



## **BRIEFING NOTES**

**FOR**

**TIMEKEEPER**

Candidate Name.....

Club.....



## **Timekeeper**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Technical officials are required to control all swimming competitions.
- 1.2 Application to become a Timekeeper will be accepted from persons 14 years and over.
- 1.3 There will be a register of qualified Officials.

## **1. ROLE**

Timing is the swimmer's measure of performance. The role of timekeepers is to accurately determine the time it took each swimmer to cover the distance of the event.

Final placement of the swimmers in each event is determined by their times and finish order. Therefore, precision and accuracy are important for timekeepers.

## **2. REPORTING FOR GALA DUTY**

- 2.1 All Technical Officials should, when attending at any competitive swimming event held in Britain, wear the poolside uniform for men or women as set out below.

Men	White open-necked short sleeved shirt White trousers, white accessories White poolside shoes and white socks
Women	White dress or white blouse and skirt or trousers White poolside shoes, white accessories

- 2.2 Uniform requested by Gala Organisers is appropriate where a modified form of uniform is supplied directly by the Gala Convenor, Promoter, Organising Committee or Event Sponsor. Such dress will be adopted as directed by the Meet Organisers and will replace (both in style and colour) the recommended uniform in full or part, provided such dress complies with the advertising conventions specified by FINA.
- 2.3 You should ensure you have at least two pens (one as a spare) with black or blue ink with you when you report to the REFEREE, at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the gala (unless you have been informed otherwise).
- 2.4 The Referee will note that you have reported for duty and pass you to the CHIEF TIMEKEEPER to whom you are responsible during the gala.

## **3. DUTIES AND EQUIPMENT**

- 3.1 The Chief Timekeeper will allocate your assigned lane for which you are responsible. FINA require three timekeepers allocated to each lane. At some events however, this may not always be possible and therefore, there may be fewer than three on each lane.
- 3.2 The Chief Timekeeper may issue you with a watch. On receiving the watch check you know how the following functions operate:
  - a) start
  - b) stop
  - c) return to zero (resets)

d) split time feature (if appropriate) is working

- 3.3 The Chief Timekeeper should provide you with a start sheet or a programme of the events and would also normally appoint one of the Timekeepers in each lane to carry out the following specific duties.
- a) Note the times recorded by each timekeeper in the lane onto the respective swimmer's record card/start sheet.
  - b) Note the "official" manual time onto the same timecard/start sheet.

#### 4. PROCEDURE FOR RECORDING A TIME

- 4.1 At the start of a race the Timekeepers allocated to each lane are seated.
- 4.2 All swimmers entered into a competition may be provided with a "time" card for each separate event they are to swim. This is the swimmer's entry/identity card for each swim, and must be given to the lane timekeeper. At National and other events timecards are not used and times should be recorded onto start sheets.
- 4.3 Each card/start sheet shows important details for the Timekeeper to check before each start.
- |                     |   |                            |
|---------------------|---|----------------------------|
| Event Number        | - | Swimmer in correct event   |
| Lane Number         | - | Swimmer in correct lane    |
| Heat Number         | - | Swimmer in correct heat    |
| Swimmer's Name      | - | Swimmer's name correct?    |
| Style of Stroke     | - | Stroke correct?            |
| Distance to be swum | - | Number of lengths correct? |
- 4.4 Prior to each start, the referee will signal to the swimmers by a short series of whistles, inviting them to remove all clothing except for swimwear, followed by a long whistle, indicating that they should take their positions on the starting platform, or for backstroke swimming and medley relays to immediately enter the water. For the backstroke and medley relay events the referee will sound a second long whistle requesting the swimmers to return to the starting position.
- 4.5 On hearing the long whistle timekeepers must
- a) stand up to indicate readiness to the referee.
  - b) Listen/watch intently for the starting signal
- 4.6 When the starting signal is given timekeepers must
- a) start the watch
  - b) sit down
  - c) check that the watch is running
- 4.7 If the watch fails to start or stops during a race a Timekeeper must inform the CHIEF TIMEKEEPER immediately in order that a reserve timekeeper/watch can be called in.
- 4.8 When the swimmer is 15m from the end during the last length of the race the Timekeeper prepares to take the swimmer's time by
- a) standing up to indicate readiness to the Chief Timekeeper
  - b) standing immediately above the allocated lane
  - c) looking at the wall where the swimmer will touch to finish the race

- 4.9 When the swimmer is seen to touch the finish wall, the timekeeper stops the watch. (Do not try to anticipate the swimmer finishing, make sure you actually see the swimmer touch the wall then immediately press the stop button).
- 4.10 Immediately the watch has been stopped the Timekeeper will return to his/her seat, sit down and read out the time recorded on the watch to the one timekeeper appointed for this duty. This Timekeeper records the times given by each timekeeper in the lane onto the timecard, and declares the official manual time by noting it in the space provided on the timecard.
- 4.11 Each timecard has a space to write down the separate times for one, two or three Timekeepers in, Heats or Finals.

	EVENT	LANE
	<b>HEATS</b>	<b>FINAL</b>
<b>T/Keeper 1</b>	01:22.30	.....
<b>T/Keeper 2</b>	01:22.32	.....
<b>T/Keeper 3</b>	01:22.32	.....
<b>OFFICIAL TIME</b>	_____	_____

- 4.12 All times must be recorded using six digits.  
  
2 digits for minutes, 2 digits for seconds, 1 digit for 1/10 second 1 digit for 1/100 second. Thus 1 minute 22.32 seconds is recorded as 01:22.32.
- 4.13 Where a swimmer gets through to a final, the same card is used again. The lane number would now be shown directly above "FINAL" and, the times taken would be recorded in the "Finals" space.
- 4.14 Timekeepers must not compare/discuss times. The only time an individual timekeeper can declare is that recorded on their own watch. However if one time is significantly different, the Chief Timekeeper may wish to examine the time on the watch to be satisfied with the operation of the watch and/or efficiency of the timekeeper operating the watch.
- 4.15 Timekeepers should clear their watches when the referee signals the swimmers for the next race by a short series of whistles. (SW 2.9.3)
- 4.16 At some events timecards are not used and Timekeepers are required to record their times on the start sheets and returned for collection at the end of the session.
- 4.17 If Automatic Officiating Equipment (AOE) is available and there are two Timekeepers on each lane do not average the times, this will be done later if it is required. If there is no AOE available and two Timekeepers on each lane, then the times must be averaged as quickly as possible as shown in the next paragraph and rounded up.

**5. CALCULATING AN OFFICIAL MANUAL TIME**

To determine the official time for the swimmer, observe the following guidelines.

- 5.1 WHEN THERE ARE THREE (3) TIMEKEEPERS ON A LANE:

- a) If all three watches read the same time - that is the official time.
- |                      |                  |                        |
|----------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| Timekeeper 1         | 01:18.38*        |                        |
| Timekeeper 2         | 01:18.38*        |                        |
| Timekeeper 3         | <u>01:18.38*</u> |                        |
| Official Manual Time | 01:18.38*        | Three watches the same |
- b) If two watches are the same - that is the official time.
- |                      |                  |                      |
|----------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Timekeeper 1         | 01:14.62*        |                      |
| Timekeeper 2         | 01:14.64         |                      |
| Timekeeper 3         | <u>01:14.62*</u> |                      |
| Official Manual Time | 01:14.62*        | Two watches the same |
- c) If all three watches differ - take the middle time - that is the official time.
- |                      |                  |                      |
|----------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Timekeeper 1         | 01:14.89         |                      |
| Timekeeper 2         | 01:14.91         |                      |
| Timekeeper 3         | <u>01:14.90*</u> |                      |
| Official Manual Time | 01:14.90*        | Middle Time of Three |

## 5.2 WHEN THERE ARE TWO (2) TIMEKEEPERS ONLY ON A LANE:

- a) When both watches agree - that is the official time.
- |                      |                  |                    |
|----------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Timekeeper 1         | 01:09.01*        |                    |
| Timekeeper 2         | <u>01:09.01*</u> |                    |
| Official manual Time | 01:09.01*        | Both watches agree |
- b) When both watches differ: Take the average of the times- that is the official time.
- |                      |                 |              |
|----------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Timekeeper 1         | 01:23.96        |              |
| Timekeeper 2         | <u>01:24.00</u> |              |
| Official Manual Time | 01:23.98        | average time |
- c) When both watches differ: Take the average of the times- that is the official time.
- |                      |                 |              |
|----------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Timekeeper 1         | 02:46.53        |              |
| Timekeeper 2         | <u>02:46.58</u> |              |
| Official Manual Time | 02:46.56        | average time |

*Round up to the next 1/100<sup>th</sup> of a second.*

Of course when there is only one (1) Timekeeper on a lane, that one time will be the official time to be given on the timecard.

Sometimes mistakes do happen: in unusual circumstances therefore, one of the times recorded may be disregarded, e.g. it may be far too fast or, it could be far too slow in comparison with the other time(s) for the lane. Inform the Chief Timekeeper if your watch failed at the start or finish or if watch is wrong.

## **OTHER DUTIES**

### **6. SPLITS - TAKING TIMES AT INTERMEDIATE DISTANCES**

- 6.1 Timekeepers may be instructed by the Chief Timekeeper to record "splits" at intermediate distances in races longer than 100mtrs.

- 6.2 Pressing the “splits” button on your watch allows you to take the time of a swimmer at intermediate distances during a race, without stopping the full running time of the race.
- 6.3 Press the “splits” button when you actually see the swimmer touching the turning wall.
- 6.4 Record the time shown for the “split” on the back of the swimmer’s timecard.

## **7 Back-Up Button**

- 7.1 Automatic Officiating Equipment (AOE) is a system of electronic timing used for swimming events. The system is linked into the starting gun or horn and into the timing pads hung into the water from the pool deck.
- 7.2 The system starts automatically when the start signal is given, and is stopped automatically when the swimmer hits the pads firmly hard on completion of the race.
- 7.3 The system by being automatic is much quicker to start and more accurate than hand held digital watches. When in use, the times recorded by this system always take precedence over hand held watches. Sometimes however, the swimmers do not hit the pads hard enough and the system does not activate properly and does not record an accurate time.
- 7.4 The back-up button is connected to the AOE system. It is a cable with a button which is pressed at the end of the race at the same time as the stop watch is pressed. After you have pressed the button lay it down. A time is recorded in the AOE system.
- 7.5 The referee may have to refer to this recorded information, and therefore, it is essential that the timekeeper operates the back-up button effectively.

## **8. LAP CARDS, BELLS and WHISTLES**

- 8.1 As in other sports, swimming also has longer races. In order to assist the swimmers to indicate of the number of lengths remaining to the finish, we operate “lap cards”.
- 8.2 Normally these cards are displayed at the turning end of the pool and are operated by the Turn Judge on each lane. At some events however, the cards may be displayed at the starting end of the pool and it may be necessary for timekeepers to turn the cards as well as record the split times.
- 8.3 Each time the swimmers’ turn they can see the card display for their own lane. The cards are changed to a lower number after the swimmer has had an opportunity to look at the card.
- 8.4 At the starting end of the pool, each swimmer is given a signal by ringing a bell or blowing a whistle when they have two lengths and five metres left to swim in events of 800 metres and 1500 metres.
- 8.5 Timekeepers may be requested by the referee to give this signal so, when there are such events you may be given a bell or a whistle.

- 8.6 Five metres from the end of the pool is shown in two different ways:
  1. Suspended over the whole width of the pool at five (5) metres from the end wall are the “backstroke indicator flags”.
  2. In the pool, modern lane dividers are coloured “red” from five metres out of each end wall.
- 8.7 When the swimmer in your lane, still with two lengths and five metres to swim, that is, gets to the red markers or swims below the indicator flags at your end of the pool, ring the bell or blow the whistle throughout, until the swimmer has completed the turn and passed the red markers or the flags after the turn.

## 9. CHIEF TIMEKEEPER

Duties of the Chief Timekeeper:

- 1 Allocates each timekeeper to a lane. FINA require there should be three Timekeepers on each lane, but we don't always manage that.
- 2 Provides:
  - a) each Timekeeper with a stop watch should they require one (The Timekeeper should check that it works trying 'start' 'stop' and 'reset'.)
  - b) cover or a reserve watch for a Timekeeper whose watch fails to start.
  - c) another watch to Timekeeper whose watch has failed completely.
- 3 Provide a programme or start sheet.
- 4 Take the time of the fastest swimmer but keep one watch running at least until the end of the race in case of failures. The Chief Timekeepers time should only be used if a failure of a watch occurs.

After each race the Chief Timekeeper will:

- 1 Collect the time cards from each lane – if used.
- 2 Check manual times recorded on the cards and arrange the cards in time order – fastest to slowest.
- 3 Consult with Chief Finish Judge/Referee to compare time result with Finish Judge/Referee result – normally these will agree. In this case the time cards and result go to the recorder and becomes 'official'. If the two results do not agree then the Referee may have to adjust the times to agree with the finish result. If AOE is in use then the times recorded by the AOE overrule the manual times and the cards must be arranged in the AOE finish order regardless of manual times and sent to the recorder.
- 4 If start sheets are used, at the end of the session collect the annotated sheet from each lane and give to the Recorders.

## 10. FINA RULES

These notes have been compiled using the rules governing swimming competitions which are set by the Federation Internationale De Natation (FINA) and are reproduced below and available on web site: [www.fina.org/rules](http://www.fina.org/rules)

The rules relevant to timekeepers are:

### SW 2.8 CHIEF TIMEKEEPER

- SW 2.8.1** *The chief timekeeper shall assign the seating positions for all timekeepers and the lanes for which they are responsible. There shall be three (3) timekeepers for each lane. If Automatic Officiating Equipment is not used there shall be two (2) additional timekeepers designated, either of whom*

*shall be directed to replace a timekeeper whose watch did not start or stopped during an event, or who for any other reason is not able to record the time. When using three (3) digital watches per lane, final time and place is determined by time.*

**SW 2.8.2** *The chief timekeeper shall collect from each timekeeper a card showing the time recorded and, if necessary, inspect their watches.*

**SW 2.8.3** *The chief timekeeper shall record or examine the official time on the card for each lane.*

**SW 2.9**      **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 2.9.2** *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 2.9.3** *Promptly after the race, the timekeepers in each lane shall record the times of their watches on the card, give it 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 2.9.4** *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 11        TIMING**

**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 of the three 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 watches disagree, the watch recording the intermediate time shall be the official time.*

**SW 11.3.3**        *With only two (2) of the three (3) watches working the average time shall be the official time.*

## **FR 4        Automatic Officiating Equipment**

**FR 4.1**        *Automatic and Semi-Automatic Officiating Equipment records the elapsed time of each swimmer and determines the relative place in a race. Judging and timing shall be to 2 decimal places (1/100 of a second). Equipment that is installed shall not interfere with the swimmers starts, turns, or the function of the overflow system.*

**FR 4.5**        *With Semi-Automatic Equipment, the finish shall be recorded by buttons pushed by timekeepers/judges at the finish touch of the swimmer.*

## **SW 4.        The Start**

**SW 4.1**        *The start in Freestyle, Breaststroke, Butterfly and Individual Medley races shall be with a dive. On the long whistle (SW 2.1.5) from the referee the swimmers shall step onto the starting platform and remain there. On the starter's command "take your marks", they shall immediately take up a starting position with at least one foot at the front of the starting platforms. When all swimmers are stationary, the starter shall give the starting signal (shot, horn, whistle or command).*

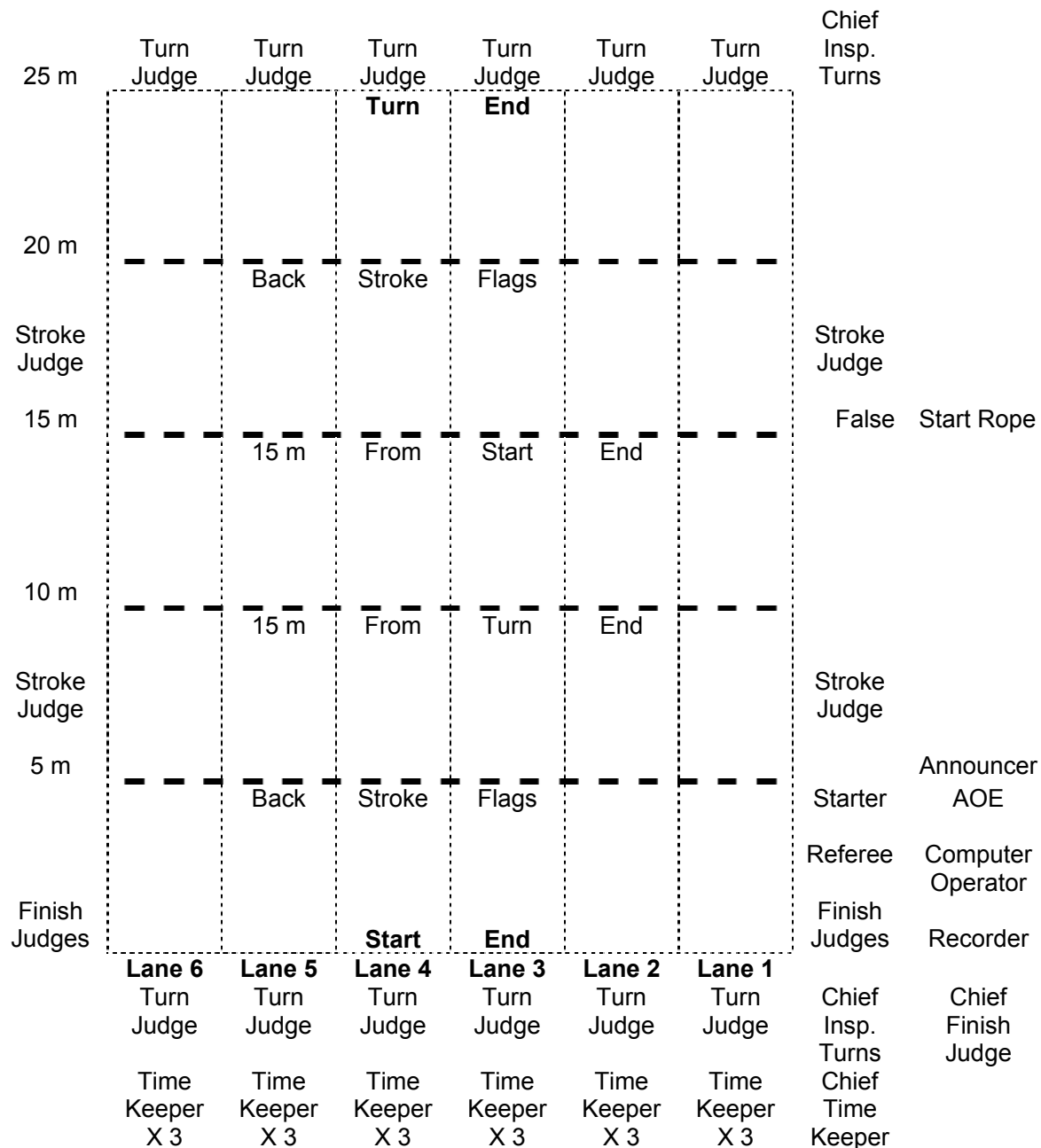
**SW 4.2** *The start in Backstroke and Medley Relay races shall be from the water. At the referee's first long whistle (SW 2.1.5), the swimmers shall immediately enter the water. At the referee's second long whistle the swimmers shall return without undue delay to the starting position (SW 6.1). When all swimmers have assumed their starting positions, the starter shall give the command "take your marks". When all swimmers are stationary, the starter shall give the starting signal.*

## **11 TIPS FOR TIMEKEEPERS**

1. Do not cheer or coach swimmers during a race
2. Please refer any questions to the Chief Timekeeper
3. Know the distance of the event in the water
4. Record the watch accurately
5. Avoid the top of the timing pad if the AOE is in operation
6. Do not divulge the time to the swimmer
7. Only give information to the Chief Timekeeper or Referee
8. Check the swimmers name shown on the timecard or start
9. Check the lane/event/heat.
10. Check relay team lines and swimmers are swimming in the given order.

## Appendix A

Schematic diagram of Officials required for a 25 Metre Pool





## Appendix C

### PRACTICAL TIMEKEEPING

As a Timekeeper you will be required to determine the Official Manual Time for each swimmer in your lane in accordance with FINA Rules SW 11 Timing (Section 2 of these notes), and also in line with the guidelines laid out in Section 5 - Determining the Official Manual Time.

Using these guidelines, determine the Official Manual Time in each of the following instances.

Timekeeper 1	02:12.57	02:01.66	No time
Timekeeper 2	02:12.53	02:01.69	05:31.57
Timekeeper 3	<u>02:12.57</u>	<u>02:01.67</u>	<u>05:31.60</u>

Official Time

Timekeeper 1	01:14.62	01:00.02	02:19.84
Timekeeper 2	01:14.55	01:00.01	02:19.33
Timekeeper 3	<u>01:14.67</u>	<u>00:59.99</u>	<u>02:19.89</u>

Official Time

Timekeeper 1	04:54.62	02:00.02	17:39.84
Timekeeper 2	<u>04:54.55</u>	<u>01:59.97</u>	<u>17:39.65</u>

Official Time