

Splash Times

ALL ABOUT TIMELINES

Session timelines are a valuable tool for providing an estimated schedule of events and determining an estimated session length to distribute to meet participants and spectators. It behooves us to create the most accurate timeline possible, though there will often be unforeseen factors that shape the schedule.

When creating a session, parameters such as start time, interval between heats and backstroke interval must be included. Accuracy in selecting interval times is the most important factor in creating an effective timeline. Let's take a closer look at these values.

Interval Between Heats – This is the average amount of time expected between the conclusion of one heat and the start of the next. Perhaps the most important factor in determining this interval is whether or not flyover starts will be used. It can be helpful to contact the Meet Referee in advance of creating a timeline to determine if flyovers will be used.

When using flyover starts, I've found for older and more experienced swimmers (as well as an expedient and efficient Referee/Starter), a break of 15 seconds between heats is typical. For younger swimmers, the estimate often ranges between 20-25 seconds. Without flyovers, one can expect to add about 10-15 seconds per heat interval.

Backstroke Interval – This is the additional amount of time allotted for backstroke swimmers to be removed from the pool at the end of a heat and the subsequent heat's swimmers to enter the water and prepare to start. While the standard interval is 15 seconds, I've found the actual value to be less, noting the schedule will usually "make up" time with the 15-second add-on.

Seeded vs Unseeded – Once entries have been imported, an Unseeded timeline can be created. Though helpful for determining estimated session lengths, the Unseeded timeline will not be as accurate as a timeline created after seeding, or a Seeded Timeline. Often when determining session length, there is a difference of a few minutes between a Seeded and Unseeded Timeline.

Additional Breaks – All pauses during the competition should be programmed into the timeline. Perhaps timers are asked to move from one end of the pool to the other for 25-yard or 50-meters events. "Timer walks" usually take two minutes for short course and three minutes for long course. These are to be included in the "Break" column along with a purpose for such break. Other reasons for including breaks can be awards ceremonies, special presentations and switching out timers.

Timelines for NT – Hy-tek uses seed times to determine heat duration, then adds the interval between heats to create heat and event start times. Often, college and high school meets show all swimmers seeded with No Time. In this case Hy-tek uses standard values to create a timeline, which is often not very accurate. For example, when all swimmers are entered at NT, the standard used for a 200-yard heat is around 4:00, while a 1000 free is around 16:00. Especially in a college meet, 200- and 1000-yard times will be much faster, resulting in an inaccurate timeline.

Chase Starts – Chase Starts is the practice of starting heats at alternate ends. One heat starts prior to the heat at the opposite end finishing. Though rarely used in our area, Chase Starts only apply to Long Course Meters events of 100 or more. For these events, you can enter a negative number such as -10 to subtract 10 seconds from the time line.