Timekeeper's Briefing

Stopwatch Basics

1. Take the time before the meet starts to check your watch is working properly and also that you get used to how your watch works.
2. There are 2 types of digital stopwatch: 1) basic (left) 2) memory (right).
3. Use MODE function to find the stopwatch mode
4. When the watch is stopped, push SPLIT/RESET button and the 00:00:00 will appear.
5. If the watch is running, push START/STOP and then SPLIT/RESET to get to 00:00:00
6. Ask the Chief Timekeeper if you have any questions.

① Before the start the Referee will blow a long whistle blast to signal the swimmers to get on the blocks (NB: there is a 2nd blast for backstroke). This is your signal to push the SPLIT/RESET button. Check your watch is reading 00:00:00.

② The Starter will say "take your marks" (NB: you may not be able to hear this). If you can see it, watch the light on the start box. Concentrate and listen/watch for the start signal. Wait for the signal, don't anticipate it.

③ When you hear the start signal (usually an electronic beep) hit the START/STOP button to activate your watch. Straight away, check to ensure your watch has started correctly. If it hasn't, or if you missed the start, IMMEDIATELY put your hand up and stand up to signal the Chief Timekeeper (they will give you a fresh watch).

④ Count the number of lengths your swimmer has swum. When they are about 15m from the finish get up and stand over the end of the lane where you can see the wall (NB: you will get wet – sorry!)

⑤ When the swimmer has about 1.5m to go, switch your eyes to the wall and wait for the swimmer to touch. When you see the touch, push the START/STOP button. Don't anticipate the touch.
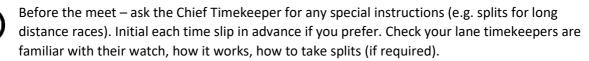
⑥ Return to your seat and quickly write your time on your programme. When asked, show the lane chief your watch and tell them the time. Keep the time on your watch until the next race is set to start (someone may ask to see your time).

Split Times (800/1500m Freestyle)

1. Make sure you know how this function works on your watch (the basic and memory watches are slightly different).
2. One lane timekeeper only needs to get a split time.
3. As for the finish, stand to see the swimmer touch the wall at the end of each lap (touch may be with the feet).
4. Record the time by pressing the SPLIT/RESET button. The Lane Chief Timekeeper will record each time.
5. Finish the race as normal – using the START/STOP button.

Lane Chief Timekeeper Briefing

1 Before the meet – ask the Chief Timekeeper for any special instructions (e.g. splits for long distance races). Initial each time slip in advance if you prefer. Check your lane timekeepers are familiar with their watch, how it works, how to take splits (if required).

2 Before the first race – make sure your lane timekeepers have cleared their watches and are ready to go.

3 If a swimmer doesn't turn up for a race, write "DNS" in large letters across the time slip. Hand the time slip to the runner at the end of the race as usual.

4 After each race – ensure your timekeepers write their watch times on their programme IMMEDIATELY after the race. Write the time from your watch directly on the time slip (NB: at this point, if the referee blows the whistle to signal the start of the next race, you can clear your watches for the next start – the rest of the process can wait until after the next race has started).

5 If time permits, inspect the watch as each timekeeper tells you their times. Write the watch times on the time slip in the same order as everyone is sitting.

6 Determine the official time (see below). Sign the time slip (if you haven't already) and hand to the runner.

7 Report any irregularities to the Chief Timekeeper.

The Official Time

1. If all three watches agree then that is the official time.
2. If two of the three watches agree then that is the official time.
3. If all three watches disagree then the middle time is the official time (see example below).

4. If there are only two good watch times (i.e. one watch fails) the remaining two watches are averaged e.g. 1:24.60 & 1:24.66 = 1:24.63, or 2:33.15 & 2:33.20 = 2:33.18 (NB: average up not down)
5. Good timekeepers on a lane should record times within 0.15 secs of each other (but up to 0.30 is acceptable).