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PocketTimer for the Palm Computing Platform Timers Guide

Starting the Timer

When you start **PocketTimer** you'll see this screen:



To start the timer, tap on the **Start** button (!). The **Start** button will now change to read **Record**, and you're ready to start recording times once the finishers start arriving.

Hot tip! 

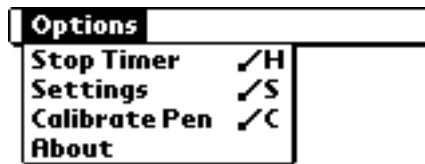
Like the buttons on most computers, the **Start** button in **PocketTimer** only activates when you lift the stylus **up**, not when you tap the pen down. Starting the timer by moving the stylus down and then up is therefore a two-step, slow process. For extremely accurate timing (in our experience, within 0.02 seconds or so), just before the start of the race (like when the countdown begins), tap the stylus on the **Start** button and **hold it down**. The button will "invert" (turn to white letters on a black background) to indicate this. When the gun goes off, lift the stylus (in most cases, your arm will naturally jerk back at the start anyway) and the timer will start.

Stopping the Timer If You Make a Mistake

There is no button to stop the timer, because we don't want you to do this accidentally. However,

suppose there is a false start in the race, or you simply press the **Start** button too soon. Here's what you need to do:

1. Tap on the **Menu** button (the one which is permanently silk-screened on the window) in the lower left of the Palm screen. This menu will appear:



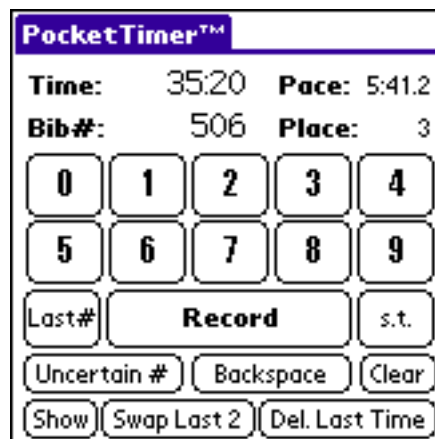
2. Tap on the **Stop Timer** menu option. A dialog will appear asking you if you are sure; tap on **OK**.
3. The **Start** button, which was labelled **Record**, is now labelled **Reset**. Tap on **Reset** to reset the timer. The button should now once again be labelled **Start**. If after you started the timer you "practiced" by entering a few numbers, when you press **Reset** you'll be asked if you want to erase the recorded times. Answer yes.

Recording Times

During the event, the Palm screen will constantly display the elapsed time and the current pace. As a racer approaches the finish line (or other location where you are stationed), you can enter the bib# of the racer in advance. You do so by tapping on the large number buttons on the screen. For example, if racer #458 is approaching, tap first on the **4** button, then on the **5** button, and then on the **8** button. As you do so, the bib# you are entering will be displayed. When the racer crosses the finish line (or other line), tap on **Record** and the bib# and time is captured. The "place" is incremented so it is always displaying the place of the *next* racer to pass. The bib# is erased and the timer is ready for you to enter the next number.

At times, the density of racers will be such that it is impossible for you to record all the bib#'s. In this case, you skip the step of entering the bib#, and only use the **Record** button to record the time by itself (the bib #'s can be filled in later). The software will record your taps as fast as you can enter them, which is approximately ten taps per second, so when a lot of racers approach, forget about looking at the bib #'s, and just concentrate on counting the racers so you can record the correct number of times (although if you miss one or more, that too can be corrected later).

Also, if you cannot read the bib# (or the person doesn't appear to be wearing one), just tap on **Record**, and record the time for that finisher.



As you can see, there are a number of other buttons on the screen which you can use when you are

entering information. None of these are absolutely essential, but they may come in handy in certain situations. These are:

Last#: This button lets you enter the number of the last (previous) finisher. This occurs most commonly when someone finishes whose number is not visible (perhaps on their back). As they finish, tap **Record** to record the time. Then enter the bib# and tap **Last#**. This will NOT record an additional finisher, but instead will modify the previous entry (which at the time you recorded it had no bib#) by entering the correct #. You can also use this to correct the number of the previous finisher, as long as no other finisher has yet been recorded. In other words, if you tap "4-1" and then **Record**, and then quickly realize it was actually "4-7", you can (if there is time before the next finisher) tap "4-7" and then **Last#** to correct the error.

s.t.: This button lets you record someone as having the same time ("s.t.") as the previous finisher. So if two (or more) finishers are approaching the line for a tie (or in any case the "same time" as the term is used in bike racing), enter one bib# and tap **Record** as the group crosses the line. Now enter the second bib# and instead of tapping **Record**, tap **s.t.** which will record a second finisher with the same time as the first; repeat for any additional finishers at the same time. Or, if there isn't time or you don't remember the other bib #'s, just tap **s.t.** by itself multiple times (one for each additional finisher) to record the fact that there was a finisher at the same time, without recording their bib#.

Uncertain #: If you think you can read the bib#, but aren't absolutely certain, you can record it as an uncertain #. After entering the number (by tapping on the number buttons), but before tapping on record, tap the **Uncertain #** button. A ? will appear just to the right of the Bib# in the display, to indicate that you aren't sure. If, before you tap on the **Record** button, you suddenly become certain, tap on **Uncertain #** again and the ? will be removed. Remember, if you can't read the number at all, don't bother to enter it, just tap on **Record** to record the time without any bib# number at all.

Backspace: This button erases the last digit you entered.

Clear: This button erases the enter number you are currently in the process of entering.

Show: This button will take you to a display of the recorded information which will be discussed below. Unless there is a large gap between racers, you should *not* press this button while the race is in progress.

Swap Last 2: Sometimes it will happen that two racers are approaching the finish line. Enter the first number, then press **Record**, then the second number, then **Record**. However if a last minute sprint to the finish surprises you and the second racer passes the first, after you have entered both numbers you can press **Swap Last 2** to reverse the order of the last two finishers. If you don't catch this, don't worry, it can be corrected later.

Del. Last Time: It is possible that you might hit the **Record** button by accident. Another thing that happens is that someone finishes, you press Record, and then you realize the person was a "bandit" (a person without a number who wasn't really entered in the race). If you realize this immediately, before anyone else has finished, tap on **Del. Last Time** to remove that time from the list of recorded finishes. If someone else is coming, don't worry, it can be corrected later.

Capturing All the Times

When a group of people approaches at once, it will be impossible to record all the bib #'s with **PocketTimer**. If you are doing finish line timing, then in most races the racers will have some kind of "tear-off tag" on their bib# which will be collected at the end of the finishing chute, which will show the order of the finishers. Since you can use these numbers later to enter the bib#'s into **PocketTimer**, the most important thing is to record the *times* of the finishers. The best way to do this is when you see a group approach, enter the bib# of the lead racer in the group (but don't tap on

Record yet), then start counting the number of people. When the group reaches the finish line (or other point at which you are timing), tap on the **Record** button once to record the bib# of the lead racer along with the time, then tap on the **Record** button by itself as many times as necessary to record the times of the rest of the racers in the pack. It is important to try to get the first bib# correct, as this will help immensely in editing the results later, but if you don't, don't worry about it.

Dealing with "Bandits"

If a racer without a number approaches you, they may be a bandit (someone who is racing without paying the entry fee), or they may be a legitimate racer whose number is hidden (or fell off). You should assume the person is legitimate, and tap on **Record** to capture the time of the person. However, if *before* the next finisher has come in, you realize the person *was* a bandit, just tap on the **Del. Last Time** button to delete that entry. If there is any doubt at all, leave the result alone; you can always delete it after the race is done.

If you are *sure* the person is a bandit as he or she approaches you (for example, they pull off the race course before reaching the finishing chute), you shouldn't record their time.

Stopping the Timer At the End of the Race

Don't. Let race timing personnel handle this chore. Leave the timer running.

Powering the Unit Off and On

The Palm will keep time accurately even when it is off, IF you are recording in the "slow" mode (1.0 second accuracy). To conserve battery life, after you start the timer at the beginning, turn it off (press the green button) until racers are approaching your station, then turn it on. After that, the unit will stay on while the timer is running (the normal "auto shutoff" feature of the Palm is disabled by the software). If there are long periods between racers (as might happen in an ultramarathon, for example), you may turn it off (and then on again), but it really isn't necessary.

If you are recording times in the "fast" mode (0.01 second accuracy), you **MUST** leave the unit on at all times. With fresh batteries inserted before the race, the unit will run in excess of 24 hours, so you shouldn't have any thing to worry about.

If in doubt, LEAVE THE UNIT POWERED ON.

The Recorded Times Window

In the bottom left of the timer window is the **Show** button. Tapping on the **Show** button produces this screen:

Recorded Times			
▼ All times ⓘ			
Place	Bib#	Time	Pace
1	12	34:23	5:32.0
2	37	34:37	5:34.3
3	506	35:27	5:42.3
4	378	35:52	5:46.3
5	516	36:26	5:51.8
6	23	36:43	5:54.5
7	461	37:00	5:57.3
8	117	37:13	5:59.4
9	238	37:23	6:01.0
10	201	37:33	6:02.6

(Timer) Find: 126...

If you need to return to the Timer screen (to record an approaching racer, for example), tap on the **Timer** button in the lower left. If there are more than ten recorded results, you'll see a "torn tape" either at the bottom or the top of the window, or both. Tap on the scroll arrows in the lower right to scroll the tape up or down to see more results. The pop-up menu in the upper right which reads "All Times" will be explained in the next chapter. Tapping on the information icon in the extreme upper right will bring up a window of "Tips" reminding you of how this window operates.

Sorting

The results are by default displayed in place order. The words **Place**, **Bib#**, and **Time** at the top of the first three columns are actually buttons which you can tap on to change the display order. Tapping on **Place** sorts by place; tapping on **Bib#** sorts by Bib#, and tapping on **Time** sorts by time. Place and time are obviously very similar; they only differ if two finishers have been recorded with exactly the same time but successive places. **Sorting by Bib# is of value if you want to post a list of finishers by Bib# (which makes it easier for people to search for themselves), or if you want to get a good view of which racers have finished and which have not.** To search for a particular racer, you can use the **QuickSearch** feature described next.

QuickSearch - Finding a Particular Entry

In the lower right of the window is the **QuickSearch** (tm) field. If you enter a number (using Graffiti) on that line, and then tap on the **Find** button (or use the Graffiti "return" or "newline" stroke), if that bib# has been recorded, the "tape" will automatically scroll so that that racer is on top of the screen. You can also enter a "t" (lower-case or upper-case) into the QuickSearch field; pressing the Find button in that case will scroll to the top of the recorded times (first finisher). A "b" will scroll to the bottom (if you display the Recorded Times window while the timer is running, it starts out by automatically scrolling to the bottom, since experience shows that the most recently recorded times will usually be the ones you're interested in).

Palm Tip - Using Your Fingernail

The Palm comes with a stylus, and you should use it to tap the buttons on the screen. If you should drop the stylus at a critical moment, don't panic. Use your fingernail (not your fingertip) to lightly tap the screen instead.

Palm Tip - Adjusting the Contrast

If the Palm has been in a leather case, you may find the screen display is not "right." Also, if the unit

gets very hot from sitting in direct sunlight, the display may also get darker. In either case, there is a small contrast wheel on the left side of the unit. Adjust it to get the display to your liking.