

Notes about setting up and recording finishing order and times on paper at a cross-country or road race

Layout of finish to facilitate accurate recording

- 1) The width and depth of V section of funnel must be enough for safety of fast finishing runners
- 2) The length of straight section of funnel must be enough to accommodate lots of runners finishing around the same time.
- 3) Someone needs to ensure people enter the straight section in the order they crossed the finishing line
- 4) Someone needs to encourage people to keep moving and check that they stay in order
- 5) Someone needs to assist/remove anyone who is unwell and inform recorders of race number and the number in front/behind
- 6) For larger fields an additional funnel is used a) to prevent over crowding in a single funnel and b) to deal with eg someone passes out in the funnel then runners can be switched to another
- 7) If there is more than one funnel additional teams of recorders are required and extra officials are needed (to switch runners to the new funnel when it comes into use and for multiple funnels, to delineate the beginning and end of each set of runners)

Equipment in wet weather

- 1) Those writing numbers or times should use a pencil (preferably HB) and have a couple of spares
- 2) A portrait sized weather-writer board can be used to keep the paper dry; or the board can be held inside a large polythene bag; or, if not too windy, someone can hold an umbrella above the people writing numbers and times

Recording finishing order

- 1) This is the most important job for producing the results.
- 2) Recorders stand at the end of the funnel so they are not distracted by numbers called out by timekeepers and to allow runners to be sorted into correct finishing order before recording as this is difficult to do close to the finishing line
- 3) One recorder faces runners approaching the end of the funnel and calls out the numbers at a steady pace and in a clear voice
- 4) Often, the other recorder stands with their back to approaching runners (to prevent distraction and confusion on which numbers have been written down and which haven't) and writes numbers down legibly as called
- 5) The person calling numbers must check that writer is keeping up, especially at the bottom of a sheet when switching to the next page
- 6) Note that mistakes can occur when race numbers contain differing numbers of digits
 - eg 2, 34, 129 could be heard and recorded as 234, 129
 - or 2, 234, 129 could also be heard and recorded as 234, 129
- 7) If the runners are coming through too quickly. The person calling should slow them down until all numbers are recorded.
- 8) If someone doesn't have a number (eg if it has disintegrated in the rain) take their name/club (and/or number if they can remember it)

Timekeeping

- 1) The timekeeper stands level with and facing the finishing line
- 2) The scribe stands on the funnel side of the timekeeper facing incoming runners
- 3) The timekeeper calls times as follows:
 - Initially states the minutes, for example, “minutes are 37” when the first of a group of runners is approaching the line
 - Then calls the seconds as each runner crosses the line (Correctly this should be one second up from that showing on the watch as timing is always “rounded up” because tenths will already have elapsed so the second showing on the watch will already have passed – in practice this is not crucial)
 - Only when the minutes change is it necessary to announce the minutes again for example “minutes are 38” and this is repeated at subsequent changes of minute or after a long gap (The reason for saying it this way round is that it is often very hectic recording times and the scribe is expecting seconds so if minutes are announced without preamble they can be recorded as seconds by mistake)
 - If minutes change during a group of runners, the timekeeper just carries on eg 58, 59, 02 04 and then when there is a gap, announces the minutes.
 - For exact minutes, the expression “dead” can be used or “00” if not in the middle of a group of runners where it could be confusing.
 - When more than one runner has the same time, the seconds should be announced first followed by the number of runners eg “48 twice” or “51 three times” (This is so the scribe doesn’t write down the number of runners instead of the time)
- 4) The scribe writes down the times legibly as called
- 5) Where there is a group and it’s possible to repeat the time on the correct number of lines, that is useful but not essential so when in a rush it is acceptable to write eg 37:14 x5 or just 14 x5 and then carry on, on the next line or after a small gap
- 6) In addition, wherever possible without compromising the time, a race number is also recorded. Generally it is left to the scribe to record race numbers when a single approaching runner can easily be identified – the number is written down first in the left hand column and the time added on the right as the runner finishes
(This is to facilitate reconciliation with place recorders’ results)
- 7) If there has been a group which the timekeeper was unable to count or there has been any other difficulty, the crucial next step is for the scribe to record the race number and time for the next clear runner
(Again, this is to facilitate reconciliation with place recorders’ results)
- 8) If there is any doubt at any point, a squiggle in the margin to identify to the results team where a discrepancy could have occurred can be useful.
- 9) For a very large field, a second team should record only specific pairs of race number and time on a “check board”
(This ensures that there are accurate links between race numbers and times every 10 or 15 seconds and is especially useful when many athletes are finishing at the same time)

Example

Finally an example of recording and timekeeping sheets illustrating the above points and demonstrating the usefulness of timekeepers recording race numbers when possible without compromising accuracy.

Position	Recorders	Timekeepers	
1	23	23	37: 15
2	154	154	16
3	195		18
4	210		19
5	235		22
6	134	134	31
7	67		33
8	632		35
9	125	125	43
10	354		44
11	148		47
12	152		47
13	162		48 x3
14	138		<i>*see below</i>
15	267		50
16	298	397	57
17	397	402	38: 05
18	402		06
19	56	321	17
20	321		

*Notes on times for positions 13, 14 and 15 above

- Ideally the scribe would write 48 on the next two lines, but this is not always feasible when runners finish in a group.
- Here the scribe has only used two lines for the three runners, which means that from now on, the recorders and timekeepers appear to be one line out.
- The next runner finished close behind the three at 48 seconds and there wasn't time to identify the number.
- The following runner is well separated and both time and number can be recorded accurately in this case 397 in a time of 37:57.