

# STARTER

14 May 2018

This year, the RSL has mandated the use of computer seeding. The Referee, Starter, Clerk of Course, and Stroke & Turn Judges will be provided with a heat sheet that details which swimmer is in each lane. Swimmers will not have cards for their individual events, they will be brought to the blocks by the Clerks in accordance with the heat sheet. Timers will have lane timer sheets on which to record swimmers' times for their individual events. Only relay teams will continue to use cards for their races.

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## 1. General

- a. Assure a fair start
- b. Conduct a timely meet
- c. Act as a relay take-off judge when assigned

## 2. Preparation

- a. Become familiar with the starting device and make sure that it is working and fully charged.
- b. Work with the referee – know how he wants to handle false starts and other duties.
- c. Know the order of events – number of heats – number of swimmers expected in each heat - when timers need to change ends – where Stroke & Turn Judges are going to stand on your side of the pool (you need to be sure they as well as coaches and swimmers do not block the timers from seeing the strobe).

## 3. Starting

- a. The starter will be supplied with an electric starting system. However an air horn or other approved starting device can be used. The starter shall take a position within 10 feet of the starting edge of the pool where the timers can see the strobe light of the starting system.
- b. On receiving clearance from the referee, the starter assumes full control of the swimmers until a fair start has been achieved. The objective is to get the swimmers on the blocks in a timely manner, relax the swimmers as much as possible and focus them on the race. To accomplish this, the swimmers need to know what to expect when they get to the blocks. The starter needs to follow the same procedure for every heat of every event. To relax the swimmers the starter must use a calm clear voice to announce the events and give the commands. The starter does NOT use voice inflexions or changes in volume to give the starting commands. If you think that you can not be heard, stand the swimmers and ask for quiet for the start.
- c. Starting sequence for forward starts:
  - (1) After the Referee blows 4 to 7 short whistles, the starter announces the EVENT NUMBER, HEAT NUMBER, BOYS/GIRLS, AGE, DISTANCE (Yards or Meters) AND STROKE. Wait for the Referee's long whistle.
  - (2) When the Referee is ready to proceed, he/she will blow a long whistle. The starter will then instruct the swimmers to 'STEP UP'. Wait for the referee to turn over control to the starter by holding out his arm.
  - (3) After the Referee holds out his arm, the starter tells the swimmers to 'TAKE YOUR MARK'.

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(4) After all the swimmers assume their starting positions, become stationary and after a short hesitation, the starter initiates the starting system.

(5) Swimmers may start from the blocks, on the deck or in the water. However when starting from a platform or the deck, they are required to have one foot at the front of the starting platform or the deck. When starting in the water, the swimmer must have a hand touching the wall above the water and conform to the starting rules for the stroke to be swum (e.g. forward for freestyle, breaststroke and butterfly and facing the wall for backstroke.)

#### d. Starting sequence for backward starts:

(1) After the Referee blows 4 to 7 short whistles, the starter announces the EVENT NUMBER, HEAT NUMBER, BOYS/GIRLS, AGE, DISTANCE (Yards or Meters) AND STROKE. Wait for the Referee's first (of two) long whistle.

(2) When the Referee is ready to proceed, he/she will blow the first of two long whistles. The starter will then instruct the swimmers to 'STEP IN.' Wait for the Referee's second long whistle.

(3) When the Referee is ready to proceed, he/she will blow the second of two long whistles. Standing in or on the gutter or curling the toes over the lip of the gutter is not permitted at any time before or after the start. Wait for the Referee to turn over control to the starter by holding out his arm.

(4) After the Referee holds out his arm, the starter tells the swimmers to 'TAKE YOUR MARK'.

(5) After all the swimmers assume their starting positions, become stationary and after a short hesitation, the starter initiates the starting system. Do not hold the swimmers in the start position too long. The delay between 'TAKE YOUR MARK' and before initiating the starting system should be half that of a forward.

(6) If after the swimmer assumes their starting position but fails to become stationary, very calmly and with a flat tone, say 'STAND' in a drawn out manner. Once the swimmers stand, say 'TAKE YOUR MARK' again. In most cases that will be all that is required to have the entire field ready to swim.

(7) When standing the swimmers up give them a reason such as:

- i. Quiet for the start
- ii. Respond immediately to the command
- iii. Respond immediately to the command and hold your position.

(8) If a swimmer is moving around on the blocks or adjusting their goggles, they are not ready. Be patient. The Starter's job is to ensure each swimmer gets a fair start.

(9) Do not allow the swimmers on the blocks to become stranded. If the referee has to deal with a situation after the STEP UP command that might take an extended time, tell the swimmers to 'RELAX'. Allow the swimmers to relax on the blocks or step down at their discretion.

#### 4. False Starts

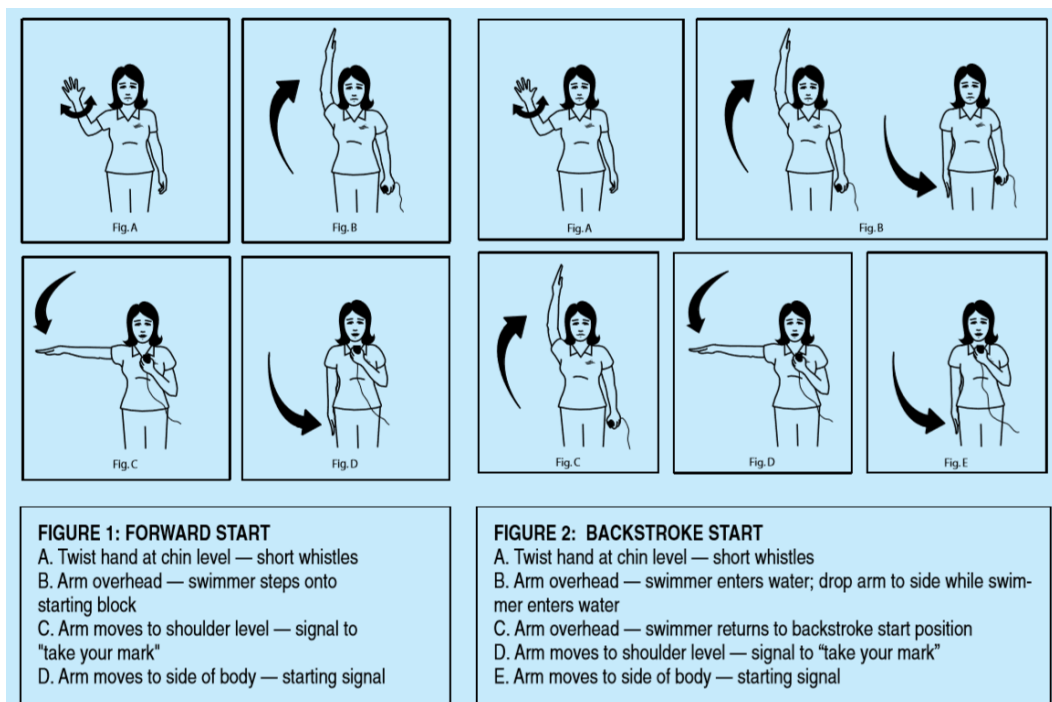
a. Any swimmer who enters the water or backstroker who leaves the starting area shall be charged with a false start, except that a swimmer who would otherwise be charged with a false start may be relieved of the charge if the false start was caused by the swimmer's reaction to the command (i.e. falls into the water on the command to STAND).

b. All swimmers leaving their marks before the starting signal is given shall be charged with a false start, except that a swimmer who has false started because of the action or

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- movement of another competitor may be relieved of the responsibility for the false start and a false start may be charged only to the offender.
- c. In backstroke or medley relay events a false start may be charged to any swimmer who fails to maintain his/her feet in a legal position after the first warning.
  - d. When the starting signal is given and one or more swimmers have obtained an unfair advantage, all swimmers shall be recalled at once by a second signal and/or a recall rope. The starter will also give the recall signal, when the referee observes a false start and he/she blows their whistle indicating an infraction.
  - e. A swimmer can be charged with a false start by the starter only if the referee or an officially designated assistant referee has observed the violation and confirms that the violation has occurred.
  - f. The starter shall indicate the swimmer or swimmers, if any, who are charged with a false start.
  - g. Any swimmer who is charged with committing or causing two false starts shall be disqualified and shall not be permitted to swim the event.
  - h. A swimmer shall not be disqualified for an illegal starting position at the start or charged with a false start if the race is permitted to proceed without recall.
5. Hearing Impaired Signals (USAS Rule 105.3.1)



Excerpt from USA Swimming 2015 Rulebook

6. Take-off Judge:
- a. The starter and referee will serve as relay take-off judges at the starting end of the pool.
  - b. The starter will first observe when the departing swimmer's feet leave the starting block that then look down to confirm the incoming swimmer has touched.

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All certified Starters will be listed on the “List of Trained Officials” spreadsheet. If a person is not listed at the time of the meet – then the Starter is not certified to officiate and conduct those duties. Additions, deletions, or modifications to this list should be addressed with the RSL Officials Committee Chair.

RSL Rules Section 10.5 defines the rules and responsibilities pertaining to the Starter.

RSL Rules Section 10.8 defines the rules and responsibilities of the Relay Take-off Judge, a responsibility often assigned to the Starter.

Given any discrepancy between the RSL Rules and this document, the RSL Rules shall take precedence.

The RSL Rules are available on the RSL’s official website, [www.RSLSwimming.com](http://www.RSLSwimming.com). Click the “Read More” button under Resources, then the “Read More” button under Training, then select “RSL Rules.” This training document is also available under “RSL Starter.”

Contact: Michael C. Sizemore  
RSL President/Officials Committee Chair  
[MCsizemore@gmail.com](mailto:MCsizemore@gmail.com)  
(540) 834-8120

1 **Referee:** At the commencement of each heat, the Referee shall signal to the swimmers by a series of short whistles to remove all clothing except for swimwear and be ready to swim. (Reference RSL Rule 10.4.2.1)

2 **Starter:** After the Referee's series of short whistles signaling the commencement of the heat, announce the EVENT NUMBER, HEAT NUMBER, BOYS/GIRLS, AGE, YARDAGE and STROKE. Wait for the Referee's long whistle. (Reference RSL Rule 10.5.4)

3 **Referee:** When the pool is clear and ready for competition with Stroke & Turn Judges in position, the Referee shall signal with a single, long whistle indicating that the swimmers should take and maintain their positions on the starting platform, the deck, or in the water. (Reference RSL Rule 10.4.2.2.1)

4 **Starter:** After the Referee's long whistle, direct the competitors by saying "STEP UP." (Reference RSL Rule 10.5.4.1.1)

5 **Starter:** Wait for the Referee to place the competitors under the Starter's control. (Reference RSL Rule 10.5.4.3)

6 **Referee:** When the swimmers and officials are ready, the Referee shall signal with an outstretched arm to the Starter that the swimmers are now under the Starter's control until the start has been achieved. (Reference RSL Rule 10.4.2.4)

7 **Referee:** The Referee shall keep the arm outstretched until the start has been achieved. (Reference RSL Rule 10.4.2.4.1)

8 **Referee:** The Referee shall retract the outstretched arm to abort the start. (Reference RSL Rule 10.4.2.4.2)

9 **Starter:** After the Referee signals via an outstretched arm that the swimmers are now under the Starter's control until a fair start has been achieved, perform the following: (Reference RSL Rule 10.5.5)

10 **Starter:** Direct the competitors by saying "TAKE YOUR MARK." (Reference RSL Rule 10.5.5.1)

11 **Starter:** Sufficient time should follow this command to enable all competitors to assume a starting position. (Reference RSL Rule 10.5.5.2)

12 **Starter:** All competitors must assume a stationary position prior to the use of the starting device. (Reference RSL Rule 10.5.5.3)

13 **Starter:** Activate the starting device. (Reference RSL Rule 10.5.5.4)

14 **Starter:** Stop immediately any time the Referee retracts his outstretched arm. (Reference RSL Rule 10.5.5.5)

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- 2 **Starter:** After the Referee's series of short whistles signaling the commencement of the heat, announce the EVENT NUMBER, HEAT NUMBER, BOYS/GIRLS, AGE, YARDAGE and STROKE. Wait for the Referee's long whistle. (Reference RSL Rule 10.5.4)
- 3 **Referee:** When the pool is clear and ready for competition with Stroke & Turn Judges in position, the Referee shall signal with the first of two long whistles indicating that the swimmers should step into the water. (Reference RSL Rule 10.4.2.3.1)
- 4 **Starter:** After the Referee's first long whistle, direct the competitors by saying "STEP IN." Wait for the Referee's second long whistle. (Reference RSL Rule 10.5.4.2.1)
- 5 **Referee:** When all swimmers have surfaced, the Referee shall signal with the second of two long whistles indicating that the swimmers should return to the wall and assume their starting positions. (Reference RSL Rule 10.4.2.3.2)
- 6 **Starter:** Wait for the Referee to place the competitors under the Starter's control. (Reference RSL Rule 10.5.4.3)
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- 8 **Referee:** The Referee shall keep the arm outstretched until the start has been achieved. (Reference RSL Rule 10.4.2.4.1)
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