



Pacific Swimming
Basic Starter Clinic
October 2024

Clinic Instructor: Jim Morefield

with thanks to
USA Swimming National Officials Committee (2017)
Illinois Swimming (2022)

Clinic Overview



- Introduction and Updates
- Philosophy of Starting
- Starting Rules
- Elements of the Start/Techniques of Starting
- Developing Good Habits and a Routine
- Questions
- Practice (time permitting)

Updates

- Today's clinic is now a preview!
 - Is not required, and won't count for certification
- New USA Swimming Starter training module
 - Online October 1, 2024
 - Required for all new certifications
 - New test required for recertification
- Old online test in progress?
 - Must be completed by October 15th to count

Starter Education

- Starter Certification handout (2024)
- Certified Stroke & Turn Judge for a minimum of 3 months. Worked at least 4 sessions at a minimum of 2 meets since ST certification.
- Updates on Pacswim.org

		STARTER CERTIFICATION RECORD		
OFFICIALS NAME / TEAM				
SESSION 1 / DATE / MEET NAME / TRAINER NAME / LSC				
SESSION 2 / DATE / MEET NAME / TRAINER NAME / LSC				
SESSION 3 / DATE / MEET NAME / TRAINER NAME / LSC				
SESSION 4 / DATE / MEET NAME / TRAINER NAME / LSC				
APPRENTICESHIP REQUIREMENTS				
USA Swimming Member				
Attend a Starter clinic (Please indicate date to the left)				
Pass the USA Swimming Starter Certification test with an 80% or more				
Apprentice as a Starter for at least 4 training sessions total, over 2 meets with 2 trainers. Trainer can be the Deck Referee. OR Coach or Athlete members with 5+ years USA Swimming experience shall apprentice as a Starter for at least 2 training sessions with a trainer.				
Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Session 4	CERTIFICATION PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS May be evaluated during last apprentice session and use MR sign-off for each session. Y-Yes, N-No, ND - Not Demonstrated
				Arrives on time, prepared with necessary personal equipment, in proper and professional uniform.
				Knows the rules for starting.
				Demonstrates ability to start swimmers across a wide range of ages and proficiency.
				Understands how to start swimmers with disabilities.
				Demonstrates the start for hearing impaired swimmer.
				Demonstrates both forward and backstroke starts.
				Understands how the starting system operates.
				Establishes a comfortable starting position on deck for both forward and back starts.
				Demonstrates ability to communicate and interact with the DR.
				Prepared and in position prior to each heat; comfortable holding microphone and securing cord.
				Delivers TYM calmly and with necessary volume.
				Shows PATIENCE before delivering TYM and starting signal.
				Understand the use of other commands (ie; stand, relax, place your feet).
				Understands and practices the false Start Protocol.
				Understands performance criteria as outlined in Starter Professional Document.
Comments (if needed)(Can use back of sheet)				
MR (session 1) Print Name:			Signature:	
MR (session 2) Print Name:			Signature:	
MR (session 3) Print Name:			Signature:	
MR (session 4) Print Name:			Signature:	
Recommend Certification as a Starter (Y/N)				

Certification must be complete within one year of the Starter clinic.

Email completed form to your Zone Certifier

Starter Education

- Handout (2024)
The Professional Starter
- Summarizes most of today's information.
- Updates on
 - Pacswim.org
 - USASwimming.org

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

The “Professional” Starter should:

- **Know the Rules** and the protocols, procedures, and philosophies for being a successful starter
- **Be on time for each session and officials’ briefing, dressed appropriately in a professional manner**
- **Be flexible and adaptable to all procedures made by the Meet Referee or Head Starter that may differ from the suggested guidelines offered in this document**
- **Confirm assignments, rotations, and invigilating schedule with the Head Starter:**
 - Be aware how heats will run – fly-overs, cleared pool, lighting, or events or heats alternating by gender
 - 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 and know the rules and procedures
- **Confirm meet protocol and procedures for the Starter-Deck Referee (DR) teams and with the individual Deck Referees with whom you are teamed:**
 - Work as a team with the Deck Referees and Chief Judges
 - Be aware when jurisdiction will be turned over to Starter, indicated by Deck Referee’s out-stretched arm
 - 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
- **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 mic during warm-ups to feel comfortable with the device
 - Omega 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
 - After confirming with the equipment staff, 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
- **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
 - Your body language should convey that you are relaxed and confident
 - On the long whistle (second long whistle for the back start), have the microphone in a “ready” position
 - Secure the cord by holding it with your free hand
 - When all swimmers have stepped on the blocks the Deck Referee will turn over jurisdiction to the Starter

Philosophy of Starting

THE STARTER ROLE:

- Is an art, learned through practice and education
- Has most impact on success of each athlete's race
- Can be the most "public" officiating role, BUT
 - A proficient Starter will hardly be noticed
 - Starter role is limited (know your jurisdiction)
 - Be ready to receive and re-direct questions as needed
 - Be mindful what you project, including body language
 - Your attitude and demeanor are contagious

Philosophy of Starting

- Qualities of a good Starter (and official):
 - Calm
 - Friendly
 - Relaxed
 - Confident
 - Patient
 - Focused
 - Flexible
 - Team Player
- Shown through the **Starter's**
 - **Deck presence**, demeanor, body language
 - **Voice** tenor, inflection, and cadence

Philosophy of Starting

THE GOAL: A FAIR START

- for all athletes
- in every heat
- every time
- What is a "fair start"? **THE IDEAL:**
 - starting signal at precise moment when you know
 - each and every athlete is
 - completely ready to start (in legal positions) and
 - not a moment earlier
 - not a moment later (the "sweet spot")

Philosophy of Starting

- GOAL: A FAIR START
 - The "ideal" start isn't always achieved, but
 - Should remain the goal for each start
 - A start can still be fair without being "ideal"
- But how to get the athletes to cooperate?
 - THAT is the art of starting

The Mindset of a Starter

- **Swimmers start the heat – not the Starter**
(Huh??)
- The swimmers will **show you** through their body language
 - when they are ready for "Take Your Marks"
 - when they are ready for the starting signal.

The Mindset of a Starter

- **Swimmers start the heat – not the Starter**
- The Starter **coordinates and facilitates** starts.
 - starting is **not** "command and control"
(although you will see those words used)
- A start is an **observation and agreement with the athletes** that a race is ready to proceed.
- The Starter **responds** to the readiness of the athletes, not vice versa.

The Mindset of a Starter

- **Swimmers start the heat – not the Starter**
- This means no two starts will be the same!

A Starter learns to:

- Use a consistent routine and voice for each start, but
 - DOES NOT develop a fixed timing pattern for starts.
- Send the athletes only when they are ready
 - NOT after a robotic period of time.

Two Parts of the Start

(before, then after, "Take Your Marks")

1. Knowing when all athletes are ready to take their starting positions
 - PATIENCE here improves chance of success in Part 2
 - response: "Take Your Marks."
2. Knowing when all athletes are ready to receive the starting signal
 - response: press the starting button
- Knowing is **not** guessing or anticipating
 - Take an extra split-second to be sure

A Third Part of the Start

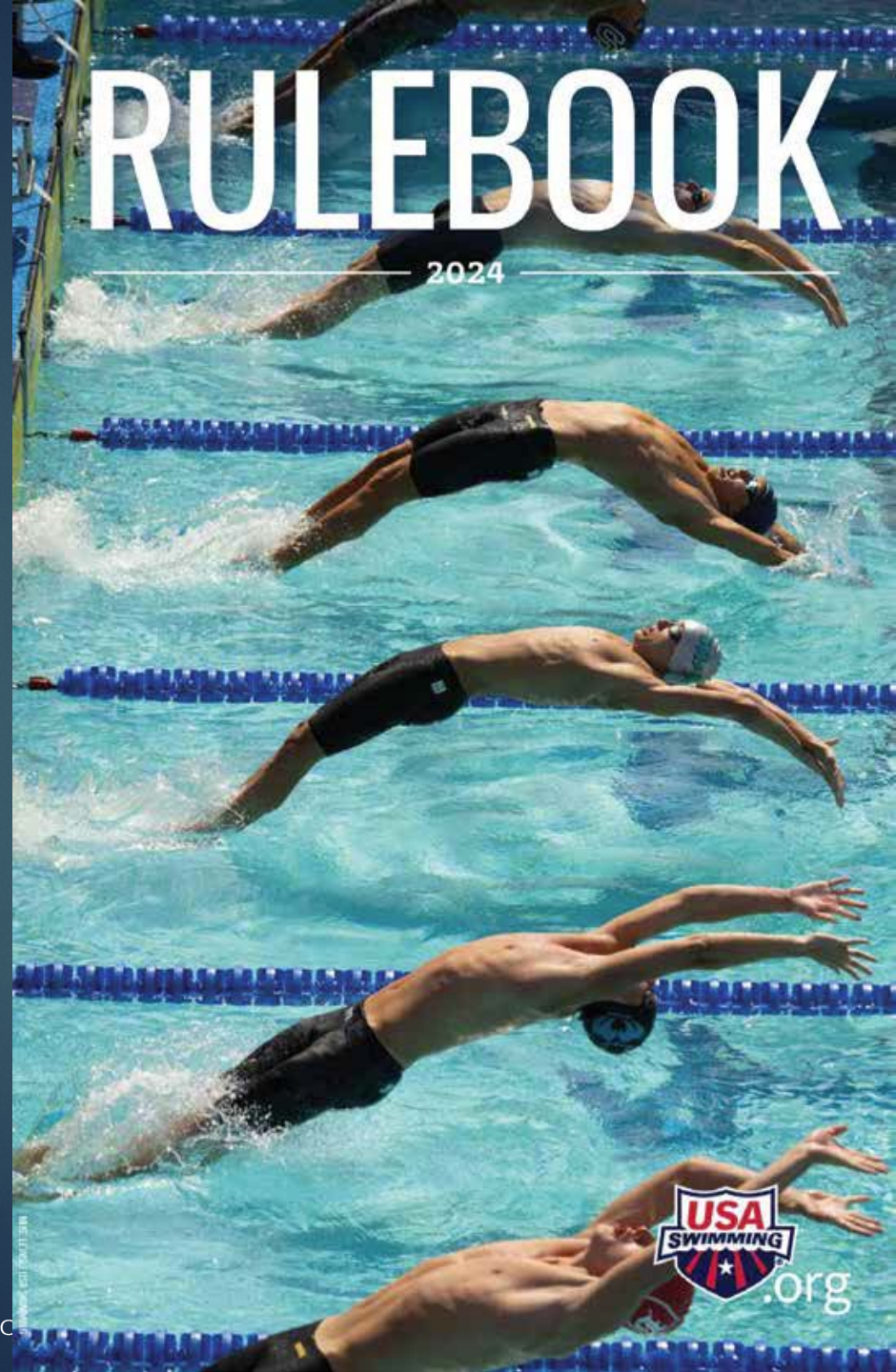
3. Knowing when a start cannot proceed fairly
 - response: "stand please" (right away, don't hesitate)
 - same response for backstroke starts
 - process then starts over at Part 1
- How can a start become unfair after T.Y.M.?
 - Readiness is taking too long – swimmer(s) losing focus
 - Often avoidable with Starter attention and PATIENCE in Part 1
 - Loud noise or other distraction
 - Swimmer slips or loses balance
 - Swimmer leaves
 - Equipment malfunctions or breaks
 - Starter loses focus

The Starter's Tools

- This may seem like a lot to observe and respond to in the space of a few seconds – and it is!
- With practice and experience, it will become natural
- You have the tools!
 - Body language of the athletes
 - Focus, Observation, and PATIENCE
 - Verbal invitations that are clear, calm, confident, & concise
 - **The Rules**

Starter Education

- The Rulebook (2 pages)
 - Starts at the beginning
 - Official Glossary
 - 101.1 Starts
 - 101.4.1 Backstroke Start
 - 102.12 Starter
 - 105.3 Deaf or Hard of Hearing



Starting Rules

- Official Glossary items pertaining to Starters:
 - FORWARD START — an entry made while facing the course.
 - INITIAL DISTANCE — that first portion of a race for which an official time may be recorded but which is not in itself a completed event.
 - MAY — permissive, not mandatory.
 - SHALL — mandatory.
 - SHOULD — recommended but not mandatory.

Starting Rules

- DECK REFEREE teammate initiates the starting sequence
- From Section 101.1.2 of the 2024 USA Swimming Rulebook
 - Once all swimmers have removed their clothing, except for swimwear, the Referee shall signal the commencement of an event by a short series of whistles inviting them to get ready at the starting end, followed by a long whistle indicating that they should take and maintain their positions on the starting platform, the deck, or in the water.
 - **In backstroke and medley relay events**, at the Referee's first long whistle, the swimmers shall immediately enter the water and at the second long whistle shall return without undue delay to the starting position.

Starting Rules - Backstroke

- From Section 101.4.1 of the 2024 USA Swimming Rulebook
 - The swimmers shall line up in the water facing the starting end, with **both hands** placed on the gutter or on the starting grips. Standing in or on the gutter, placing the toes above the lip of the gutter, or bending the toes over the lip of the gutter, **before or after** the start, is prohibited.
 - When using a backstroke ledge at the start, at least one toe of both feet must be in contact with the end wall or face of the touchpad. Bending the toes over the top of the touchpad is prohibited.

Starting Rules

- From Section 102.12 of the 2024 USA Swimming Rulebook
 - The Starter shall stand on the side of the pool within approximately five meters of the starting end of the pool and, upon signal from the Referee, shall assume control of the swimmers until a **fair start** has been achieved.
- From Section 101.1.2 of the 2024 USA Swimming Rulebook
 - When the swimmers and officials are ready, the Referee shall signal with an outstretched arm to the Starter that the swimmers are under the Starter's control.
 - Usually right after final long whistle
 - ONLY means you now have jurisdiction, NOT that they are ready to start.

Starting Rules

- From Section 101.1.2 of the 2024 USA Swimming Rulebook
 - On the Starter's command "take your marks", the swimmers shall immediately assume their starting position, in the forward start, with at least one foot **at the front** of the starting platform or the deck. **Swimmers starting in the water** must have at least one hand in contact with the wall or starting platform.
 - When all swimmers are **stationary**, the Starter shall give the starting signal.
 - A swimmer shall not be disqualified for an illegal starting position at the start if the race is permitted to proceed. **Enforcement of the correct starting position is the responsibility of the Starter.**

putting it all together...

The Starting Process

2022 Illinois Swimming Training Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i8337VJ8Avg>

(0:00-12:37)

Review: Before Each Heat

- Observe swimmers behind the blocks
- Communicate issues with Deck Referee as needed
- Be in position and ready to go
- Short whistles
- Long whistle(s) – microphone ready
 - Hold free cable with other hand - always protect your equipment!
- Wait for Referee's outstretched arm

"The First Part of the Start"

- Begins with the Referee's extended arm
- Sets the stage for a successful start
- PATIENCE as the swimmers settle into place
- Forward Start—one foot "at front" of block
 - allow to happen **after** "Take Your Marks"
 - awareness of swimmers in water (fly-over starts)
- Backstroke Start—toes not above gutter
- Once all swimmers are settled in place and attentive, ready for "Take Your Marks"

Example 1



(04:01:54 - 04:02:01 clip from 2007 USA Swimming Starter Training video)

Example 2



(05:04:28 - 05:04:38 clip from 2007 USA Swimming Starter Training video)

"Take Your Marks."

- It's an invitation to swim
 - Warm, conversational, relaxed but confident
 - Not cold or robotic
 - Let the microphone project your voice
- Slightly descending tone...
 - ... *leading* ... the athletes toward their starting positions.
 - It's a statement. (not a question?)
 - "Close the door."
- Excellent voice examples in new training module and in 2022 Illinois Swimming videos here
 - Note: pre-2023 materials will still say "Take Your Mark"

"The Second Part of the Start"

- Wait for the swimmers to become **stationary**.
- **Stationary** does NOT necessarily mean motionless, but...
- Give them a chance to try. Use PATIENCE. Find the "sweet spot" without extra delay.
- **Stationary** = "set" = remaining at their marks.
- Give the starting signal when you are sure that all swimmers are **stationary**.
 - Don't anticipate stationary - be sure first.

Once The Heat Has Started...

- Watch swimmers until all heads surface, keeping the mic in position in case a recall becomes necessary
- Starter can recall a heat for any reason that caused swimmers to not have a fair start
 - Recalls should be extremely rare
 - No swimmer can be charged with a false start
- Carefully replace microphone and cable out of harm's way
 - again, always protect your equipment!
- Mark any empty lanes, false starts, etc. on Starter paperwork
- After all is resolved, begin observing the next heat

Starting Rules

- From Section 101.1.2 of the 2024 USA Swimming Rulebook (plus September 2024 legislation):
 - When a swimmer does not respond promptly to the command "take your marks," the Starter shall immediately release all swimmers with a "stand" command upon which the swimmers **may** stand up or step off the blocks.
- The currently preferred wording is **"stand please"**
- Swimmers **may** choose not to respond at all.

If Things Don't Go As Planned... (For ANY Reason)

- As soon as a fair start is no longer possible...
- Finger away from start button
- "Stand please" – right away, don't hesitate
 - said more softly and extremely calmly
(they were expecting to hear the starting signal next)
- EXTRA PATIENCE while the athletes refocus and resettle
 - **Let them show you** when they are ready to try again

Have we mentioned...

PATIENCE?

From the USA Swimming National Officials Committee 2017 Starter Clinic:

Taking the extra time to be patient and ensure that every swimmer receives a fair start makes an immeasurable difference in the swimmers' races; it is always worth the extra time to ensure that the job is done correctly.

Other Things to Say (And Not To Say!)

- Don't ad lib. NEVER deviate from the language of "Take Your Marks" and "Stand Please"
- "Lane X toes please" if necessary to correct toes in backstroke
- Further instructions only in consultation with Referee
 - "Step up please"; "Step in please"; "Step down please"
 - "Relax please" or "Swimmers relax" for prolonged delay
 - "Thank you ladies (gentlemen)" to clear pool
 - Address athletes as "ladies" and "gentlemen" or "swimmers"

Starting Rules – the Starter

- From Section 102.12 of the 2024 USA Swimming Rulebook (plus September 2024 legislation):
 - Optional Instructions — The Starter may:
 - Announce the event.
 - Advise the heat when a swimmer will be attempting to achieve a time at an initial distance.
 - For backstroke starts, give the command, "Place your feet."
 - Use a "stand" command in accordance with 101.1.2 D, 101.1.3 A, and 101.1.3 D.

Starting Rules – False Starts

- From Section 101.1.3 of the 2024 USA Swimming Rulebook (plus September 2024 legislation):
 - Any swimmer **initiating a start before the signal** may be disqualified if the Referee **independently** observes and confirms the Starter's observation that a violation occurred. Swimmers remaining on the starting blocks shall be relieved from their starting positions with a "stand" command and **may** step off the blocks.
 - A swimmer who would otherwise be charged with a false start may be relieved of the charge if the false start was caused by the swimmer's reaction to a "stand" command.

Starting Rules – False Starts

- From Section 101.1.3 of the 2024 USA Swimming Rulebook
 - If the starting signal has been given before the disqualification is declared, **the race shall continue without recall**. If the Referee **independently** observes and confirms the Starter's observation that a violation occurred, the swimmer or swimmers who have false started **shall** be disqualified upon completion of the race.
 - If the recall signal is activated, no swimmer shall be charged with a false start and the Starter shall restart the race upon signal by the Referee.

Starter Education

- What is a False Start? handout (2012)
- Illinois Swimming 2022 Training Video

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.

False Start Scenarios

2022 Illinois Swimming Training Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lppCO1nWC3k&t=100s>

(01:40-13:49)

Review - The False Start

- A Swimmer **STARTING** early—initiating a start before the signal
- Benefit of the doubt goes to the swimmer
- Record violation by marking on heat sheet
- **Then initiate Dual Confirmation procedures**
 - False starts caused by obvious outside interference (loud noise, etc.) should be stood or recalled, and not charged. This does NOT include others' false starts.
 - Other athletes are responsible for their own starts.

Dual Confirmation Procedures

- **No discussion.** No rush.
- Give Referee time to make any notes first.
- **Starter initiates:**
- Silently show marked sheet to Deck Referee
- If necessary, quietly say "I have a false start."
 - I prefer to avoid "potential" or "possible" false start verbiage (but follow your Deck Referee's preference)
 - Only mark your sheet for a definite false start.
- Verify whether Referee's sheet matches
- If confirmed, a DQ slip is initiated

Review - The False Start

- These MAY or MAY NOT involve a False Start:
 - moving before the signal
 - breaking stationary position before the signal
 - breaking an imaginary plane before the signal
- A False Start IS ONLY:
 - **initiating a start** before the signal
 - if you are not sure, benefit of doubt to swimmer
- Only initiate Dual Confirmation for a **definite** False Start.

What was this?

(change of hand grip just before start - video not available)

What was this?



(loss of balance at Take Your Marks - video not available)

What would you do?

(start initiated at Take Your Marks - video not available)

Before the Meet

- Review Meet Announcement
- Review the Rules
- Review The Professional Starter document
- Possible pre-meet communication about Starter expectations and protocols

Before the Session

- Promptly attend Officials Briefing(s)
- Clarify your Assignment(s), Rotations, Protocols etc. with Referee, Head Starter, or designee
- Confer with your Deck Referee – Teamwork!
 - Determine where you will stand for forward and backstroke starts
 - Should have best view of entire heat while also able to distinguish between individual lanes
 - Confirm other expectations for false starts, missing swimmers, additional instructions, special needs, etc.
 - Test microphone, volume, practice "Take Your Marks"

Other Possible Starter Responsibilities

- Invigilating warmups
- Timers Briefing
- Announce event and/or heat (at short whistles)
- Call a missing swimmer
- **Hand signals for hearing-impaired athletes**
- Keep lap counts for distance events
- Sound warning signal for distance events
- Record order of finishes (OOF)
- Assist as Relay Takeoff Judge or Stroke & Turn Judge
- Supervise competition when Referee is busy
 - second set of eyes and ears on the pool and deck

105.3 DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING

Rulebook 105.3

- Practice Time!
- Forward Starts
- Backstroke

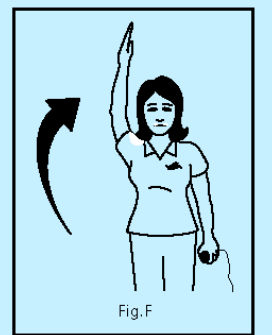
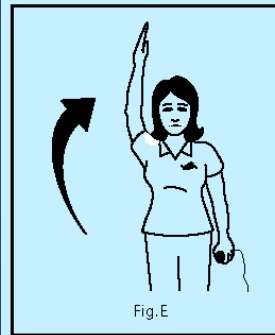
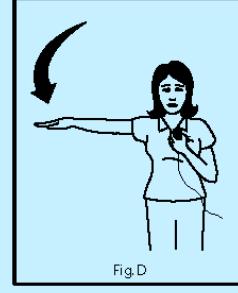
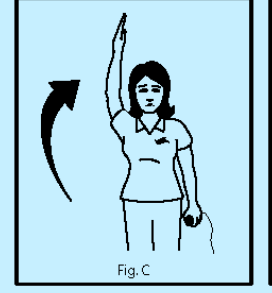
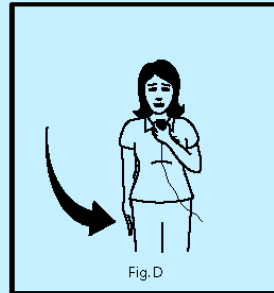
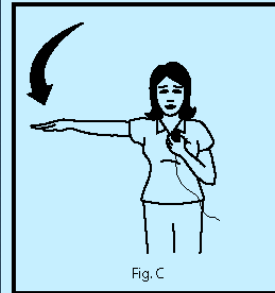
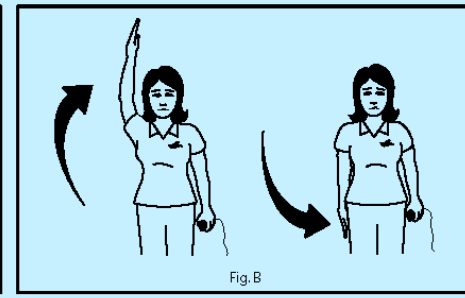
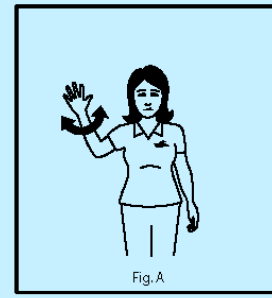
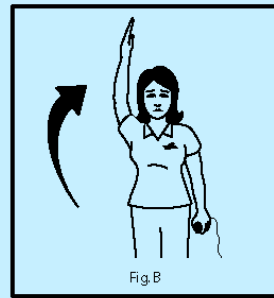
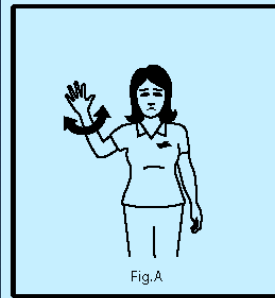


FIGURE 1: FORWARD START

A. Twist hand at chin level — short whistles
 B. Arm overhead — long whistle — swimmer steps onto starting block
 C. Arm moves to shoulder level — signal to "Take Your Marks"
 D. Arm moves to side of body — starting signal
 E. Arm raised overhead with palm up (at any time after C. ["Take Your Marks"] and prior to D. [starting signal] — swimmer released from "Take Your Marks" command)

FIGURE 2: BACKSTROKE START

A. Twist hand at chin level — short whistles
 B. Arm overhead — long whistle — 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 Marks"
 E. Arm moves to side of body — starting signal
 F. Arm raised overhead with palm up (at any time after D. ["Take Your Marks"] and prior to E. [starting signal] — swimmer released from "Take Your Marks" command)

Practice, Practice, Practice!

- The more experience you gain, the more comfortable the role will become
- Ask for feedback. Self-evaluate after sessions.
- Watch other experienced Starters working
- Ask questions (during off time)
- **Review educational materials**
- Always bring your "A" game!
 - Approach each start as if it will be your last

Starter Education

- usaswimming.org
 - Officials
 - Officials Documents
- Situation Resolutions Starter & Deck Referee
 - 27 pages (2018)

The following situations and resolutions have been outlined by the USA Swimming Officials Committee and the USA Swimming Rules and Regulations Committee to demonstrate examples of various situations that Starters and Deck Referees may encounter during the starting sequence to be used for officials' education and training. While this resource has been designed to be representative of the many situations that a Starter or Deck Referee may come across, it is not intended to be exhaustive. The core principle of officiating—that the benefit of the doubt always goes to the swimmer—as well as the use of common sense and good judgment—should always be followed.

1. In the 200 yard breaststroke, the Referee asks the Starter to recall the heat, on the basis of an unfair start. The Starter is inexperienced and unfamiliar with the starting system, and is unable to recall the heat. How should the situation be handled?

Recommended Resolution: The Referee may also attempt to use her whistle and/or a recall rope, if present, to recall the heat. In the event that the swimmers do not stop, the Referee may offer all of the swimmers in the heat the opportunity to re-swim the race. For the swimmers that choose to re-swim, only the times of their re-swims will count.

Applicable Rules: 101.1.1, 102.11.1, 102.11.5, 102.12.1, 103.19

2. At an age group meet, the electronic starting system malfunctions and cannot be immediately fixed. How should the meet proceed?

Recommended Resolution: The rule states, "A loudspeaker start system conforming to 103.18, with or without an underwater recall device, and an electronic strobe signal visible to all manual timers for forward and backstroke starts, shall be the preferred starting device." While this is the preferred starting device, it is not the only acceptable starting device. The Referee may consider allowing the Starter to use a whistle to sound the starting signal, ideally in conjunction with the use of another loudspeaker device to give the verbal commands. The coaches should be consulted before these changes are implemented.

Applicable Rules: 101.1.1, 102.11.1, 102.11.5, 103.18

Educational Materials (final notes)

- The Professional Starter document and the new Training Module should seem very familiar after today.
- New Training Module is excellent!
Some personal observations after taking it:
 - Greatest strength: voice examples and interactive voice practice.
 - Greatest weakness: in some of the False Start "dramatizations" the swimmer never became set.

Basic Starter Clinic



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QUESTIONS?