



# INTRODUCTION TO SWIMMING OFFICIATING

October 16, 2015



## 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.



## THE PROFESSIONAL OFFICIAL

- As an official, an individual must operate from a strong base. That base is made up of two factors – one is the authority of the rulebook and the other is the basic philosophy that the officials conduct the competition in accordance with the rules.
- The official's job is to uphold the rules by applying them equitably and communicating their interpretation effectively.
- There is a code of conduct expected for all officials to follow. Some Provincial Swimming bodies have all their officials sign and acknowledge a Code of Conduct.



## OFFICIALS ATTIRE



White T-Shirt

Timekeepers & Chief Timekeepers



Black Pants / Shorts / Skirt

Black Shoes



Red Polo

All Other Officials

## OFFICIALS ON THE DECK



Each of the volunteers on deck will have a specific role or assignment. The following are some of the major officials required to run an effective swim meet.

**The Referee** - The Referee is the most senior officiating position on deck (the one with the whistle). The other officials on deck are accountable to the Referee.

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

## OFFICIALS ON THE DECK (CONT'D)



**The Timekeepers** - The Timekeepers (or "timers", for short) are located behind the starting blocks of their respective lanes at the start end of the pool and are responsible for the timing of swimmers using the semi-automatic timing equipment (plungers) and / or watches. Up to 16 required for a session.

**Chief Timekeeper** - The Chief Timekeeper is in charge of the timekeepers and provides assistance to them. In a fully staffed meet the Chief Timekeeper may be assisted by an Assistant Chief Timekeeper, with each taking responsibility for half the lanes.

**Clerk of Course** - The Clerk of Course is responsible for organizing and marshalling the swimmers on deck, seeding or reseeding heats and if instructed by the Referee, may combine heats where there are empty lanes.

## OFFICIALS ON THE DECK (CONT'D)



**Judges of Strokes and Inspectors of Turns** – Stroke and Turn judges are charged with observing the swimmers and reporting infractions of the rules of each stroke. Turn judges will be positioned at the start and turn end of the pool and Judges of Strokes along the side of the pool and are charged with judging the swimmers compliance with the rules of each stroke.

**Chief Finish Judge** - The Chief Finish Judge determines the official times, results and placing of the swimmers.

**Control Room Supervisor** – The Control Room Supervisor determines the official times, results and placing of the swimmers when electronic timing equipment is in use. The Control Room Supervisor oversees the operation of the Automatic Timing system.

## OFFICIALS ON THE DECK (CONT'D)



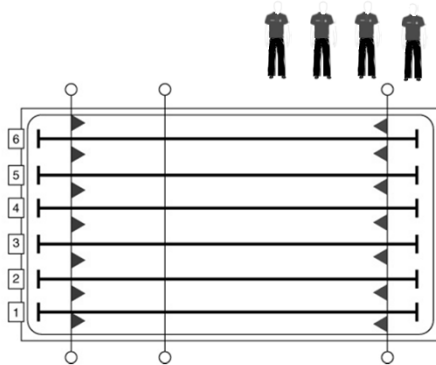
**Meet Manager** - The Meet Manager is the general manager of the entire competition. He/she has duties before, during and after the meet.

**Other Volunteers** - A fully staffed meet may also require a false start rope operator, runners to post results and collect cards, and volunteers for food, awards, and fund raising.

As you can see, a swim meet is a major undertaking that requires a significant number of volunteers and officials to get involved.

For a single session meet in an 8 lane pool, there are a minimum of 40 people required on deck.

## PLAN OF POOL DECK



## THE ROLE OF THE COACH



### *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 (not mom and dad);
- Advocate for their swimmer – question disqualifications and follow rules to protest.
- The Coach will address any questions/concerns they have to the referee of the session. They will not approach individual officials.

## KEY TERMS



## KEY TERMS



- **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** – The bulkhead is a movable wall that allows a 50m pool to be divided into two 25m courses. Turn judges are often asked to monitor turns from the bulkhead.
- **Carded meet** – Swim meets that use time cards to record finish times and manage the lane assignment of swimmers.

## KEY TERMS (CONT'D)



- **Cardless meet** – Swim meets that use computer printouts and a software program (Hy-Tek Meet Manager or SPLASH) to record finish times and manage the lane assignment of swimmers. Timekeepers are provided with printed heat sheets and/or lane timer sheets to identify lane assignments and record times when requested to do so.
- **Recall (false start) rope** – Suspended across the pool, the recall rope is located 15m from the start end of the pool, and is lowered into the pool to alert swimmers in the event of a recalled start.
- **Heat Sheet** – The program that is created that detail the events, heats and lanes the swimmers may. (Also called Meet Program)

## KEY TERMS (CONT'D)



- **Long Course** – A long course competition is held in a 50m pool. The long course season in Canada typically runs from March until the end of the season each year. Most major international events are held in a long course pool.
- **Official Time** – The primary time (touchpad time) or a calculated time using the times determined by using the plunger times or watch times.
- **Plungers/buttons** – Plunger or buttons are the devices used by the timer to manually stop the clock when a swimmer arrives at the start end of the pool.
- **Qualifying time** – A set time a swimmer must achieve to be entered into an event in a given competition.

## KEY TERMS (CONT'D)



- **Session** – A combination of events and heats for a group of swimmers to compete in over a period of no more than 4.5 hours
- **Short course** – A short course competition is held in a 25m pool. The short course season in Canada typically runs from September until February each year.
- **Split times** – The time for a swimmer when they turn at the start end of the pool for a race that is longer than two lengths of the pool.

## KEY TERMS (CONT'D)



- **Starting Blocks** – The starting blocks (or blocks) are located at the start end of the pool to accommodate swimmers starting a race or leg of a relay. A second set of starting blocks is located at the turn end of a 50m pool to accommodate the 2nd and 4th swimmers in a 4 x 50m relay.
- **Touchpads** – A part of the automatic timing system that is located in the pool at the end of each lane and stops the clock when a swimmer touches the touchpad.
- **Warm-up** – The period of time before the session begins when the swimmers warm-up in the pool as a group before the competition.
- **Watches** – An approved timing device that is started and stopped by the Timekeeper and is used to time the swimmer to the 1/100th of a second.



# TIMEKEEPER DUTIES



## BEFORE THE SESSION

- Arrive on time and check-in at the Officials room
  - Arrive 45 minutes before the start of the session or at the time requested by Meet Management.
- Meet the Chief Timekeeper and the team assigned to your lane.
- There may be an officials briefing by the Referee and/or Chief Timer.
- Sign out a watch (if necessary)
  - Secure the watch with the lanyard around your neck.
  - Make sure it is working properly. If your watch is not operating properly, request a replacement.



## THE TIMING TEAM

The team of timekeepers assigned to a particular lane will have a number of other duties in addition to the timing of the actual swim. These other duties are equally critical to the well officiated meet.

**Head Lane Timer:** When you work as a timekeeper, you may be appointed head lane timer. The head lane timer may perform some or all of the following duties themselves or they may delegate the duties to the other timekeepers within their lane. The critical duties of the head lane timer are to ensure that all these duties are performed consistently throughout the session.

**The recorder:** The recorder is asked to ensure that the finish times and split times are recorded accurately and properly when so requested.



## DURING THE SESSION

- Ensure you arrive at your assigned lane at the time requested by the Referee or Chief Timer and stay in that lane for the entire session.
- If you need to step away from your lane during the session, please let the Chief Timer know.
- If you require your cell phone on deck, please ensure it is set to vibrate so as to not interrupt the start of a race.
- Swimmers will arrive behind the blocks and present themselves to you.
- Ensure that you have the correct swimmer in the correct heat and lane by checking the swimmers card, the meet program or the lane timer sheets.
  - Report any concerns to the Chief Timekeeper or the Referee
- In your lane swimmers should arrive 1-2 heats before their race.

## DURING THE SESSION (CONT'D)



- Swimmers will mount the blocks on the referee's long whistle, or in backstroke events enter the water on the referee's first long whistle.
- The Referee will turn the heat over to the Starter by extending their arm.
  - The Starter will start the race
- 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.

## FINA Rules describing the duties of: TIMEKEEPERS



**SW 2.9.1** Each timekeeper shall take the time of the swimmers in the lane assigned to him in accordance with SW 11.3. The watches shall be certified correct to the satisfaction of the meet Management Committee.

## SW 2.9.1 in Action



- Position yourself so you can see the flash from the starting device
- Hold the watch firmly and motionless and use your index finger to start (and stop) your watch
- Start the watch on the flash of the strobe from the starting device
- At the end of the race stop the watch or depress your plunger when any part of the swimmers body touches the wall or crosses the plane of the pool edge.
- If your watch does not start
  - alert the Chief Timekeeper
  - record your time as NT

## FINA Rules describing the duties of: TIMEKEEPERS (cont'd)



- **SW 2.9.2** Each timekeeper shall start his watch at the starting signal, and shall stop it when the swimmer in his lane has completed the race. Timekeepers may be instructed by the chief timekeeper to record times at intermediate distances in races longer than 100 metres.

## SW 2.9.2 in Action



Split times or “at intermediate distances” as stated in the rule may be requested of the timekeepers in the following ways:

- One Timekeeper may be asked to take the split time at each interval in the race.
- The first swimmer in any relay event (official split). It is looked upon as an individual event for that swimmer and an official split will always be taken by all timers.
- Timekeepers will take and record times as if this was an individual race.
- An official split may also be requested by coaches for a swimmer at an intermediate distance in an event.

## FINA Rules describing the duties of: TIMEKEEPERS (cont'd)



- **SW 2.9.3** Promptly after the race, the timekeepers in each lane shall record the times of their watches on the card, give them to the chief timekeeper, and if requested present their watches for inspection. Their watches must be cleared at the short whistle of the Referee announcing the following race.

## SW 2.9.3 in Action



- Times may be recorded on a card, on a meet program or on lane timer sheets.
- Time is to be recorded in the 1/100s of a second. Ie 2:01.31, 59.45
- The process to be used for the meet you are timing at will be explained by the Referee or Chief Timer prior to the event.
- If a swimmer does not finish the race for any reason, record DNF (did not finish) on the card or lane timer sheet.

## FINA Rules describing the duties of: TIMEKEEPERS (cont'd)



- **SW 2.9.4** Unless a video backup system is used, it may be necessary to use the full complement of timekeepers even when Automatic Officiating Equipment is used.

## SW 2.9.4 in Action



- Along with stop watches, plungers or buttons may be used as a form of semi-automatic timing system.
- Timekeepers are key to an approved electronic timing system.
- Plungers or buttons are used to provide a back-up to the Touchpads.
- The semi-automatic timing system is started automatically by the start signal.
- Semi-automatic timing system requires the Timekeepers to press the plunger or button at the finish. You may also be required to press at every split as well.
- Please handle this equipment with care.
- Ensure at the end of a race, you do not step on the touchpads.

## FINA Rules describing the rules of: TIMING



- **SW 11.1** The operation of Automatic Officiating Equipment shall be under the supervision of appointed officials. Times recorded by Automatic Equipment shall be used to determine the winner, all placing and the time applicable to each lane. The placing and times so determined shall have precedence over the decisions of timekeepers. In the event that a break-down of the Automatic Equipment occurs or that it is clearly indicated that there has been a failure of the Equipment, or that a swimmer has failed to activate the Equipment, the recordings of the timekeepers shall be official (See SW 13.3).

## FINA Rules describing the RULES of: TIMING (cont'd)



- **SW 11.2** When Automatic Equipment is used, the results shall be recorded only to 1/100 of a second. When timing to 1/1000 of a second is available, the third digit shall not be recorded or used to determine time or placement. In the event of equal times, all swimmers who have recorded the same time at 1/100 of a second shall be accorded the same placing. Times displayed on the electronic scoreboard should show only to 1/100 of a second.

## FINA Rules describing the RULES of: TIMING (cont'd)



- **SW 11.3** Any timing device that is terminated by an official shall be considered a watch. Such manual times must be taken by three timekeepers appointed or approved by the Member in the country concerned. All watches shall be certified as accurate to the satisfaction of the governing body concerned. Manual timing shall be registered to 1/100 of a second. Where no Automatic Equipment is used, official manual times shall be determined as follows: **SW 11.3.1** If two (2) of the three (3) watches record the same time and the third disagrees, the two identical times shall be the official time. **SW 11.3.2** If all three (3) watches disagree, the watch recording the intermediate time shall be the official time. **SW 11.3.3** With only two (2) out of three (3) watches working the average time shall be the official time.



## FINA Rules describing the RULES of: TIMING (cont'd)



- **SW 11.4** Should a swimmer be disqualified during or following an event, such disqualification should be recorded in the official results, but no time or place shall be recorded or announced.
- **SW 11.5** In the case of a relay disqualification, legal splits up to the time of the disqualification shall be recorded in the official results.
- **SW 11.6** All 50 metre and 100 metre splits shall be recorded for lead-off swimmers during relays and published in the official results.

# OTHER TIMEKEEPER DUTIES



## THE BELL LAP



The "Bell Lap" refers to the ringing of the bell during distance events of 800 and 1500 metres. The bell is rung to alert the swimmer that they have 2 more lengths to complete in the race.

- The Chief Timer or the Referee will inform the lane when it is time to ring the bell, although each lane should be keeping track. The Inspector of Turns may also be responsible for this.
- In short course events the bell is rung at the 750m mark of the 800m race or 1450m mark of the 1500m race.
- In long course events the bell is rung at the 700m mark of the 800m race or 1400m mark in a 1500m race.
- The bell is to be rung continuously over the right hand lane rope when possible and from the 5m (backstroke flags) as the swimmer comes into their last turn back out to the 5m (backstroke flags) after the turn.
- It is important not to 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 time card or heat sheet. There are special rules pertaining to judging the start, strokes and turns of para-swimming athletes. You should be aware that the para-swimming athlete may start in the water or beside the blocks. Para-athletes may require help from an assistant for a start and during the race. A blind swimmer will require the assistance of a "tapper" to identify when he/she is reaching the end of the pool. When an assistant is present please give them the room required to assist their athletes.
- If Para swimmers are participating in the session you are working at, the Referee or Chief Timer will explain any additional information you may need.

