



STARTER CLINIC

March 20, 2017



WELCOME



- The goal of any competition volunteer or official is to contribute to a fair, safe and positive competitive environment.
- The goal of the Starter is to: Ensure a fair start for all swimmers

PREFERRED PREREQUISITES



- An interest in the sport of swimming
- An interest in the fair conduct of sport
- It is preferable you've already had the Stroke and Turn Clinic (and completed deck experience/evaluations) prior attending the Starter clinic – if not, take it as soon as possible as Starters can also be assigned these tasks
- Consistent voice/tone
- Calm and patient

THE PROFICIENT SWIMMING OFFICIAL



The proficient swimming official is a judge of the competition, not the rules.

- The swimming rules must be followed. The official who has standards that differ from those set down in the rulebook may leave themselves open to having their decisions challenged by coaches and the referee.
- Following the rules puts a stake in the ground that tells everyone concerned with the competition that the decisions will be made in a fair and equitable manner against a known standard.
- The official's job is to uphold the rules by applying them equitably and communicating their interpretation effectively

THE PROFICIENT SWIMMING OFFICIAL

(cont'd)



- As an official, an individual must operate from a strong base. That base is made up of two factors – one is the authority of the rulebook and the other is the basic philosophy that the officials conduct the competition in accordance with the rules.
- Each time a rule and the purpose of that rule are explained, the rule becomes easier to accept. Rather than hiding behind the statement "It's the rule", an official should explain why there was a violation so the official does not appear to be arbitrary.
- While the rules of swimming are clear, their application may differ slightly based on the level of competition.



STARTER'S DUTIES

STARTER'S DUTIES



- The starter shall give the command that begins each race, using a consistent tone and cadence. The starter shall adapt to different levels of swimmers (level, age, para-swimmers)
- The starter shall work collaboratively with the Referee to ensure that all swimmers have a fair start.
- The starter shall take notes of everything related to the start
- The starter shall complete other duties as assigned, such as recall rope, act as Stroke Judge if needed and if qualified, counting laps in long distance, take sweeps, etc.
- The starter should be consistent and exercise good judgment, maintaining the confidence of the referee and the swimmers.

BEFORE THE SESSION



- Arrive at least one hour prior to the beginning of the meet
- Complete a deck check to view the starter area and equipment being used. If there are two starters during the session (multi-pool or mentor starters), complete the deck check as a team.
 - Verify the starting equipment to be used during the session and become familiar with the pool layout
 - Perform a test start
 - Test the volume of the starting equipment microphone across the pool deck.
 - Verify that if speakers are in place and are functional

BEFORE THE SESSION



- Determine if there is back-up starting system,
 - where it is located, and if there is someone who shall assist you if problems arise.
 - Inspect each starting platform to ensure they are firm and stable
- Test the recall rope by releasing it - ensure it covers all lanes.
 - this should be done before the warm-up session begins to allow time for adjustments , if necessary
- Inspect both ends of the pool, if required

BEFORE THE SESSION



- Meet with the Referee
 - Read the meet package prior to the meet to find out what type of competition in order to apply the appropriate starting rules (Masters, Para Swimming)
 - Address any concerns from the pool inspection
 - Is there an announcer?
 - Determine if the starter is making any type of announcements (event number, heat number, advise swimmers to clear the pool, etc.)
 - Determine who is responsible for the re-call rope – off starter or stroke judge
 - Discuss the starting protocol with the referee -Flow of the session (over the top, para-swimmers, are there any breaks)

BEFORE THE SESSION



- Do a watch check with the Timekeepers when requested by the Chief Timekeeper
- Determine if any races are starting at the turn end?
- Discuss any swimmers with special considerations, such as Hearing Impaired swimmers
- Long distance events – are there one or two swimmers per lane?
- If double ended – which pool has priority
- Are there other duties, such as Stroke Judge, IT, recall rope, sweeps, counting laps in long distance races, etc. that the starter is to perform
- Ensure you have heat sheets/program, disqualification forms, and a bottle of water

STARTING EQUIPMENT



Common starting equipment:





RULES FOR THE STARTER

RULES DESCRIBING THE DUTIES OF THE STARTER



SW 2.3.1 *The starter shall have full control of the swimmers from the time the referee turns the swimmers over to him (SW 2.1.5) until the race has commenced. The start shall be given in accordance with SW 4.*

SW 2.3.1 IN ACTION



- Swimmers are turned over to the Starter by the Referee's outstretched arm.
- The Starter shall give the command "**Take Your Marks**" in a slow, steady and clear voice.
- A Starter must establish an even, consistent cadence with his/her starting commands.

RULES DESCRIBING THE DUTIES OF THE STARTER



SW 2.3.2 *The starter shall report a swimmer to the referee for delaying the start, for wilfully disobeying an order or for any other misconduct taking place at the start, but only the referee may disqualify a swimmer for such delay, wilful disobedience or misconduct.*

SW 2.3.2 IN ACTION



- Example: A swimmer suddenly mounts the starting platform in a empty lane when the race is under the starter's control
 - Starter should step the swimmers down and then confer with the Referee
- Disqualification for “Delaying the meet” can be recommended by the starter but **CAN ONLY BE DECLARED** by the Referee

RULES DESCRIBING THE DUTIES OF THE STARTER



SW 2.3.3 *The starter shall have power to decide whether the start is fair, subject only to the decision of the Referee.*

SW 2.3.3 IN ACTION



- If the start was not fair, the race shall be recalled without any disqualification
 - Excessive/loud noise at the start
 - Camera flash from the crowd
 - Any distraction on the start
 - Starter held the swimmers too long



RULES DESCRIBING THE DUTIES OF THE STARTER

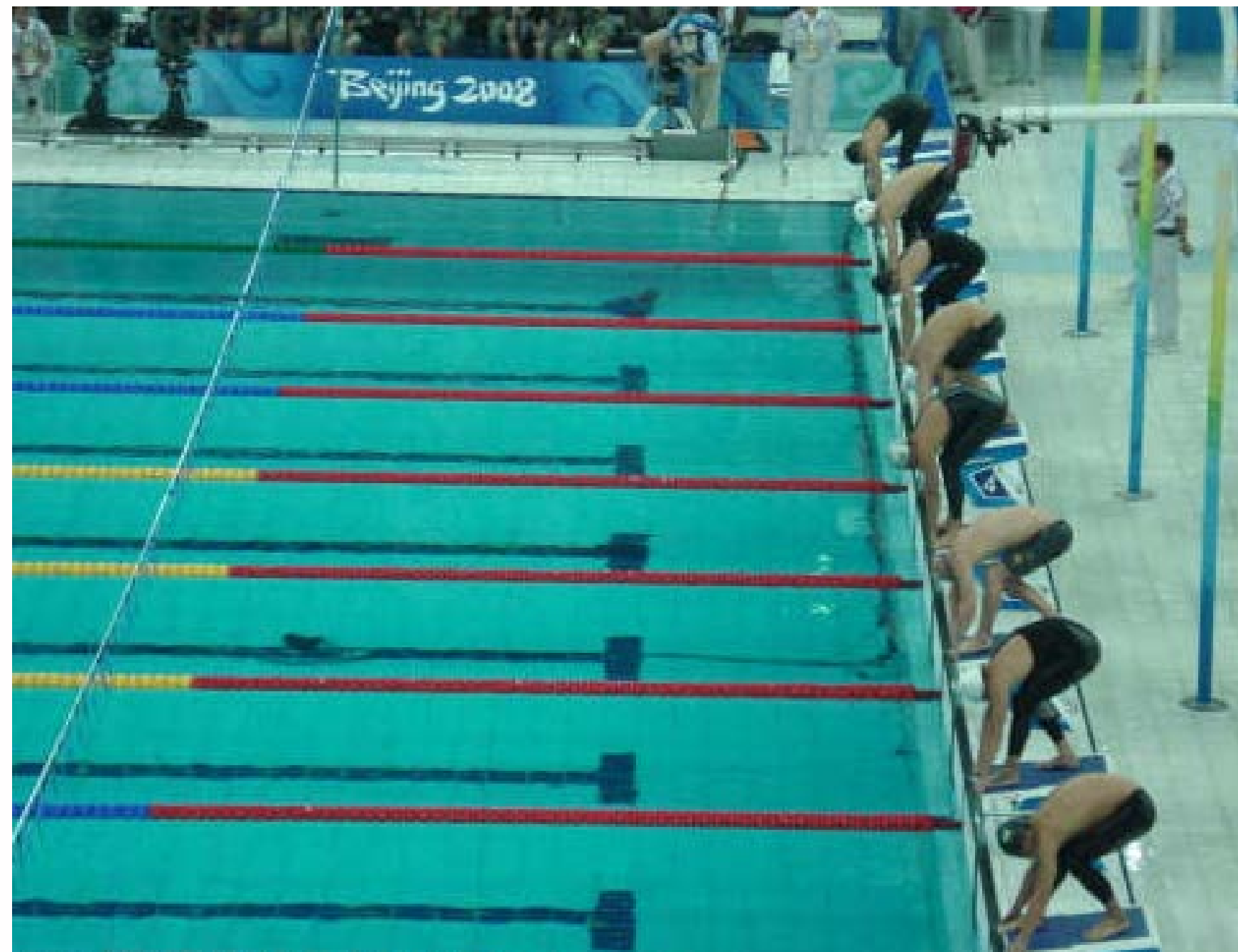


SW 2.3.4 *When starting an event, the starter shall stand on the side of the pool within approximately five metres of the starting edge of the pool where the timekeepers can see and/or hear the starting signal and the swimmers can hear the signal.*

SW 2.3.4 IN ACTION



- The starter needs to be positioned to ensure a good view of all swimmers at the start
 - If a podium is used - adjust it if required and if possible



RULES DESCRIBING THE START



SW 4.1 *The start in Freestyle, Breaststroke, Butterfly and Individual Medley races shall be with a dive. On the long whistle (SW 2.1.5) from the referee the swimmers shall step onto the starting platform and remain there. On the starter's command "take your marks", they shall immediately take up a starting position with at least one foot at the front of the starting platforms. The position of the hands is not relevant. When all swimmers are stationary, the starter shall give the starting signal.*

SW 4.1 IN ACTION



- For all Freestyle, Breaststroke, Butterfly and Individual Medley events, swimmers must get on the starting platform at the referee's long whistle.
- If a swimmer gets in the water to start his freestyle event because he decides to swim backstroke in his freestyle event, starter/referee needs to tell him to dive, as per rule 4.1. Then, the swimmer is free to swim any style he wanted.
- The referee shall turn the race over to the starter when the swimmers are prepared
 - Some swimmers may fidget until the Referee turns the race over to the starter
 - Some swimmers may continue to move their hands until the command "Take your marks" is given

SW 4.1 IN ACTION



- When the referee turns the race over to the starter, and the swimmers are ready, the starter shall give the command “Take your marks”
 - At that time, swimmers must immediately take position with at least one foot at the front of the starting platform
 - Be vigilant – allow swimmers to become stationary after their backwards movement in their “Track Start” before giving the starting signal
 - The position of the swimmers hands is not relevant; however the swimmers must be stationary
- When all swimmers are stationary, the starter shall activate the starting signal
 - If the swimmers are not stationary, do not activate the starting signal; ask them to step down and restart the procedure

SCENARIO FOR DISCUSSION



A swimmer does not respond to the command “Take your marks” by taking a starting position with one or both feet at the front of the starting platforms

- Do not activate the starting signal
- Instruct the swimmers to step down
- Discuss with the referee; did the swimmer hear the command or not, etc. The referee should disqualify the swimmer if he’s 100% sure that the swimmer was not obeying the command.
- This call would be “Delay of meet” rather than “Starting prior to the signal”. Lane shall remain empty.

RULES DESCRIBING THE START



SW 4.2 *The start in Backstroke and Medley Relay races shall be from the water. At the referee's first long whistle (SW 2.1.5), the swimmers shall immediately enter the water. At the Referee's second long whistle the swimmers shall return without undue delay to the starting position (SW 6.1). When all swimmers have assumed their starting positions, the starter shall give the command "take your marks". When all swimmers are stationary, the starter shall give the starting signal.*

SW 4.2 IN ACTION



- For all Backstroke and Medley Relay events, swimmers must get into the water at the referee's first long whistle.
- At the referee's second long whistle, all swimmers must return without undue delay to their starting position
- The referee shall turn the race over by raising his arm when the swimmers are settled
- When the referee turns the race over, the starter shall give the command "Take your marks"
- When all swimmers are stationary, the starter shall activate the starting signal
 - If the swimmers are not stationary, do not activate the starting signal; ask them to relax and restart the procedure

RULES DESCRIBING THE START



SW 6.1 *Prior to the starting signal, the swimmers shall line up in the water facing the starting end, with both hands holding the starting grips. Standing in or on the gutter, or bending the toes over the lip of the gutter, is prohibited. When using a backstroke ledge at the start, the toes of both feet must be in contact with the end wall or face of the touchpad. Bending toes over the top of the touchpad is prohibited.*

SW 6.1 IN ACTION



Without any undue delay after the referee's second long whistle, swimmers must:

- Line up in the water facing the starting end
- Both hands must hold the starting grips
- It is prohibited for swimmers to stand in or on the gutter
- Bending the toes over the lip of the gutter is prohibited as well



SW 6.1 IN ACTION



When a backstroke ledge is available, swimmers may use the ledge to perform their backstroke start

- Backstroke ledges are installed by the Inspector of turns (IT) on the top of the starting platform prior to backstroke and medley relay events.
- The IT should ensure that the straps are not twisted as it will not work properly; if the strap is twisted the starter shall relax the swimmers and have the straps adjusted appropriately



SW 6.1 IN ACTION



- When using backstroke ledges, the toes of both feet must be in contact with the end wall or face of the touchpad
- Bending the toes over the top of the touchpad is prohibited
- The starter shall scan the swimmers to confirm the toes are in contact with the wall, prior to giving the “Take Your Marks” command.



RULES DESCRIBING THE START



SW 4.3 *In Olympic Games, World Championships and other FINA events the command "Take your marks" shall be in English and the start shall be by multiple loudspeakers, mounted one at each starting platform.*

- The command shall be given in English (Take your marks) or in French (À vos marques) with the exception of the following meets where it must be done in English only.
 - Olympic Games, World Championships and any other FINA events
 - At all Swimming Canada Designated meets, the command shall be given in English

RULES DESCRIBING THE START



SW 4.4 *Any swimmer starting before the starting signal has been given, shall be disqualified. If the starting signal sounds before the disqualification is declared, the race shall continue and the swimmer or swimmers shall be disqualified upon completion of the race. If the disqualification is declared before the starting signal, the signal shall not be given, but the remaining swimmers shall be called back and start again. The Referee repeats the starting procedure beginning with the long whistle (the second one for backstroke) as per SW 2.1.5.*

SW 4.4 IN ACTION



- If a swimmer starts forward before the starting signal sounds but before a disqualification is declared , the race shall continue and the swimmer(s) shall be disqualified at the end of the race
 - It is possible to have more than one swimmer disqualified
- If a swimmer moves forward prior to the starting signal and the disqualification is declared, DO NOT activate the starting signal
 - Step the swimmers down
 - Confer with the referee to confirm the disqualification
 - Swimmer(s) being disqualified cannot swim under protest (CSW 4.4.1)

SW 4.4 IN ACTION



- Prior to each subsequent attempt to start, the start shall revert back to the Referee who shall again signal swimmers to the starting platforms with the long whistle.
- In general, if the starting signal goes, the race goes – unless it is determined that it was an unfair start
- Examples of an unfair start could be:
 - a loud noise or interference during the start, causing the swimmer to think that was the start signal,
 - if a starter holds the swimmers too long while waiting for all swimmers to become stationary causing an unfair start the race should be recalled without any disqualification

RULES DESCRIBING THE START



SW 2.1.6 *A disqualification for starting prior to the starting signal must be observed and confirmed by both, the starter and the referee.*



SW 2.1.6 IN ACTION



- Both the referee and starter **MUST** have observed and confirmed a swimmer starting prior to the starting signal
 - If the starter and referee do not agree, there is **NO** disqualification

RULES DESCRIBING THE START



CSW 4.4.1 *When swimmer(s) are disqualified for a false start under this rule, the swimmer(s) shall not be allowed to swim under protest. If a protest is made and upheld by a Jury of Appeal, the swimmer(s) concerned shall swim on their own at a time determined by the referee and the coach(es) concerned.*

CSW 4.4.1 IN ACTION



- If the disqualification on the start is protested by a coach, the swimmer is not allowed to swim the race under protest.
- A decision on the protest must be given prior to allowing the swimmer to swim
 - If the protest is upheld, the swimmer shall swim on his own later during the session, at a time determined by the referee, and the swimmer's coach

RULES DESCRIBING THE START



GR 7.5 *If an error by an official follows a fault by a competitor, the fault by the competitor may be expunged.*

GR 7.5 IN ACTION



- If a swimmer starts prior to the start signal being given and the starter recalls the race in error.
 - This is an official's error, the fault by the swimmer will be expunged because the race was recalled.



PARA-SWIMMING AND STARTING

PARA-SWIMMING OFFICIATING



- An official may work at a meet with Para swimmers in attendance
- The rules are exactly the same as able bodied; however, exceptions are allowed with some of the rules for the Para swimmers who are identified with their sport class (e.g., S8, SB7, SM8), due to a specific impairment. Their sport class is found between their first and last name in a heat sheet.
- The Referee shall provide additional instructions and protocol to be used

PARA-SWIMMING OFFICIATING



The most common exceptions for the Start have an element of common sense.

Swimmer with visual impairment (S/SB/SM 11-13) shall be permitted to orientate themselves prior to the Starter's command "Take your marks" (IPC 3.1.3.1)

- Para swimmers may start anywhere, regardless of their respective class. They may start beside the starting platforms (IPC 3.1.3.3), start using a sitting position on the starting platforms (IPC 3.1.3.4) or start in the water (IPC 3.1.3.5)
 - For a water start, the swimmer is required to have one hand in contact with the starting place until the starting signal is given (IPC 3.1.3.5)
 - Any swimmer starting in the water and who's unable to grip the starting place may be assisted by a Support Staff or a starting device (IPC 3.1.3.7) (Exception E)

PARA-SWIMMING OFFICIATING



- Para swimmers with a balance problem, i.e., standing stationary on their own, have a problem getting on the starting platform, may have an assistant to balance them on the starting platform (IPC 3.1.3.2) (Exception A)
 - Support staff shall not allow the swimmer unfair advantage by being held beyond the 90 degrees vertical position on the starting platform (IPC 3.1.3.2)
- Only classes S/SB/SM 1-3 can perform a feet start – feet held on the wall by a support staff (IPC 3.1.3.6)
- All para swimmers may have a towel (one layer only) on the starting platform (IPC 3.1.3.8)
- Support staff cannot give momentum to the swimmer at the start, (IPC 3.1.3.2, IPC 3.1.3.7)

PARA-SWIMMING OFFICIATING



- Any kind of strapping that limits unwanted movement is prohibited, such as kinesio tape (IPC 3.8.9).
- Swimmers cannot use orthosis and prosthesis during a race (IPC 3.8.9.1)
- For the backstroke start, when a swimmer is unable to hold both grips (e.g. one arm only), he can hold one grip (IPC 3.3.1.1) (Exception 1, Y)
- For backstroke start, when a swimmer is unable to hold either starting grip, he can hold the end of the pool (IPC 3.3.1.3) (Exception E [No E, must hold grips])
- Para swimmers may use the backstroke ledge for their start
- If there are para swimmers in the meet, the starter shall clear the pool prior to, and after the para swimmer's race as you don't know if the para swimmer may start in the water or may take more time to exit the pool. They may exit out the side

START FOR HEARING IMPAIRED SWIMMERS

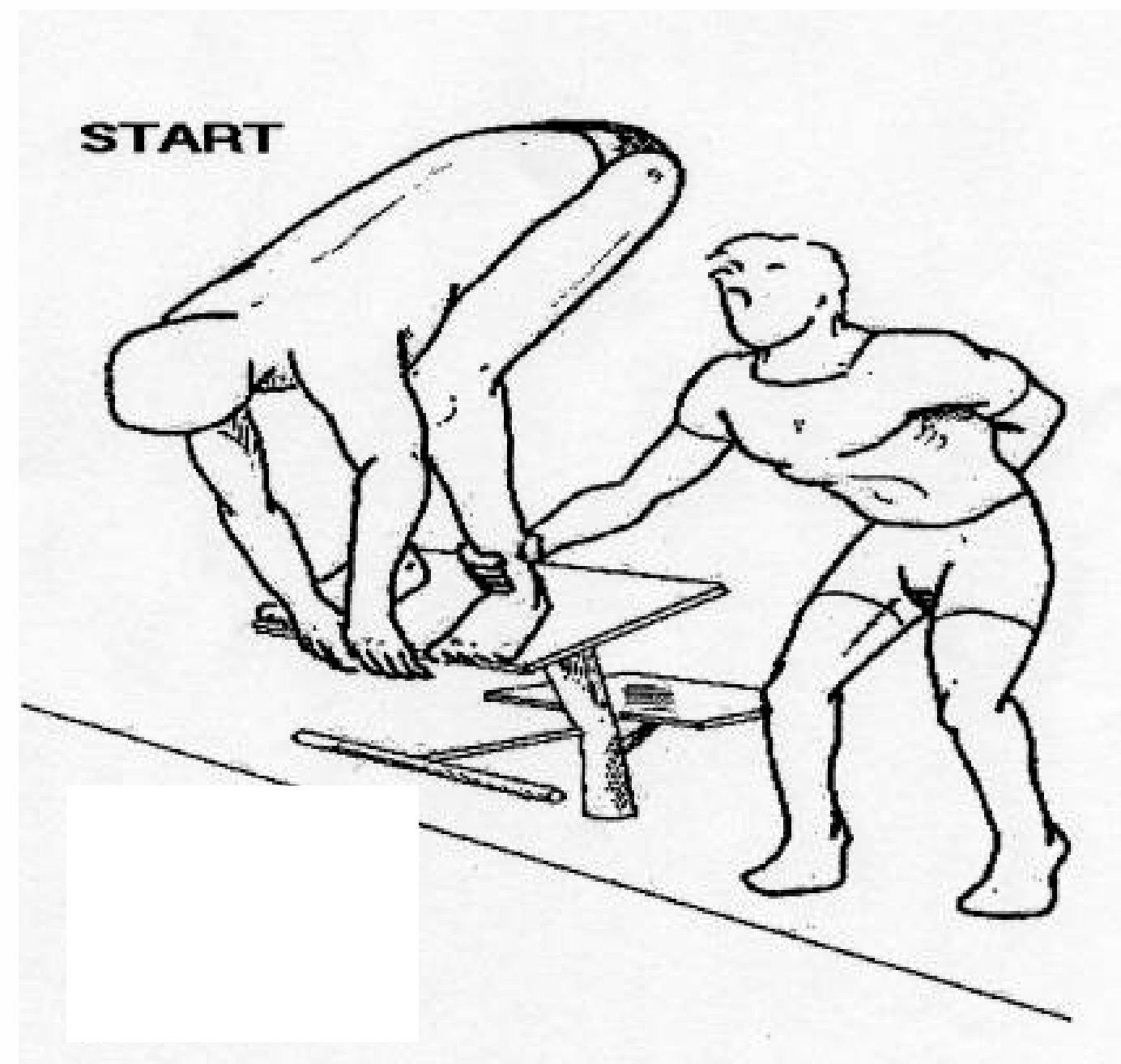


- Coaches who enter swimmers into a sanctioned meet are responsible for notifying and identifying these swimmers to the Meet Manager or the Referee and request the start adaptations, if needed.
- Hearing Impaired swimmers may have a support staff holding their ankle until the starting signal is given or may require a visual starting signal, i.e., Starter's arm signals and/or strobe light. (Exception A) (slide 49)
- The starter shall use the hand signals, if requested. (slide 50)
- When available, the strobe light shall be placed where the swimmer can see it, and the starter should stand where the deaf swimmer can see them.
- The Referee may reassign lanes within the swimmer's heat so that the arm signals by the Starter, or strobe light, can be more readily seen by the swimmer.

START FOR HEARING IMPAIRED SWIMMERS



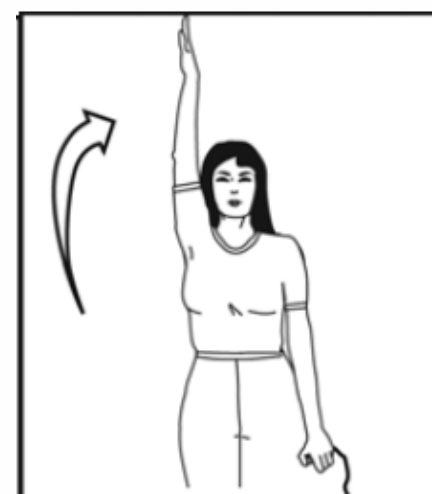
- A support staff can hold the ankle of the swimmer and release it at the Starting Signal
- Support staff cannot give momentum to the swimmer on the start.



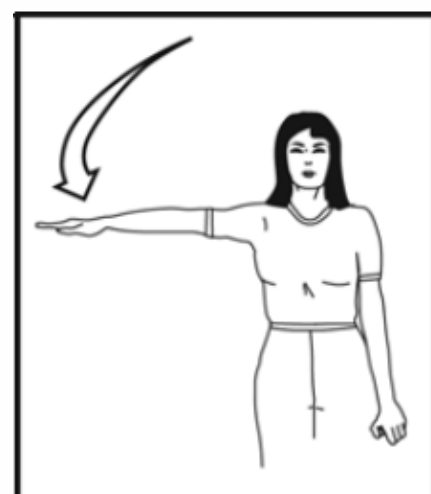
START FOR HEARING IMPAIRED SWIMMERS



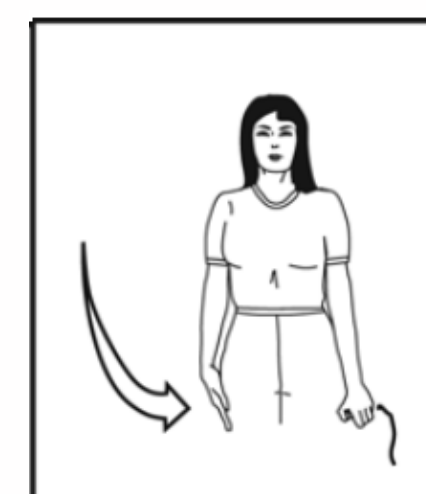
Hearing Impaired Swimmers may request a visual signal from the Starter



1. Arm overhead
(long whistle):
swimmer steps
onto starting block



2. Arm moves to
shoulder level:
Starter command
“Take your marks”



3. Arm moves
to side of body:
Starting signal
is given



KEYS TO SUCCESS

KEYS TO SUCCESS



- Continually observe the activity behind the starting platforms and in the pool
- Ensure the electronics are ready and the pool is quiet
- Once the referee turns the swimmers over to the Starter, the swimmers are under your control
- Give the command “Take your marks”
- When all swimmers are stationary give the starting signal
- If the start was unfair, RECALL THE RACE
- If a swimmer starts prior to the starting signal, but the signal is given, don’t recall the race; the disqualification shall take place at the end of the race

KEYS TO SUCCESS



- As soon as the starting signal is given, check the clock, normally if the clock didn't start, the race should be recalled. Then turn your attention to the pool and ensure all swimmers have surfaced
- Clear the pool, if requested by the Referee
 - Backstroke starts, para-swimmers, relays
- Maintain notes related to the starts on your heat sheet/program
 - No shows or empty lanes
 - The start time of each heat
 - Any Relaxes, Step downs or Delays
 - Any start disqualifications – referee and starter must have confirmed it
 - Sweeps (swimmer's finish order), if requested by the referee

KEYS TO SUCCESS



- Starter and Referee work as a team
- Fair start for all swimmers
- Commands
 - “Take your Marks”
 - A calm, clear, neutral tone, relaxed command
 - Think of it as a invitation; NOT an instruction
 - “Relax, step down please...” If Para-swimmers or Masters Swimmers then they should just be told to “relax”
 - “Swimmers clear the pool please”
- Observe the swimmers as you give the command
 - Watch for distractions, listen for noise

KEYS TO SUCCESS



- Consider the level and ability of the swimmers and adjust your expectation of “stationary”
- Timing is every thing, do not start the swimmers before they are stationary, do not hold them too long, or start them too quickly
- Adjust for Masters Swimmers
- Be aware of the needs and accommodations for Para Swimmers
- Practice - Practice - Practice

CONGRATULATIONS



You have now completed the Level II Starter Clinic.

Your next task is to obtain deck experience.

To be certified as a Starter you must complete two on deck evaluations.

The session referee must be informed prior to the session that you are requesting a deck evaluation. At the end of the session, the session referee shall sign your officials card if the evaluation was successful.



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