



Instructions for Timers

It is the responsibility of each team to provide timers. There are three timers and one scribe (optional) in each lane.

At the start of the race:

- Head timer will remind timers to clear the watches.
- Referee will blow the whistle to signal the next race is ready to begin.
- Starter will call the swimmers to the blocks, instruct them on what stroke, heat, or event they are swimming and then give them the command “take your mark”.
- Watch the starting panel and start the watch when you see the strobe light flash. Use the index finger to start the stopwatch; its reactions are faster than the thumb.
- If the swimmers are called back, remember to stop, clear, and reset the watch.

At the finish of the race:

- Position yourself where you can lean over the water and see the swimmer’s hands touch the end of the pool.
- Stop the watch when any part of the swimmer touches the end of the pool. You do not have to worry about whether the touch was proper and legal.
- Turn and give the time to the scribe (or one of the three timers acting as the scribe). Read the complete time on the watch (seconds and fractions). Time should be recorded to hundredths of a second (i.e. 1:57.22). This helps avoid transcribing errors. Record each timer’s time in the same order each time. This helps identify problems such as a bad watch.
- Make sure the time was recorded correctly and then clear and reset the watch upon the referee’s whistle or the head timer’s command.

Other things to think about:

- **Always ask the swimmer his/her name and make sure it matches the name on the card or land timer sheet. ALWAYS do this at the beginning of the 50’s or at the end of the 25’s. If there is a discrepancy, get it resolved.**
- Everyone should watch for the swimmer in the next heat and help them get to the blocks. The crowd can be intimidating for the small children.
- Stand behind the blocks during the start so the swimmers do not feel crowded and the starter has a clear view. For older swimmers, you may need to stand on the back of the block to help stabilize the block so the swimmer gets a fair start.
- If a start is missed or the watch has a malfunction, raise your hand and get one of the backup watches.
- If there is no swimmer in your lane, start the watch anyway. It may be needed as a backup time for another lane.



Northwest Aquatic League
Training and Certification

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- Only record valid times. If you have a malfunction or know the time is not a good time, do not record it and leave a blank where the time is normally recorded.