

Starter Training

Updated for the 2016 Season



IMPORTANT FOR REFEREE TRAINEES–

Do not waste your time

- In order to train for Referee, a trainee **MUST** have **WORKED** as Strokes and Turns at least 8 halves (4 full meets) of GRAL meets in the last 4 years. **MUST** also have worked as either a Strokes and Turns judge or a Starter in the past 2 years, consecutively.
- Other organizations' meets , including USA, do not qualify.
- If you have not met this requirement, you will not be able to walk as a Ref until you do meet the requirement.
- Please contact officials@gralva.com if you have any questions.



Agenda

- GRAL Handbook
 - Starter Description
 - Training and Recertification
 - Trainee requirements
- Main Responsibilities
- Types of Starts
- Calling the Starts
- False Starts, Delays & Misconduct
- Relay take offs
- Equipment
- USA Swimming Video (*optional*)



GRAL HANDBOOK



Section XIII of GRAL Handbook – Starter Description

- **Starter (Certified):** See USS Handbook for duties. The Starter is in control of the meet from the Referee's signal until a successful start is completed. There will be a certified Starter at each meet. Electronic Starters will be used at all GRAL meets. Each club is responsible for having a Starter's gun with blanks or a whistle available for backup. The visiting team should bring their electronic starter to the meet in case of a malfunction with the home team's starter.



Section XIII of the Handbook – Training and Recertification

- **TRAINING:** The Starter must complete the GRAL approved training course and pass the written test during the first year of service OR if certification is NOT continuously maintained. New Starters shall walk one full meet prior to completing the League training requirements.
- **Recertification**
 - Work a minimum of two halves per year
 - Pass GRAL written test every other year



Responsibilities of the Trainee

- Take this class from a certified GRAL trainer
- A link to the test will be sent to the email that you provide at the training
 - Take and pass the test PRIOR to walking
- You can walk at either a home meet or an away meet
 - Walk (shadow a certified starter) one full meet
 - You can walk a first half at one meet and second half at another meet, but you cannot walk two first halves or two second halves
- Get the back of your card initialed by the Referee
- Make sure your name is on the cover sheet
 - The cover sheets are posted on the GRAL Web site shortly after the meet. **It is your responsibility to make sure you are on it.** If not, contact officials@gralva.com as soon as possible!



When Walking a Position . . .

Model

Watch the experienced worker in the position. Ask questions when you can.

Practice

Work the position yourself with the experienced worker monitoring.

Feedback

Get feedback (both positive and constructive) on how you did from the experienced worker. Then start the process again.



MAIN RESPONSIBILTIES



As Starter . . .

- Your job is to get the swimmers on to the starting block (or in the water) and start each heat of each event

- Your main objective/purpose is to provide a fair start for all swimmers

- As always, the benefit of any doubt should go to the swimmer
- Refer to the USA Swimming Rule Book
 - Can be found online or check with your team's Head Referee



Starters Set the Pace of the Meet

- Too fast and you can have false starts and incorrect timing information
- Too slow and you may be there late into the night
- **Starters need experience to find a good pace**
- The length of the meet is greatly affected by the performance of the Clerk of the Course and the Starter
- Beginning with the 2008 Season, GRAL began using flyover starts for swimmers in non-backstroke events who are 9 and older to help make meets go faster



TYPES OF STARTS



Flyover Starts

- With flyover starts, the swimmers from the previous heat stay in the water, and the swimmers in the next heat dive over
- It is important that the in-water swimmers stay close to the edge for safety reasons
- Timers can remind swimmers to stay in the water and coaches will discuss it at practice
- Sometimes there is a delay before, after, and between relays so the swimmers may call the water
- The following events don't have flyover starts:
 - First heat of 2
 - 6 and 7 (8&U 50 Free or 100 IM)
 - First heat of 8
 - 12 through 21 (Backstroke)
 - 22 and 23 (8&U 25 Breast)
 - First heat of 24
 - 28 and 29 (8&U 25 Free)
 - First heat of 30
 - 34 and 35 (8&U 25 Fly)
 - First heat of 36

SAFETY IS TOP
CONCERN



In Water Starts

- In 2011, GRAL began requiring certification by a coach of all swimmers before they can dive in the water at practice or at a meet
- All swimmers who are not certified to dive will be marked with a “X” their shoulders on the side facing the Starter
- If you see a swimmer with a “X” on his/her shoulder who is attempting to dive in, stop the heat and request that s/he get in the water
- *Anyone* is allowed to start in the water, even if s/he is certified to dive
- There may be special needs swimmers who will start in the water or have other accommodations; the Referee will alert you of these situations prior to the meet.



Out of Water Starts

- Some swimmers may be certified to dive off the deck but not off the blocks – their shoulders will be marked with an “O” to indicate side certification
- If you see a swimmer with an “O” on his/her shoulder who is attempting to dive off the block, stop the heat and request that s/he dive from the deck



Backstroke Starts

- All backstroke events will start in the water
- Note that Medley Relays begin with the backstroke
- In backstroke, the swimmer is not allowed to put his or her toes over the lip of the gutter or pool
 - If a Starter sees this, he should ask the swimmer to move his toes
 - It is a disqualifiable offense if the swimmer does not move his toes or the toes go over the lip after the start; the Ref writes the card, as Starters never *write* DQs, they just consult on



Starts and Water Depth

- USA Swimming rules dictate that no swimmer shall dive into water that is less than four feet (4') deep
- Both ends are measured by the Referee or his/her designee at the beginning of the meet to ensure that they meet the standard
- Many pools will require that starts at the turn end will be from in the water
 - This only effects the 8&Under relays as the timers will move for the short distance 8&Under events
 - In pools where swimmers start from both ends, it will be necessary for the starter to move to the starting end



CALLING THE STARTS



Conferring with the Referee

- Meet with the Referee prior to the start of the meet to see if there are any special-needs swimmers and also to see how the Ref plans to run the meet
- Some Refs will leave the start of each heat to the Starter and some will blow a whistle to indicate the start
 - Even if the Referee doesn't use a whistle start, the Starter should remain in contact with the Ref and start the heats at the Referee's discretion



Working with Timers

- Before starting each heat, it is a good idea to make sure the timers are ready
 - If the timers are taking too long, the Referee may need to talk to the Head Timer so that it doesn't slow the meet.
- The timers will need to see the light of the starter mechanism since they will start their watches on the blink of the light rather than the sound of the horn that starts the swimmers
 - Take note of where the light is when timers move. Can they still see it?



At the Start

- According to USA Swimming, the following is optional for the starter to do:
 - Announce the event. (Typical and expected at GRAL events)
 - Advise the heat when a swimmer will be attempting to achieve a time at an initial distance. (Not applicable for GRAL since we do not recognize splits as qualifying times)
 - For backstroke starts, give the command, "Place your feet." (Up to the Starter and Referee)
- Use the meet program to determine how many swimmers should be at the block
 - You can look or wait for a missing swimmer, but it may be that s/he has scratched
 - Note that sometimes swimmers have difficulty getting around the timers



The Meet Program

GRAL A

HY-TEK's MEET MANAGER 3.0 - 2:34 PM 4/2/2013 Page 1

2012_W2_Kings_Charter_at_Pebble_Creek - 6/20/2012

Meet Program - GRAL Regular Season Meet

#2 Girls 9-10 100 SC Meter IM

Lane	Name	Age	Team	Seed Time
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Heat 1 of 2 Finals

1	DOISE, RAEGAN J	10	KC	
2	MACDOUGALL, CALLE	9	KC	
3	BENSON, WENDY C	9	KC	
4	HARDING, CARRIE R	10	PC	
5	DENI			
6	PRO			
7	EVANK, DELLA H	9	PC	
8	HALEY, MADLINE B	9	KC	

Heat 2 of 2 Finals

1	OWENS, RAYNEL	9	PC	
2	WILLIS, JOY K	10	KC	
3	PEPPER, JESSIE A	10	KC	
4	SHAVER, SAVANNAH	9	PC	
5	MISTER, AVA C	10	PC	
6	SANTELLI, SUMMER A	10	PC	
7	ULM, CHLOE E	9	PC	
8	MAAS, NICOLE E	10	KC	

#3 Boys 9-10 100 SC Meter IM

Lane	Name	Age	Team	Seed Time
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Heat 1 of 2 Finals

1				
2				
3	BURTON, NICK J	10	PC	
4	PATTERSON, SAM B	10	PC	

Event Number and Name

Heat 1

2	WILLIS, JOY K	12	KC	
3	BESSETTE, BRITT L	11	PC	
4	SEAY, EMILY M	12	KC	
5	DEWITT, KAITLYN F	11	KC	
6	ULM, MADISON A	12	PC	
7	BUTT, CASSIDY R	11	KC	
8	KISS, BEANIE	12	KC	

#5 Boys 11-12 100 SC Meter IM

Lane	Name	Age	Team	Seed Time
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Heat 1 of 2 Finals

1				
2				
3	KONECNY, RYAN J	11	KC	
4	WASSON, JACOB M	12	PC	
5	KUCHTA, J D D	11	KC	
6				
7				
8				

Heat 2 of 2 Finals

1	BOCK, JACOB H	12	PC	
2	HAYNES, JEFFREY G	11	KC	
3	WILLIS, MASON S	12	KC	
4	PENDLEBURY, JACK R	12	PC	
5	GRIFFITHS, RYAN D	12	PC	
6	HEMLINGER, KAMER	11	KC	
7	HART, COLBY	11	PC	

& Under 100 SC Meter IM

Lane	Name	Age	Team	Seed Time
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Heat 1 of 1 Finals

1				
2	OWENS, SAM J	8	PC	
3	WHYTE, COLE H	8	KC	
4	SHEFFIELD, GABE S	8	PC	
5	OWENS, NICK T	8	PC	
6	OWENS, JAKE C	8	PC	
7				
8				

#8 Girls 13-14 100 SC Meter IM

Lane	Name	Age	Team	Seed Time
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Heat 1 of 1 Finals

1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				

Heat 2 of 2 Finals

1	COAKE, MARINA N	14	KC	
2	MOTLEY, SARAH C	14	KC	
3	STILES, CASSIE L	14	KC	
4	SHEFFIELD, MOLLY S	13	PC	

Note that these lanes will not have swimmers in this heat.




What the GRAL Starter Says

- “Event two, girls nine ten, one hundred meter I.M., heat one of two.”
 - Most GRAL starters will announce the event, although USA Swimming rules say that it is optional. This can be said while the previous event is still swimming in the water, approaching their finish.
- “Heat one step up.” This lets the swimmers next in line know that their event is about to start.
- “Take your mark.”
- For subsequent heats . . . “Heat _____ step up . . . Take your mark.”
 - It is important to say the correct heat number for each heat so that all officials know the correct heat number for timer sheets, DQ cards, etc.
- In backstroke, you should tell the swimmers to “Step in” when the last heat of the prior event has all exited the pool
 - It is optional to say “place your feet” prior to “take your mark.”
- If there is a reason to delay the start, say “stand up” for all



What the Swimmers Do

- When the Starter gives the “Take your mark” command, some part of the swimmer will usually move to their starting position.
 - Many swimmers will bend down to grab the block and/or move a foot to the front
 - Swimmers must have at least one foot at the front of the block and must assume a stationery position
 - The swimmer may grab any part of the block, or s/he doesn't have to touch the block at all
 - In backstroke, after the “Take your mark” command, most swimmers will pull their upper bodies closer to the block or side of the pool
 - Some younger swimmers may not do this
 - If a swimmer looks wobbly or not ready, you can give the command “Stand up” or “Relax”
 - If there is a loud noise, flash, or other occurrence that might cause a distraction to the swimmers or an unfair start, you should ask them to stand, then restart when the situation is clear.
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FALSE STARTS, DELAYS & MISCONDUCT



False Starts

- When a swimmer leaves the block or starting position prior to the start signal, this is called a False Start
- In GRAL summer swimming, we deviate from USA swimming and allow a swimmer one false start
 - Upon the second false start of the same swimmer (observed by both the Starter and Referee), the Referee will write the card to disqualify the swimmer
- If you see a swimmer false start, you should hold down the signal button (which will repeat the signal over and over)
 - Then the recall rope will be dropped
 - Some teams have a recall rope position as a separate position from the Starter



Delays and Misconduct

- The Referee is responsible for handling situations of delay and misconduct
- If a swimmer is purposefully delaying a start or showing other signs of misconduct, confer with your Referee



RELAY TAKEOFFS



Relay Takeoffs and Dual Confirmation

- A Referee may ask the starter to assist with dual confirmation of relay takeoffs
- The proper way to judge a relay take-off is to confirm that the swimmer on the block has left the block, **then shift your focus down** to the arriving swimmer to see if s/he has touched the wall
 - If s/he has not, then mark as an early takeoff (but do not raise your hand); otherwise mark as a legal takeoff
 - You will be asked at the end of relays events if you observed any early take-offs. If you and the other observer (Referee, or Strokes & Turns Judge) both observed the same early take-off, the other observer will write the card and ask that you sign it



Dual Confirmation Communication

- When using the dual confirmation method, you may be given a slip of paper that has the event, heat, lane, and swimmer (1-4) information as in the example below
- Simply place an “X” in the correct square if you see an early takeoff and an “O” if the takeoff is legal
 - Always write something so that no one can tell that it was illegal just because they see you write
- This information will be compared with that of the other judge
- Both observers must observe the same early take-off to result in a disqualification



EQUIPMENT



The Starter Mechanism

- Teams are responsible for having their own starter mechanisms
 - Away teams should bring theirs to each meet in case of a home team starter malfunction
- Someone on your team is assigned to be responsible for the starter mechanism – usually the Head Starter
 - This person should make sure it is plugged in for charging 24 hours prior to the meet
 - This person also sets up the starter equipment at the meet
- It is necessary to have a starter pistol and/or whistle in case both starter mechanisms fail at the



Sample the Equipment



USA SWIMMING VIDEO

Optional



Differences between GRAL and USA Swimming Video

- Not all Referees will use the whistle or hand signals to signify starts; discuss this protocol with your Ref
- Most GRAL swimmers do not know the whistle commands, so it may be necessary to give them verbal commands to step up or step in
- Starters are not necessarily responsible for timer instructions or checking the blocks
- Swimmers are not immediately disqualified on a false start as in USA Swimming, but are rather disqualified if they make two false



QUESTIONS?

