

USE OF ELECTRONIC PLUNGERS

This document was prepared by the B.C.S.O.A provincial director, Paul Jenkins, and appeared in the July 1997 edition of the Newsletter, "Off the Blocks". It is shown here with the permission of the author.

A short while ago Swim BC received a call asking what was our policy on the number and use of plungers. In addition, how many watches, if any, were required if plungers were to be used. Well, no policy was in place and as a result the BCSOA was asked to create one. The following is what was developed. Before discussion takes place it should be brought to your attention rule SW 1.3, which states that "any timing device that is terminated by an official shall be considered a watch." Therefore a plunger is technically considered a watch.

Considerable debate has taken place over which systems work better than others. The most common electronic timing systems are Omega, Colarado and Daktronics. Systems are now at the stage where they can be relied upon to a greater degree than in the past. Also, type of equipment and number of timekeepers available has to be considered.

Given a double ended meet, having three timekeepers in each lane in an eight lane pool has to be a dream come true and therefore asking for two seems to be far more practical. However, if no watches are used and the timekeepers are using nothing but plungers, in the event of an electronic failure there will be no times available.

RECOMMENDATION:

Given a timing system which has one or more plungers available for use, it is recommended as a bare minimum, two timekeepers, of which one will use a stopwatch and the other a plunger.

RATIONALE:

In the event of a complete system failure, at least one time is available. In the event of a light touch, the chief finish judge will have both the watch time and plunger time to determine the official time.

RECOMMENDATION:

If three timekeepers are available the choice can be made by meet management as to whether the combination be one stopwatch and two plungers or two stopwatches and one plunger.

RATIONALE:

In the event of a system failure, as one stopwatch time is available and three watches (including plunger(s)) are available for a manual time if required.

RECOMMENDATION:

That each timekeeper only operate one timing device at a time.

RATIONALE:

It is proven beyond all doubt that too great a time variance takes place when a timekeeper stops a watch in each hand. In the event of manual adjustments by the CFJ, times are not sufficiently accurate for determining a swimmers performance.

This is now Swim BC policy and will be incorporated in the Technical Guide