

Chase Start Protocol

For long course competition, Potomac Valley Swimming (PVS) is permitting Chase Starts when the conditions described in this paper, to assure both proper officiating and safety, are met. Chase Starts is another tool available to meet management to manage the timeline. Other tools for managing timeline include limiting entries and positive check-in.

These types of starts are only for 100, 200 and 400 meter events and involve starting a heat from both ends of the pool. A heat of swimmers is started after the previous heat, which started from the opposite end, has made the final turn and is on their last lap.

In many ways, running a Chase Start meet has requirements similar to running a meet that is using two pools simultaneously, such as the need for two sets of officials. With one exception, which will be discussed later in the document, Chase Starts requires two sets of officials.

The remainder of this document will cover the following topics. The parameters for using chase starts are described. An overview of the chase start protocol itself follows. The third topic covered is considerations for officials staffing. Finally, the set up for collecting electronic times is described.

Chase Start Guidelines

- Only in long course meets
- Sufficient pool depth and legal starting blocks at both ends of the pool to do racing starts (Note: Some pools within PVS area do not meet this requirement.)
- Event distance 100m, 200m and 400m, not including relays.
- Two sets of the following official roles, one for each starting end
 - Deck Referee
 - Starter
 - Results Operator (Hy-Tek)
 - Timing System Operator (e.g., Colorado)
 - Timing Judge
 - Chief Judge
 - Stroke Judges for the sides of the pool
- One set of turn end judges that will judge turns for all heats.
- For ages 9 & over
- In a prelims/finals format meet, Chase Starts may be used only in prelims.

The Meet Referee will make the determination if sufficient officials are available to safely and effectively utilize Chase Starts.

Assigning start ends for Chase Start events

For the events where Chase Starts will be used, swimmers should be assigned starting end by gender, i.e., one end is designated as the starting end for males and the other end is the starting end for females. The starting ends for genders should remain constant for the meet. One consideration for this method of assigning start ends: there is less time benefit if there is a large disparity in the number of male and female entries for the Chase Start events.

For relays, 50 meter events and events longer than 400m, only one end of the pool should be used for starting. To avoid unnecessary delay in the meet for reconfiguring starting and timing equipment, these events should occur either before or after all the 100, 200 and 400 meter events to the maximum extent possible.

Chase Start Protocol

Chase Start Protocol

We illustrate chase start with the following set of diagrams. Figure 1, below, defines the nomenclature used in the subsequent figures.

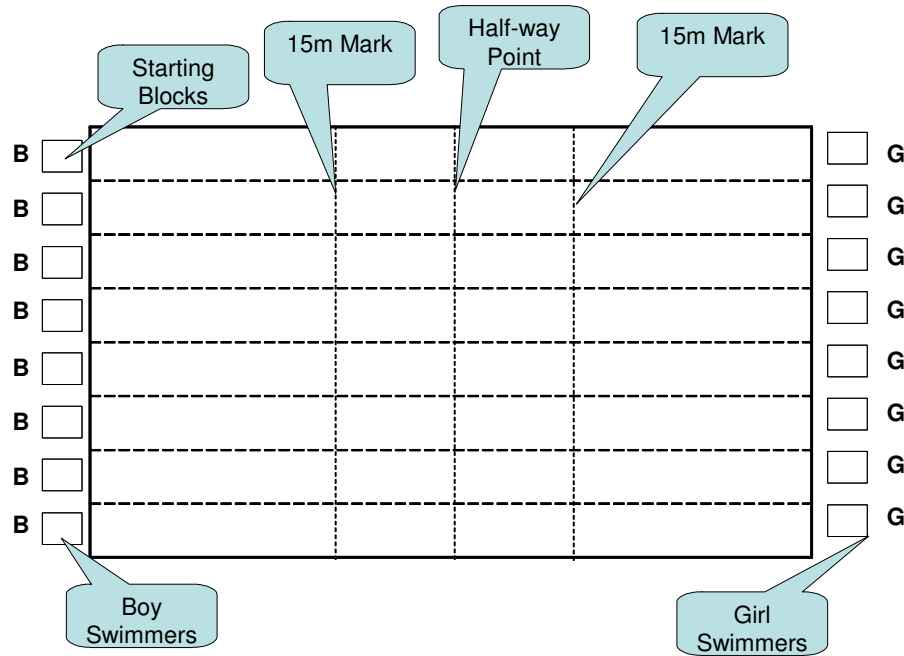


Figure 1 Pool Overview

Note to Referees: The following are general guidelines not mandatory instructions. Referees are expected to adjust pacing of the start to account for actual swimmer performance and to ensure the “chasing” swimmer does not catch-up with the swimmer ahead.

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Figure 2 shows swimmers coming into the final turn for their heat. The Girls are coming into their final turn.

Swimmers coming into final turn

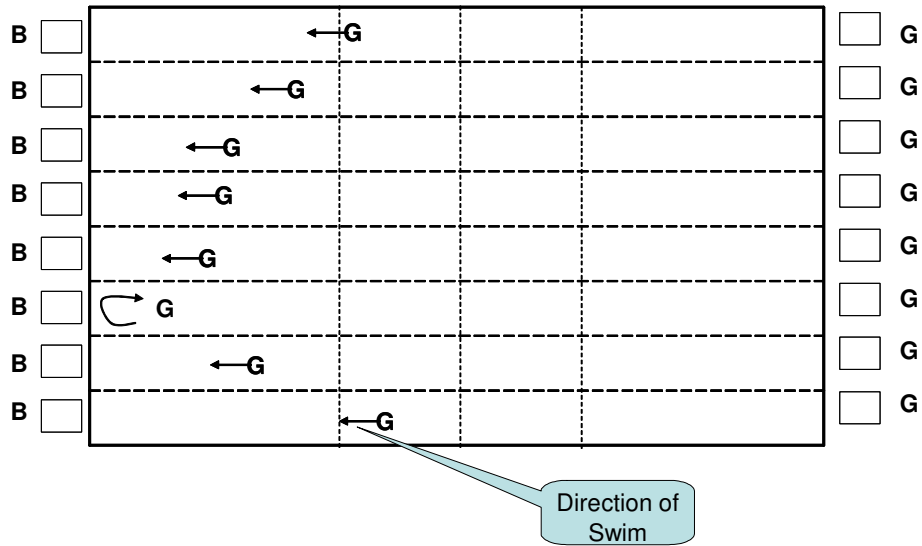


Figure 2 Swimmers coming into final turn

As shown in Figure 3, the Deck Referee on the Boys end, which will be starting the next heat, blows the four to five whistle chirps once all Girls complete their final turn and are on the last lap.

Referee: 4 to 5 chirps

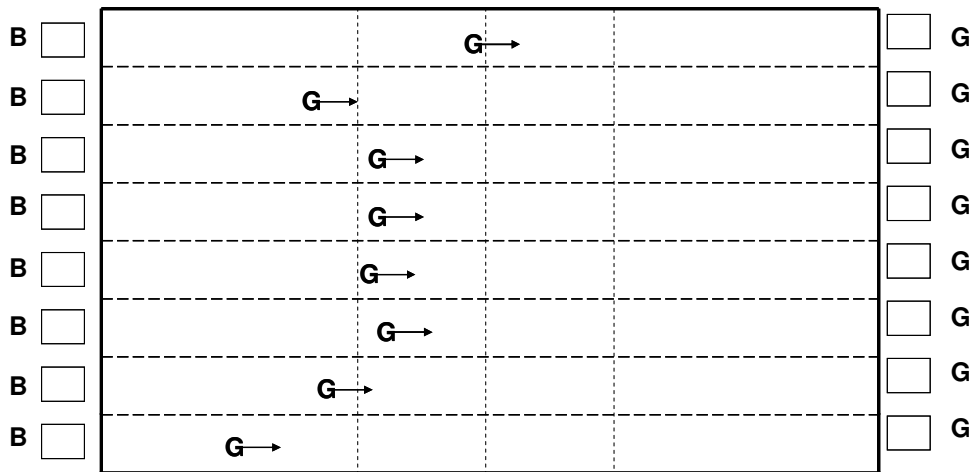


Figure 3 Referee sounding the 4 to 5 chirps

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When the last swimmer in the heat swimming is about the half-way point, the Deck Referee blows the long whistle to step up the next heat of Boys as shown in Figure 4

Referee: Long whistle

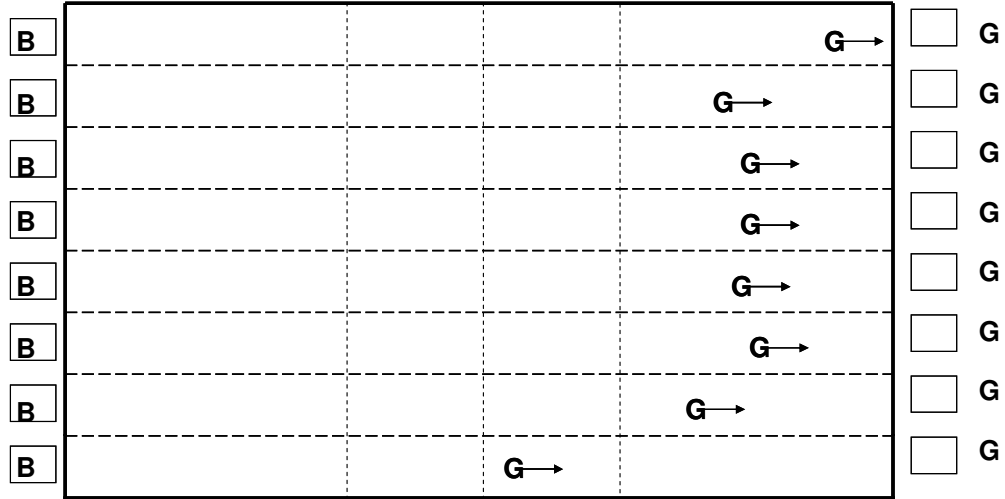


Figure 4 Referee sounding the long whistle

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Once the last Girl swimmer reaches the 15m mark from the other end, the Referee turns control over to the Starter and the next heat is started.

Referee: Extends arm to turn over to Starter
 Starter: "Take Your Mark"....Beep!

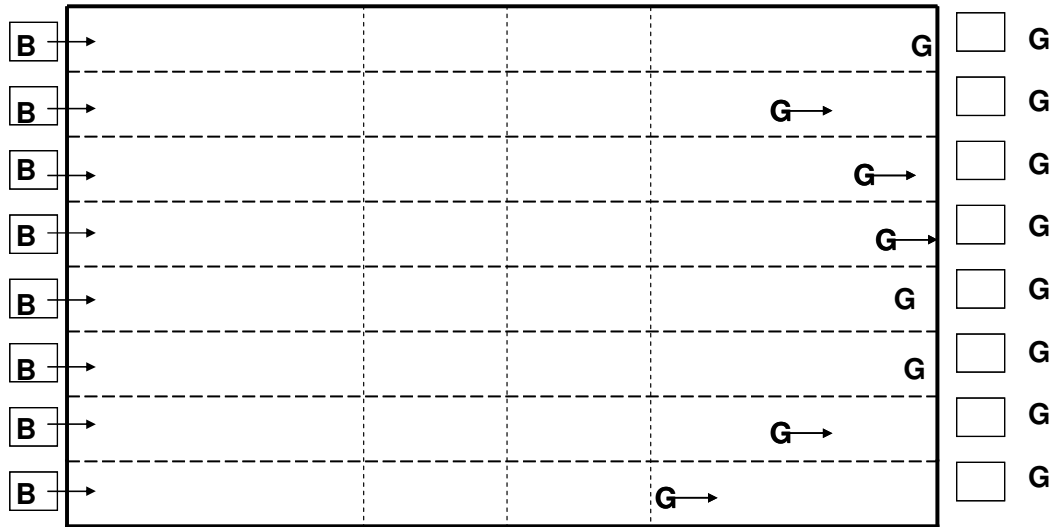


Figure 5 Starting the next heat

IMPORTANT NOTE: It cannot be over emphasized that the timing of the starting sequence is a guideline and not a strict rule. Referees are expected to adjust the timing as appropriate to ensure the “chasing” swimmer does not catch up with the swimmer in front, such as when a there is a stroke change. For example, the in-water swimmers are swimming the Breaststroke and the heat starting is Freestyle.

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Officials Staffing

The following diagram shows one possible staffing assignment. The officials in circles are associated with the left side starting end. The officials in squares are associated with the right side starting end. The Turn End Judges are judging all heats regardless of start end. The actual assignments will vary based on available officials. However, the mandatory requirement is that there are two sets of Referee, Starter, Timing Console Operator, Hy-Tek Operator, Chief Judges and Stroke Judges. **If this minimum staffing cannot be fulfilled then starts shall occur from only one end.**

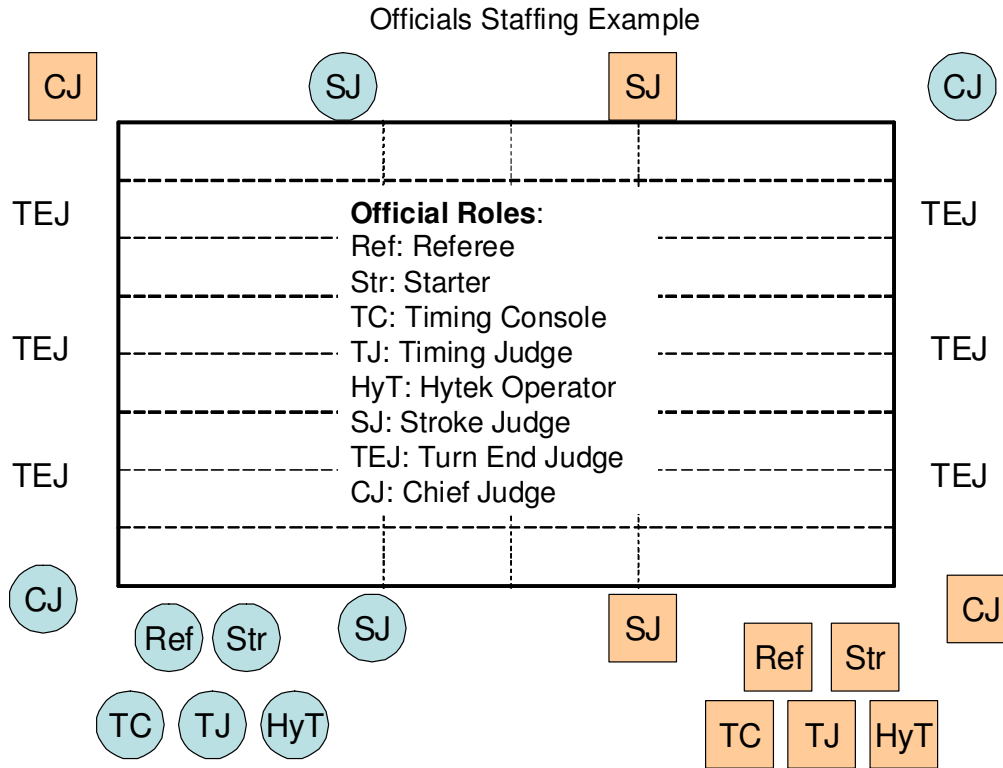


Figure 6 Example of Official assignments

Notes To Officials:

- Starters. When briefing the Timers, mention they should be prepared to help swimmers out of the water to ensure that next heat coming to the wall will not encounter a swimmer from the previous heat is still in the water. This is different from Dive-over starts where Timers are encouraged to remind swimmers to stay in the water until the next heat starts.
- Stroke Judges. An alternative way of utilizing two Stroke Judges per side is using the lead/lag method for most of the race for the heat in the water. On the last leg of the heat in the water, the lead Stroke Judge follows the heat into the finish. The lag Stroke Judge waits for the next heat to start and goes with them until the other official is done with the prior heat and they both resume lead/lag method for the new heat in the water.

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Equipment Setup for Chase Starts

The equipment setup is similar to what is used during the Short Course Yard season where two pools are used. If the Hy-Tek Meet Manager systems are not network connected, then designate one of the systems as the Master. When the session is over, export results from the non-Master system for merge into the Master.

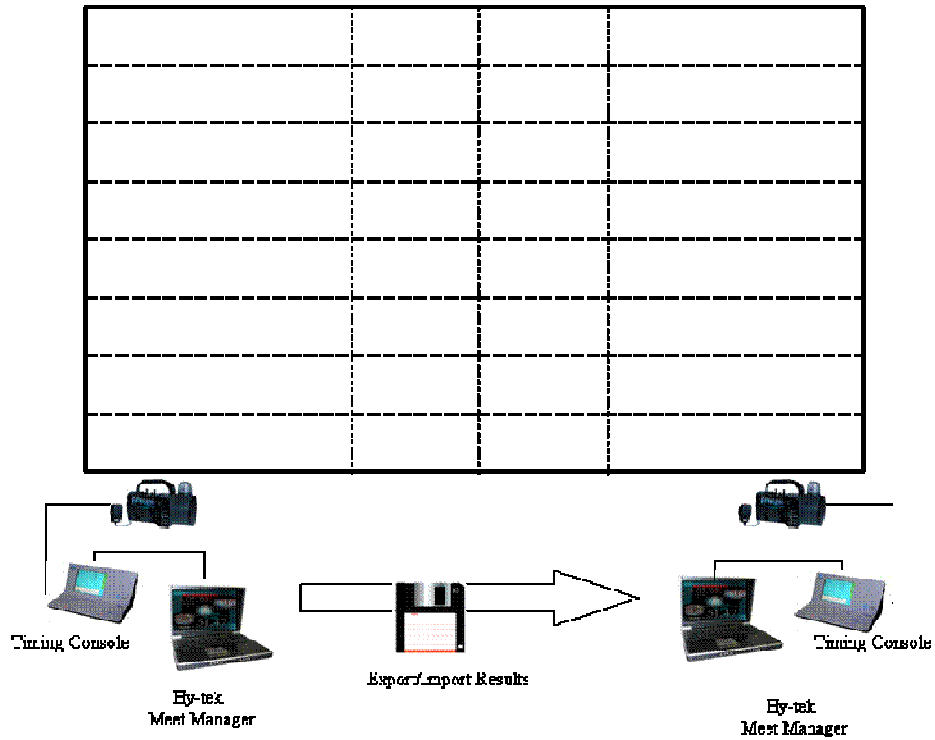


Figure 7 Non-networked Hy-tek setup

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Alternatively, if the Hy-Tek Meet Manager systems can be networked, it will eliminate the manual effort for merging results from both starting ends.

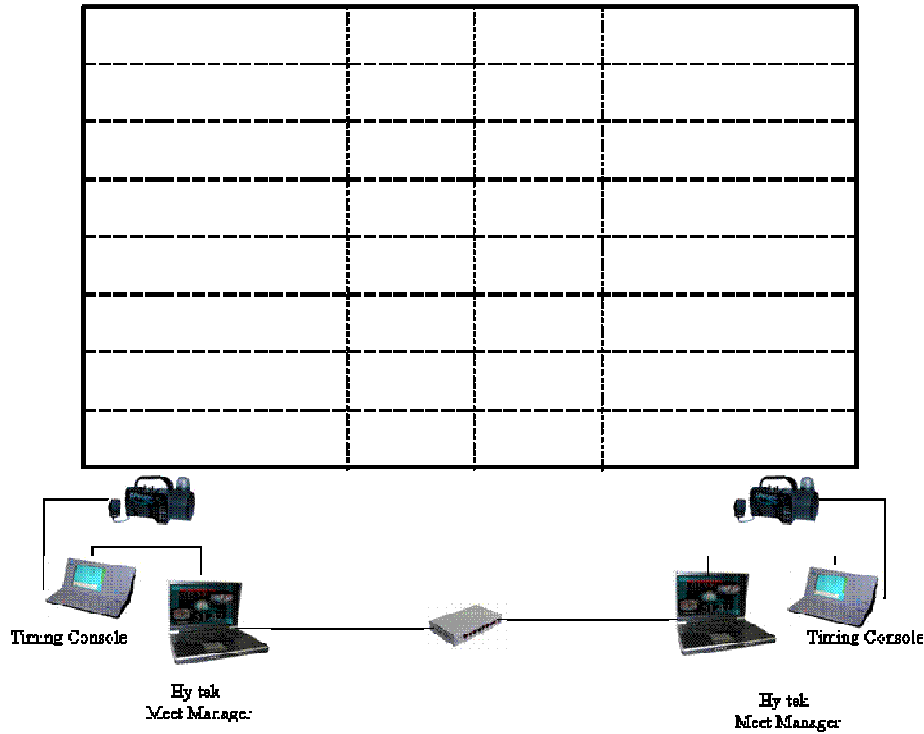


Figure 8 Networked Hy-Tek setup

Equipment Considerations: With 50 meter events, the starting system used will be on the opposite end from the finish end with the timing console and finish pads. This means the connection between the starting system (e.g., Infinity) and the timing console (e.g., CTS 5000/6000) needs to be reconfigured when moving between the 50 meter and Chase Start events.