

STARTER CLINIC AGENDA



Introduction

Starter Basics (with video clip)

What is a False Start? (with video clip)

Other Starter duties

The Starter Training process

Starter Areas of Emphasis (illustrated by video shorts)

- Patience, Patience, and Patience
- Vocabulary
- Voice

Miscellaneous Starting Issues

Introduction to Starting

- Much more than “Take Your Mark.”
- Takes practice at many meets and sessions.
- Best learned “on the job.”
- (potentially) Most visible officiating position.
 - *less visible after good training & practice*
- Most directly affects success of athletes.
- Don't be scared, just be aware!
- Training Goal: develop skills and protocols consistent with National standards.

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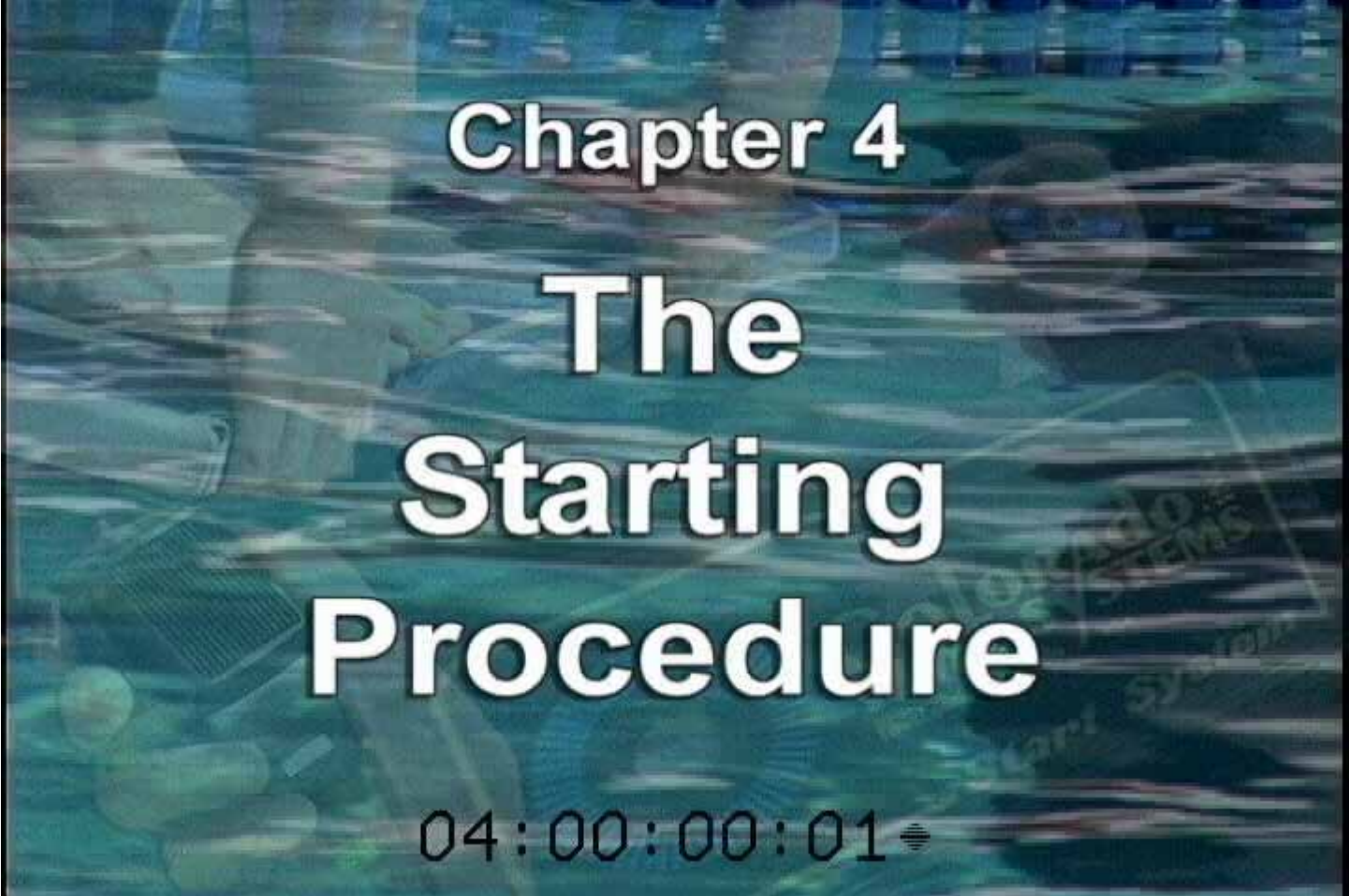
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STARTER PROTOCOL ... THE BASICS

(with thanks to Richard Hayes, 2011 clinic)

- The Starter shall choose a position within approximately 5 meters of the start end of the pool.
- The Deck Referee shall take a position on either side of the Starter such that the Starter can see the Referee's hand extended when the swimmers are turned over to the Starter.
- Calm-cool-collected voice... "take-your-mark."
Not... "take-your-mark?" Not... "Taaake.....yourmark."
- "Stand please" (or "Stand Down Please" for Backstroke) – should be rare.
- Consider stepping the swimmers down from the blocks on the second "Stand", but always on the third.
- Generally do not use the microphone to "single out" a problematic swimmer. If necessary, step the swimmers down and ask the Referee to speak with the swimmer individually.
- Start *just after* all swimmers are *visibly stationary* (not necessarily motionless).



Chapter 4

**The
Starting
Procedure**

04:00:00:01 ●

105.3 DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

1. Deaf and hard of hearing swimmers require a visual starting signal, i.e., a strobe light and/or Starter's arm signals. The Referee may reassign lanes within the swimmer's heat, i.e., exchanging one lane for another, so that the strobe light or Starter's arm signal can more readily be seen by the deaf or hard of hearing swimmer. Standard Starter's arm signals are shown in Figures 1 and 2. A false start rope is required in the event of a recall, provided the meet host is notified by the entry deadline that a deaf or hard of hearing swimmer will be participating.

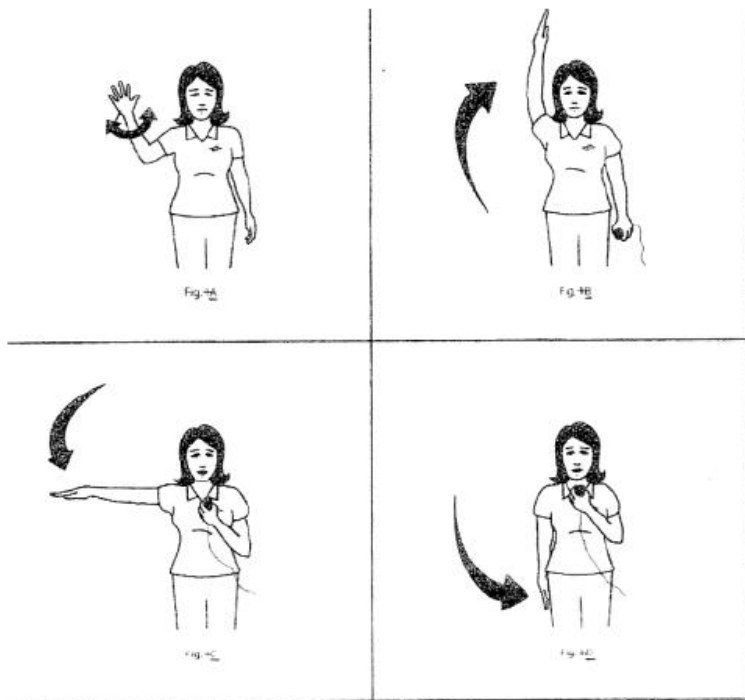


Figure 1: **Foreward Start**

- †A. Twist hand at chin level - Short whistles
- †B. Arm overhead - swimmer steps onto starting block
- †C. Arm moves to shoulder level - signal to "take your mark"
- †D. Arm moves to side of body - starting signal

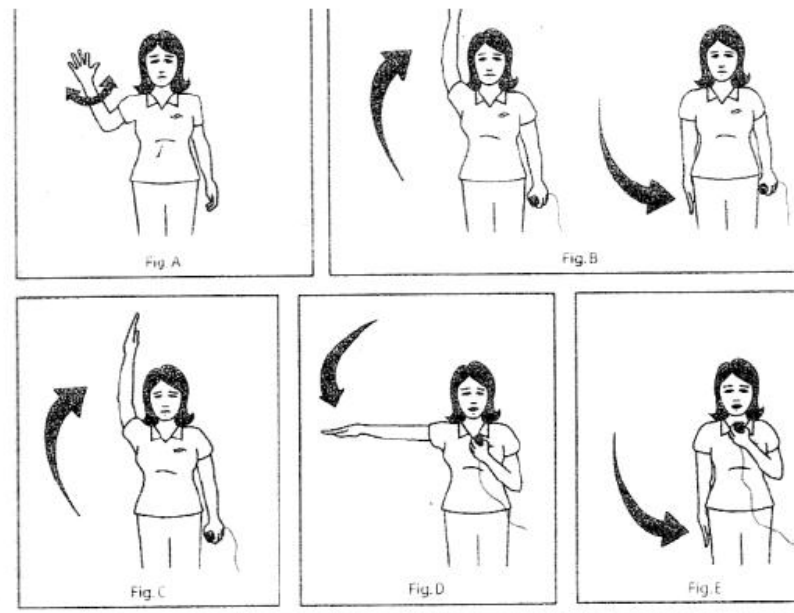


Figure 2: **Backstroke Start**

- A. Twist hand at chin level - Short whistles
- B. Arm overhead - Swimmer enters water, drop arm to side while swimmer enters water
- C. Arm overhead - Swimmer returns to backstroke start position
- D. Arm moves to shoulder level - Signal to "take your mark"
- E. Arm moves to side of body - Starting signal

Starter basics – continued after the start....

- Follow the swimmers until all heads are up and a fair start is confirmed.
- The Starter can independently recall a *bad* start or the Deck Referee can instruct the Starter to recall a *bad* start.
- No Recall Rule - OK to recall Bad Starts, but not False Starts.
- False Start: No comments are made until the Starter has marked the lane(s) in question. Then the Starter initiates the process by saying "I have a possible". Deck Referee shall confirm by already marked lane number(s).
- The timeline is not a "Starter problem" ...Use an abundance of PATIENCE to assure a FAIR START FOR ALL SWIMMERS.

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What is a False Start?

- 101.1.2c: *"When all swimmers are stationary, the starter shall give the starting signal"*
 - motion due to a swimmer not being allowed time to become fully stationary is the STARTER'S fault, and NOT a False Start.
- 101.1.3A: *"Any swimmer **STARTING** before the starting signal is given shall be disqualified if the Referee **independently** observes and confirms the Starter's observation"*
- If all of the above is true, it IS a False Start.

WHAT IS A FALSE START?

The rules state... “When all swimmers are stationary, the starter shall give the starting signal” (101.1.2.c) and “Any swimmer starting before the starting signal is given shall be disqualified if the Referee independently observes and confirms the Starter’s observation” (101.1.3A).

So what constitutes a false start? These scenarios should help you paint the picture.

FALSE START SCENARIO #1

Swimmer leaves the set or stationary position prior to the starting signal. The starting signal is then given. The race proceeds and, assuming the Starter observed the early start and the Deck Referee independently observes and confirms the Starter’s observation, the offending swimmer is disqualified at the conclusion of the race. Rule 101.1.3B applies. This is a false start.

FALSE START SCENARIO #2

Swimmer leaves the set or stationary position prior to the starting signal. The swimmer upon realizing the early starting motion attempts to catch himself/herself. Starter says absolutely nothing, and the swimmer fails to halt the forward motion and goes into the pool. Rule 101.1.3A applies. This is a false start.

FALSE START SCENARIO #3

Exactly the same facts as #2 above, but this time the Starter says “stand please” after the swimmer leaves the set or stationary position. The seven other swimmers stand or step down from the blocks. The offending swimmer struggles, but once again is unable to halt the forward motion and falls into the pool. Unlike scenario #2 above, here the starter said “stand please”, but that does not change the false start result. The rule is clear that the “stand” command is for the benefit of the other swimmers on the starting blocks. When the stand command is issued, the athletes have the option of standing or stepping off the blocks. The offending swimmer did neither. He fell into the pool just like the swimmer in scenario #2. Rule 101.1.3A applies. This is a false start.

FALSE START SCENARIO #4

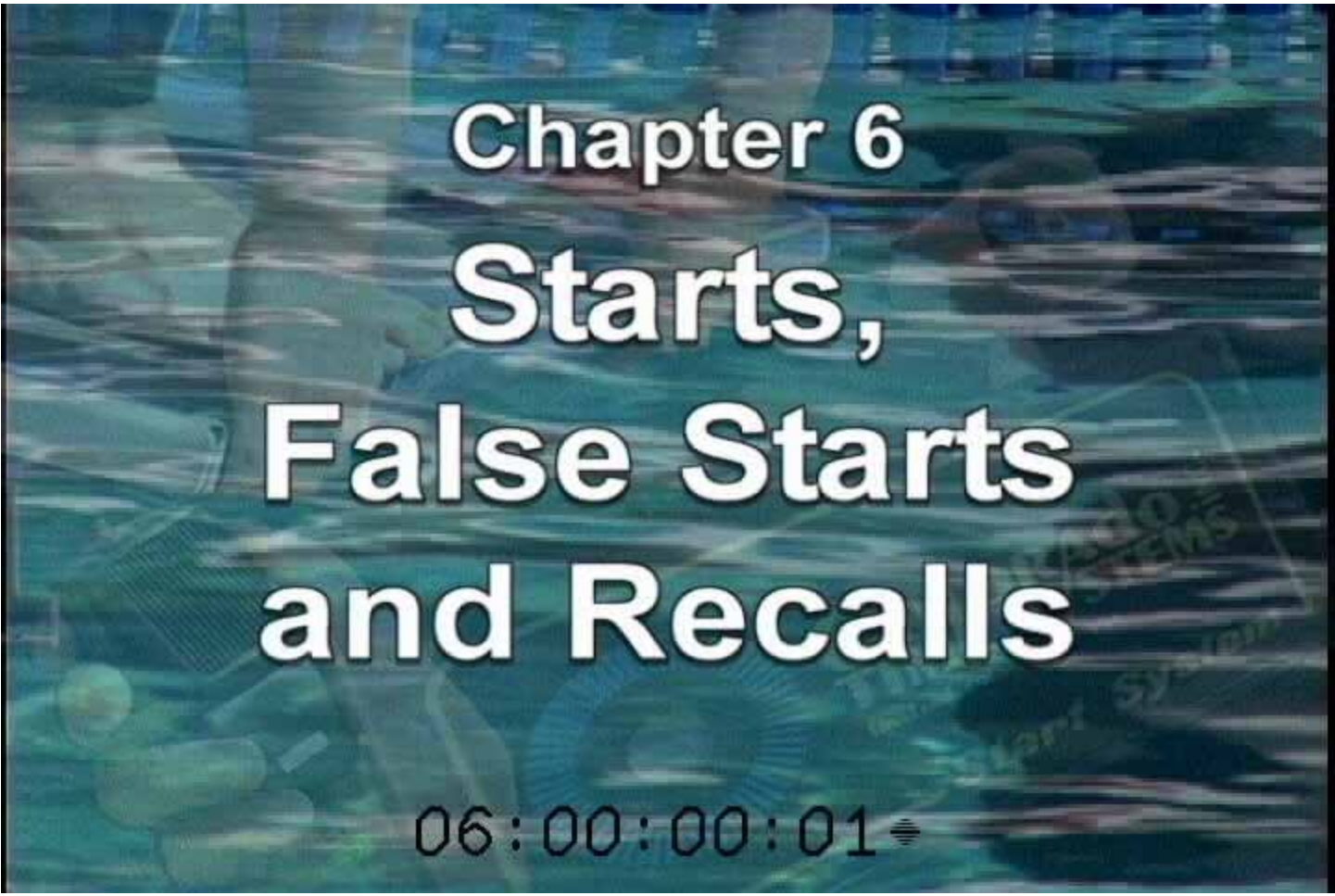
Exactly the same facts as scenarios #2 and #3 above. However, this time when the command “stand please” is issued, the offending swimmer struggles, but is able to stand or step off the blocks. Rule 101.1.3A applies. This is NOT a false start. Why? Because the swimmer remained on the blocks or deck like everyone else in the heat, and no starting signal ever sounded.

FALSE START SCENARIO #5

Exactly the same facts as scenarios #2 and #3 above. However, when the Starter gives the “stand please” command a swimmer(s) other than the offending swimmer instantly bolts from the blocks and enters the water. Rule 101.1.3D applies. The swimmer(s) clearly started in reaction to the “stand” command. This is NOT a false start.

FALSE START SCENARIO #6

The swimmer, upon hearing the command “take your mark” starts down to take a set or stationary position. The swimmer loses his/her balance before coming set and falls into the pool. Rule 101.1.2C applies. The swimmer should be given the opportunity to come to his/her set or stationary position prior to the start. A loss of balance prevented that, and clearly this swimmer never engaged in any starting action. This is NOT a false start.



Chapter 6
Starts,
False Starts
and Recalls

06:00:00:01

What is a False Start?

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- 101.1.3A: *"Any swimmer **STARTING** before the starting signal is given shall be disqualified if the Referee **independently** observes and confirms the Starter's observation"*
- If all of the above is true, it IS a False Start.

Some False Start Issues



To keep the start fair for ALL competitors, it is critically important for BOTH the Starter and the Referee to be attentive and observant during the start.

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STARTER DUTIES

The Starter is **ALWAYS** on duty during a shift. Your responsibilities don't end with a successful start.

- **Substitute Referee** – the Starter is the second set of eyes and ears for the Referee, and should **always be ready to supervise the competition (whether asked to or not)** when the Referee's back must be turned to take care of other business. Let the Referee know before you go off-deck for any reason.
- **Initiate possible false-start calls**, to be confirmed or not by the Referee.
- **Starting Area** – watch for and correct safety/interference issues around the starting area.
- **Distance Events** – count laps and/or ring bells during distance events.
- **Next Heat** – observe the swimmers in the upcoming heat for possible problems (equipment or wardrobe issues, confusion about correct heat/lane, possible no-shows, etc.)
- **Step in** as a Stroke & Turn Judge or Relay Take-off Judge when requested.
- **Anything else requested by the Referee.**

STAY IN COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR REFEREE on all of the above.

ADDITIONAL HEAD STARTER DUTIES (Zone 4)

(with thanks to Richard Hayes, 2011 clinic)

The Head Starter is the Team Lead for the corner officials, both Starters and Deck Referees.

- **Pre-Meet** – coordinate duties and protocols with the Meet Referee as needed. Possibly recruit help.
- **Arrive 15-30 minutes before warm-ups** each session, or inform the Meet Ref if not possible.
- **Warm-ups** – supervise, or delegate supervision of, warm-ups and opening of special warm-up lanes.
- **Check equipment** – preferably during warm-ups (blocks, buttons, pads, strobe box, microphone)
- **Head Timer** – identify and prep as needed (extra watches for 25 yard events, etc.; encourage a vest)
- **Colorado Operator** – establish Protocol when Colorado problems arise (generally, "STOP")
- **Announcer** – instruct as needed on protocols (Event & Heat numbers, No shows, Finals, when to be quiet, etc.)
- **Starter/Deck Referee rotations** – assign to include "off-shift" duties (processing paperwork, finishes for 25 yard events, etc.) and brief on protocols (# no show calls, whistle timing, any other announcing, etc.) Also assign trainees to mentors.
- **Timers** – present or delegate the "Timer Briefing," including another test start
- **Paperwork** – availability of Clipboards, False Start slips, no-show slips, DQ slips, S&T Heat Sheets, etc.

Hang out at the Official's Table...ready to step in at any moment.

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Starter Training Process

- 1 Year as an active Stroke & Turn Judge
- Minimum of six days working under direct supervision within the first year.
- DECK REFEREE training will usually be included at Pacific Zone-4 meets.
- Attend starter clinic.
- Complete and pass USAS starter certification test.

Starter Initial Certification

- Completed all training requirements.
- Minimum Pacific level-2 stroke and turn.
- Evaluated and recommend by two level-2 starters or two meet referees within the first year.

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What is a Good Starter?



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- **Vocabulary**

- **Voice**

Miscellaneous Starting Issues

Starter Patience

- You usually need more patience than you think (at least when new).
- There are three times during the start when patience is especially important:
 - Before "take your mark" (after Referee's extended hand)
 - After "take your mark."
 - If you have to stand up a heat.

Starter Patience



Starter Patience

- The Referee's extended hand:
 - Does not mean "you must start the race ASAP"
- Short or Fast Races:
 - Approach exactly like any longer race.
- Small Heats:
 - Give same amount of time as a "typical" full heat.

Starter Patience

GUIDING PRINCIPLE:

AT ALL STAGES OF THE START...

YOUR TIMING MUST MATCH...

...THE READINESS OF THE SWIMMERS.

NEVER VICE VERSA.

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Starter Vocabulary

- CONSISTENT
 - Unusual or unexpected requests can distract swimmers from their race.
- MINIMAL
 - The more we use, the more the swimmers will expect.
- BOTH promote a smoothly flowing meet.
 - Allow the swimmers to learn to respond to the “standard” requests first, before using something unusual.

USA SWIMMING STANDARD LANGUAGE

Take-Your-Mark. – singular; you are speaking to each individual swimmer, not to the whole heat

ssstaaand please / stand down please [backstroke] – always calmer and quieter than "take your mark"

Step Up please (ladies/gentlemen) – only after allowing ample time to respond to the whistles

Step In please (ladies/gentlemen) – only after allowing ample time to respond to the whistles

Lane X, toes please – to correct illegal backstroke starting position

Step Down Please (ladies/gentlemen)

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED LANGUAGE (ONLY IF NEEDED)

Thank you ladies/gentlemen (please clear the pool) – may also be needed during relays!

Heat X (ladies/gentlemen), please **come forward** to your blocks – only if not responding to whistles

Lane X, Michael Phelps, Baltimore – to call for a missing swimmer when requested

Lane X, you are excused – when a swimmer "sits on the block" before a race

Step Up or Step Forward to the Edge please – sometimes needed for young swimmers

Lane X, toes cannot be above the edge of the gutter – to correct illegal backstroke starting position

Lane X, at least one foot must be at the front edge – to correct illegal forward starting position, only after the first "take your mark" and "stand please" requests

Ladies/Gentlemen, please respond promptly and hold your position – when swimmer(s) are still slow to become set after the second "stand" of a heat

Everyone not in this race, please move back behind the timers for the start – only when needed.

Ladies/gentlemen, be advised, Lane X is swimming for a 100 yard split. – or whatever the distance

FOR FLY-OVER STARTS (ONLY IF NEEDED)

Stay in the water please (ladies/gentlemen)

Ladies/gentlemen in the water, please stay against the wall for the start

Ladies/gentlemen in the water, please stay against the corner of your lane for the start

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Starter Voice – tone & cadence

- Often the most challenging to learn
- A Starter's Voice **Leads the Swimmers.**
- If the swimmers need to:
...**gently, evenly, and calmly** come down.
- Then the Starter's Voice should:
...**gently, evenly, and calmly** come down.
- **"take-your-mark."** ends with a period.
 - ...not with a question mark (?) or an ellipsis (...)

Starter Voice - volume

- Should never have to “push” your voice.
 - If so, the microphone is not close enough!
- “Eat the microphone” – let it do all the work.
 - Feel free to bring disinfectant wipes!
- Speak as if in a quiet room, with someone right in front of you.
- Relax and let your breath out as you speak.

Starter Voice



Starter Voice – no age differences!

- Avoid “age-specific” tone/cadence with younger swimmers.
- Address ALL swimmers as you want them to act: **like mature ladies and gentlemen.**
 - They will usually (or eventually) rise to your standard!
- Do this for everything you say as a Starter, not just for “take-your-mark.”

Other Starting Issues

- Meet Delays – step down & clear pool.
- Step Down – if standing for possible false start.
- Step Down **judiciously** for any other reason.
- No Response to “Stand Please” –
 - None required – swimmer may stand, step down... or stay right where they are.
- Any Unexpected Event – stand, **do not start!**
- **Follow Swimmers until all heads are up.**
- **Make sure at least one set of eyes is always on the swimmers in the water.**

Other Starting/Deck Issues

