

## TIMERS - BAYOU SWIM LEAGUE

Other than winning the race or scoring points for their team, the most important part of a swimmer's race is knowing with confidence how long she/he took to swim that event-- their official time! Although there is usually only one first place winner in a race, each swimmer who participates legally achieves an official time. The swimmer's time could meet the qualification standards for future competition, set a record, or it could simply be that swimmer's Personal Best. Regardless, our responsibility as timing officials is to provide each swimmer with an accurate, valid, official time. The rules of BSL specify that, "No swimmer shall be required to re-swim a race due to equipment failure which results in unrecorded or inaccurate time or place." So, the Timers have one of the most important jobs at a swim meet!

### Timing System

The BSL currently uses only manual timing as its primary timing system to obtain official time. Manual timing requires the use of hand-held, battery powered, digital read-out stopwatches. Digital wristwatches, cell phone timers, or dial watches are not permitted. Lane timers perform the "start" and "stop" actions.

At least two watches per lane (two lane timers) must be used. Three watches per lane are highly preferable and should be used whenever possible (i.e. tri meets). Three watches per lane are required for Championship meets.

Because of the critical importance of times, many people are involved in determining the official time for each swimmer. The following is a brief description of each person's duties.

- Lane Timer -- A lane timer starts and stops one watch in a lane. A Lane Timer may not operate two watches at the same time. The Lane Timers will be assigned to lanes by the host team, and each lane's timers cannot all be from the same team.
- Head Lane Timer -- In addition to performing the duties of a Lane Timer, the Head Lane Timer also records the watch times from that lane on the timing sheet, and verifies the proper swimmers are competing in his/her lane.
- Chief (Head) Timer -- This person is responsible for all the Lane Timers. In addition to assuring the Lane Timers are properly briefed prior to each session, the Chief Timer supervises the timers during the session, collects timing sheets, and starts additional watch(es) to be used as a substitute in the event a Lane Timer's watch fails.

### Review of Timing Rules

1. Chief Timer: Recommended. The Chief Judge or Referee may perform the duties of a Chief Timer if it does not interfere with their other duties. If assigned, he/she shall:
  - a. Assign, brief, and supervise Lane Timers.
  - b. On the starting signal, start a watch(es) on every race. The time of this watch(es) shall be used if a Lane Timer's watch fails.
  - c. Coordinate delivery of timing sheets to the Administrative Personnel (usually via runners).
2. Lane Timers
  - a. Two (2) timers are required per lane for all meets except the Championship Meet, which requires three (3) timers per lane.

- b. A lane timer may operate only one watch at a time.
- c. A lane may not be timed by timers from only one team.
  - i. 2 timers per lane: 1 host team timer, 1 visiting team timer
  - ii. 3 timers per lane: 1 timer from 3 different teams or, for dual meets, at least 1 timer from host team.
- d. The head lane timer should verify the identity of the swimmer(s) in his/her lane for each event and heat.
- e. It is not within the lane timer's jurisdiction to judge if the swimmer's touch conforms to the applicable finish rules or if a relay take-off infraction has occurred unless assigned concurrent responsibility as a Lane Timer and Turn Judge or Relay Take-off Judge.
- f. Each Timer shall:
  - i. Be in position at the start to have an unobstructed view and shall start the watch at the instant of observing the visual starting signal. If the visual starting signal is not observed, the watch shall be started upon hearing the starting signal.
  - ii. Stand directly over the assigned lane at the finish to observe a touch above, at, or below the surface of the water and stop the watch when any part of the swimmer's body touches the wall.
  - iii. Record the watch time accurately, and, if requested, present the watch for inspection. Lane Timers shall not clear their watches until the Referee, Starter, or Announcer signals that the next heat is ready to start, or a command to "clear watches" is given.

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR LANE TIMERS

1. The Lane Timers should decide who performs as the head Lane Timer.
2. A lane must not have all timers from the same team.
3. Remember that timing is one of the most important positions at the meet. Your focus and accuracy are needed to determine a swimmer's Official Time, particularly because BSL has no back-up timing system.
4. Never operate two watches at the same time. If a lane is lacking the minimum number of timers, the event/heat may not begin.
5. Become familiar with the watch you are given. In particular, know which button starts, stops and clears (resets) the watch. Start and stop the watch with the same finger.
6. The head Lane Timer should verify the proper swimmer for each heat, preferably by asking for the swimmer's name, before or after the heat (depending on distance). For relays, the team and the order in which the swimmers compete should be checked.
7. Avoid engaging in unnecessary conversation with swimmers prior to their race unless they initiate the conversation.
8. Keep order by asking swimmers not in the current heat to stay behind you so that you can see the starting signal.
9. Prior to the race you should be sitting or standing far enough back so you will not distract the Starter or competing swimmers.
10. The Chief Timer will signal when you and other timers are ready.

11. At the start, make sure you can see the starting device (strobe light) and start your watch upon seeing that signal, rather than the sound. *Never ask a swimmer who is about to start to move just so that you can see the strobe light.* If necessary in this case, start on the sound.
12. Once each heat has started, look at your watch immediately and check to be sure your watch is running. If it is not, if you forgot to start, or you think you started it late (or if you forgot to stop the watch), signal the Chief Timer by raising your hand with the watch showing.
13. As the swimmer approaches the finish, stand up and ensure you walk to the edge of the pool. You must be looking down, right over the forward edge to see an underwater or overwater touch. Observe how fast the swimmer is coming in.
14. Once the swimmer is past the flags nearest you, stop watching the swimmer and look down for the underwater or overwater touch. Expect to get wet. Stop your watch when *any part* of the swimmer's body touches the wall. You are not concerned with whether the finish was legal. Don't anticipate! Stop the watch when you see the touch.
15. Times should always be recorded immediately. Do not worry with decimals and colons; you can fill those in while the next heat is running. The goal is to get an accurate time, then to record it quickly. Athletes in the next heat and/or other Officials should not have to wait more than a few seconds for times to be recorded.
16. Times are recorded to the hundredths of a second (two decimal places), and in the same order for each heat.
17. Initial all timing sheets.
18. If there is no one in the lane, record "No Swimmer" as N/S or DNS ("did not swim").
19. If your swimmer fails to complete the race, record DNF ("did not finish").
20. Clear your watch only after confirming its time has been accurately recorded, and then look over to the Chief Timer.
21. Stay focused on your duties, particularly during the start and finish. Avoid chatting or excessive cheering, as this may be distracting to other timers or swimmers.
22. Do not get distracted! KEEP YOUR CHILDREN AND FRIENDS away from the timing area. It is easy to lose focus by your own child, watching an exciting race in another lane, conversing with swimmers or other people, or by loud fans. You must get an accurate time for the lane you are timing for EVERY swimmer. If your child is swimming in another lane while you are timing, you must not observe them until you have given your lane a fair start and finish. (This is one of the biggest causes of missed or unfair times.)
23. Arrive promptly before your shift. Do not leave your shift until you are relieved.