



DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE SECTION TIMERS

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Volunteers are an extremely important component for any carriage driving show, and an internationally-rated competition such as Live Oak will require the services of over 100 volunteers! Many people have expressed doubts about their ability to volunteer, but anyone can do it! This document describes the duties of the Section Timers.

General Duties: Most U.S. marathons are three sections. Section A (any pace), Section D (walk), and Section E (hazards). Each of these sections needs a starting time and an ending time so that the scorekeepers can figure out how much time has elapsed on that section. If the time elapsed is greater than the time allowed, penalty points will be added to the score. The section timers are responsible for recording times on the green card and returning it to the navigator or competitor. In addition to timing duties, section timers may also be asked to do some spotting of the areas within their visual range for competitors going through a mandatory gate, or competitors breaking pace.

Equipment needed: You will need a clock that is accurate to the second to the time of day and synchronized with all other clocks used on the course. This could be an atomic clock that receives accurate signals from a satellite, or special clocks in a set that can read each other and are synchronized with each other. You will be recording the actual time of day, not an elapsed time. You should also have an “order of go” that indicates the number of each competitor and their planned starting time. Typically, competitors on a marathon are scheduled to start in five-minute intervals. You will need a clipboard with your own backup timer sheet and pens or pencils. I prefer that section timers use ballpoint pens or permanent ink “sharpies” (just be careful that there are no mistakes). Green cards are handled many times during the event, and become crumpled and/or wet – and the pencil marks rub off! By the time the green card gets to scoring, some of the times are no longer legible (thank goodness for those backup time sheets!). Write carefully and neatly! You should also have a radio – it is important that you can communicate your times so everyone knows who is on course when. You should also listen to radio traffic to be sure you know if you have to hold a competitor.

Start Timers: If you are the timer for the start of the section, first check the Order of Go and make sure you have the proper competitor number. Decide on the start time (always in whole minutes) and write the start time on the Timer Record or Backup Sheet along with the competitor number. Enter the same time on the competitor’s green card (under the appropriately lettered section and at “Start Time”) and sign the green card next to the Start Time. Double check the competitor number. Hand the green card back to the Navigator. Stand at the start line and call the following: Two minute warning, 1 minute warning, 30 second warning, 10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1-GO! As soon as the competitor passes through the gate, call on your radio “Start of A (or D or E); Competitor #; Time:___.” You should receive a response of the time if your radio transmission was received properly. If you are starting sections D or E, you can start your competitor at the next even two minutes.

Note that drivers MUST start from the halt. They can choose where to stand, but can have no running starts. If a competitor starts early through the gate before being given the authorization to go, they should be halted, the green card retrieved, and a new start time noted. The ground jury must be advised of the “false start.”

In Section A, a competitor is required to be at the section area 15 minutes before their posted start time. If a competitor is not ready one minute after their posted start time, they may be eliminated by the Ground Jury. Notify the Ground Jury of any late starts. If you are running ahead of time, you cannot penalize a competitor for not knowing a new, unposted schedule – just wait for them to arrive at their posted time.

End Timers: If you are the timer for the end of the section, stop the clock (or note the time) when the nose of the horse crosses the finish line. Write the time on the Timer Record or Timer Backup Sheet. Get the green card from the navigator and note the competitor number, and record the same clock time on the green card. Be sure you have written down the Finish Time (usually above the Start Time) in the right place, and also sign your name next to the time. Hand the card back to the competitor and direct them to their next position. If you are at the end of E, get the navigator or driver signature on the card and then hand the green card to the judge. Call the time on the radio: “End of A (or D or E); Competitor #___; Time: ___.” You should receive a response of the time if your radio transmission was received properly. At the end of E,

vehicles crossing the finish line must be pulled by the proper number of equines in the class and on all wheels (broken or missing tires are acceptable). Disconnected poles, traces, or pole straps will incur elimination.

Holdups: In any CDE there might be a reason for a holdup where you cannot start the competitor according to the predetermined schedule or on 5-minute intervals. There may have been an accident, or a competitor could have gotten lost on the course and is running behind, there is a loose horse, someone has a medical problem, or any other reason. If a competitor is repeatedly catching up with the turnout ahead of them, respect their request for a later start time, especially on Section E. Listen to the radio traffic for any holds ahead of you, and translate those holds back to your section. If there is a long hold ahead, it will be up to the Start section timer to begin "catching up" so that competitors are eventually as close as possible to their posted time. You may need to send competitors off at 3 minute intervals instead of five, for example.

Spotting: Section timers may also be asked to spot for competitors arriving through mandatory gates, or not breaking pace. Missed gates should be recorded on the green card, along with any break of pace for more than five seconds. Breaks of pace are particularly important on the walk section. You can review the duties of the spotter for more details.

When Are You Done? After the last competitor leaves your area, you need to turn in your equipment and your timer record sheets to the show office or ground jury. Don't leave! There is a 30-minute protest period after scores are posted in which competitors can challenge times and penalties. You may be called by the judge to discuss a situation. Wait until the President of the Jury (head judge) officially releases you when the protest period is over.

If you are not competing at a show, you should volunteer, because it is one of the best ways to learn! Volunteers help make shows happen, so please contribute your time, so at the next show, you can drive!