

SAIL Starter Clinic

Agenda

- Rules Review
- False Start
- Commands to Use
- Backstroke Start Rule Interpretation
- Relay Take-Off Procedures
- What to Wear
- Other Important Information
- Recall Starter as Deck Referee
- Additional Notes
- Review / Test

At the start of each heat, the Starter has complete control of the meet from the time the Referee/Deck Referee signals that a race can begin, until he/she has released the swimmers for the start of the race, making sure they all get off to a fair start.

The Deck Referee shall stand next to the starter in pools that have diving wells. It is recommended that the Deck Referee stand next to the starter in all pools to facilitate the exchange of written false start information.

To perform the job of a Starter/Deck Referee properly, an individual must have a thorough understanding of the following:

Rules Review

To properly perform the responsibilities, an individual shall have a thorough understanding of these USA Swimming Rules:

- 101.1.1 Equipment
- 101.1.2 The Start
- 101.1.3 False Starts
- 101.1.5 Deliberate Delay or Misconduct
- 101.4.1 Backstroke Start
- 102.14.1 Preparation
- 102.14.2 Optional Instructions

Guidelines for the "No Recall" Starting Procedure – (New Procedures Implemented 2006)

RATIONALE

The first start generally is the swimmer's best effort. Therefore, swimmers should not be penalized for a good start by having a race recalled due to someone false starting. Under the "no recall" starting procedure, the penalty for a false start is imposed on the offender after completion of the swim. This starting procedure, however, emphasizes swimmer's responsibility to concentrate on the start and the race and not be affected by actions of the other swimmers on the blocks. If confirmed by the Deck Referee, swimmer's reaction to the movement by another swimmer could result in a disqualification or at the very least, in a delayed response to the start signal. Also note that, under this procedure, informing the athletes about a disqualification for a false start after the event is consistent with all other disqualifications under the swimming rules.

STARTER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

If a false start occurs, no recall signal will be given. Instead, the Starter shall allow the race to proceed and shall make a written record and immediately report to the Deck Referee the lane or lanes which false started. Any other observation by the starter or information relative to the start should also be reported.

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If, after assuming the starting position on the command "take your mark" a swimmer leaves their mark prior the start signal and the Starter has time to give the "stand" command, no signal shall be given and the offending swimmer will be disqualified by the Referee or a Referee's designee after confirming the lane with the Starter. All other swimmers entering the water in reaction to the "stand" command shall be released. The starter shall inform the heat by saying "please remain motionless" or "second start" and shall restart the heat.

The Starter may recall a heat for unusual circumstances, such as a lane line break, sudden noise interfering with the start signal, or anything that may affect fair conduct of the race.

DECK REFEREE'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The Deck Referee shall observe each start for movement prior to the signal and other irregularities. The Deck Referee shall record the observations immediately after the start, but shall allow the race to continue without recall. If the Deck Referee and Starter independently agree on the infraction and the lane or lanes, the swimmer or swimmers in those lanes shall be charged with a false start. The Referee or a designee shall inform swimmers of the violation upon completion of the race. No false start can be charged if a heat is instinctively recalled by the Starter and the heat shall be restarted. In the 25 meter races, notification of the infraction will be communicated by the Referee or the chief judge at the starting end to the chief judge at the finish end who then will inform the athlete of the infraction.

RECALL STARTER

A recall starter will not be used with this procedure. The Starter shall have full responsibility of ensuring that proper starting procedures are implemented and enforced.

Do not raise your hand to indicate a confirmed false start.

Commands to Use

Forward Starts

1. At the beginning of each event, event (number), distance and stroke.
2. The starter will give the command, "Step up". (conversational tone)
3. When the pool is clear and the swimmers are ready, the referee will blow the whistle.
4. The starter will give the distance and the event, "100 meter freestyle" pause and then say "Take your mark". You want to try and talk the swimmers down. Do not emphasize the last word. Think of the phrase "shut the door" or "three blind mice". After the swimmers are motionless, depress the "start" button

Backstroke Starts

1. At the beginning of each event, event (number), distance and stroke.
2. The starter will give the command, "Step in". (conversational tone) Do not let the swimmers dive in headfirst. You should advise the referee if that occurs.
3. When the pool is clear and the swimmers are ready, the referee will blow the whistle.
4. The starter will give the distance and the event, "100 meter backstroke" pause and then say "Take your mark". After the swimmers are motionless, depress the "start" button.
5. The starter will use the "Place your feet" command only when one or more swimmers have not attained a starting position within a reasonably short time period.

Recommended Stand Up and Other Commands

1. If the starter is not comfortable with what is occurring after the command, "Take your mark", then give the command "Stand up", "Stand, please" or "Relax" (backstroke only).
2. After the first command, you should pause to let the swimmers get readjusted. Then, give the command, "Take your mark". Do not repeat the event and distance.
3. If it is necessary to stand the heat up twice, the starter may give one of these appropriate comments, prior to starting the heat.
"Please assume your starting position without delay."
"Please come down promptly upon the command."

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“Please remain in a motionless position.”

Pause and give the command, “take your mark”.

4. If you must stand the swimmers up a third time, and it is the second time for the same swimmer, warn the swimmer by saying, “Lane ____, please assume the starting position without delay” or what is appropriate for the situation.
5. If you would have to stand a heat up again for the same swimmer, step them down by saying, “Step down”, and recommend to the referee that the swimmer be disqualified for delay of meet. (This action should be the rare occurrence.)

Important: If you feel uncomfortable starting a heat, the swimmers may be just as anxious and need to relax.

Backstroke Start Rule Interpretation

September 21, 2005 (relating to 2005 FINA rule change): The official interpretation for the change to the backstroke (101.4.1) is that the toes are no longer required to be under the surface of the water at the start. However, the toes are still not allowed to be above the lip of the gutter or curled over the lip of the gutter. The change was actually made so that when full face pads are used (pads that extend above the gutter) there is no requirement to have the toes under the water. From a practical standpoint there is no change when using touch pads that actually hang on the pool gutter.

Note: SAIL interpretation of this rule change is that toes will still be required below the surface of the water throughout the season as gutters are used for C&C meet.

Relay Takeoff Procedures

You may be asked to judge relay takeoffs. Two independent judges are used and should be positioned opposite each other. Each judge shall judge each takeoff and write the results on the takeoff pad. The judges shall confirm the takeoff after the last swimmer in their jurisdiction has entered the pool. If there is a confirmed early takeoff, the judges shall notify the referee.

The proper procedure is defined below:

- The relay takeoff judge shall watch only the assigned lanes.
- The feet of the starting swimmer should be watched until the feet (toe) lose contact with the block. The feet of the starting swimmer need not be at the front edge of the block. If the incoming swimmer has not touched the wall, an early takeoff should be noted by marking the form with an “X”. A legal takeoff shall be noted with a circle.
- The finish occurs when any part of the incoming swimmer body touches the wall, regardless of the legality of the touch.
- The judge should compare the takeoffs with the other judge. If the judges agree that an early takeoff has occurred, then one judge should raise their arm and notify the referee
- All relay takeoff forms shall be turned into the referee at the event’s conclusion.

What to Wear

Wear white (or light khaki) shorts and shirt. **Do not wear any item that has your team’s logo or name.**

Other Important Information

1. Shall be equipped with an electronic starter system, or a starting gun for backup (having already been tested and in good working order), cartridges, whistle, earplugs, and a list of the events being swum.

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2. Shall hold a timers briefing, unless held by the Chief Timer, with all Timers at least 15 minutes prior to the start of the meet to verify accuracy of watches and Timers.
3. Shall not become the announcer. Let someone else announce other messages. The more you say to the crowd, the less impact your “commands” make.
4. For all events – with the exception of the individual medley, the distances for ages 11 and up are double those of ages 10 and under.
5. In a freestyle event, a person may swim any stroke including backstroke, but must use the forward start.
6. Deck referee should help starter identify backstroke swimmers whose feet are out of the water **after** the command “take you marks” and **before** the start. This infraction is a disqualification.

It is more important to be fair and equitable than to punish!

Deck Referee

You may be asked to act as a Deck Referee by the meet Referee especially when the meet and assistant Referee are handling disqualifications or other meet concerns. The responsibilities are as follows:

- Be responsible for determining that the timers are prepared to start by observing the Chief Timers signal.
- Be responsible for determining that the referees are not still sorting out disqualification. It is advisable to wear a radio.
- Determining that the pool is clear except for swimmers that are at the wall when dive-over starts are used (usually Red and/or Purple division meets).
- Sounding a whistle immediately prior to the “take your mark” command then extending your arm parallel to the ground so that the starter may issue the starting command.

Additional Notes

- Keep gun loaded and keep track of shots fired, if gun is used.
- If there wasn't intent to take advantage, stand them all back up.
- Have list of events. (A laminated copy is in supply box received by SAIL rep.)

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True or False

- ___ 1. A device to recall the swimmers shall be provided.
- ___ 2. Prior to the command, "Take you mark", the swimmers may be in motion.
- ___ 3. When the start signal is given, at least one foot must be at the front edge of block or platform.
- ___ 4. The Starter should pause between announcing a heat and the command, "take your mark" so that a whistle is sounded.
- ___ 5. The Deck Referee is typically designated to judge false starts in conjunction with the Starter.

Multiple Choice (circle all correct choices)

- 6. If all swimmers do not promptly respond to the command, "Take your mark", or if one of them continues to move after all swimmers are at their marks, the Starter should:
 - a. give the starting signal immediately
 - b. wait for everyone to become motionless before giving the signal
 - c. instruct the swimmers to stand up
- 7. If a swimmer enters the water in response to the "stand up" command:
 - a. the swimmer is disqualified
 - b. the swimmer may be relieved by the Starter, Referee, or Deck Referee
 - c. the swimmer should be relieved by the Starter, Referee, or Deck Referee
- 8. If you have started a race and realize after the event that a false start should have been called but you failed to write down the lane number, you should:
 - a. tell yourself to do better next time
 - b. go to the swimmer after the event is completed and issue a disqualification
 - c. give the swimmer and coach a warning
 - d. make a note of the swimmer's name and disqualify him in his next event
- 9. If a backstroke swimmer has a foot out of the water prior to the start and no previous warning has been issued, the Starter should (2 responses):
 - a. issue a warning over the loud speaker to the entire field
 - b. issue a warning over the loud speaker to the specific swimmer
 - c. disqualify the swimmer after the starting signal has been fired to start the race
 - d. discuss the situation with the Deck Referee and the Meet Referee
- 10. Upon witnessing a false start in a heat, the Starter should:
 - a. sound the starting horn several more times
 - b. record the lane number of the swimmer in violation on the small pad and notify the deck referee that there is a potential false start.
 - c. raise his or her hand to signal disqualification

Name: _____
Pool: _____
Phone #: _____ e-mail: _____
Years Of Starter Experience: _____