

LAP SCORING BASICS - For 1 or 2 SCORERS

(USATF Rule 131, NCAA Rule 3.18)

Introduction

Lap scorers are required to keep a record of laps covered by each competitor for races of one mile or longer (USATF), and times for each competitor's lap for races of three miles/3000 meters or more. Also, lap scorers should not be assigned more than three competitors in any race. When a sufficient lap scoring crew is present, see the Best Practices "Lap Scoring" document for how to perform this duty, along with the associated "Lap Scoring Sheets."

However, at many meets only one or two lap scorers are assigned, and this paper describes how to perform the duty in these instances. At least two people are needed for races with more than ten runners. In the absence of multiple lap scorers, and with a field of many athletes, it's impossible to accurately record laps, keep track of lapped athletes and finishers, and record times. In these cases, do not attempt to record times because the correct number of laps remaining, and an accurate order of finish are the most critical elements. Scorers must be focused for the entire race for accuracy.

Preparation

Assume nothing will be supplied by the meet or facility. You'll need the following at a minimum:

- Clipboards and several reliable pens or pencils
- Graph paper or lap scoring sheet (LSS). Instructions for creating a form in Microsoft Excel are at Appendix A
- A lap counter device and/or large hand held numbers to display to the athletes
- A finish line bell, or possibly a metal baton suspended from a lanyard and struck with a metal rod

A lap counter device displays laps remaining for the leader in a race. Lap scorers and the counter device are positioned just before the finish line so laps remaining can be shown to athletes as they approach the finish. When using hand held numbers, drop numbers you're finished displaying; you can't display a wrong number if you're not holding it.

Coordinate with the Clerk regarding issuing of hip numbers. Ensure runners have a number on both the chest and the hip so they're clearly visible to the scorers (if scorers are inside the track, then numbers go on the left hip & chest).

A standard indoor track is 200 meters though many are various other sizes. Don't take anyone's word for it; arrive early, find out the length and calculate the number of laps for each race in the meet. There are more distances run indoors (see Appendix B) and lapping happens twice as fast due to the smaller track. Be aware of the challenges for relays: the competitor that starts the race does not end the race; many times only the final runner in each team wears a hip number, and there may be different distances for different legs and exchange zones moving around the track. It's useful to put the total laps in the race on the lap counter and use hand held numbers for the individual runners.

Neatness counts; if your 7's look too much like your 2's your sheets will be worthless to anyone else trying to read them during or after a race. The lap scoring sheets below are one example; others have designed sheets with larger spaces to handle smaller fields, and sheets that record the running order horizontally vs. vertically. Use what works for you.

Procedures

Before a race starts get a count of how many athletes will run, hip numbers used, and hip numbers in sequence not used. This allows you to prepare your lap scoring sheets and helps to identify dropouts. Obtain this from the Clerk (especially needed for races that do not start near the finish line). Record the initial sequence of hip numbers on the sheet in the highlighted or "ST" or START column/line. If time permits, make a mental or written note of a description of the runners – especially 1st place; for example # 6 is a blonde with white top and red shorts (white on red).

One scorer is watching the field, calls out the hip numbers of athletes in order as they approach the finish line and operates the lap counter. Call out and record hip numbers as early as possible (head of the straightaway) to maximize the number of athletes you can score each lap; having the runners' descriptions helps you to do this. The other scorer has their head down and is recording the order of athletes on each lap and keeping track of lapped athletes.

In the first few laps of the race it's unlikely all hip numbers can be recorded. Don't worry - get as many as you can from both the front and the back of the field. As the athletes string out during the race, you should be able to record all athletes in the race. Circling a number on the lap chart may be used to indicate a runner who has been lapped.

On every lap, change the lap counter when the leader reaches the head of the final straightaway so you don't change it twice on the same lap. As you prepare to change the lap counter, confirm verbally with other scorer that the next open column on the sheet matches the new number displayed on the lap counter. For any athlete who has been lapped, you must call out to them the number of laps they have remaining (may display the appropriate hand held number).

Always know who is in first place and who is in last place.

The Start

Order	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Fin	
1	2																									
2	1																									
3	3																									
4	6																									
5		}																								
6																										
7																										
8																										
9																										
10																										
11																										
12																										
13	12																									
14	13																									
15	14																									

Not recorded on the 1st lap – all were bunched together.

Figure 1 – Lap Scoring Sheet, Prepared For 10,000m Run, 15 competitors, First Lap.

Figure 1 shows a LSS prepared for a 10,000m race with 15 competitors after the first lap. Outdoor 10,000m races begin at the finish line so all the action happens right in front of you. 24 is the first open column on the LSS, which corresponds to what the lap counter displays as the competitors enter the home straight for the first time.

As soon as possible, start entering hip numbers in the 24 column in the order the athletes pass the finish line. It's rare that you'll capture the complete order of finish on the first lap (see Figure 1 with no entries for the middle of the pack), so get as many as you can from the front and from the back. Don't guess; if you're unsure of a number; wait and get a record of the complete order of athletes on subsequent laps. After the field passes, count the runners as best you can to confirm the number of starters.

On every lap, confirm verbally with the other scorer that the next open column on the LSS matches the new number displayed on the lap counter. Pay attention every single lap that the display has the right number.

Early In the Race

Order	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Fin	
1	2	2	2	3	2																					
2	1	1	3	2	3																					
3	3	3	1	1	6																					
4	6	6	6	6	1																					
5		7	8	7	8																					
6		8	7	8	7																					
7			15	4	4																					
8			4	15	15																					
9			9	9	9																					
10			5	5	5																					
11		11	10	12	11																					
12		10	12	10	12																					
13	12	12	11	11	10																					
14	13	13	13	13	13																					
15	14	14	14	14	14																					

Figure 2 – Lap Scoring Sheet, Early Race.

Early in the race is the period after the start and before lapping begins. During this time, the field usually spreads out so this is the best time to get a complete order recorded for all athletes on the LSS (see Figure 2 above). The earlier in the race you can accomplish this the easier it will be when lapping occurs. With your LSS you will probably be the first one to recognize that a competitor dropped out of the race – inform timing officials of this as soon as possible.

Again, display on the lap counter the number from the LSS which is the next blank for the leader; changing the display number as the leader enters the home straightaway.

Middle of the Race

Order	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Fin
1	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2											
2	1	1	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3											
3	3	3	1	1	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6											
4	6	6	6	6	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1											
5		7	8	7	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8											
6		8	7	8	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7												
7			15	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4												
8			4	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15												
9			9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9												
10			5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5												
11		11	10	12	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11												
12		10	12	10	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12												
13	12	12	11	11	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10												
14	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	DNF											
15	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14												

Figure 3 – Lap Scoring Sheet, Middle Race.

Continue to enter numbers into the empty cells in each column as those competitors complete those laps. You're still paying attention to the first empty column on the LSS and making sure that number is displayed to the leader.

The middle of the race is where lapping starts. The leader has caught up and passed runners at the end of the field and. One way to capture this on the LSS is to circle #14 (in this case with 18 laps to go) to graphically indicate #14 is lapped. Every competitor listed after a circled runner in a column is a lapped competitor. Similarly, #11 is circled with 17 laps to go and #15 is circled with 15 laps to go.

#14 will be circled again with 13 laps to go, indicating he is lapped twice since 2, 3, 6, 1 and 8 have been entered with 11 laps to go already. When #7 approaches with 12 laps to go, he will be circled. This is also indicated by the empty cells in the 13 and 12 columns.

Alternatively, or in addition, you may draw a bold line (or use a highlighter) between the lapped vs. un-lapped runners to indicate where the lapping begins – as has been done above in columns 18, 17, and 16.

As runners drop out of the race, try to capture and record this; use whatever works for you – a diagonal line thru their number in the last lap completed, or a “DNF” in the column after the last lap completed (as has been done above for #13). Again, inform the timing officials if possible.

You must indicate to lapped competitors how many laps they have remaining.

The Finish

Order	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Fin	
1	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2		
2	1	1	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	
3	3	3	1	1	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	
4	6	6	6	6	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
5		7	8	7	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	
6		8	7	8	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	
7			15	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	
8			4	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	
9			9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	
10			5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	
11		11	10	12	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	
12		10	12	10	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	
13	12	12	11	11	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
14	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	DNF	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	
15	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	

Figure 4 – Lap Scoring Sheet, The Finish.

The LSS above shows the chart configuration as the leaders cross the finish line with one lap to go. The bell is rung as the leader crosses the line.

It's evident from the chart that 2, 3, 6, 1, and 8 will be finishing the next time they cross the finish line. Every competitor who has been lapped gets a verbal "One Lap" or "Two Laps", etc. as they go by. 7 and 4 will have two laps to go the next time they cross the finish line and the rest of the runners have three laps to go when they cross the finish line, except 14 who will have 4 laps to go. The person recording the numbers on this sheet knows how many laps each runner has remaining and should communicate this information to the person calling out the hip numbers and telling each runner his laps remaining.

This race is not over for you until #14 finishes 4 laps from now. As each runner approaches the finish line, announce verbally whether the runner is a finisher or how many laps to go he has left. Record the order of finish in the **Fin** column. The completed lap sheets should be turned in to the head umpire.

Appendix A – Lap Scoring Sheet Instructions.

Fitting a full size lap scoring sheet on this page has proven difficult so here are suggestions.

Open Microsoft Excel.

Create a table 27x51.

Provide any borders desired.

Make columns 2.71 wide and rows 14.75 high.

Select the whole table and choose a font, font size of 8.

On the first row, enter 25 in the second box and 24 in the third box.

Select both boxes and drag the black square to the next-to-last box. The numbers counting down to 1 will appear in the first row.

In the first column, enter 1 in the second box and 2 in the third box.

Select both boxes and drag the black square to the last box. The numbers counting up to 50 will appear in the first column.

Appendix B – Total Laps For Common Races

<u>Distance</u>	<u>Typical Indoor</u>	<u>Outdoor</u>
400 meters	2 laps	-----
500 meters	2+ laps	-----
600 meters	3 laps	-----
800 meters (and 4X200)	4 laps	2 laps
1000 meters	5 laps	-----
1500 meters	7 + laps	3+ laps
1600 (and 4x400) meters	8 laps	4 laps
Mile	8+ laps	4+ laps
2000 meters SC	-----	4+/5+ laps*
3000 meters & 3000 m SC	15 laps	7+ laps*
3200 (and 4x800) meters	16 laps	8 laps
4000 (Distance Medley) meters	20 laps	10 laps
5000 meters	25 laps	12+ laps
6000 (4x1500) meters	30 laps	15 laps
6440 (4xMile) meters	32+ laps	16+ laps

* Location of water jump determines length of lap.