# Halliwick Information

Timed Handicapping System

This guide is aimed to help the newcomer understand the basics of the racing system used in Halliwick galas. The timed handicapping system is used to ensure that swimmers with varying disabilities are able to compete fairly in a single race. A fundamental principle of the handicapping system is that each swimmer is aiming to match their entry time. It is hoped that the swimmer enjoys the competition of a gala and the camaraderie of taking part. To illustrate the system please take a look at the following worked example:

Entry times

There are 5 swimmers taking part in a boys 1 length race. Each swimmer has submitted their fastest time for the event. This is known as the **Entry time** for each competitor:

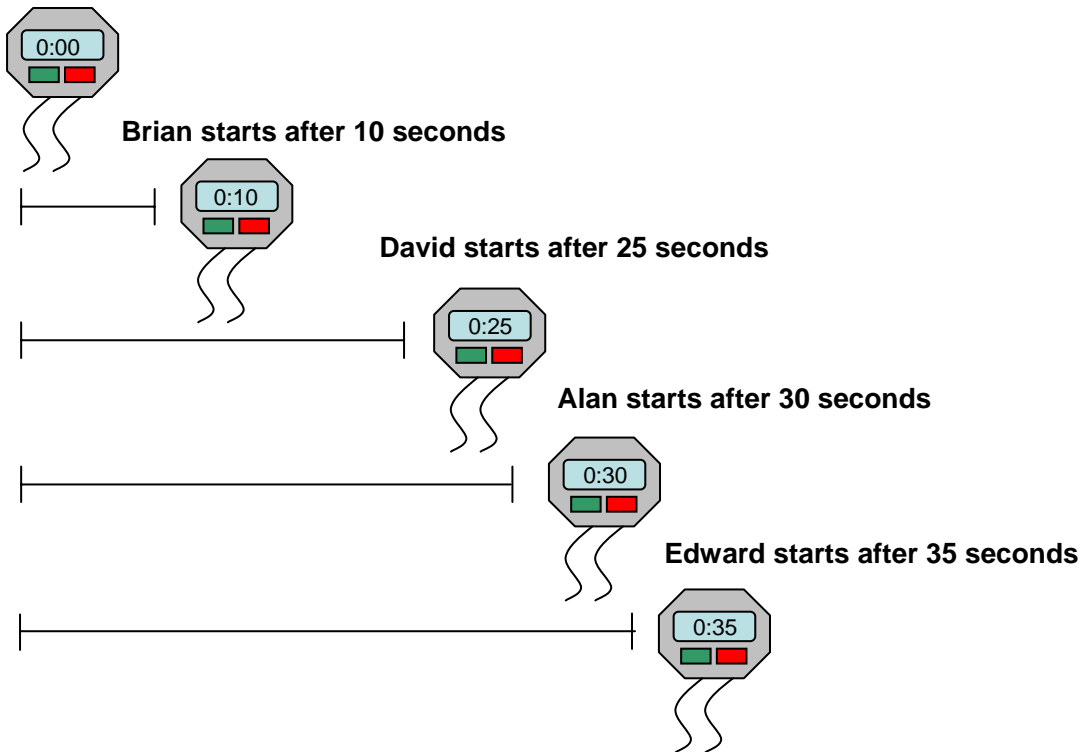| Alan	Brian	Chris	David	Edward
0:55	1:15	1:25	1:00	0:50
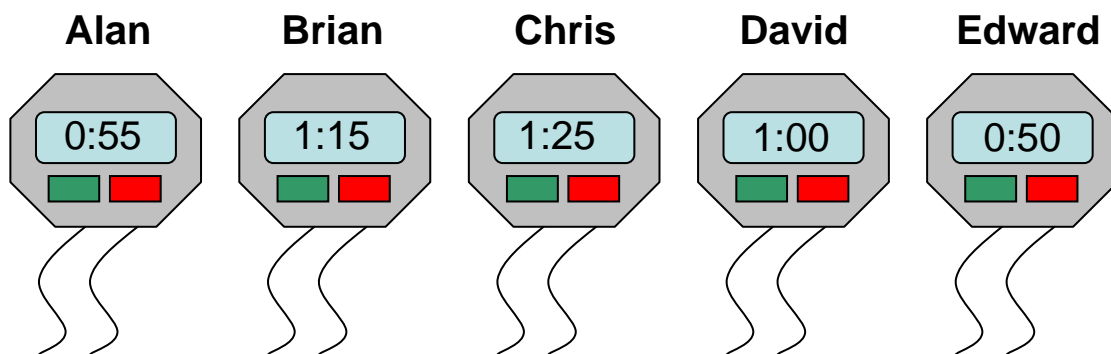
The "Go At" times

The first task is to sort the times from slowest to fastest. This step is required to calculate the "Go at" time for each swimmer. The "Go at" times are adjustments designed to ensure that the race should finish with swimmers touching the finishing wall at the same time. The sorted times (from slowest to fastest) are as follows:

Name	Entry time
Chris	1:25
Brian	1:15
David	1:00
Alan	0:55
Edward	0:50

Calculating the "Go at" time is a simple process. Using the slowest time (Chris) for each calculation, we subtract each swimmer's time from their time.

For example, Brian is 10 seconds quicker for this distance than Chris.
Thus for them to finish together, Brian must start 10 seconds later than Chris. This principle is applied to all other competitors in the race.

Chris goes first

0:00

Brian starts after 10 seconds

0:10

David starts after 25 seconds

0:25

Alan starts after 30 seconds

0:30

**Edward starts after 35 seconds**

0:35

The Race

Once the race is underway, swimmers keep going until they complete the race distance. Ideally, as the race unfolds you should see the swimmers with faster times catch up with the slower swimmers and competitors should finish within a short gap of one another.

Swimmers' times

In this example, swimmers have achieved the following aggregate times
(lane position and finishing touch order are indicated):

Lane	1	2	3	4	5

	Chris	Brian	David	Alan	Edward
	1:20	1:26	1:29	1:24	1:22

Finishing touch order	1	4	5	3	2
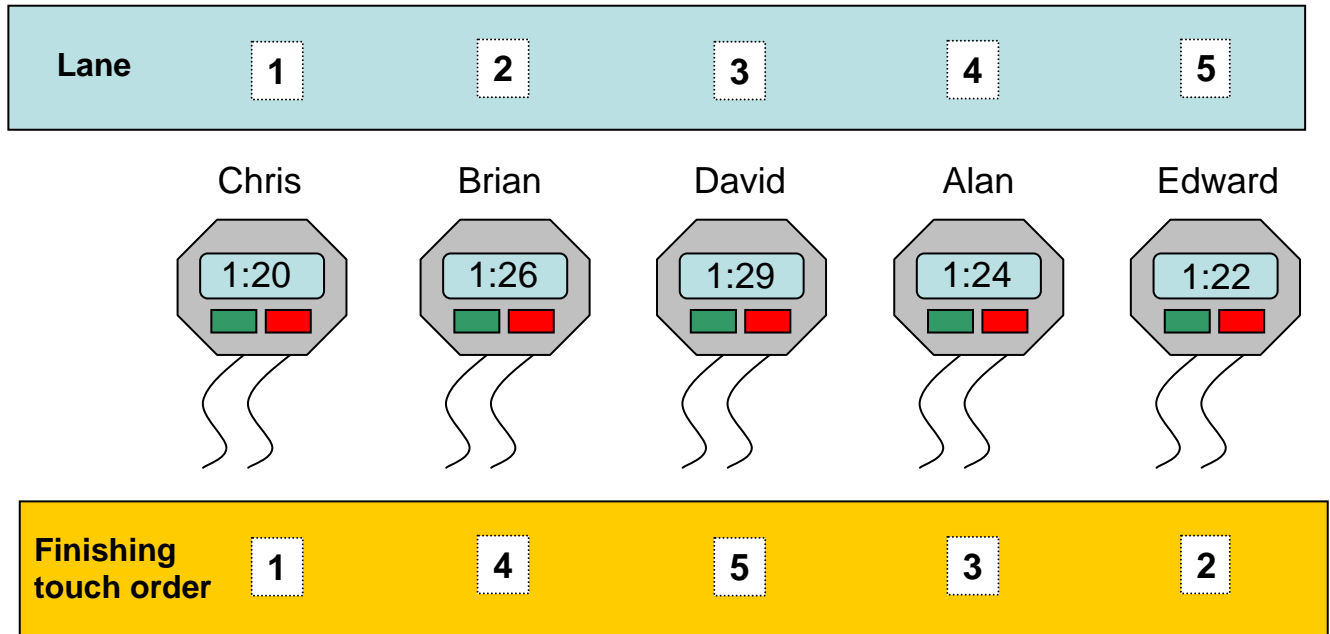
Lane Order

The place judge will look to see in which position the swimmer touches the finishing wall. This is known as the **lane order**.

For this example, the Lane order is: 1, 5, 4, 2, 3

This is easy to see in practice: a swimmer will touch the wall first and the place judge will note down which lane they were swimming in. The next swimmer finishes and again the place judge writes down which lane they were in, this is repeated until all swimmers have completed the race.

The Winner

To summarise events up to now, the officials have scaled the entry times so that Swimmers should all be finishing at 1 min 25 sec if they swim near to their entry times. The faster the entry time of the swimmer, the longer he has to wait before being allowed to start. This is a key principle of this handicapping system. The swimmers have now swum their race and we can go on to calculate the winner.

To work out the winner (irrespective of who touched the end of the pool first) it is necessary to work out who got nearest to our finishing time of 1 min 26 sec. Remember that a swimmer can finish closest to 1 min 25 sec by being slower than this time. Results are worked out <u>either side</u> of 1 min 25.sec.

In this example, each swimmer's time is compared to 1 min 25.sec.
A negative value indicates that a swimmer went faster than 1 min 25 sec,
 a positive value shows that a swimmer went slower than 1 min 25 sec:

Chris

1:20   Subtract 1 min 25 seconds = **- 5 seconds**

Brian

1:26   Subtract 1 min 25 seconds = **+ 1 seconds**

David

1:29   Subtract 1 min 25 seconds = **+ 4 seconds**

Alan

1:24   Subtract 1 min 25 seconds = **- 1 seconds**

Edward

1:22   Subtract 1 min 25 seconds = **- 3 seconds**

Who won?

To reiterate, the last step is to work out who was closest to a finishing time of 1 min 25 sec. Remember that the 1 min 25 sec is the time of the slowest swimmer, and that all other Swimmers have been delayed so that they should finish close to this time.   The results using this principle are illustrated by the diagram below. Please note that Brian came second even though he swam 1 second slower than his entry time. Chris swam much faster (5 seconds) than his entry time and although he touched the wall first, he did not finish first in the race. This is why it is important to encourage helpers in clubs to motivate swimmers for fast entry times and for the club to submit the swimmers' fastest times. Of course, if a swimmer really does improve by a large margin, and doesn't win a medal, they should still be congratulated by the club members and celebrated in the social event afterwards.
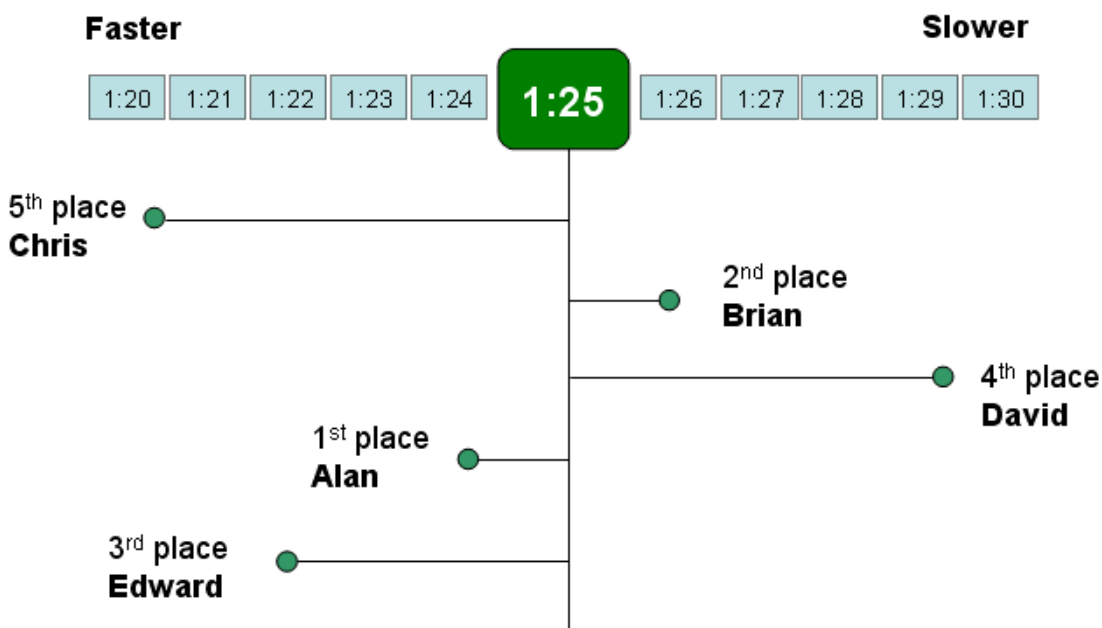
This particular method can be used to enable able-bodied and disabled swimmers
to co-compete on an equal footing.

Frequently asked questions

These Q&A are designed to reply to common queries that helpers and parents may have about galas.

<u>Who tells the swimmers to start?</u>

The starter is responsible for making sure swimmers start the race at the correct "Go at" time. The "Go at" times are determined before the gala starts.

<u>Why do the officials want everyone to be quiet until the last swimmer goes?</u>
<u>I want to cheer on my team and swimmer</u>

Some swimmers may have difficulty in hearing (or interpreting) the starting signal.
Therefore we ask for 'silence' so that each Swimmer has an equal chance in the race,
as good start is important in competing well.

<u>Why am I not allowed to encourage my swimmer from the poolside by waving them on?</u>

There are strict guidelines as to what constitutes coaching. This handicapping system can be abused by swimmers and coaches working together to adjust their speed to finish close to the projected finishing time. Obviously teams and competitors want to do well, but it's unfair to allow even a chance of engineering results.

<u>Our Swimmer improved significantly and smashed his time, why did he not finish first?</u>

There could be several reasons for this. <u>Firstly</u>, the club should ensure that a recent (and fastest) time should be submitted close to the deadline of the gala. If the entry time was out-of-date, a swimmer could improve between the date of the entry time recording and the gala. <u>Secondly</u>, this could be a genuine improvement, and in these instances it's best to celebrate their success with plenty of attention and fun in the social event afterwards. Please remember that all handicapping systems are a compromise of positives and negatives.
<u>If two swimmers are equidistant from the finishing time, (e.g. Swimmer A is 2 sec slower, and Swimmer B is 2 sec faster) what happens?</u>

The swimmer who is 2 sec faster will be placed above the swimmer who is 2 sec slower. This is because this system encourages improvement