



IPICO Sports (309) 672-6442

**IPICO SPORTS**

311 SW Water St.  
Peoria, IL 61602  
309.672.6442

[sales@ipicosports.com](mailto:sales@ipicosports.com)

[www.ipicosports.com](http://www.ipicosports.com)

**MONTGOMERY  
COUNTY ROAD  
RUNNERS CLUB**

PO Box 1703  
Rockville, MD 20849

[www.mcrrc.org](http://www.mcrrc.org)

Overview

MMRC

What is Electronic Timing?

Choosing a System

Return on Investment

Additional Opportunities

Conclusion

## CASE STUDY: *Should a Running Club Own an Electronic Timing System?*



## MONTGOMERY COUNTY ROAD RUNNERS CLUB

The Montgomery County Road Runners Club justifiably describe themselves as being well known for many low-key but high quality club races, training runs, special events and other activities.

Being involved in over 30 races annually, including acting as host to four major events, the question of investing in a self-administered timing system was often a point of lively debate.

With expenses exceeding several thousand dollars a year to hire outside timing companies, there was no doubt that it would be beneficial. The real question, would it be feasible. Should a running club own an electronic timing system?

Points of consideration included choosing a system, operating requirements and cost. In addition, concerns revolved

around time to recoup the initial investment, affect on club revenue and the impact on club membership

This study will examine these issues as well as additional services and benefits an electronic timing system can provide to a club of any size.



## What is Electronic Timing?

Electronic timing for running or multi-sport events is often considered a highly complex process requiring an advanced level of expertise. Indeed, there can be a certain degree of complexity involved, especially when networking and media interface is required. The simple truth is that for the majority of events timing is merely referencing an RFID tag to assigned locations at a specific time of day. The

information is then managed within a database specially designed to calculate elapsed time between these locations and generate results (i.e. overall, age group, gender, etc.).

Event timing functions include creating the database, matching the RFID tags with the correct bib numbers, setting up the timing locations; and gathering, processing and distributing the results.

The success of an event is largely determined by proper database setup and being reasonably effective at managing the data. The size of the event or number of participants really has no bearing on whether or not an event should be timed electronically.

*"(The club) would increase revenue by more than \$15,000 in 2008 by using the IPICO Sports system."*

## Choosing a System

Lyman Jordan and Phil Quinn, timers for MCRCC events, had been leading the charge to acquire a system for some time. The club had been paying large timing service fees, particularly for the four major club events. Their research found not only was it feasible to own a system, but it was also easy to implement.

They examined a variety of companies and chose an IPICO Sports system because it was user-friendly, affordable and did not require tag

rental fees. Their research further determined the dual-frequency technology used by IPICO Sports provided the most accurate and reliable method of capturing times.

The entire system consisted of a reader, mats and tags. No additional components were needed. The readers were self tuning and portable. The mats were much lighter than any other offering and required nothing more than to be connected to the reader and turned on. Once the

system was connected to a laptop via the Ethernet port, they could view streaming data as tags passed over each mat. The entire setup could be completed in less than fifteen minutes.

In fact, Lyman found the IPICO Sports system to be so easy to operate that his very first event was managing a split location at the 50,000 runner Bolder Boulder over Memorial Day weekend.

*"Electronic timing all but eliminates the myriad of problems that result when runners and race organizers do not set up and use bibs and pull tags properly. I encourage all our clients to use IPICO Sports timing solutions."*

## Return On Investment



MCRRC is now timing events outside of their own club. They contract to score larger events for new clients and electronically time all MCRRC events that have more than 300 participants. According to Lyman, they will begin to use their IPICO Sports system for all events, regardless of the size.

He expects the club's initial purchase\* to completely pay for itself in less than two years. He calculated they would increase revenue by more than \$15,000 in 2008 by using the IPICO Sports system. Now, other IPICO Sports customers are contacting Lyman and MCRRC to participate in

timing larger events that require multiple systems including some of the top national road races and triathlons. This continues to become an added source of revenue for the club.

\*complete systems start at \$6700.00 plus tags at a cost of \$3.00

## Additional Opportunities



runners to track their progress and performance in a single location. The data can easily be exported to a web based application for display on the MCRRC site.

The club also plans to acquire additional readers later this year to compliment their system and hopes to use the tags in a similar way to follow progress in track workouts -- yet another benefit to members of MCRRC.

According to Lyman, it is still too early to tell the effect that owning an IPICO Sports system has had on their overall club membership numbers, but they are definitely seeing an increase in interest and registrations for electronically timed events over pull tag races. He has also noted that many runners and race directors, especially novices, are not accustomed to pull tags how they are used.

MCRRC is now looking at additional ways to partner with IPICO Sports. The club plans to use custom branded IPICO Sports tags as an ID for each member. Active members will already be entered in the scoring database making race registration easy. It will be as simple as showing up for a race and running. There will be no need to wait in long lines at packet pick-up. A check field in the database will ensure the participant has paid the required entry fee as well as act as identification to confirm the participant is not a bandit. MCRRC sees this as another way to provide services for club members and an opportunity for

Lyman says, "Some tag pulling races have become a pain, and some have become a nightmare to score. Electronic timing all but eliminates the myriad of problems that result when runners and race organizers do not set up and use bibs and pull tags properly. I encourage all our clients to use IPICO Sports timing solutions."

# Conclusion

As the active sports lifestyle continues to expand, athletes of all levels want to achieve better performance through personal coaching, detailed training programs and accurate results. They have expressed a willingness to pay for these services and often make decisions about event participation based on the amenities provided. As the demand for detailed information increases, the use of electronic timing is becoming more and more important as part of the total athletic experience. In fact, organizations have come to realize this and have now included net times to be used in IAAF, Olympic Trials and Boston Marathon qualifiers.

Up to this point, electronic timing has been limited to professional companies willing to make the investment and acquire the expertise needed to accommodate complex equipment and the demands of major events. Now, IPICO Sports has developed a system that makes electronic timing available to those who have been previously excluded from offering these services. Today, electronic timing has become more cost effective and user friendly than ever before.

To answer the question, "Should a running club own an electronic timing system?" a few things need to be considered. First, does the club pay to have these service provided by a third party, and is it an expensive proposition year after year? If the answer is yes, further consideration is merited. If the club can commit to managing and maintaining the equipment it is only a matter of amortizing the purchase price. Since IPICO Sports includes tags for sale as opposed to rent, there is no further investment needed once the system is acquired. Additional components can be added as needed.

Other things to consider, will an electronic timing system increase the participation level of our events? Will our events be more profitable if we incorporate our own system? Over 73% of runners admitted they are willing to pay more for electronically timed events and 81% said they would prefer an electronically timed event over a manually timed event.

As more athletic organizations compete for members, clubs need to consider how to expand the level of services offered. Electronic timing systems can be used to log times, workouts and event records. Is it an advantage to be able to track the performance of members? Will it be a helpful tool for monitoring training programs? The answer is invariably, yes.

Finally, IPICO Sports products provide a seamless interface to most third party scoring software packages, the most popular being RunScore and Race Director. IPICO Sports can also provide a universal translator for other software vendors at no additional charge and also offers custom scoring software.

Of course, the bottom line to any club is ...the bottom line. How much does a system cost? IPICO Sports offers a small, portable system that can provide a timing line 5 meters wide for only \$6700.00. By using a gun start, this simple system can effectively time events with as many as 500 athletes, even more in longer races. As a club expands timing services, this starter system can be used as a split point or back up line and can be equally effective for workouts and fun runs.

Ultimately, only the club can evaluate the pros and cons of purchasing an electronic timing system. Electronic scoring doesn't require an unobtainable investment or a technical background. Today, electronic timing is available to everyone. For more information contact IPICO Sports at 309.672.6442.



*"Today, electronic timing has become more cost effective and user friendly than ever before"*

**IPICO Sports**

311 SW Water Street  
Peoria, IL 61602  
309.672.6442

[sales@ipicosports.com](mailto:sales@ipicosports.com)

[www.ipicosports.com](http://www.ipicosports.com)