

# Head Timer

Rappahannock Swim League  
Online Training Course



Why do we  
have lane  
timers?

The kids are here swimming to  
get times in their events!

The job of the lane timer is to  
make sure this happens.

The job of the Head Timer is to  
help the lane timers!





# Duties

The role of the Head Timer is to assist the Head Referee by overseeing lane timers during the meet.

RSL Rule 10.9



# Before a Meet



Ensure your team has enough functioning stopwatches

8 lane pool- 26  
6 lane pool- 20  
5 lane pool- 17  
4 lane pool- 14



Stopwatches should:

Measure in hundredths of seconds  
Be labeled with team's initials and number (EG. CY-7)



Each team is responsible for providing its timers' stopwatches



Review the RSL rules (Esp Sections 10.9 and 10.10)  
Current rules may be found on [rsl.swimtopia.com](http://rsl.swimtopia.com)



Semi-automatic timing systems are now approved for use in the RSL. Head Timers should continue to follow current timing guidelines as these devices will be used in conjunction with stopwatches.



# Semi- Automatic Timing Devices



Semi-automatic timing systems are now approved for use in the RSL. Head Timers should continue to follow current timing guidelines as these devices will be used in conjunction with stopwatches.

A semi-automatic timing system for swimming is activated automatically by the starting device and stopped manually at the finish by the timers.



# RSL Rules



## 10.9. Head Timer. The Head Timer shall:

10.9.1. Prior to the start of the meet, group and instruct the timers on their responsibility and procedures for timing. This meeting should also include a test to verify the accuracy of all watches to be used.

10.9.2. Assign 3 timers to each lane.

10.9.3. Designate one of these timers as the official recorder for that lane.

10.9.4. Signal the Referee that all timers are ready to proceed with the next heat.

10.9.5. Be responsible for delivering to the scorekeeper, via the runner, all official timer sheets as completed by the lane recorder. This is to include those of any disqualified swimmer or relay team.

10.9.5.1. Individual event times are recorded on lane timer sheets provided by the home team.

10.9.5.2. Relay event times are recorded on relay entry cards provided by the team coaches.

10.9.5.3. For these rules, "timer sheets" refers to either relay entry cards or lane timer sheets provided by the home team

10.9.5.4. For electronic timing systems, will confirm all devices have been stopped, times recorded to the system, and reset if necessary.

10.9.6. Shall start the timing devices on every race. The Head Timer's watch shall be used in the event of a failure for any reason of an official lane timer's timing device.

## 10.10. Lane Timers. The Lane Timers shall:

10.10.1. Perform their duties in the lane assigned to them by the Head Timer.

10.10.2. Look at the starting device after the Referee gives control of the competitors to the Starter. Upon sighting the flash from the starting device, they should start their watch. The only time sound should be used to start a watch is when the starting device does not have a visual signal.

10.10.2.1 If a semi-automatic electronic timing system is in use, no action is required of the lane times at the start of the race.

10.10.3. Stop their timing device immediately when any part of the competitor's body touches the end wall.

10.10.4. If not using an electronic timing device, shall promptly report the time listed on their timing device to the lane recorder and if asked, present the timing device for inspection.

10.10.4.1 In event of a timing device malfunction: Record "NT" for no time

10.10.4.2 In the event of a no show: Record "NS" for no swim

10.10.4.3 In the event a swimmer did not complete the race: Record "DNF"

10.10.5. Not clear any time from their timing device until after all times from their respective lane have been recorded on the timer sheets.

10.10.6 Verify competitor's name is correct by asking competitor for their name

10.10.6.1 If the competitor's name does not match what is listed, the Lane Timer should note the correct name on the timer sheet

10.10.6.1.1 The Lane Timer should communicate the discrepancy to the runner

10.10.6.1.2 The runner will take the updated timer sheet to the Head Referee for review prior to taking it to the scorekeeper.

10.10.6.2 In the event of a DQ - the name written on the timer sheet should be used.



# Lane Timer Clipboards



Each home team will need enough clipboards to have one per lane. Number each clipboard with a lane #

Place corresponding lane timer sheets on the correct clipboard. These will be given to you by the data table once they are printed.

Be sure there is a sharpened pencil on each clipboard to record times.

A full list on events along with instructions on when to switch sides is nice to provide as well. You can download a copy of this from the RSL website.

Some teams will also provide clip-on lights for 2<sup>nd</sup> half to help timers see!

# Before the Meet: Assigning Lane Timers

- ▶ Each team completes the timing matrix prior to the meet
- ▶ Place timers with the most experience in the center lanes
- ▶ Confirm and check off your timers as they arrive to the meet
- ▶ Get the names of the visiting team timers to complete the matrix
- ▶ No lane should have 3 timers from the same team.

Lane 1	Lane 2	Lane 3	Lane 4	Lane 5	Lane 6	Lane 7	Lane 8
Home	Visitors	Home	Visitors	Home	Visitors	Home	Visitors
First Half							
1 (H)	1 (H)	1 (H)	1 (H)	1 (H)	1 (H)	1 (H)	1 (H)
2 (V)	2 (H)	2 (V)	2 (H)	2 (V)	2 (H)	2 (V)	2 (H)
3 (V)	3 (V)	3 (V)	3 (V)	3 (V)	3 (V)	3 (V)	3 (V)
Second Half							
1 (H)	1 (H)	1 (H)	1 (H)	1 (H)	1 (H)	1 (H)	1 (H)
2 (V)	2 (H)	2 (V)	2 (H)	2 (V)	2 (H)	2 (V)	2 (H)
3 (V)	3 (V)	3 (V)	3 (V)	3 (V)	3 (V)	3 (V)	3 (V)



20 minutes before the start of the meet, hold a Timers' meeting with both 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> half timers.

- ▶ Review Lane Assignments for meet
- ▶ Designate one timer per lane to be the official recorder
- ▶ Make timers aware of elements specific to your pool (e.g. using portable starting blocks)
- ▶ Review operation of stopwatches
  - ▶ Start
  - ▶ Stop
  - ▶ Clear
- ▶ Timers should test stopwatches to verify they are functioning
- ▶ First half timers should not leave until relieved by second half timers
- ▶ Remind timers to NOT use phones behind the blocks and do NOT pull swimmers out of the water by the arms. Swimmer may swim to the side and exit by ladder or steps.
- ▶ A Timer Briefing is available at [rsl.swimtopia.com/training](http://rsl.swimtopia.com/training)

# Timer meeting



## TIMER BRIEFING – RSL

### Introductions:

- Introduce yourself as the head timer.
- THANK everyone for volunteering to help. Without timers, swimmers would not be able to receive an accurate, official time - that is the reason they are here. Your watches perform this crucial task in every heat.
- Ask if there are any new timers? "That's great! It's easy to learn!"
- Head Timer will assign each timer a specific lane and will designate one timer is each lane as Lead.
- (Assign your more experienced timers to the middle lanes)
- Please make sure to turn off all cell phones and any other device that could distract you or the swimmers.
  - **\*REMEMBER NO CAMERAS/SMARTPHONES are permitted behind the blocks\***

### Before the Race:

- Familiarize yourself with the watch. Make sure you know which button is start, stop and reset. Practice a few times.
- Assign each timer in your lane a number (1, 2 or 3). Always write down the times in the same order, 1-2-3.
- The Lead Lane Timer with the clipboard, PLEASE verify that the correct swimmer/relay is present and in the correct lane/heat (This is a really nice way to assist the kids and make sure no one missed their event). Check that relay order is correct.
- Do NOT engage in conversation with the swimmers unless they initiate.

### At the Start:

- Make sure you can see the strobe. Focus on the strobe and start the watch at the moment of the flash.
- Strobes do occasionally fail; in that case, start your watch on the sound.
- If you are on the blocks end of the pool and your lane is empty, please hold your hand over the starting block; this helps the ref and starter know they are not waiting for a swimmer in that heat.
- Please remember that sometimes the ref will fill in an empty slot with a swimmer that missed their heat. Please allow this swimmer to swim and write down their info after the heat. If confused, look at ref; he may indicate to you.

### Immediately after the Start:

- Check the watch the make sure it has started and is working properly.
- If you miss the start, or the watch has malfunctioned, raise the watch overhead to signal to the Head Timer.

### During the Race:

- Keep track of the race and the distance completed by your swimmer.
- Timer with the clipboard should be verifying swimmer in the next heat.
- If a swimmer misses their heat, please direct them to the Referee.

### At the Finish:

- Come forward to the edge of the pool and look directly down.
- Stop the watch when ANY PART of your swimmer touches the end of the racing course. You are not concerned with the legality, just that the swimmer has finished.
- Timers and officials share space at the finish – please be considerate of each other.

### After the Finish:

- Step back to make space for the next swimmer.
- Timer with the clipboard records the watch time(s) on the sheet for each heat.
  - Please record watches in the same order each heat
  - Times are recorded to the hundredth of a second - **2 decimal places** – if the watch records to the thousandth, drop the last digit without rounding
  - Record NS if the swimmer missed the heat
  - Record DNF if your swimmer did not finish their race
  - Note any other problems (different swimmer, bumped head, etc)
- **NEVER assist a swimmer out of the water by pulling on their arm.** If the swimmer is having trouble exiting the pool, the swimmer may be directed to a ladder or steps on the side.

### Additional Items:

- If a swimmer did not swim due to what you feel was your error (told swimmer wrong heat, you got in the way of the blocks), please let the ref know. We do not want to penalize swimmers for mistakes made by officials and timers.
- If you do not have enough time to write down times between events, please notify the Head Timer who will bring it to the attention of the Ref/Starter.



# Timers will:

Prior to the start, determine whether the swimmer is present and in the correct lane, heat, and event.

- Ask “What is your name?” not “Is your name?”
- If the name is different, write in the correct name.
- A change may have occurred after the lane sheet was printed so occasionally, a swimmer may be different or not listed
- The correct name **MUST** go with the correct time.
- 25s should be verified when the swimmer exits the pool.

Be in a position to see and start the watch at the instant of observing the visual starting signal. (Start at the FLASH- not the sound when using a strobe)

- If no visual starting signal is observed, or a whistle is being used, start the watch upon hearing the sound of the signal
- Timers should start stopwatch **even if the lane is empty**
- Head timers should be holding **AND START TWO** stopwatches to be used as backup

Immediately check stopwatch to confirm a good start

- If malfunctioned occurred or timer did not get a good start, the timer should immediately raise their hand with the stopwatch to get attention
- Head timer will bring a stopwatch to replace the one that did not start correctly



For an accurate finish, timers will:

Stand directly over the assigned lane at the finish to observe a touch above, below or at the surface of the water

Stop the watch when any part of the swimmer's body touches the wall

Tell the Recorder the time from stopwatch. Recorder will:

Write down stopwatch times in the same order each time.

NEATLY record all three times (seconds, tenths, and hundredths) on the clipboard

If a stopwatch malfunctioned, write "NT"

Write "NS" for no swimmer  
Write "DNF" for Did Not Finish

Runners collect timer sheets between events



# Conclusion of Timers' Meeting



## Rain Delay

If needed, discuss Rain Delay procedures:

- In event of lightening, clear pool deck in a quick and orderly fashion.
- After recording completed heat, stopwatches and clipboards should be given to the Head Timer.



## Questions

Answer any questions.



## Preparation

Instruct timers to be behind the blocks 5 minutes before the start of the meet.



## Appreciation

Thank timers for donating their time to help swimmers.



# HEAD TIMERS: WHY ACCURACY MATTERS

Scorekeepers use recorded times to determine official time and order of finish by means of the following procedure:

## 3 Valid Watch times:

- The official time is the middle of the 3 times
- Ideally, times should be within .3 seconds of each other
- 3 valid times are required to break an RSL record!**

## 2 Valid Watch times:

- The official time is the average of the 2 times
- Mistakes happen. Timers should always be willing to admit when they've missed a start or finish

## 1 Valid Watch time:

- The official time is that time.
- Hopefully, this a rare occurrence

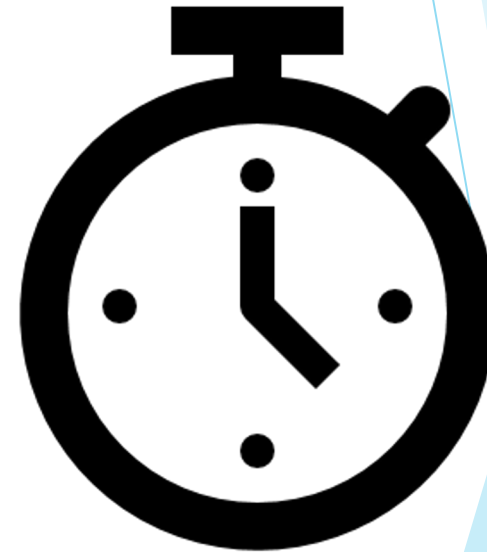
## No Valid Watch times:

- Head referee needs to be notified **immediately**
- Referee is consulted to determine order of finish.
- Time can be averaged based on the swimmer before and after the no time swimmer
- If the order of finish is not agreed upon, the swimmer may be able to re-swim the event later during the meet.



# Head Timer: Meet Duties

- 5 minutes before the start of the meet, verify all lane timers are behind the blocks and ready to begin.
- Signal Referee when timers are at the ready.
- Start two stopwatches at the beginning of each race
- If a timer signals, bring a stopwatch to replace the one that did not start correctly
- If both stopwatches have been given out, use a stopwatch from an empty lane
  - If needed, move someone from an adjacent lane for that one race to ensure two times are recorded for each swimmer.
  - If no time is received for a swimmer, notify Head Referee immediately.
- Occasionally review timer sheets to verify consistent times and that timers are following procedures.
- Direct timers on when to move for 10 & under races.
- Collect watches at the end of the night and get them to appropriate team representative.



Congratulations!



You have completed the RSL Course for Head Timer



Thank you for volunteering to help the RSL and for everything you do for your teams and your swimmers.



RSL Rules Section 10.9 defines the rules and responsibilities of the Head Timer. RSL Rules Section 10.10 defines the rules and responsibilities of the Lane Timers. Given any discrepancy between the RSL Rules and this document, the RSL Rules shall take precedence.



Suggestions for improvement to this course should be directed to: [rslofficials@gmail.com](mailto:rslofficials@gmail.com)



# Final Steps

Visit the RSL Website and Submit Online to get credit for completing this course.  
[RSL.swimtopia.com/Training](https://RSL.swimtopia.com/Training)

## Officials Certification Request

After completing RSL training, please complete and submit the Officials Training form to be considered for certification. Please note, submitting this form does NOT mean you are certified. It is a request to the RSL Officials Committee that you be considered. They will VERIFY your submitted information and then approve your request. You should check with your team's RSL Rep if you have any questions about your verification.

Before submitting this form, be sure you have your screenshots with all requested information showing.

### For EdPuzzle:

There should be NO red indicator next to Assignments with a number in it. This red indicator tells you how many INCOMPLETE tests you still have remaining.

Assignment	Start Date	Due Date
01 - 2023 Stroke and Turn Training Slides	Today	-
02 - RSL - Freestyle	Today	-
03 - 2023 Stroke and Turn Slides - Freestyle	Today	-
04 - Freestyle Technique	Today	-
05 - RSL - Backstroke	Today	-
06 - 2023 Stroke and Turn Slides - Backstroke	Today	-
07 - Backstroke Technique	Today	-
08 - RSL - Butterfly	Today	-
09 - 2023 Stroke and Turn Slides - Butterfly	Today	-

CLICK TO SUBMIT YOUR RSL OFFICIALS  
TRAINING VERIFICATION REQUEST



If you are training for multiple positions, you can wait and register for all at the same time.  
Any questions, please contact [rslofficialsinfo@gmail.com](mailto:rslofficialsinfo@gmail.com)