand.
- If a swimmer does not report for their race, record "NS" (No Show) on the paperwork.


## THE START (II.4.1 \& II.4.2)

On the referee's long whistle:

- Swimmers will mount the blocks; or
- In backstroke events enter the water.

The Referee will give control of the race to the Starter by extending their arm.
If a swimmer arrives after the race is under the Starter's control:

- Ask the swimmer to wait.
- Tell the Chief Timekeeper or Referee.
- The Referee may accommodate the swimmer in a later heat.


## STOPWATCH OPERATION



Split - When the watch is running:

- Push once to "pause" the running time.
- Record the split time
- Push again to resume the running time.

Reset - When the watch is stopped:

- Push this button to reset the watch to zero.


## Start / Stop Button

Start - From zero:

- Push once to start the watch.
- Start the watch with the flash of the starting device.

Stop - When the watch is running:

- Push this button to stop the watch
- Only stop the watch at the end of the race
- Record the finish time.


## STARTING YOUR WATCH (II.2.9.2 \& II.C2.9.2.1)

Stopwatches are an approved timing device started and stopped by the Timekeeper and used to time a race to $1 / 100$ th of a second.

To start the stopwatch:

- Position yourself so you can see the flash from the starting device.
- Hold the watch firmly and motionless and use the same finger to start and stop your watch.
- Start the watch on the flash of the strobe from the starting device.
- Start your watch even if you do not have a swimmer.
- If your watch doesn't start, raise your hand and let your Chief Timekeeper know.


## STARTING DEVICE

- An electronic device which signals the start of the race with both sound and light



## STOPPING YOUR WATCH (II.2.9.3)

To stop the stopwatch:

- Position yourself right at the edge of the pool (without stepping on the touchpad).
- Be sure you have an unobstructed view of the pool wall or touchpad.
- Look down over your lane at the finish end of the pool.
- Stop the watch or depress your plunger when any part of the swimmer's body touches the wall.
- Don't anticipate the touch.


## RECORDING YOUR TIME (II.2.9.3)

Times may be recorded on a card, on a meet program or on a lane timer sheet.

- Times are to be recorded to $1 / 100$ s of a second ie. "2:01.31" or " 59.45 ".
- If the swimmer did not swim, record NS (No Show/Swim).
- If you are unable to record an accurate time for any reason, record NT (No Time).
- If the swimmer does not finish the race for any reason, record DNF (Did Not Finish).
- Once the time (or NS, NT, DNF) is properly recorded or at the referee's short whistle, clear your watch and prepare for the next race.

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| Lane | Heat 3 | Gage. .ral 14 | PSC | ${ }_{2}: 1434$ |  |  |  | $\square$ |
| Lane | Heat 4 | Fulfort Kate 13 | Tsc | 2.1246 |  |  |  | $\square$ |
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Lane/timer sheets list all the swimmers assigned to a specific lane.

- Stopwatch times are recorded for each race on the sheet.
- Each timer should put their initials at the top of one column and always record times in that column.
- Generally used in manual meets.


## HEAT SHEETS



Heat sheets list the events, heats and lane assignments for the swimmers in one session.

- Stopwatch times may be recorded on a heat sheet.
- Be sure to write the lane number on the top of the page.


## SWIM MEET TIMING SYSTEMS

## Manual timing

- Stopwatches \& lane/timer sheets or time cards are used to record swimmer times.


## Electronic timing

- An electronic system is used to record swimmer times.
- May include touchpads, plungers or wireless stopwatches.
- Stopwatches may be used as a backup if there is a failure of the electronic timing system.
- At the Toronto Pan Am Pool a high speed video (HSV) system may be used as a backup to the electronic timing system instead of timers and watches.


## ELECTRONIC/AUTOMATIC TIMING

Touchpads are part of the automatic timing system.

- Located in the pool at the end of each lane.
- Record a time when a swimmer touches the touchpad.
- Ensure you do not step on the touchpads when taking a time.



## ELECTRONIC/AUTOMATIC TIMING

Plungers/buttons are part of a semi-automatic timing system.

- Timing starts electronically with the starting system.
- Finish time is recorded when the timer pushes the button.
- Please handle this equipment with care.




## TIMING HIERACHY(II.13.1 \& II.13.2)

1. Automatic Officiating System - times recorded by the touchpads.
2. Semi-Automatic Officiating System - times recorded by the timers operating plungers/buttons to provide a backup to the touchpads.
3. Manual Officiating System - times recorded by the timers operating stopwatches to provide a backup to the automatic and semi-automatic systems.

## SPLITS (II.2.9.2 \& II.C2.9.2.1)

A Split Time is a time recorded at an interval shorter than the total distance of the race (ie. record a time at 100 m in a 200 m race)

- Timers may be asked to take the split time at each turn in the race.
- This is typically requested in distance events $(800 \mathrm{~m} \& 1500 \mathrm{~m})$.

For an Official Split, all timers will take and record the time at the requested distance as instructed by the referee or chief timer.

- This time becomes an official time recorded in the meet results.
- Coaches can request an Official Split for races longer than 100 m .
- An official split is always recorded for the first swimmer of a relay (except for Mixed Relays).


## DISTANCE EVENTS

Distance events are the 800 m and 1500 m freestyle.
At a short course competition ( 25 m pool):

- 800 m event is 32 laps of the pool.
- 1500 m event is 60 laps of the pool.

At a long course competition ( 50 m pool):

- 800 m event is 16 laps of the pool.
- 1500 m event is 30 laps of the pool.

Most major international events are held in a long course pool.


## DISTANCE EVENTS

During distance events you may be asked to record split times on a counter sheet for each lap.

- The splits times may be stopwatch or scoreboard times.
- Helps to keep track of the distance the swimmer has completed.
- If you miss a split, make sure to record "NT" for that lap.



## DISTANCE EVENTS - THE BELL LAP

The "Bell Lap" refers to the ringing of the bell to alert the swimmer that they have 2 more lengths to complete in the race.

- It is recommended that all officials in the lane count laps.
- The Timekeeper or Inspector of Turns may be responsible for ringing the bell.

In short course (SC) events the bell is rung:

- At 750 m of an 800 m race and 1450 m of an 1500 m race.

In long course (LC) events the bell is rung:

- At the 700 m of an 800 m race or 1400 m of an race.


## THE BELL LAP (cont'd)

The bell is to be rung continuously over the right hand lane rope (your right):

- Begin ringing from 5m (backstroke flags) as the swimmer comes into their last turn.
- Continue ringing as the swimmer turns, until the swimmer has reached 5 m after the turn.
- Do not ring the bell directly over the swimmer to prevent any mishaps with broken or dropped bells.

Note: A very common error by an official is failing to ring the bell at the appropriate point in the race.


## PARA SWIMMING AND TIMING

Some meets may include para swimmers.

- They are identified by having their class beside their names (e.g., S8, SB7, SM8) on the heat sheet.
- The rules pertaining to judging the start, strokes and turns of para swimming athletes may be different.
- If para swimmers are participating in the session, the Referee or Chief Timekeeper will explain any additional information you may need.


## PARA SWIMMING AND TIMING

As a timer, you should be aware that:

- Para swimmers may start in the water or beside the blocks.
- Para athletes may require help from an assistant for a start and during the race. For example, a visually impaired swimmer may require a "tapper" to identify when they are reaching the end of the pool.
- When an assistant is present please give them the room required to assist their athletes.


## KEY TERMS

## KEY TERMS

Session - A combination of events and heats for a group of swimmers to compete in over a continuous time period of typically no more than 4.5 hours.

Warm-up - The period of time before the session begins when the swimmers warm-up in the pool as a group before the competition.

## KEY TERMS (cont'd)

Backstroke flags - Suspended across the pool, the backstroke flags are located 5 metres from the start and turn end of the pool. The backstroke flags are a visual aid to backstroke swimmers.

Bulkhead - A bulkhead is a raised wall found at the end of a pool. It is often movable to allow a 50 m pool to be divided into two 25 m courses. Turn judges will stand on the bulkhead to observe the swimmers.

Starting Blocks - The starting blocks are located at the start end of the pool. A second set of starting blocks may be located at the turn end of a 50 m pool.


## KEY TERMS (cont'd)

## Minutes Hundredeths <br>  <br> Seconds

Official Time - The final time given to a swimmer.
Split Times - A time which is recorded part way through a race and at an interval shorter than the total distance of the race.

Entry Times - Also referred to as a Seed Time, this is the time a swimmer has previously achieved in a given event.

Qualifying Time - A set time a swimmer must achieve to be eligible to enter into an event in a given competition.

## KEY TERMS (cont'd)

Event - An event is a group of races that have the same distance, stroke, gender and age group defined. Each event will typically have a number assigned to it.

Heat - Swimmers are sorted into groups called heats based on their entry time for the event. Heats typically include a maximum number of swimmers equal to the number of lanes in the pool ( 6,8 or 10) who will swim together in one race.

Lane - Each swimmer is assigned a lane and need to start and finish their race in that lane. Lanes are numbered from 1 to 6 (six lane pool), 1 to 8 (eight lane pool) or 0 to 9 (in a ten lane pool) from right to left when standing behind the starting blocks.

## KEY TERMS (cont'd)

Meet Manager Software - A software program (in Canada this is typically HyTek Meet Manager or SPLASH) used to organize the swim meet and generate the required printouts and results. Timekeepers may be provided with printed heat sheets and/or lane timer sheets to identify lane assignments and record times from this software.

QUIZ

## QUESTION 1

The correct dress code for Timekeepers is:
a) white shirt and white pants
b) white shirt and black pants
c) red polo shirt and black pants

## QUESTION 2

Before a meet, you should report to the designated officials' area (choose all that are correct):
a) in time for the first race
b) at the time requested by the meet manager
c) two hours before the start of the meet
d) at the start of warm up unless otherwise instructed

## QUESTION 3

After taking your manual digital watch, you should (choose all that are correct):
a) secure the lanyard around your neck
b) make sure the batteries are charged and video display works
c) test operational features (start, stop, split etc.)
d) all of the above

## QUESTION 4

Ideally, as a timer you should be stationed:
a) on the deck at the finish end of your assigned lane
b) on the side deck, midway along the pool
c) in the bleachers, at the finish end of the pool

## QUESTION 5

If a swimmer reports to your lane after the race is under Starter's control, you should (choose all that are correct):
a) wait until the race has started and then inform the Referee through the Chief Timekeeper
b) wave your hands and shout to get the Starter's attention
c) put the swimmer into the next available empty lane
d) direct the swimmer to wait and not interrupt the start

## QUESTION 6

As soon as you become aware that you have an incorrect swimmer in a particular heat, you should:
a) inform the Chief Timekeeper and/or Referee
b) adjust the time card
c) do nothing
d) inform the Chief Finish Judge

## QUESTION 7

At the commencement of the race, you should start your watch (choose all that are correct):
a) when the swimmer leaves the block
b) at the sound of the horn
c) at the flash of the strobe light on the automatic system
d) whether your lane is occupied or not

## QUESTION 8

When starting or stopping a manual digital watch, you should (choose all that are correct):
a) swing it in an arc;
b) snap your wrist as you depress the button
c) hold it firmly and motionless
d) use the same finger to start and stop it
e) only stop a watch that you start

## QUESTION 9

If you missed a start, or the watch malfunctions during a race or you failed to get a finish time, you should (choose all that are correct):
a) report to the Chief Timekeeper
b) record the same time as another timer on your lane
c) record NO TIME (NT) for your watch
d) record an estimated time
e) record the time on the automatic system scoreboard

## QUESTION 10

For the finish of a race, you should position yourself:
a) with your foot on top of the touchpad
b) looking down over your lane, at the finish end of the pool
c) seated behind the starting block of your assigned lane

## QUESTION 11

When the required distance has been completed, you should stop your watch when:
a) the swimmer's hand touches the end wall of the pool
b) any part of the swimmer's body touches the end wall
c) the swimmer makes contact with the touch-pad
d) the swimmer touches with one hand on the breast stroke
e) all of the above

## QUESTION 12

If the swimmer in your lane does not finish the required distance, you should:
a) report Did Not Finish (DNF) on the time card
b) record what time the swimmer left the water
c) record what time the swimmer stopped swimming

## QUESTION 13

If your manual digital watch reads two minutes, ten seconds and one-one hundredth, the correct time to record on the time card is:
a) $2: 10.01$
b) $2: 10.0$
c) $2: 10$

## QUESTION 14

If the swimmer in your lane is disqualified for any reason, you should:
a) record their finish time anyway
b) tell the swimmer their finish time but don't record the time
c) record the time when the disqualification took place

## QUESTION 15

When semi-electronic equipment is in use, the timer shall:
a) press the plunger with the flash from the starter
b) use the device to record the split time (if assigned)
c) use the device to record the finish time
d) $a \& c$
e) $b \& c$

## QUESTION 16

The correct time to clear your watch is:
a) when your Chief Timekeeper tells you
b) if you are not instructed, then when the Referee blows their whistle to put the swimmers on the blocks for the next heat
c) when the Starter says "take your marks"
d) after you are sure that your time is recorded properly on the time card
e) whenever your time is substantially different from the other timers

## QUESTION 17

When ringing the bell lap, you should (choose all that are correct):
a) ring the bell as the swimmer approaches the wall (from backstroke flags to the wall and back to the backstroke flags)
b) ring the bell over the right hand lane rope
c) ring the bell throughout the last lap of the race
d) ring the bell after direction from the Referee \& Chief Timekeeper

## CONGRATULATIONS

You have now completed the Introduction to Swimming Officiating clinic.
Your next steps are to:

1. Complete the Safety Marshal clinic - Available through the LMS

- 10 mins to complete - no quiz

2. Complete your registration in the Swimming Canada Officials Registration System.
3. Obtain deck experience as a Timekeeper.

