

Purpose

To accurately measure the elapsed time between the start and finish of a track event.

Note: The procedure described on this handy hint is when stopwatches are used.

The principles are the same if using timing gates or photo finish. Additional timing devices, e.g. stopwatches, should be used as a backup method of timing should the automatic timing system fail.

Equipment

The timing system is dependent on what is available at the location.

- ✓ Stopwatches, multi timers, electronic timing system, i.e. timing gates, photo finish
- ✓ Additional stopwatches as backup devices as required
- ✓ Finish posts painted white
- ✓ Recording forms, pens and clipboards
- ✓ Two-way radios or flags (1 red and 1 white) for communication between Officials



Safety

The finish and nearby areas must be clear of obstructions and hazards.

Where to stand

Timekeepers should:

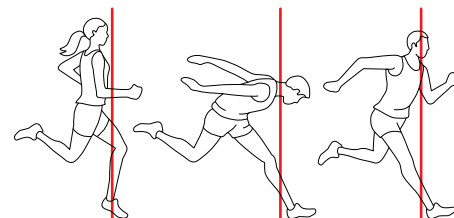
- operate from the outside of the track with a clear view of the Starter.
- be in line with the finish line for an accurate view of the athletes reaching the finish line.
- preferably be seated on an elevated stand at least five metres back from the outside lane of the track for a good view of the finish.

What to do

- Timekeepers are allocated a specific place to time **not** a lane, e.g. second place **not** lane 2.
- The stopwatch is held in one hand between the thumb and forefinger with the forefinger on the stop/start button.
- Be familiar with the timing system being used.
- Act independently, do not consult with other Timekeepers over times.

How to time

- The Starter will check with the Chief Timekeeper that all is ready before the starting procedure begins.
- The Chief Timekeeper will normally advise when the start is imminent and/or watch for the Starter to begin the starting procedure.
- Watch for the raised gun/starting device, i.e. the start is imminent – athletes are in the 'Set' position.
- Start timing from the moment the flash or smoke from the gun/starting device is seen, **not** from when the sound is heard.



- Stop timing when any part of the athlete's torso reaches the finish line. The torso is between the shoulders and waist and does not include head, neck, arms, legs, hands or feet.
- At the end of the race, the Chief Timekeeper will ask for the time recorded for the allocated place.
- Do not clear the stopwatch until instructed by the Chief Timekeeper.
- If a mistake happens, e.g. missed the start or finish, remain calm and inform the Chief Timekeeper immediately. The Chief Timekeeper will determine the official time if there are any discrepancies.

How to record

- All manual (hand) timing is recorded to the nearest tenth of a second **above** the actual time for all distances, e.g. 12.23 secs is recorded as 12.3 secs.
- Times are never taken to the nearest tenth of a second.

Handy hints for Timekeepers

- Watch the Starter's movements once the Track Referee or Chief Timekeeper has signalled 'All Clear' for the start of the race.
- Maintain concentration from the start to the finish of the race.
- Be aware and do not obstruct the view of other Timekeepers.
- Do not converse with the athletes – it slows down the process.