

SWIMMING SCIENCE BULLETIN**Number 59****Copyrighted by****Professor Emeritus Brent S. Rushall, San Diego State University**

SELF-TIMING FOR 50 y/m SPRINT-USRPT**Glenn A. Gruber, Masters Swimmer****May 11, 2016**

The new protocol for 50 y/m sprint training using USRPT, recommends all-out swims of 15 m and 25 y/m with a coach or timer taking the times. These swims are on a three- or four-minute interval (complete recovery) and require accurate times that can be recorded so that the swimmer knows when a failure has occurred.

Digital Clock. A digital clock on the deck or on the wall of the pool is a great improvement over the sweep hand of an analog pace-clock. With the analog clock, by the time a swimmer hits the wall and looks at the clock and focuses on the number, it is easy to be off the actual duration of the swim. The digital clock has made getting a time much easier and accurate. With the digital clock and practice it is easy to know if the 25 just completed was a 10-high or a 10-solid. Not so with the analog clock.

A Coach. If a coach is timing you on deck, a swimmer can feel much more confident about getting accurate times. However, if there is no coach, it is very hard to do self-timed starts off the blocks and to get an accurate time.

Finger-timer. The current 50 y/m USRPT protocol requires block starts and timing to the tenth of a second. One way to get an accurate self-time is with the use of a finger-timer. With three or four minutes between swims, the finger-timer is a valuable tool because a swimmer can see their time, record it on a diver's slate, and later transfer it to their training-log.

To use the finger-timer, slip it on the index finger of either hand. Position it so that your thumb can easily depress the start button. Whether you use the grab start from the front or side of the blocks or even the handles on some blocks, swimmers usually grab with their fingers, leaving the thumbs essentially resting next to the index finger.

It is easy to depress the start button at the moment of beginning an explosive start. At the finish, if the hand with the watch touches the wall, the clock can be stopped easily. If the other hand touches the wall, it is also easy to stop the clock with the trailing hand. Stopping the clock seems less accurate than starting the clock, but with practice, it is possible to get what appears to be an accurate time. Any measurement error is very likely to be constant once the skills of starting and stopping the watch are honed.

Sport Count offers several finger-timers from very basic to ones with several complex functions. The Yellow model is a basic stopwatch with start, stop, and reset functions. The Red model can count laps as well as provide statistics such as fastest lap and average time. For the purpose of accurately timing all-out 25s, the Yellow model is quite adequate and easy to use.

This writer has been using the Yellow model for some time and is very satisfied with the ease of use and consistency/accuracy of its times. *Sport Count* can be accessed at www.SportCount.com and the model I recommend is the:

- Stopwatch Model - 90030 Yellow

Respectfully submitted,

Glenn Gruber

Glenn A. Gruber is a Masters swimmer who competes for Ventura County Masters. He was the 2014 FINA Masters World Champion in the 200 and 400 meter freestyle and was World Record holder in the 400 SCM freestyle in the 65-69 age-group. He is the 2016 National Masters Champion in the 50, 100 and 200 yard freestyle in the 65-69 age-group and has trained exclusively using USRPT since 2013. Glenn can be contacted at sca17@pacbell.net.