

DECK REFEREE & STARTER GUIDELINES

August 3, 2002

1. Starters should find their respective positions on deck for both forward and backstroke starts.
2. Deck Referee's then position himself or herself on either the right or left of the Starter, but always where the Starter has visual contact with the Deck Referee.
3. The starting cadence is a series of short crisp whistles to signal the next event or heat is about to start. A long whistle follows this, which is the signal for the swimmers to step up on the block or into the water.
4. When the Referee is comfortable that the heat or race is ready to begin, they will extend an arm to turn the swimmers over to the starter. It is at this point and this point only that the heat is closed.
5. The Starter should raise the mic when that first hear the long whistle and be ready for the extended arm.
6. The Starter and Deck Referee need to develop a working natural rhythm and pace as a team.
7. When the swimmers are turned over to the Starter and when the Starter is ready, the Starter simply says, "take your mark" in a calm, collected and conversational tone.
8. With the start of the race the Deck Referee should step away from the Starter and direct themselves towards the swimmers in the water and so that they observe the entire pool. The Starter should follow the swimmers in the water until their heads come up or until they are comfortable that all received a good start and a fair race has begun.
9. With the start of the race, the Starter should slowly begin to lower the mic.
10. No heat of swimmers should be left on the blocks or in the water for any extended length of time due to circumstances beyond their control.
11. If there is a need for the "stand" command the Starter should use the terms "stand please". If the stand command is used twice, the heat should be asked to step down by saying "ladies or gentlemen step down please". Then there should be a simple silent pause and then the Starter should say, " ladies or gentlemen step up please". Remember, once the Deck Referee has extended their arm to the Starter, the swimmers are in the Starters jurisdiction and remain there until the race is started. There may be circumstances where the Deck Referee will need to use the 1 long whistle again to signal for the swimmers to step back up on the block.
12. No commands should be given to single out a swimmer or to address movement on the starting platform. If an athlete needs to be spoken with the Starter addresses the Deck Referee who in turn goes to the block and speaks with the swimmer
13. If the Starter observes anything that may impact the start of a race such as a loud noise or flash, the swimmers should be stepped down and the Deck Referee addressed as to the reason. If something occurs after the starting signal that impacts the race, the heat or the swimmers, the Starter may recall the race and the second attempt starts again with the 1 long whistle.
14. If a Starter or Deck Referee observes a false start, they MUST write down the lane number and circle it independently and not converse with anyone. The Starter should then approach the Deck Referee with the words " I have a potential". If the Deck Referee has something they simply show the Starter what they have written down and circled. No words should be spoken during this process. If they agree, the Deck Referee will state they have a confirmed false start on lane ___ and proceed with the write-up and communications process. The Deck Referee should notify the swimmer of a false start.
15. Across the board finishes will be taken by the Starter on duty and the on-deck Starter from opposite sides of the pool. The finishes must be written down in either programs or heats sheets or finish forms that will be passed on from Starter to Starter. At the end of each session these forms are turned in to the Administrative Referees.
16. The first starter and the first Deck Referee of each session are to make sure that all is ready to start the races for that session. This includes running the timers meeting and making sure that the blocks are tight, the pads are in, the volume of starting speakers is checked and that a test start is conducted prior to the beginning of all sessions. This is all BEFORE and in time to start the events of the session ON TIME. NOT early, not late, but ON TIME.
17. Starters and Deck Referee's need to be ready to step in as next in rotation, if the need should arise, no matter what the reason.
18. Off Duty Starters and Deck Referee's should not congregate around the starting HOT BOX. Too many officials in one place will self-destruct.
19. Starters and Deck Referees must stay focused on their role and their role only! They should not try to wear all hats at the meet. Let the Meet Referee, Chief Judges and pool staff do their jobs. If you are paying attention to everyone else the you are not adequately focused on Starting or the running of the deck.
20. Starters should practice PATIENCE, PATIENCE AND MORE PATIENCE when starting and should never rush a start or feel rushed by the Deck Referee, or Meet Referee. Yes, you must keep a time line, but you never, ever rush a start for anyone.