

# ***GUIDANCE for LANE BACKUP TIMERS at NEISD***

1. Two Backup Timers on each lane are an absolute imperative in the successful conduct of any swimming meet employing electronic Touchpad timing
2. Actual Touchpad malfunctions or failures are quite rare, occurring in less than one percent of races.
3. However, swimmers fail to properly touch the pad at the finish of a race at a much higher percentage which, unsurprisingly, is inversely related to the age of the athletes.
4. Consequently, without backup timers some athletes would be credited with grossly inaccurate times or, worst of all, no times at all.
5. The procedures and mechanics of lane timekeeping are straight-forward and quite simple, but do require your undivided attention at the start and finish of races.
6. On the other hand, timekeeping is, by most accounts; much preferable to sitting in the stands and you will have an up close and personal view of the action.
7. Please be aware, however, the proper discharge of your timing duties absolutely guarantees that you **WILL GET WET!**
8. Every so often circumstances will arise where it become obvious to you as a Lane Timer that something is amiss and you are tempted to try and help out with the situation. **PLEASE DO NOT DO THAT.** Even though you are on the deck in an official capacity, you have no authority of any sort to instruct swimmers or interfere in any other way with the management of the competition.
  - a. If you believe the situation is grave enough to warrant stopping the meet, demand the attention of the Deck Referee, the Starter, or any Deck Official.
  - b. The most common circumstance of this sort occurs when a swimmer attempts to swim in the wrong lane or heat. These are deck official's problems to resolve and you must resist all temptations to get involved beyond calling attention.
  - c. If you are unable to halt the competition and the race continues, at its conclusion, seek out the nearest official and describe to her / him what happened. If at all possible, identify the errant swimmer by name and / or team.
9. The two of you will be provided with a digital stop watches and instructions on their use as well as a clip board and a Lane Timer's Sheet (LTS), which lists the swimmers, by heat and name, who will be competing in your lane during a given session.
10. In addition to the names of swimmers assigned to your lane, the LTS also provides appropriate spaces in which to record the times noted on your stopwatches for a given race.
11. Sound travels much slower than light. Consequently, you must never start a watch from the sound of the horn beneath each starting block.
12. Instead, there are a series of flashing lights integral to the Starting System that provide the reference from which to start a watch. These are commonly referred to as "STROBES."
13. There is a large yellow-colored strobe atop the backstroke line pole near the Deck Referee.
14. There is also a green-colored strip-like strobe on the left side, at the front of each starting block.
15. At the start of a race, all eleven of these strobes flash for about 250 milliseconds ( $\frac{1}{4}$  of a second), synchronized with the sound of the horns, which also sound for 250 milliseconds.
16. In addition to the two timers required per lane, there is also a Head Timer who is normally found somewhere near the Starter.
17. If, for whatever reason, as a Lane Timer; you failed to get an accurate start at the beginning of a race, please promptly alert the Head Timer, who will hand you another watch that was accurately started.
18. At the finish of a race you are only concerned with seeing the incoming swimmer touch the wall or the touchpad and that is the instant when you must stop your watch.
19. At some meets, **Fly Over Starts** will be employed and they are particularly hard on Lane Timers, especially events of 50 yards.
  - a. Because the interval between the finish of one race and the beginning of the next is very short, i.e., less than 25 seconds, it is necessary that Lane Timers quickly develop a system to ensure they will not miss a start.
  - b. Experience has demonstrated these "systems" are highly individualistic and suggestions on how to proceed have been mostly ineffective.
  - c. You and your partner are essentially on your own to work out a system that works well for you!

