

Guide to Timekeeping

Before the race

- Once the pool is cleared to start the competition, Timekeepers should be seated and ready. Hold the watch in a position most comfortable in the hand. Check the watch is reset to zero before the first race.

At the start

- Do not watch the starter (as this may cause the start to be anticipated and the watch activated before the starting signal etc) but listen for the start sound (which can be by siren, hooter, whistle, or even voice!).
- It is important that Timekeepers all start their watches on the same signal.
- Start and stop the watch with a finger or thumb movement only. A sweeping movement with the arm looks very dramatic but causes inaccuracy.
- Once the race has started check to make sure the watch is running.
- If a watch malfunctions, does not start, or was started late or early, Timekeepers should stand immediately to attract the attention of the Chief Timekeeper who will assign a replacement Timekeeper or replacement watch for that race.
- Timekeepers should start their watch for every race – even if there is no swimmer in their lane. This is because you may be required for a lane where a Timekeeper's watch has malfunctioned.

During the race

- The first swimmer in a relay can request to be timed separately.
- Timekeepers need to count the laps to be ready to take the time at the finish.
- In long races it is important to periodically check that the watch is still running.

At the Finish

- Check the watch at the last lap before the leading swimmer is due to finish – this allows sufficient time for a replacement should a problem have occurred with the watch.
- During the last few metres Timekeepers should NOT watch the swimmer - the eyes should be focused straight down at the end of the pool (the wall!) in your assigned lane, and the watch stopped when any part of the swimmer touches the wall.
- If the touch is incorrect, this is not the Timekeepers concern.
- Timekeepers should maintain their position to ensure an accurate recording of the performance. Do not step back or take the time from the side of the pool to avoid getting wet – it's one of the hazards of the job!
- Once the watch has been stopped, Timekeepers should return to their seats without delay, check their watch and record the time.
- The Chief Lane Timekeeper or scribe (the person writing the times onto the card) will record the times on the appropriate form and then determine the official time.
- The only people permitted to inspect times on watches are the Chief Lane Timekeeper, Chief Timekeeper, and the Referee.
- Watches should be reset on the Referee's whistle for the start of the next race.