

Splash Times

PRELIM/FINAL MEETS IN HY-TEK

It's championship season, and many swimmers are preparing to compete in meets conducted in the Prelim/Final (P/F) format. For the Administrative Official, these competitions are almost like running two separate meets in one day. Each session has its own procedures, timelines, and responsibilities, making careful preparation essential.

The setup for a Prelim/Final meet in Hy-Tek Meet Manager begins well before the first swimmer steps onto the blocks. As each individual event is created, select "Prelims/Finals" as the event round rather than "Timed Finals."

Meet Manager allows you to specify the number of preliminary lanes and the number of final heats. Most championship meets use a single Championship (A) Final, but the software also supports Consolation (B), Bonus (C), and additional final heats when needed. Under Set-Up > Options, you can determine whether preliminary heats are seeded fastest-to-slowest or slowest-to-fastest, as well as the order in which final heats are contested.

As shown in Figure A in the attachment, the Girls 11 & Over 200 Meter Freestyle is configured as a Prelim/Final event with eight preliminary lanes and heats seeded from slowest to fastest. If the event advances two final heats, the B Final is swum before the Championship (A) Final.

Although the preliminary session is conducted as a single 11 & Over event, the finals are divided into three age groups, 11–12, 13–14, and 15 & Over, as illustrated in Figure B. This option is accessed by clicking the small button next to the Multi-Age Group checkbox.

The "Round 2 or Round 3 – Finals" section asks for the number of lanes that will be used during Finals. This number may differ from the number of preliminary lanes. The value entered in Heats in Finals is overridden if multiple final heats are defined in the Multi-Age Group setup (Figure B). However, if the event consists of only one age group, this setting determines the actual number of final heats—for example, three heats if A, B, and C Finals will be contested.

One of the most important settings is ensuring that "A Final, B Final" is checked. If this box is not selected, Meet Manager will rank swimmers solely by their Finals times. In that case, a swimmer in the B Final who swims

faster than every swimmer in the A Final would be listed as the event champion. While technically the fastest performance, this is almost never the desired championship result. Checking this option ensures that all A Finalists are placed ahead of B Finalists, regardless of time.

Large championship meets sometimes include a C Final for senior events that is limited to a maximum age, such as 17 & Under. This allows additional younger swimmers to experience swimming in Finals while still maintaining an open senior championship event.

Another, although rarely used, option is to Score Prelims as Extended Finals. For example, suppose only the top eight swimmers advance to Finals, but the meet awards points through 16th place. Enabling this option allows places 9 through 16 to be determined from the preliminary results while the top eight compete in Finals.

When a Prelim/Final event is created, Meet Manager automatically generates the corresponding Finals event. It retains the same event number but is identified as Finals rather than Prelims. This event can then be assigned to the Finals session in Session Setup.

One of the Administrative Official's most important responsibilities is overseeing the scratch process. Since preliminary results determine who advances to Finals, even a single error can affect the integrity of the competition.

Whenever possible, assign an experienced official to supervise the scratch table. While it may not be the most exciting assignment, it is one of the most important. If a dedicated official is unavailable, periodically monitor the scratch table or scratch books to ensure coaches and athletes are following the published procedures.

Successfully administering a Prelim/Final meet requires careful planning, attention to detail, and constant vigilance. While Meet Manager automates much of the process, the Administrative Official remains responsible for ensuring that event setup, advancement, scratches, and Finals seeding are all handled correctly.

A well-run Prelim/Final meet is rarely noticed—and that's exactly the goal. When every detail is handled accurately, the meet runs smoothly, coaches and athletes have confidence in the process, and everyone can focus on what matters most: fast swimming!