

Competition with time handicap

The Halliwick Concept's competition principle, expresses respect for the individual differences between people. The winner of the gala will not be the fastest swimmer, but the one that improves the most.

The competition is carried out with a delayed start time (a time handicap) allowing the swimmer with the longest enrolment time, to start first. The swimmer, with the second-longest enrolment time next. The second swimmer is assigned a time handicap which equals the difference between their enrolment times. E.g. if the first swimmer uses 90 seconds and the second swimmer uses 80 seconds for this distance. The second swimmer will start 10 seconds after the first swimmer. The same calculation principle is used for the following swimmers, as the enrolment time for the first swimmer is used for the calculations.

Hereby it is achieved, that all swimmers finish at the same time - if they swim as fast as expected. The winner is the one, who has improved the most (however see below). The enrolment times used for calculation should always be a swimmers personal best one. This ensures that the winner will be the one, who makes an extra effort, both during the competition and during the training for the Gala. If a swimmer enrolls for the Gala with a time far from the personal best (whether it's on purpose or not), the swimmer will have a greater possibility to improve compared to those who have enrolled with their best time. This will make the competition unfair. To avoid this, a 7% margin of improvement has been introduced in Denmark. Anyone who swims 7% faster than their enrolment time will be disqualified and excluded from the ordinary heats. These swimmers with too large improvements will then swim in a new extra semi-final heat exclusively for them.

In the semi-finals, the swimmers will be enrolled with the time that they achieved in the preliminaries. Correspondingly the time from the semi-finals will be used for the finals. The 7% margin improvement rule is used in the semi-finals but not in the finals.

The principle of competition with time handicap differs from ordinary disability swimming, by not dividing the swimmers according to their disabilities.

To conclude, competition with time handicap offers a range of advantages:

- everyone can participate, regardless of disability
- swimmers without disability can compete with disabled swimmers
- swimmers are competing according to their ability not their disability
- the main motivation for swimming faster is improving your own time –the result is shown in competition with others
- everyone is part of the finish of the race and experiences the excitement of a "fair" competition
- there is a continued motivation for improvement



*Illustration 1.
Finish of a heat with time handicap*

Example of setting heat lists:

50 meter Preliminary Heat nr. 1

Lean	Name Club	Starting time	Enrol time in seconds	Minus 7%	Permitted Swim time	Watch Time	Absolute swim time= Watch time minus start time	Position	Notes
1	Peter "HASA"	0	120,5	8,4	112,1	114,5	114,5	1	
2	Maria "HASI"	30	90,7	6,3	84,4	115,8	85,8	2	
3	Jan "HATO"	32	88,2	6,2	82,0	112,6	80,6	DQ	
4	Anna "Halli"	50	70,4	4,9	65,5	116,2	66,2	3	

Dispensation for aid and "pilot"

The swimmer is allowed a helper at the poolside, who helps during the start. E.g. the helper holds the swimmers hand, until the swimmer is allowed to start.

Swimmers are not allowed any flotation aids during Galas, however dispensation can be given by the HASAM Gala committee.

Using a "pilot" is allowed, however the Gala club must be notified at registration.

Assignments for officials

Calculators: The committee has calculated all preliminary heats before the Gala. An overview of all preliminary heats is handed to the team leaders before the Gala.

Once the Gala has commenced, the calculators receive the results for all swimmers in all heats. The two timekeepers for each lane will note the time for "their" swimmer. If there is a difference between the two times registered, the average time should be calculated before subtracting the time handicap (starting time) in order to calculate the absolute time for each swimmer. The absolute time should be used when placing the swimmer in a semi-final.

For putting together the appropriate number of heats is often used a computer program. The computer should be able to put together the heats, so that:

- the heats are made so the difference between swimmer's swimming time is the least possible
- swimmers compete against swimmers from other teams,
- the swimmers either start at the exact same time or with a gap of at least two seconds. Otherwise the starter will have problems separating the swimmers.

The number of swimmers to proceed to semi-finals should be determined by the Gala Committee beforehand. This decision and a timetable of the heats in the different distances should be handed out to the team leaders before the start of the Gala.

The starter: Before beginning the countdown, the starter makes sure that the swimmers are ready and that the timekeepers have reset their stop watches.

Afterwards the starter commences the heat by lifting his arm saying:

- Swimmers on your marks!
- Ready!
- And on go! he blows a whistle and lowering his arm. This is the signal for all stopwatches to be started and for the first swimmer to start.

Afterwards the starter counts the seconds loudly, so that the rest of the swimmers know when to start according to their starting time. In case the swimmer has a helper, he/she can help communicating the starting time to the swimmer.

In case the first swimmer starts before time, there will be a restart. If any following swimmers start ahead of time, they will be disqualified, but there will not be a restart.

Time keepers: Two time keepers at each lane. All watches are to be started when the first swimmer starts (according to the starters mark) and stopped when the corresponding swimmer finishes. Both times are noted before the watches are reset.

Finish referee: Minimum 2, preferably 4 –two on each side of the finish area. Their responsibilities are to determine in which order the swimmers finish. Often the finish race is so close, that a small incorrectness from the time keepers will result in a wrong order of places. The finish referees evaluation is more important than the time keepers. In cases of doubt, the Gala Leader and the calculators should decide.

Turning referees: Their task is to make sure that the swimmer touches the end of the pool, when making the turn. If not, the swimmer is disqualified.

The speaker: Announces the heat telling who is swimming on each lane, and calling the swimmers for the next heat to be ready.

Spectators: Must stay calm during the entire start of a heat - until the last swimmer has started. Afterwards they are encouraged to cheer. It is not allowed during the race to signal to the swimmer whether he/she is within the allowed time margin.

The Gala Leader: Has the overall responsibility for the Gala, and furthermore functions as a top referee in cases of doubt.

The Gala Leader is in charge of making sure that the spectators do not signal to the swimmer during the race, so that he/she will stay within the allowed time margin. The swimmer can be disqualified in this case.

During the Gala it can be helpful that it is clearly signed which heat is to be started. This can be a necessary help for the team leaders, time keepers, the finish referees and the starter.

Relay

Most Galas finishes with a relay, where each competing team (clubs) make a team of 4 swimmers in either 25 or 50 meter. If a team is in lack of one to make it four swimmers, they can "borrow" a swimmer from another team.

When calculating the teams enrolment time for the relay, the sum of the 4 swimmers times from the preliminary heats are used. In relays there is no 7% margin improvement rule.