

- .2 Air temperature within 8 feet above deck level in indoor facilities shall be not lower than 76 degrees Fahrenheit, with relative humidity maintained at about 60% and air velocity at about 25 feet per minute.

R-9 ADOPTED Effective January 1, 2013

Location: Page 49 **104.2 USA Swimming Records**

104.2 USA SWIMMING RECORDS

.1 General Requirements and Conditions for Records

G Record Attempts Against Time

- (1) ~~Must be sanctioned by the LSC and conducted by the LSC Chairman or his/her duly appointed representative in accordance with all pertinent rules, and all information relative to such attempt must be public and available to any interested person for at least three (3) days before the event. Programs, schedules, facility and other relevant fixtures may not be changed thereafter except as provided in 102.7.~~
- (2) ~~All times achieved in such attempts shall be duly certified and made matter of record by the LSC or Record Chairman or his/her representative.~~
- (3) ~~Record attempts against time are not acceptable for NAG Recognition Times or Age Group Records.~~

R-10 ADOPTED Effective May 1, 2013

Location: Page 54 **105.3 Deaf and Hard of Hearing**
Page 55 **105.5 Physical Disabilities**

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.

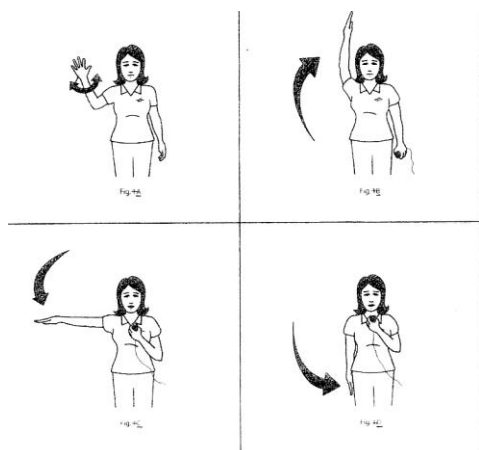


Figure 1: **Foreward Start**

- 1A. Twist hand at chin level - Short whistles
- 1B. Arm overhead - swimmer steps onto starting block
- 1C. Arm overhead - swimmer returns to backstroke start position
- 1D. Arm moves to side of body - starting signal

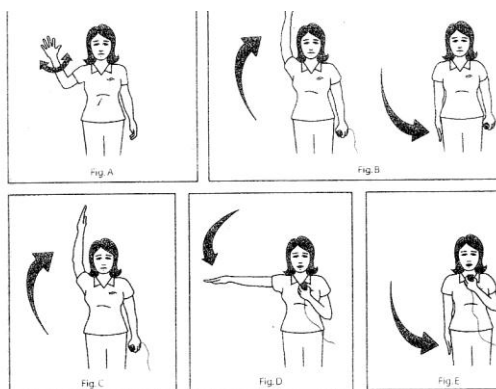


Figure 2: **Backstroke Start**

- 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

The “Professional” Starter - or - It’s more than three short words!

1

The “Professional” Starter should:

1. **Read the “GUIDE TO OFFICIATING SWIMMING”** on the USA Swimming website (the Starter chapter in particular!)
2. **Know the Rules** and the protocols, procedures and philosophies for being a successful starter
3. **Be on time for each session and officials’ briefings, and dress appropriately in a professional manner**
4. **Be flexible and adaptable to all procedures made by a Meet Referee or Head Starter that may differ from the suggested guidelines offered in this document**
5. **Confirm assignments, rotations and invigilating schedule with the Head Starter:**
 - ☐ Be aware how heats will run – fly-overs, cleared pool, etc.
 - ☐ Be aware of any event flighting or events or heats alternating by gender that affect starting rotations
 - ☐ Confirm the meet procedures for Starters that may include additional responsibilities, including:
 - timer instruction: be aware of timing system (number of buttons and watches or cameras) and provide instruction to timers at the designated time established by meet director
 - a rotation involving stroke or turn judging, taking order-of-finish, distance counting, ringing the bell for the lead swimmer in a distance heat, relay take-off judging or head timer responsibilities
 - ☐ Be aware of swimmers with disabilities who may require special starting accommodations. *Know the rules and procedures*
6. **Confirm meet protocol and procedures for the Starter-Deck Referee (DR) teams and with the individual Deck Referees with whom you are teamed:**
 - ☐ Be aware when jurisdiction will be turned over to Starter, indicated by Deck Referee’s out-stretched arm
 - ☐ Confirm how Starter will be notified of “No Shows” and “Declared False Starts” prior to event start
 - ☐ Confirm how to make Deck Referees aware of next-up swimmers behind the blocks affected by suit malfunctions, cap or goggle issues or unexpected empty lanes
7. **Pre-Meet and Pre-Session:**
 - ☐ Become familiar with the starting system by checking the equipment during the session warm-up period
 - There are a variety of microphones in use. Practice with the mike during warm-ups to feel comfortable with the device
 - Some microphones display a green light when the timing system is ready for the next start. When outdoors, confirm you can clearly see the green light and be prepared to notify the DR when the green light has not been displayed
 - ☐ Check your voice level in the microphone with another Starter monitoring the audio level in all lane speakers
 - ☐ Perform a test start to get a feel for how sensitive the starting button may be
 - ☐ Find your optimum deck positions for both forward and back starts so that all swimmers can be clearly and individually viewed
 - ☐ Find out where the Deck Referee will stand adjacent to your position. Ask him or her to extend their arm so that it can be seen in your peripheral vision, without blocking your view of the swimmers. Make sure you and the DR are standing close enough that you can converse quietly. It may be about swimmer issues, green lights, step down requests, etc.
 - ☐ Be prepared with a master starter heat sheet if you have been asked to use one for marking all false starts, no shows, declared false starts, and any other notes. Also acquire an OOF (Order Of Finish) heat sheet, if the meet’s procedures call for the off-duty starter to take OOF
8. **During the Start:**
 - ☐ Assume your deck position to start the upcoming heat prior to the finish of the current heat. In some cases, the previous event’s results are scrolled on the scoreboard, allowing for a bit more time to take position
 - ☐ Show that you are relaxed and confident in your starting ability with your body language
 - ☐ On the long whistle when the swimmers are stepping up (second long whistle for the back start), show that you are prepared for starting by having the microphone in a “ready” position
 - Make sure the microphone can’t fall in the water or someone doesn’t trip over the cord and unplug it from the starting unit either by holding the cord with your free hand or stepping on the cord
 - ☐ When all swimmers have stepped on the blocks the Deck Referee will turn over jurisdiction to the Starter
 - ☐ BE PATIENT when allowing all swimmers to assume the position on the blocks they want to use for the start. Watch to see their feet are in the final chosen position. The swimmers will then show you when they’re ready to hear the “Take Your Mark” instruction
 - If “track style” starting platforms are used, swimmers may require a bit more time to assume their position
 - ☐ Deliver the “Take Your Mark” instruction in a calm, conversational tone that’s loud enough for the swimmers to hear over any possible crowd noise, but not so loud the instruction sounds like a shouted command. Use a cadence that is inviting with a slight falling in pitch

The “Professional” Starter - or - It’s more than three short words!

2

- ☐ **SWIMMERS START THE HEATS – NOT THE STARTER!** BE PATIENT - when allowing the swimmers to show you they are ready for the starting signal
- ☐ When that “sweet spot” moment is achieved and the swimmers are stationary, push the starting button
- ☐ After the start keep the microphone in a “ready” position in case the heat needs to be recalled
- ☐ Watch the swimmers until all heads have surfaced. Then replace the microphone to a position where it can’t be bumped and the cord isn’t in a traffic zone that could cause tripping
- ☐ Step out of the starting area to allow more room for Deck Referee, Chief Judge and Stroke Judge
 - Avoid conversing with the Deck Referee unless it involves a possible false start or another timely matter
- ☐ Using the Starter’s heat sheet, confirm the next heat’s swimmers are reporting to the assigned lanes. Note on the heat sheet any “no shows”, “declared false starts”, false starts or other matters for which there should be a record
- ☐ Begin preparations to start the next heat

9. Use the False Start Protocol:

Remember the definition of a false start: *Any swimmer **starting** before the starting signal is given shall be disqualified if the Referee independently observes and confirms the Starter’s observation that a false start occurred.*

- ☐ After the start and the microphone is replaced, calmly mark the Starter heat sheet to indicate which heat and lane the false start was observed. Double-check that mark for accuracy of heat and lane
 - Any mark can be used as long as the Deck Referee can tell a particular heat and lane has been indicated, whether it’s circling the lane number, underlining the lane number and name, placing a visible dot next to the lane, etc.
- ☐ Show the marked heat sheet to the Deck Referee and implement the procedure discussed prior to the start of the meet. It may include pointing out the heat and lane, as well as verbally indicating a false start was observed. The Deck Referee should also show the Starter his/her marked heat sheet as confirmation of a false start. Under no circumstance should a false start confirmation be based solely on a discussion
- ☐ When a Chief Judge is available, they will fill out the disqualification form and hand it to the Starter for signature. Double check the event, heat, lane and, possibly the name and team, have been correctly noted and the false start box was checked before signing and handing the form back to the Chief Judge
- ☐ When a Chief Judge is not available, the Starter completes and signs the disqualification form before handing it to the Referee for final sign-off
- ☐ If necessary, note any peculiarities to the false start on the heat sheet for later reference; possibly when advising a coach or swimmer of the observed action

10. When Using Other Commands;

- ☐ To address the athletes with the microphone, refer to the swimmers as “Ladies” and “Gentlemen”
- ☐ Remember to use “Please” and “Thank you”
- ☐ If it is necessary to stand the field after the TYM instruction, for both forward and backward starts, say, “Stand *please*”
- ☐ If the Deck Referee asks for the swimmers to step off the blocks, say, “Ladies (Gentlemen), step down please”
- ☐ If the swimmers are taking a prolonged amount of time to leave the pool after their swim (before or after the next start) say, “Thank you Ladies/Gentlemen.” If more instruction is needed, say, “Ladies/Gentlemen, please clear the pool”
- ☐ Use of the “Relax please Ladies/Gentlemen” instruction means it will be a prolonged period before the starting sequence will begin. The “Relax” instruction should not be used in place of a “Stand Please” instruction for backstroke starts
- ☐ If a swimmer’s toes are curled over the top of the pad prior to the start of the backstroke, address the swimmer by saying, “Lane 7, toes please”

Tips and Tricks

- Don’t hesitate to use the recall option if you feel an external noise (ex. coach’s whistle) or motion (activity around the starting blocks) has interfered with a swimmer’s ability to achieve a fair start
- All officials make mistakes. Don’t allow an inadvertent mistake to inhibit your performance. When mistakes occur, intervene, if possible. Take responsibility for your mistakes, learn from them, forgive yourself, and move on
- The Starter displays confidence (and not over-confidence) in his/her ability to start well anywhere, anytime, anyplace
- It is not unusual for Starters at high level meets to feel a certain level of anxiety or nervousness. While a certain amount of nervousness has been shown to enhance performance, public displays of anxiety can interfere with the ability to act (addressing swimmers on the microphone, asking heats to stand please, etc.) and may generate increased anxiety in others on the deck, including the swimmers. Championship starters have learned to use their anxiety to aide deck performance
- BE CONFIDENT AND RELAXED. There are (too) many opinions about starting, even at the highest levels. The Championship Starter has learned when to listen to opinions, suggestions and feedback, and when to ignore them
- Work as a teammate with the Deck Referees and Chief Judges. Confirm the Referee has her/his whistle and the Chief Judge has a pen

Checklist for Starter Advancement Evaluation

(Refer to the National Certification Advancement Summary¹)

Attachment A

N2 Starter - Prerequisites² for requesting an Evaluation:

- LSC-certified Starter for one year
- At least 8 sessions working as a certified Starter

N2 Starter - Performance Requirements for an Advancing Evaluation

- ☐ Know the rules for starting
- ☐ Understands basic starting protocols and procedures (distance counting, OOF, etc.)
- ☐ Understands how to start swimmers with disabilities
- ☐ Understands how the starting system operates
- ☐ Establishes a comfortable starting position on deck for both forward and back starts
- ☐ Prepared and in position prior to each heat; comfortable holding microphone and cord
- ☐ Delivers TYM calmly and with necessary volume
- ☐ Shows PATIENCE before delivering TYM and starting signal
- ☐ Understands the use of Other Commands
- ☐ Understands and practices the False Start Protocol

N3 initial Starter Evaluation (this is not a certification level) – **Prerequisites² for requesting an evaluation:**

- Active N2 Starter in the LSC at all levels of meets and also active in other positions at those meets
- At least 8 sessions as a Starter since N2 certification
- At least one year as an active N2 starter and working meets outside the home LSC (both suggested)

N3 initial Starter Evaluation - Performance Requirements for a recommendation to proceed to an N3 final Evaluation

- ☐ Understands how the starting system operates; tests it during warm-ups without guidance
- ☐ Observes, without scrutinizing, next-up swimmers
- ☐ Shows preparedness when the heat is turned over by the Deck Referee
- ☐ Comfortable with starting deck position and microphone
- ☐ Uses PATIENCE before delivering the TYM, and does so calmly with necessary volume
- ☐ Uses the proper TYM cadence that includes a slight falling in pitch
- ☐ Shows awareness of external noises or motions that may affect swimmers' start and properly reacts
- ☐ Follows proper deck positioning before, during and after starts
- ☐ Correctly uses Other Commands, without over-use (eg. standing swimmers)
- ☐ Correctly follows false start protocols
- ☐ Shows consistency in delivery, positioning, awareness and demeanor

N3 final Starter Evaluation – Prerequisites² for requesting an evaluation:

- Active Starter since N3i evaluation with varied experience that should include high-level meets outside the LSC
- Worked eight (8) sessions as a Starter after receiving a "recommendation" N3 initial Starter evaluation

N3 final Starter Evaluation - Performance Requirements for Certification

- ☐ Arrives on-time, prepared with necessary personal equipment, and properly/professionally attired
- ☐ Knows and consistently follows all the pre-meet/pre-session duties
- ☐ Consistently delivers starting instructions showing ideal PATIENCE, timing, cadence and awareness
- ☐ Consistently and properly uses Other Commands
- ☐ Consistently follows False Start protocols
- ☐ Consistently self-critiques with a determination to improve his/her starting talent
- ☐ Consistently shows a starting demeanor that is Calm, Comfortable and Assured

¹ There are other requirements that need to be met before an application for National Certification can be submitted and approved.

² Do not ask to be evaluated before the prerequisites have been satisfied.

Starter - Philosophy, Procedures & Protocols

Virginia Swimming, Inc.

September 23, 2006

Philosophy

- The **primary** responsibility of the starter is to ensure that **all** swimmers receive a **fair** start
- The starter does **not** “command” the swimmers to start, rather the starter **invites** the swimmers to swim
- **Always** speak in a calm voice; **never** raise your voice or yell
- Do **not** penalize the swimmers because **you** gave them a bad start
- Do **not** worry about the timeline after you have been given control of the swimmers as rushing the start will often lead to an unfair start
- Practice **patience, patience, patience** – do **not** rush the swimmers during the start

Communications

- Arrive early for the start of each session and report to the Referee
 - Stroke & Turn briefings are generally held 45-60 min prior to the start of the session; arriving before this gives you an opportunity to meet with the Referee before the briefing begins
- Communicating early and often allows the Referee and Starter to function as a team
- What should be done before the session
 - Finish setting up timing system
 - Timing system test
 - Timers briefing
 - Other
- What should be done (or not) during the session
 - How to handle missing swimmers
 - How to handle false starts
 - Special instructions

Timing System and Deck Check

- Well before the start of the session check the starting blocks for stability and have facility management fix any that are loose
- Check all equipment for proper connections (including start cable plugged into the “START” position and not the “BACKUP START” position)
- Position starting system strobe so that it can be seen by the timers
- Speakers located such that the starting commands can clearly be heard by the swimmers
- In conjunction with the Timing Equipment Operator, perform a complete electronic timing system check and do so early enough that problems can be corrected while still starting the session on time
- The timing equipment check should include:
 - Near and far-end (if any) pads
 - Near and far-end (if any) buttons
 - Near and far-end (if any) starting unit
 - A test start should be performed when switching connections from one end of the pool to the other to ensure that a starting signal is being received by the timing equipment

Positioning

- The Starter shall stand within ten feet of the starting end of the pool
- Most Referees will let the Starter have the first choice of where to stand, with the Referee then having second choice

Paperwork During the Session

- Keep track of the current heat/event on a heat sheet
- Mark any no-shows for each heat
- Mark any potential false starts (more detail to follow)
- Off Starter, when there is one, should record order of finish

USA Swimming Situation Resolutions – Starter/Deck Referee

The following situations have been reviewed by the USA Swimming Officials and Rules Committee

1. In the girls 10 & under 50-yard breaststroke, the starter has just finished giving the command “take your mark” when the swimmer in lane 4 comes down and immediately falls in the water headfirst. The referee could not tell why the swimmer went into the water. However, the starter indicated he/she thought the swimmer had lost her balance when she came down for the start. What should occur and why?

Recommended Resolution: The starter should “Stand up” the remaining swimmers. It should be determined if the swimmer had any outside interference, which they responded to such as a flash camera or horn sound. If the referee agrees that the swimmer fell before becoming set and this was not a starting motion, the swimmer should be allowed to swim with the heat.

Applicable Rules: 101.1.3A, 101.1.2C, 101.1.2D, 102.13.1

2. At a long course Sectional, several National Team and Olympians are seeded into the championship final. Each swimmer will be competing in major international meets representing the USA later that summer. Just prior to the start and after the command is given to “Take your mark” the lane 4 swimmer twitches his right knee. Reacting to the movement, the lane #5 swimmer takes off. No starting signal has been given. What is the ruling?

Recommended Resolution: If it is determined that this swimmer started before the start signal and both the starter and referee confirm this, the offending swimmer in lane #5 should be disqualified. The referee should first, however, determine that there were no extenuating circumstances such as a flash from a camera, etc. If the starter and referee both saw the movement in lane #4 as well and felt that it was a starting action, the swimmer in lane #4 should also be disqualified.

Applicable Rules: 101.1.3A, 101.1.2C

3. During the 1000-yard freestyle the turn judge, having been given the jurisdiction to sound the warning signal, rings the bell over the leader in Lane #4 at 900 yards. The leader and the swimmer in second place, Lane #5, continue beyond 950 yards and complete the race. The coach of the swimmer in Lane #4 files a written protest stating that his swimmer visibly increased his pace to a sprint at the sound of the warning bell. Realizing that he was not done and having nothing left, he was only able to finish third instead of second, causing his team to lose the meet team championship. What decision should be made with regard to the protest?

Recommended Resolution: The protest should be disallowed. Although a warning signal is required, USA Swimming Rules and Regulations also state that it is the responsibility of the swimmer to complete the prescribed distance.

Applicable Rules: 101.1.4, 102.5.6E