

How is My Child's Official Time Determined?

The time that shows up on the scoreboard is not necessarily the official result time. USA Swimming has specific rules regarding how official times are determined. This is why sometimes:

- The scoreboard is blank or has a line.
- The scoreboard time does not match the time in the official results.
- The time doesn't stop when the swimmer touches the wall.

All USA Swimming sanctioned meets are timed with one or more of the following systems:

- Fully Automatic-Touchpads (the pads in the water at the end of the lanes) are the primary timing systems. Timers operate plunger buttons (one minimum) and stopwatches (one minimum) as backup.
- Sem-Automatic-There are no touchpads; timers operate plunger buttons as the primary timing system (two minimum) and stopwatches (one minimum) as the backup.
- Manual-Only stopwatches are used. Three timers per lane, each operating a stopwatch is required.

At the end of each race, the time is recorded by both the primary and the backup devices. All of this information is sent to the Administrative Official (AO), who compares the time recorded by the primary timing system with the time recorded by the backup systems.

If the backup devices support the time recorded by the primary timing system, the AO certifies the primary time as official. However, if the difference between the primary system and backup systems is .30 seconds or more, the AO must determine the reason for the discrepancy, gathering as much data as possible, using USA Swimming rules, to determine the official time.

Examples of Reasons for discrepancy between primary timing system and backup timing systems:

- The swimmer didn't hit the touchpad.
- The swimmer didn't hit the touchpad hard enough (soft touch)
- The touchpad, plunger button, or watch malfunctioned.
- The timer was distracted or possibly inexperienced (This is why timers are so important as volunteers!)

This is also why quite often Meet Mobile will show a different time than is shown in the official results. Meet Mobile results are always published as a courtesy UNOFFICIAL time. Regardless of the reason for the discrepancy, the official time will be published in the official results.

Meet Mobile: Although Meet Mobile is great, it usually displays scoreboard times immediately, prior to review by the AO. If you see a time on Meet Mobile or on the scoreboard that you think is inaccurate, be patient and wait to see if it is updated on Meet Mobile or shows up differently in the results.

If the official results have been posted or sent out and you still have a concern, please contact your coach, as it MAY be possible something was overlooked. AO's are humans too!