

Timekeeper Instructions

Updated October 2023

The following are instructions and information for members to assist in a timekeeping role at swimming competitions (meets). The Club needs to supply timekeepers for every meet our swimmers attend. We greatly appreciate all those who make themselves available to help.

1. Please wear anything comfortable. Footwear – your feet will get wet. Some people prefer to wear jandals or open sandals rather than stay in wet shoes for a whole session. However, footwear also needs to be non-slip. Trousers will also get wet, so lightweight material that dries quickly is best. A towel can also be handy if you get splashed or need to dry your seat.
2. Entry fees for spectators are charged at most pools during a swimming event. If an entry fee is charged, tell reception you are an official at the event. You should not have to pay.
3. Once inside the pool area you need to find the desk with the Chief Timekeeper – this should be easy to spot as the desk will have stopwatches on it.
4. Check in with the Chief Timekeeper 30 minutes before the session is due to start. Tell them you are from Evolution and that you would like to time-keep. When the EVO Official's Convener has accepted your offer of timekeeping, it does not mean a slot has been booked for you at the meet. This is only done when you check in with the Chief Timekeeper. If you are not qualified and have not time-kept at a meet before, please ask them to put you with a qualified timekeeper. The ideal scenario is to have three timekeepers per lane, but it is often two, and sometimes there will only be one per lane. Don't panic!! At most events, electronic timing is used and these are the official times that are recorded. Timekeepers are in case of electronic failure. This rarely happens.
5. It is possible that when you check in there may be too many timekeepers and you are not allocated a lane. In this situation, speak to those timekeepers from Evolution as they may want to work in shifts, which gives everyone a break.
6. The Chief Timekeeper will write your name on the lane sheet and tell you which lane you will be recording. It is tempting to ask for an outside lane as these lanes are more likely to have no swimmers, but be aware that as these lanes may have slower swimmers, there is less of a turnaround time between swimmers finishing and starting races to record times.
7. The Chief Timekeeper will then issue you with a stopwatch and may also record the number on the back of the watch against your name.
8. Go to your lane and be seated before racing starts.
9. On each lane there will be a clipboard, pencil, and a list of all the swimmers in your lane for that session.
10. When a swimmer comes to your lane check off their name, This is very important with the younger swimmers, as they are often unsure and will relax once they know they are in

the right place. Additionally, confirm with younger swimmers what event they are doing. Older swimmers can also make mistakes. This sometimes happens when there are empty lanes. If you have several swimmers waiting, and a race where you have no swimmer, make sure no one enters the water, thinking it is their race.

11. At the beginning of each race it is best to stare at the floor waiting for the starting signal – this aids concentration and stops you from pre-empting the start. When you hear the start signal, start the watch. Check your watch immediately to make sure it has started. If for any reason it has not started, or you feel you have started it incorrectly, raise your hand and the Chief Timekeeper will replace your watch with theirs. They start an extra two watches at the beginning of each race for just this purpose – we have all done it.

12. At the end of the race stand at the end of the pool and look down at the wall (not the swimmer) – this aids concentration and stops you from pre-empting the finish. Stop the watch as soon as the swimmer touches the wall. If electronic touchpads are in use, an electronic button dangles over the poolside, next to the blocks, and is attached to the electronic touch pads in the water. You must pick up the electronic button in one hand with the stopwatch in the other as you wait for the swimmer to finish. You then press them simultaneously when the swimmer touches the wall.

13. The most experienced timekeeper normally records the times. If there are three timekeepers and no electronic timing, all three times are recorded and the middle time is circled as being the official time e.g. 2:10.59, 2:15.00, 2:28.35 official time 2:15.00. If there are only two timekeepers, both times are recorded and the average will be worked out later by the Recorder.

14. When timing longer races (200 upwards) it is often helpful to mark on the sheet each 50 as the swimmer completes it e.g in a 200m race 1 = 50m, 11 = 100m, 111 = 150m, then once you have 111 on your sheet you know that the next time the swimmer comes to the wall they have finished.

15. Once all the swimmers on your page have raced, the person who has recorded the times signs the sheet and it is collected by the Chief Timekeeper. It is handy to record the last swimmer's time on your new sheet as most swimmers will ask their time when they get out of the pool and often the sheet has been collected before they see it.

16. At the end of the session return the clipboard, pencil, and stopwatch to the Chief Timekeeper.

Additional Information

17. If at any time you need to go to the toilet, raise your hand and the Chief Timekeeper will replace you until you return.

18. Normally water bottles are provided on each lane and food and/or sweets are brought around during the session.

19. You are expected to stay until the end of the session in which you are timekeeping even if your child has finished swimming for that session.

20. Once you have time-kept for a few sessions please contact me and I will arrange for you to sit a small test (which is incredibly easy once you have time-kept already) to become an official time-keeper. You will then be registered by the Club with Swimming BOP and issued with an officials badge.

Thank you

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