

USA Swimming
and Minnesota Swimming

Starter 201

15 May 2024

Instructor

Gail Ann Witzel - N3 Starter





STARTER 201

WELCOME!





STARTER 201

PURPOSE

INTRODUCTION

- a. To expand Starter 101 topics
- b. For Starters and Deck Referees who want to take their game up a notch.
 - i. Prelim Finals, State meets, Zones, Sectionals and beyond.
 - ii. What to expect at the Next Level and the needed skills

Why do we all do this?

The Swimmers!



STARTER 201

PURPOSE

The Swimmers!

You never know when these guys....





STARTER 201

PURPOSE

...will grow up to be these guys!





STARTER 201

AGENDA

1. BASIC SKILLS

- a. TIMERS' MEETING
- b. ORDER OF FINISH
- c. LAPCOUNTING AND BELLS
- d. HEARING IMPAIRED STARTS
- e. START END RESPONSIBILITIES
- f. INVIGILATING
- g. OMEGA START SYSTEMS
- h. OMEGA PADS

2. NEXT LEVEL – SKILLS

- a. TEAM PLAYER
- b. START AREA AWARENESS
- c. SITUATIONS
- d. STARTING FINALS
- e. SETTING UP SR/DR ROTATIONS
- f. TEAM LEAD STARTER – MENTORING

3. NEXT LEVEL -STYLE POINTS

- a. GOALS
- b. POISE
- c. SELF ASSESSMENT

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

- a. “What Is a False Start/?”
- b. “Conducting Timers Meetings” (revised 10/23)
- c. “The Professional Starter”
- d. National Evaluation forms

The background features a large, light-colored watermark of the USA Swimming logo. It consists of a shield shape with the letters 'USA' in a large, stylized font across the top and 'SWIMMING' in a smaller font across the bottom. A registered trademark symbol (®) is visible to the right of the word 'SWIMMING'.

1. BASIC SKILLS

- a. TIMERS' MEETING
- b. ORDER OF FINISH
- c. LAPCOUNTING AND BELLS
- d. HEARING IMPAIRED STARTS
- e. START END RESPONSIBILITIES
- f. INVIGILATING
- g. OMEGA START SYSTEMS
- h. OMEGA PADS



STARTER 201

1. BASIC SKILLS - TIMERS' MEETING



i. What to find out before the meeting

1. Review the Venue

- a. Timers' chairs – placement
- b. Starting block space – any obstructions?
- c. Pool edge – touch pad and gutter
- d. Sightlines to strobe
- e. Will timers have duties with backstroke edges?

2. Review Upcoming Session

- a. Are there breaks for timers moving?
- b. Are the Timers doing the bells and lap counter sheets?
- c. Are Timers there for Distance and Time Trials?



STARTER 201

1. BASIC SKILLS - TIMERS' MEETING



3. Review Meet Management

- a. How many buttons and watches per lane?
 - Note: if two watches are used ADM will have to average them to use them.
 - Verify intervals of starts if a single watch timer needs 2 watches for quick restart.
- b. How many Timers are expected?
- c. Who is setting up clip boards and where will they be located?
- d. Is there a runner collecting timing sheets?
- e. Where are non-athlete restrooms?
- f. Coordinate with Announcer for Timer's Meeting announcement



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1. BASIC SKILLS - TIMERS' MEETING



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ii. Meet with the Head Timer(s) in enough time before meeting.

1. Introduce yourself
2. Review the above protocol issues with them
3. Request they identify and assign all timers before the meeting.
 - a. Suggest they mix skilled and new Timers on lanes together.
 - b. Suggest they put most experienced Timers on outside lanes if doing fly overs – shortest turn around time.
4. Rely on the Head Timers if communication needs to get to Timers.

iii. Run the meeting, noting any of the special issues above.

1. See Attachment to this document



STARTER 201

1. BASIC SKILLS - ORDER OF FINISH



b. ORDER OF FINISH

- i. Prefer to hand off this responsibility at local meets so you can focus on the next heat.
 1. Volunteers, head timer...others may be available for this
 2. If not possible, watch your next heat earlier behind the blocks, before the Timers step up and then take OOF.
- ii. Sit or stand where you are not part of the Start Area traffic flow
- iii. Alert Timers' ADM runner to pick up sheets from you, too, for each event or you may place them in ADM file area as directed.
- iv. Form can be a heat sheet or a lane timer's sheet



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1. BASIC SKILLS - ORDER OF FINISH

- v. Observe the finish and write down the number of each lane in the order it touches
(4,6,5,7,3,8...)
 1. In close heats use dash for missed order
(4,6,5 -- 3,2)
 2. In near ties, circle near tied lanes
 3. Do not write down what is on the scoreboard; you are back up to electronics.

- vi. On Championship Decks
 1. OOF will be rotated among assigned Starter team. Usually the 'next up' Starter
 2. There may be a separate clipboard and program for this. Follow instructions for turning in the paperwork.





STARTER 201

1. BASIC SKILLS - LAP COUNTING & BELLS

c. LAPCOUNTING AND BELLS

- i. Starter for the heat will provide lap counting
- ii. Use USA swimming forms to write down the number of each lane in the order it touches (4,6,5,7,3,8...)
- iii. Note: checking lanes off on a picks-type list does not give ADM the information to rebuild the heat if there is a malfunction in the timing equipment.





STARTER 201

1. BASIC SKILLS - LAP COUNTING & BELLS



iv. Bells

1. On Championship Decks, lane timers or Center Chair official may ring bells. Include this in Timers' Meeting.
2. Bell ringing is not meant to be showy but does need to communicate to the swimmer(s) that a lane has reached the final lap.
3. Standing next to the block, ring the bell loudly over the approaching swimmer, flags in through flags out.
4. BTW, test, practice and inspect your bell off deck for loose clapper or handle.



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1. BASIC SKILLS - HEARING IMPAIRED STARTS

d. HEARING IMPAIRED STARTS – 105.3

- i. Identify the swimmer in your Program
 1. Note which lane they will be in
 2. Note if there will be a strobe provided at the lane
 3. Inquire of coach or swimmer any preferences for signals with near to start end arm or the far arm
- ii. **Review the protocols, practice, practice, practice**

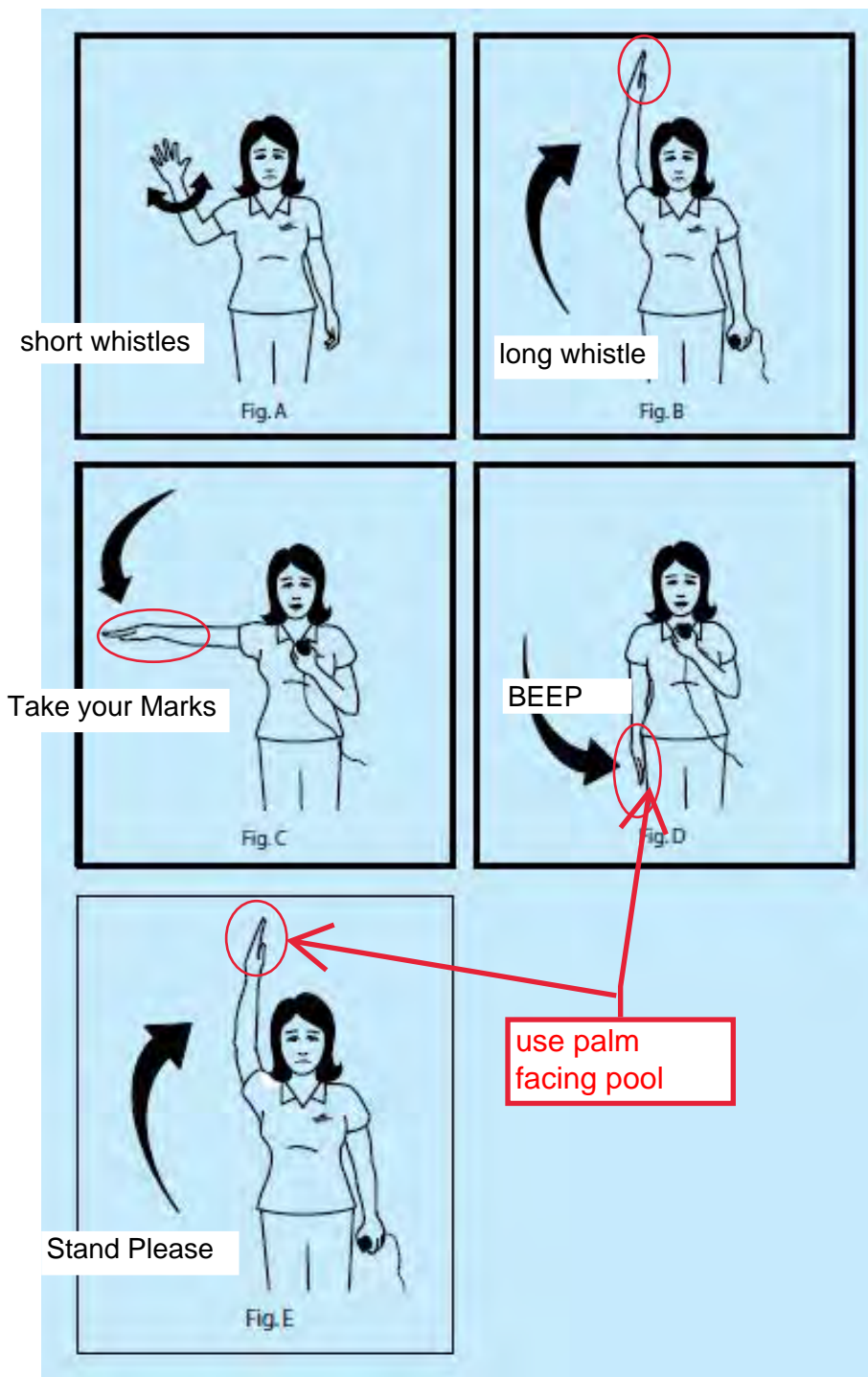




STARTER 201

iii. Forward start protocol

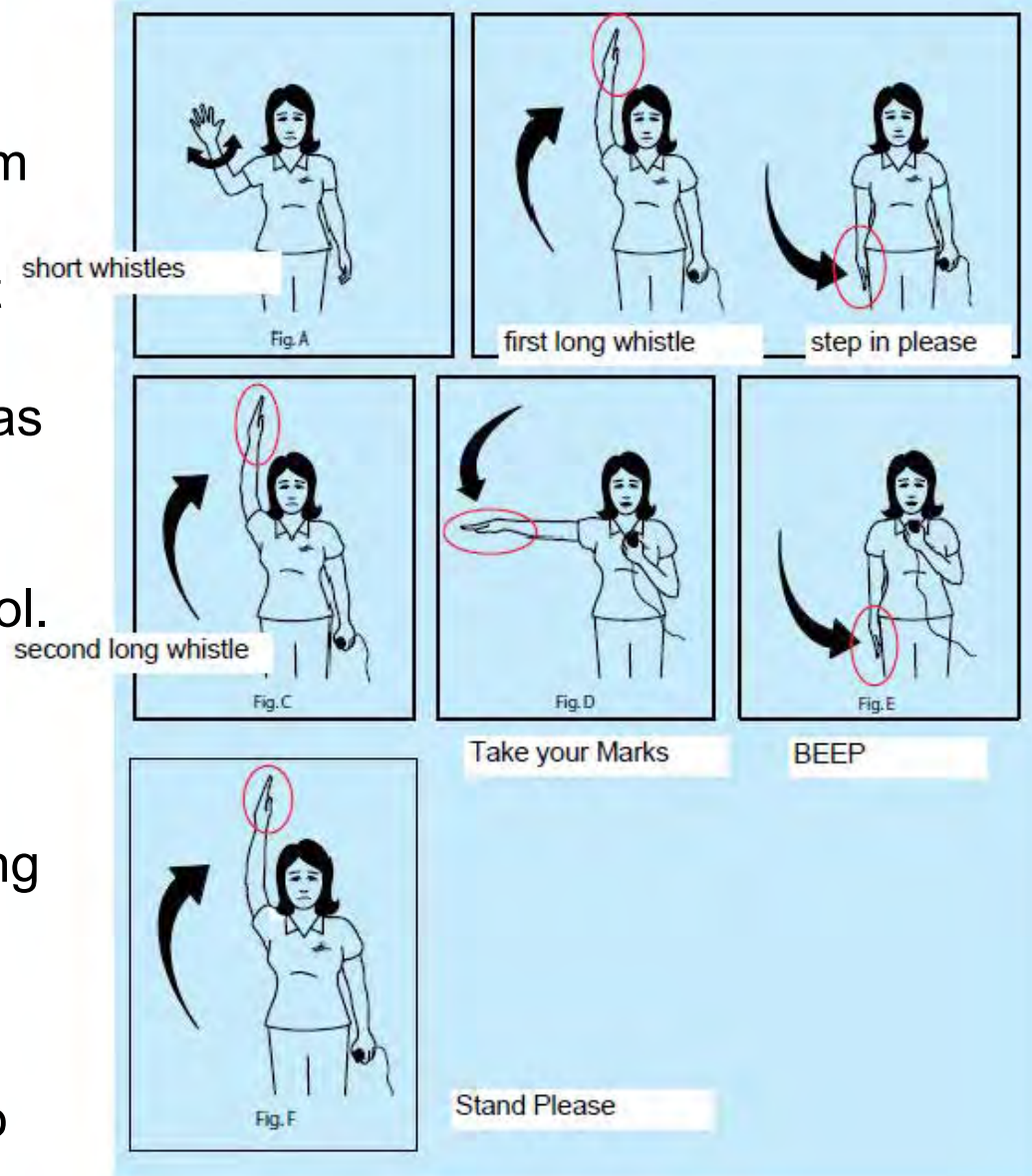
1. Short whistles – bent elbow, palm twisting motion
2. Long Whistle – arm straight up, open palm facing pool.
3. T Y M – bring down arm to horizontal position slowly to correspond with the voice command pace. Palm forward.
4. Start Signal – snap arm down to side, palm forward.
5. Stand Please – horizontal arm to vertical, palm forward.





iv. Back stroke second whistle protocol

1. Short whistles – bent elbow palm twisting motion
2. First Long Whistle – arm straight up, open palm facing pool. Bring down arm to horizontal position as swimmer enters the water.
3. Second Long Whistle – arm straight up, open palm facing pool.
4. T Y M – bring down arm to horizontal position slowly to correspond with the voice command pace. Palm open facing pool.
5. Start Signal – snap arm down to side, palm open facing pool.
6. Stand Please – horizontal arm to vertical, palm open facing pool.





STARTER 201

1. BASIC SKILLS - START END RESPONSI- BILITIES



e. START END RESPONSIBILITIES

- i. Before the Session – report issues to Staff.
Corrections and issues during the Session – use Staff if possible
 1. Timers Chairs – not impeding your sightlines or traffic flow behind them
 2. Strobe and Start Unit – turn on and test before every session
 3. Microphone and Speakers –
 - a. Test for your preferred volume BEFORE each set of your starts.
 - b. Walk the line of underblock speakers.
NOTE: Do not publicly indicate any that are malfunctioning.
 4. Blocks and grips – verify sturdy and solid
 5. Touch pads – centered in lanes, affixed to end wall



STARTER 201

1. BASIC SKILLS - START END RESPONSIBILITIES

6. Wedges and Ledges

- a. Verify Wedges are operational.
- b. Verify Ledges extend to required depth, 103.15 – within 4 cm above to 4 cm below water level
- c. Review Ledges and the top of the pads such that toe placement on Ledge does not require toes over the top of the gutter / pad.





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1. BASIC SKILLS - START END RESPONSIBILITIES



4 cm above water



more than 4 cm below water



STARTER 201

1. BASIC SKILLS - INVIGILATING

f. INVIGILATING

- i. Starters are often asked to assist the assigned DR in the invigilation of warm ups
 1. This is a good time for you to check the blocks, speakers and other start end items
 2. Also, the sprint lanes provide a starter with an opportunity to fine tune your location and vision.





POLICY & PROCEDURE

POLICY NUMBER:

250

Subject:

Meets

Warm-Ups

EFFECTIVE DATE:

5-01-1999

Approved:
4-20-1996

Retired:

APPROVED 4-20-1996 CORRECTION 10-15-2013

Violation of the slip-in procedure will result in the offending swimmer being barred from his/her next individual event in the meet.

APPROVED 4-16-1996

Slip-in Entry

Splash and ripple action of the water should be kept to a minimum. Enter by sitting down on the edge if the pool facing the water. Keep your eyes on the water, gently slide into the water with your hand on the deck.



STARTER 201

1. BASIC SKILLS - INVIGILATING



ii. What to find out before your shift

1. What is beginning time of your shift and when is pool to be cleared?
2. Does the Announcer have a schedule from the MR for opening sprint and pace lanes?
 - a. If not, find out, along with the DR, what is the MR's intent
3. Are there split warmups? Timing, teams, etc.
4. Is equipment allowed in the pool during warmups? - kickboards, fins, etc.
5. What are the water entry requirements and by whom / how enforced?
6. Are there 50s starting at the other end? Sprint lanes there?



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1. BASIC SKILLS - INVIGILATING



iii. **Meet Marshalls**

1. Along with the DR, review with the Meet Marshalls their roles during warm ups.
2. Share the above information re: water entry schedules, etc.

iv. **Coaches inquiries**

1. As you are an official on the deck, you may be approached by coaches with questions.
 - a. If you can answer, as a Starter, do so.
 - b. If not, recommend they speak with the DR or ADM.



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1. BASIC SKILLS - INVIGILATING

v. Opening sprint and pace lanes

1. It can be useful for the Starter to have radio contact with the DR for coordination
2. Typically sprint lanes are one lane over from the side of the pool. Pace lanes are on the side of the pool.
3. Observe with the DR if additional sprint lanes are needed due to back up of swimmers.
 - a. Additional sprint lanes are added toward the center of the pool.





STARTER 201

1. BASIC SKILLS - OMEGA START UNIT



g. OMEGA START SYSTEM

- i. The buttons are independent and do not require one to be held open/down to activate the other.
- ii. Note: Verify the software is set up to allow for recalls.
- iii. "Sweet Spot" for voice is harder to locate.
- iv. **Practice with these units until you are comfortable.**



STARTER 101

**1.
BASIC
SKILLS -
MEGA
START UNIT**

The Omega Mic

Light
when
system is
reset





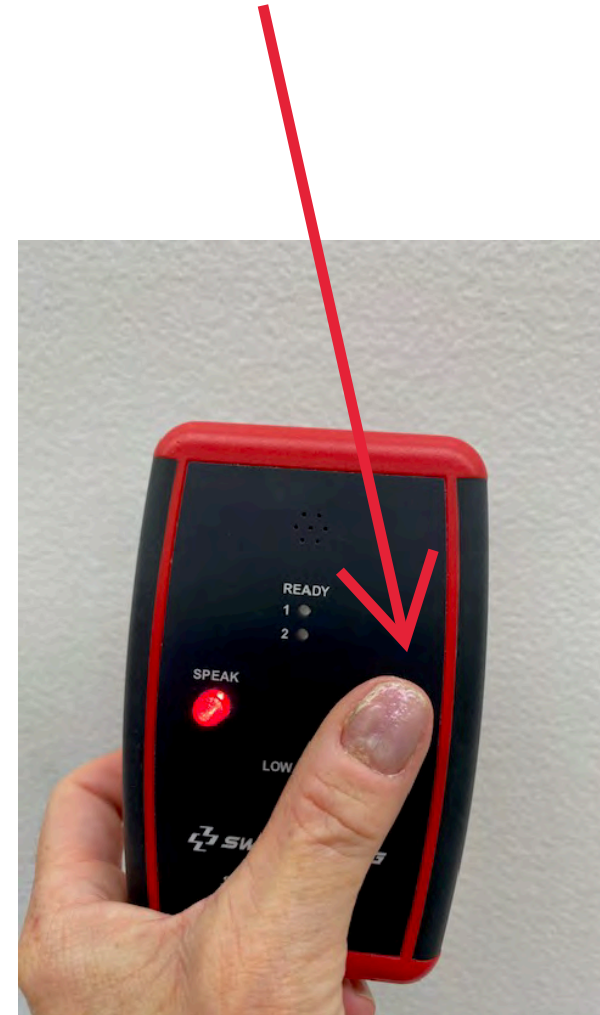
STARTER 101

1.
BASIC
SKILLS -
MEGA
START UNIT

Press and release
to activate voice



Press to start





STARTER 201

1. BASIC SKILLS - OMEGA START UNIT



- iv. The ergonomics are such that many upper-level Starters still use both hands. Be aware that this posture can give a crouched and tense look to the Starter.
- v. Try methods to use one hand. Example:



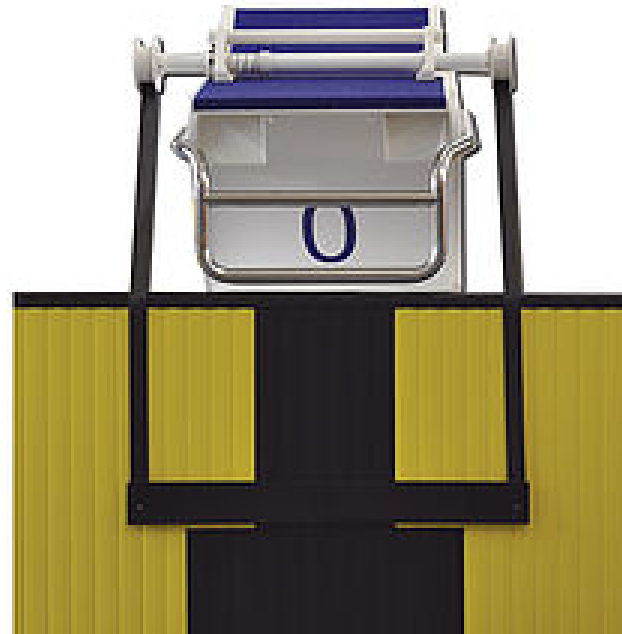


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1. BASIC SKILLS - OMEGA PADS

h. OMEGA PADS

- i. These are full height pads with proprietary ledges system.
 1. Backstroke ledges can be adjusted by the swimmers to 4 cm above to 4 cm below the water surface.
 2. They do not retract automatically. Be aware of the protocol for removing them after the start – officials or timers.





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1. BASIC SKILLS - OMEGA PADS

- ii. There are no “toes after the start” issues
 - 1. Many Starters remain in their forward start location, check what works for you



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2. NEXT LEVEL – SKILLS

- a. TEAM PLAYER
- b. START AREA AWARENESS
- c. SITUATIONS
- d. STARTING FINALS
- e. SETTING UP SR/DR ROTATIONS
- f. TEAM LEAD STARTER – MENTORING



STARTER 201

2. NEXT LEVEL SKILLS - TEAM PLAYER



a. **TEAM PLAYER**

- i. In the Start Area, learn the flow: be flexible in your movements, seating and handoffs. Step off when not on duty.
- ii. Offer to take OOF for the incoming Starter a heat early.
- iii. Let the acting Starter have their mental space, don't kibbitz.
- iv. Stay in your Box. The Referee is in charge of the competition. Do your job; assist in issues beyond your role only when asked.
- v. Support your DR. You may suggest/request to clear the pool or step down the heat if DR is distracted from swimmers by conditions.



STARTER 201

2. NEXT LEVEL SKILLS - START AREA AWARENESS



b. **START AREA AWARENESS**

- i. Meets are televised, live streamed, etc. Be aware of your body language, gestures and demeanor at all times.
- ii. Step away or be seated as directed on longer events. Be sure to observe your next heat behind the blocks from where you are.
- iii. Be aware of the DR radio communication distractions. Wait your turn.
- iv. Pay attention to the needed access for CJ s in the start area.
- v. Find out the paperflow especially if/how DFS are going to be marked in DR programs and if Starter program will be marked.
 1. Good to know if you are seeing a possible open lane before the next heat. You do not need to notify DR if you have the DFS marks in your program



STARTER 201

2. NEXT LEVEL SKILLS - START AREA AWARENESS



- vi. Find your 'spot' in the Start Area and think ahead through your movement with the Referee and clipboard for each heat, moving to mark your program, take order of finish, lap counting and for shift change.
 1. Ask to revise the Start Area if you are not comfortable with the location of the start unit. Your eyes are the most important thing to the swimmers and you must persevere to be where you are most comfortable with your vision.
 2. Be aware that cameras, banners, Omega staff, etc. may take precedent over your prime location.
 3. Do not allow a “podium” or other device to be placed between you and the water.



STARTER 201

2. NEXT LEVEL SKILLS - START AREA AWARENESS

vii. Starter Program may be printed one event per sheet.

1. This clipboard and sheets should remain behind you at all times such that the CJ/ADM can mark DFS, adds, etc. in the program.
2. Turn around to make simple marks after every start. You may mark open lanes as well. Clock times of the heats are not necessary.
3. Do not pick up the Program to “take attendance”. Do this silently as you are watching the next heat behind the blocks.
4. If a swimmer is not present and not marked, you may comment to the DR that you are "not seeing lane X."



STARTER 201

2. NEXT LEVEL SKILLS - SITUATIONS



i. FALSE START

1. Follow the “Observation” or “Possible” comment with the wordless protocol for comparing with the Referee. This interaction is being watched by coaches, parents, etc.
2. Proceed calmly and casually to the DR, be alert to radio protocols in process.
3. Do not show your program until Referee confirms there was an observation also.
4. Walk away after comparison. DR will call in the infraction and CJ will write the slip.
5. NO extraneous chat with the DR at any time, especially following a start.

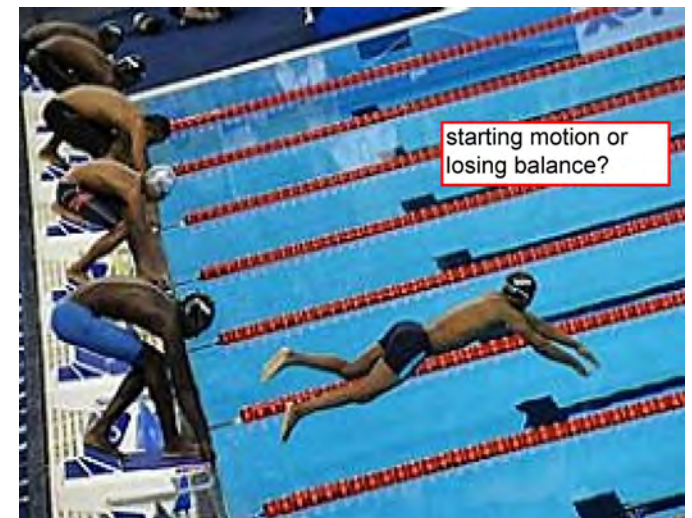


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2. NEXT LEVEL SKILLS - SITUATIONS

ii. SWIMMER LEAVES BLOCKS EARLY

1. Whether a lost balance fall-in or a starting motion, when a swimmer enters the water, turn and mark your program every time. This sets a pattern that will not be read by the DR and others as tipping your hand about a FS call.
2. After marking, either tell DR you are clear or follow FS protocol.
3. Be prepared to recall if swimmers continue down the pool.





STARTER 201

2. NEXT LEVEL SKILLS - SITUATIONS



iii. DELAY OF MEET

1. This is the DR's call but you may make recommendations.
2. If the swimmer impedes the flow of the start once it is under your control, you may recommend this to the DR.
3. Example: Seven swimmers on blocks, DR arm is out, you say TYM... and another swimmer steps up on the blocks.
 - a. You stand the heat and start over, unless DR indicates otherwise in order to investigate or take swimmer out of the heat.
4. Starter may then make the Delay recommendation after the swimmers are in the water.



STARTER 201

2. NEXT LEVEL SKILLS - SITUATIONS

iv. DISTRACTIONS

1. You are the Ninth Swimmer. If you are distracted during the start, you may be impaired from giving a fair start.
 - a. This includes sounds, flash photography, etc. Or if you just lose your focus.
 - b. Stand the heat and start over.





STARTER 201

2. NEXT LEVEL SKILLS - STARTING FINALS



- d. **STARTING FINALS – Bring your A Game**
 - i. Swimmers are counting on you for their Biggest Race.
 - ii. You may have 3 starts, period.
No learning curve....
 - iii. Prepare, know that you are ready, just like the swimmers.
 - iv. Understand the protocols for A, B, C heats, whistles, clearing the pool and for announcements.
 - v. Use your body language, smile and voice to calm the swimmers and give them confidence.



STARTER 201

2. NEXT LEVEL SKILLS - SR/DR ROTATIONS

e. SETTING UP SR/DR ROTATIONS

- i. At Championship Meets you may be asked to set up the SR/DR rotations for the meet. There may be up to five sets of DR/SR.
 1. Clearly presented (XLS) or other graphic which tracks individuals and positions throughout the meet for SR/DR teams
 2. SR/DR team 'owns' the event through Finals
 3. SR/DR team remains together for swim offs
 4. Provide continuity of teams from Prelims to Finals



STARTER 201

2. NEXT LEVEL SKILLS - SR/DR ROTATIONS

5. Should accommodate Evaluations
 - a. Provide various types and difficulties of events
 - i.e. DR Eval – Medley Relays, 200 IMs
 - i.e. SR Eval – 50s, backstroke
 - Distance for both DR/SR.

6. Accommodate Meet Referee Preferences
 - a. for incoming and off duty DR order and duties

 - b. for incoming and off duty SR / OOF duties

 - c. for staffing distance sessions

 - d. by Men / Women events or by overall event type



STARTER 201

2. NEXT LEVEL SKILLS - SR/DR ROTATIONS

ii. Steps to setting up SR/DR rotations

1. Find out how many SR/DRs there will be each session

2. Championship Meets have a fixed staff

Example of pairs rotation per day/session:

SESSION	1, 2		SESSION	3, 4
WEDNESDAY	P/F		THURSDAY	P/F
DECK REF	STARTER		DECK REF	STARTER
BRIAN S	JOHN W		BRIAN S	DOUG A
GAIL ANN	PATRICK G		GAIL ANN	JOHN W
MARVIN F	PAUL H		MARVIN F	PATRICK G
KIMS	DOUG A		KIMS	PAUL H
SESSION	5, 6		SESSION	7, 8
FRIDAY	P/F		SATURDAY	P/F
DECK REF	STARTER		DECK REF	STARTER
BRIAN S	PAUL H		BRIAN S	PATRICK G
GAIL ANN	DOUG A		GAIL ANN	PAUL H
MARVIN F	JOHN W		MARVIN F	DOUG A
KIMS	PATRICK G		KIMS	JOHN W



STARTER 201

2. NEXT LEVEL SKILLS - SR/DR ROTATIONS

3. Indicate Invigilators for each session
4. Indicate Timers' Meeting for each session

SESSION	INVIG	INVIG	SESSION	TIMERS
1	GAIL ANN	PATRICK G	1	PAUL H
2	GAIL ANN	PATRICK G	2	PAUL H
3	KIMS	PAUL H	3	JOHN W
4	KIMS	PAUL H	4	JOHN W
5	BRIAN S	JOHN W	5	DOUG A
6	BRIAN S	JOHN W	6	DOUG A
7	MARVIN F	DOUG A	7	PATRICK G
8	MARVIN F	DOUG A	8	PATRICK G



iii. Create a clear and orderly pattern through the positions

1. Use color or other pattern to enhance readability.
2. Set up to follow flow of DRs and SRs through the rotation of Off, Incoming, OOF and on duty.

STARTER 201

2. NEXT LEVEL SKILLS - SR/DR ROTATIONS

SESSION			TIMERS		INVIG						
1	WEDNESDAY	DAY 1		PAUL H	GAIL ANN	PATRICK G					
2											
	100 FREE	DECK REF	STARTER	RESERVE DR	OOF		OFF	OFF	OFF	OFF	
1	WOMEN	BRIAN S	JOHN W	GAIL ANN	PATRICK G	MARVIN F	PAUL H	KIM S	DOUG A		
2	MEN	GAIL ANN	PATRICK G	MARVIN F	PAUL H	KIM S	DOUG A	BRIAN S	JOHN W		
	200 BREAST	DECK REF	STARTER	RESERVE DR	OOF						
3	WOMEN	MARVIN F	PAUL H	KIM S	DOUG A	BRIAN S	JOHN W	GAIL ANN	PATRICK G		
4	MEN	KIM S	DOUG A	BRIAN S	JOHN W	GAIL ANN	PATRICK G	MARVIN F	PAUL H		



iv. Repeat for the entire meet

STARTER 201

SESSION	THURSDAY	DAY 2	TIMERS	INVIG						SESSION	3, 4	
4			JOHN W	KIM S	PAUL H					THURSDAY	P/F	
	400 I M	DECK REF	STARTER	RESERVE DR	OOF		OFF	OFF	OFF	OFF		
9	WOMEN	BRIAN S	DOUG A	KIM S	PAUL H		GAIL ANN	JOHN W	MARVIN F	PATRICK G	DECK REF	STARTER
10	MEN	KIM S	PAUL H	GAIL ANN	JOHN W		MARVIN F	PATRICK G	BRIAN S	DOUG A	BRIAN S	DOUG A
											GAIL ANN	JOHN W
											MARVIN F	PATRICK G
											KIM S	PAUL H
	100 FLY	DECK REF	STARTER	RESERVE DR	OOF							
11	WOMEN	GAIL ANN	JOHN W	MARVIN F	PATRICK G		BRIAN S	DOUG A	KIM S	PAUL H		
12	MEN	MARVIN F	PATRICK G	BRIAN S	DOUG A		KIM S	PAUL H	GAIL ANN	JOHN W		
	200 FREE	DECK REF	STARTER	RESERVE DR	OOF							
13	WOMEN	BRIAN S	DOUG A	KIM S	PAUL H		GAIL ANN	JOHN W	MARVIN F	PATRICK G		
14	MEN	KIM S	PAUL H	GAIL ANN	JOHN W		MARVIN F	PATRICK G	BRIAN S	DOUG A		
	400 FREE RELAY	DECK REF	STARTER	RESERVE DR	OOF							
15	WOMEN	GAIL ANN	JOHN W	MARVIN F	PATRICK G		BRIAN S	DOUG A	KIM S	PAUL H		
16	MEN	MARVIN F	PATRICK G	BRIAN S	DOUG A		KIM S	PAUL H	GAIL ANN	JOHN W		



STARTER 201

2. NEXT LEVEL SKILLS - TEAM LEAD STARTER



f. **TEAM LEAD STARTER – MENTORING YOUR TEAM**

- i. Communication
 1. The Team Lead Starter is the liaison from the Meet Referee to the Starter team.
 2. The TLSR also facilitates communication with the Meet Referee and to the DR team

- ii. **Find out all out the above preferences and share them with the SR Team.**

Review:

1. FS procedures
2. distance counting
3. bells
4. backstroke ledges protocol



STARTER 201

**2.
NEXT LEVEL
SKILLS -
TEAM LEAD
STARTER**

- iii. Let the SR Team know how the paper flow is intended.
- iv. Encourage the SR Team to test equipment, blocks, etc. every session.
- v. Let the SR Team know of any changes made by the Meet Referee regarding protocols.
- vi. Find out the protocols for Finals and review with the SR Team.
- vii. Coach, support and mentor each SR to be their best, with a light touch.



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USA

3. NEXT LEVEL -STYLE POINTS

a. GOALS

b. POISE

c. SELF ASSESSMENT



STARTER 201

3. NEXT LEVEL - STYLE POINTS



a. GOALS

- i. **Consistency** in delivery, positioning, awareness and demeanor
- ii. **Consistently** delivers starting instructions showing ideal PATIENCE, timing, cadence and awareness
- iii. **Consistently** and properly uses other commands
- iv. **Consistently** follows False Start protocols
- v. **Consistently** self-critiques with a determination to improve his/her starting talent
- vi. **Consistently** shows a starting demeanor that is calm, comfortable and assured

"The Professional Starter"



STARTER 201

3. NEXT LEVEL - STYLE POINTS

b. POISE

i. CONFIDENCE

1. Build and believe in your "back pocket" of skills and intuition
2. Know how to find and bring your 'A' game every session, every start
3. Know that those 8 swimmers can count on you





STARTER 201

3. NEXT LEVEL - STYLE POINTS

ii. APPEARANCE

1. Be aware of the body language you project.
2. Be calm, look calm. Smile.
3. Present yourself as attentive, interested, and engaged with the heat behind the blocks.
4. Wear your uniform neatly and comfortably.



Well Done Cecilie

Rio2016



STARTER 201

3. NEXT LEVEL - STYLE POINTS

iii. VOICE

1. Know how to find and bring your 'A' game before the first TYM.
2. Practice and prepare yourself with the equipment, vision and Start Area logistics.
3. Your first TYM should not be inflicted on a swimmer.
4. Talk to yourself until you are happy and know it will come out the way you want it.





STARTER 201

4. SELF ASSESSMENT

4. SELF ASSESSMENT

- a. Take a moment after each start to re-vision what happened
 - i. What went well?
What could have been better?
 - ii. Don't beat yourself up, just take it as a learning experience, tuck it into your pocket and move on to the next heat.





STARTER 201

4. SELF ASSESSMENT



- b. Take some alone time to review your set when you step off.
 - i. Were the swimmers comfortable or particularly jumpy?
 - ii. Was the venue working for you and for them?
 - iii. Were you in sync with your DR?
 - iv. Did your TYM come out well, first time? ...every time?
 - v. Was the mic volume and your location working for you?
 - vi. Was there something that distracted you?
 - vii. Were you relaxed and enjoying the role?



STARTER 201

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

- a. “What Is a False Start?”
- b. “Conducting Timers Meetings” (revised 10/23)
- c. “The Professional Starter”
- d. National Evaluation form

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 SCENARIO #7 (added August 2012)

What about the scenario where the Starter gives the "take your mark" command and all the swimmers come down and take a set position. Prior to the starting signal, a swimmer initiates a starting movement which the Starter sees but instead of standing the heat up, the Starter waits just a moment allowing that swimmer to reset prior to the starting signal. Surely this is not what we would like to see in this situation (prefer the Starter to stand the heat up). However, is this still a false start?

RESPONSE:

In the scenario you pose no false start occurs. As long as all of the swimmers, including the one who initiated a starting movement, are in a stationary position immediately prior to the starting signal, the start is legal. Often it is preferable for the starter to wait patiently for a swimmer to reset after an aborted starting attempt rather than immediately issuing a "stand" command. If the pause to reset is only momentary, the slight delay may be less disruptive than standing the swimmers and starting over again.

Reprinted from USA Swimming Officials Newsletter, April 5, 2012 and August, 2012.

CONDUCTING TIMERS MEETINGS (revised 10/23)



STARTER'S APPROACH

Timers are volunteers and some may have never been on a competition deck. The Starter should make the Timers feel comfortable, competent, appreciated and vital to the On-deck Team and overall success of the meet.

The Starter should participate in the Timers' Meeting before every session even if the faces are familiar from previous sessions. There are always questions and new timers joining the Team. It is also a good time to thank and compliment those familiar faces on a job well done.

<u>GOALS FOR MEETING</u>	Why the job is important	What is expected
	How to do it	Make it enjoyable
	Build confidence and competence	Encourage teamwork with Starter
	Express appreciation of volunteers	

WHAT TO FIND OUT BEFORE THE MEETING

- How many timers, watches and buttons per lane? (Primary and back-up timing systems)
- What is the scheduled heat interval?
- Is there a runner to pick up Event sheets?
- Will there be "fly-overs", awards or other issues affecting the session schedule?
- Are there any combined heats/events?
- Any late adds, scratches?
- Will timers be required to count and ring bells on distance events?
- Will timers be required to check-in relays?
- Where are Adult Restroom facilities

WHAT TO DO BEFORE THE MEETING

- Determine that lanes will have proper supplies: watches, clipboards, pencils, chairs, lane sheets, bells...
- Identify and meet with the Head Timer to review those duties and protocols:
 - Assignment and Management of Timers as overall Team leader
 - Instructing proper operation of watches
 - Schedule for breaks and refreshments
 - How to run Head Timer back-up watches
 - How to fill out lane sheets
 - How to count and ring bells on distance events
 - How to check-in relays
 - How to communicate with the Starter and Referee during the meet

HOW TO PRESENT THE INFORMATION

A Starter must communicate that Timers are an important part of the deck Team. The actions of the Timers can affect the ability of the Starter to provide fair starts throughout the meet. Timers are on deck to help provide the best environment for Swimmers and should be encouraged to enjoy this responsibility.

- Be conversational - use simple, direct language.
- Be relaxed - help them relax. Smile.
- Invite them to be part of a Team
- Use Humor.
- Give examples.
- Explain how the complementary timing system parts work.
- Use physical (whole body) demonstrations of what you are describing.
(Like a high back stroke touch, how to alternate watches and how to look down the pool endwall)

ITEMS TO COVER IN THE MEETING

How many Timers, watches and buttons per lane?

- which Timer is recorder and which is watch?
- who does button(s)?

Checking in your Swimmers – explain what to do when these occur.

- what about no-shows?
- what about swimmer equipment issues?
- what about adds?
- what about swimmers with missed heats?
- what about relay order?

Whistle Protocol - what does it mean?

- what does the swimmer do?
- what does the Timer do?

During the Start:

Step back / sit down and be motionless and quiet

Start watches on the Strobe flash – not sound (do not start the buttons)

Watching finishes:

What to look for (any body part touching the wall)

How to look down the wall (get wet!)

Assisting with “fly-overs” – staying in the water

Recording times and restarting watches

- stepping back from the blocks / sit down
- alternating watches on fly-over sessions

Any special issues in the session program

- Finals, parades, etc.

Safe Sport items

- Location of Adult Restrooms
- Use of cell phones behind the blocks is prohibited.

SUGGESTIONS

Let the Head Timer assemble the Timers, assign the lanes and initiate the meeting. Have the Head Timer instruct how to run the watches, fill out the Lane Sheets, check-in relays and other issues. Let the Head Timer handle individual questions and details after your part of the briefing.

If a Timer needs a reminder about protocol during the meet, call on the Head Timer to give suggestions to the person.

For a smoothly running blocks area, position the chairs where timers can get to the blocks easily, keeping the swimmers behind them. Remind timers to put the next heat in front of them promptly to assist the SR / DR in observing the swimmers behind the blocks.

To help with visibility for the SR and DR, ask Timers to immediately sit down after taking the finish, especially if using Fly-overs. Paperwork can happen during the next race.

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, flighting, 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

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

- 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
 - If “backstroke ledges” are used, ensure at least one toe from each foot is in direct contact with the end wall or timing pad prior to the start, but not curled over the top of the pad, gutter or end wall or above them
- 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
- Swimmers start the heats – not the starter! Be patient - the swimmers will show you through their body language when they are ready to hear “Take Your Mark” and for the starting signal
- When that “sweet spot” moment is achieved, and the swimmers are stationary, push the starting button
- After the start be ready to take the mic in the event the heat needs to be recalled
- The microphone should be 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 DR 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
- **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 should 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
 - 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
- **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”

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

- If it is necessary to stand the field after the TYM instruction, for both forward and back starts, say, “Stand please”
- If the Deck Referee asks for the swimmers to step off the blocks, say, “Ladies (Gentlemen), step down carefully please”
- The Deck Ref may request you clear pool by saying “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, or not in contact with the pad when ledges are used prior to the start of the backstroke, address the swimmer by saying, “Lane 7, toes please”

N2 Starter - Prerequisites for requesting an Evaluation:

- LSC-certified Starter for 16 sessions
- Certified as N2 Stroke & Turn Judge
- Must work at least 4 sessions at the OQM, with at least 3 evaluation sessions as a 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
- Demonstrates the Start for a hearing impaired swimmer
- 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
- If the evaluation is satisfactory and all other requirements are met, submit a “National Certification Application” using the OTS

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

- N2 Starter certification and N3 Stroke and Turn certification
- Active as an official in the LSC at all levels of meets
- At least 8 sessions* as a Starter, recorded in OTS, since N2 certification

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
- Is 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 how to start swimmers with disabilities
- Repeatedly demonstrates Starts for hearing impaired swimmer with minimal prompting

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

- 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 (e.g. standing swimmers)
- Correctly follows false start protocols
- Shows consistency in delivery, positioning, awareness and demeanor

N3 final Starter Evaluation – Prerequisites for requesting an evaluation:

- Worked at least eight (8) sessions* as a Starter, recorded in OTS, 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 demonstrates proper starts for swimmers with disabilities
- Consistently demonstrates Starts for hearing impaired swimmer with no prompting
- Consistently self-critiques with a determination to improve his/her starting talent
- Consistently shows a starting demeanor that is calm, comfortable and assured

**Sessions should be completed at invites approaching Sectional meet protocol or prelim/final meets.*

If your evaluation is satisfactory, and all other requirements are met, you will need to submit a “National Certification Application” using the OTS.

OFFICIAL'S NAME / MEET / DATE	
MENTOR'S NAME	
N2 STARTER EVALUATION	
Prerequisites	
	LSC certified Starter for 16 sessions
	Certified as N2 Stroke & Turn Judge
	Must work at least 4 sessions at the OQM, with at least 3 evaluation sessions in the position
Performance Requirements for Advancing to N2	
Evaluation Definitions	
4	<i>(Exceeds Criteria)</i> Performs criteria consistently without error in all areas of responsibility.
3	<i>(Meets Criteria)</i> Performance often meets criteria in all essential areas of responsibility. More experience will help refine skills. Feedback was well received.
2	<i>(Partially Meets/Needs More Experience)</i> Performance did not meet criteria in area(s) of essential responsibility. Feedback was well received but needs more opportunities for building knowledge and experience.
1	<i>(Did Not Meet Criteria)</i> Performance was consistently below criteria in essential areas of responsibility and reasonable response toward implementing feedback was not made.
	Arrives on-time, prepared with necessary personal equipment and properly & professionally attired
	Knows the rules for starting
	Understands basic starting protocols and procedures (distance counting, OOF, etc.)
	Understands how to start swimmers with disabilities
	Demonstrates the Start for a hearing impaired swimmer
	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
	Understands their responsibility to meet all requirements & submit a "National Certification Application" using OTS
Comments (2 or below REQUIRES comment):	
	Overall Ranking (4=Exceed, 3= Meets, 2= Improvement Needed, 1 = Unsatisfactory)
	Recommend Advancement to N2 Starter
Action Plan (recommended Next Steps [Bullet Points], Identify next meets to aspire to):	

OFFICIAL'S NAME / MEET / DATE	
MENTOR'S NAME	
N3 FINAL STARTER EVALUATION	
Prerequisites	
	Worked at least 8 sessions as a Starter, recorded in OTS, after receiving a "recommendation" N3 initial Starter evaluation
	Must work at least 4 sessions at the OQM with at least 4 evaluation sessions in the position
Performance Requirements for Advancing to/Recertifying at N3	
Evaluation Definitions	
4	<i>(Exceeds Criteria)</i> Performs criteria consistently without error in all areas of responsibility.
3	<i>(Meets Criteria)</i> Performance often meets criteria in all essential areas of responsibility. More experience will help refine skills. Feedback was well received.
2	<i>(Partially Meets/Needs More Experience)</i> Performance did not meet criteria in area(s) of essential responsibility. Feedback was well received but needs more opportunities for building knowledge and experience.
1	<i>(Did Not Meet Criteria)</i> Performance was consistently below criteria in essential areas of responsibility and reasonable response toward implementing feedback was not made.
	Demonstrates all performance requirements for N2 & N3i eval & performs w/ little/no supervision
	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 demonstrates Starts for hearing impaired swimmer without prompting
	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
	Understands the responsibility to meet all requirements & submit a "National Certification Application" using OTS
Comments (2 or below REQUIRES comment):	
	Overall Ranking (4=Exceed, 3= Meets, 2= Improvement Needed, 1 = Unsatisfactory)
	Recommend Advancement to N3 Starter
Action Plan (recommended Next Steps [Bullet Points], Identify next meets to aspire to):	