

**In This Issue**

1. The Maxwell Excellence Award
2. What is a False Start?

**ONLINE TESTING**

All tests will be deactivated and taken offline on Friday April 13, 2012 by 5:00pm for the annual updating process. All tests will be reactivated on May 1, 2012 by no later than 5:00pm.

Please note: ANY TEST STARTED BUT NOT COMPLETED BY MAY 1, 2012 WILL BE VOIDED AND WILL BE DELETED.

**APPLY NOW**

Applications to officiate at the Summer USA Swimming U.S. Open Championships or Speedo Junior National Championships are now posted. Click [here](#) to apply.

Welcome to the new e-newsletter for USA Swimming Officials. The purpose of this newsletter is to provide a foundation that allows for direct on-going communication with each of you. We plan to have articles that cover the technical rules and interpretations, situations, application deadlines for upcoming meets, news from the officials committee, etc. If you have any feedback, comments, or suggestions for stories (or even want to submit an article), please e-mail us at [officials@usaswimming.org](mailto:officials@usaswimming.org).

Additionally, The Official's Committee Athlete Representatives created a Facebook page last fall. It's a great way for you to stay up to date and engage in our community. If you haven't signed up yet, we hope you will. Click [here](#) to sign up.

Look forward to hearing from you.

*Clark Hammond, National Officials Chair*

**CONGRATULATIONS TO MELISSA HELLERVIK-BING ON WINNING THE MAXWELL EXCELLENCE AWARD**

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Melissa Hellervik-Bing served as the official chair for Florida Swimming, where she supervised the training and certification of more than 350 officials. She also serves as a member of the national officials committee. Hellervik-Bing officiates at all levels and for several organizations, including the NCAA, NFHS and USMS. She is a designated FINA starter, but she's just as likely to work at a weekend developmental meet. At the national level, she served as the Head Starter at the 2010 ConocoPhillips National Championships and World Championship Team Trials and also as a starter at the Pan Pacific Championships. In 2011 she became the first woman ever to serve as a starter at the NCAA Men's Division 1 Championships. At the high school level, she has served for several years as the meet referee for the Florida State High School Athletic Association State Championships.

*Reprinted with Permission from Swimming World, March 2012*

**WHAT IS A FALSE START?**

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The rules state... "When all swimmers are stationary, the starter shall give the starting signal" (101.1.2.c) and "Any swimmer starting before the starting signal is given shall be disqualified if the Referee independently observes and confirms the Starter's observation"(101.1.3A).

So what constitutes a false start? These scenarios should help you paint the picture.

**FALSE START SCENARIO #1**

Swimmer leaves the set or stationary position prior to the starting signal. The starting signal is then given. The race proceeds and, assuming the Starter observed the early start and the Deck Referee independently observes and confirms the Starter's observation, the offending swimmer is disqualified at the conclusion of the race. Rule 101.1.3B applies. This is a false start.

**FALSE START SCENARIO #2**

Swimmer leaves the set or stationary position prior to the starting signal. The swimmer upon realizing the early starting motion attempts to catch

himself/herself. Starter says absolutely nothing, and the swimmer fails to halt the forward motion and goes into the pool. Rule 101.1.3A applies. This is a false start.

### **FALSE START SCENARIO #3**

Exactly the same facts as #2 above, but this time the Starter says “stand please” after the swimmer leaves the set or stationary position. The seven other swimmers stand or step down from the blocks. The offending swimmer struggles, but once again is unable to halt the forward motion and falls into the pool. Unlike scenario #2 above, here the starter said “stand please”, but that does not change the false start result. The rule is clear that the “stand” command is for the benefit of the other swimmers on the starting blocks. When the stand command is issued, the athletes have the option of standing or stepping off the blocks. The offending swimmer did neither. He fell into the pool just like the swimmer in scenario #2. Rule 101.1.3A applies. This is a false start.

### **FALSE START SCENARIO #4**

Exactly the same facts as scenarios #2 and #3 above. However, this time when the command “stand please” is issued, the offending swimmer struggles, but is able to stand or step off the blocks. Rule 101.1.3A applies. This is NOT a false start. Why? Because the swimmer remained on the blocks or deck like everyone else in the heat, and no starting signal ever sounded.

### **FALSE START SCENARIO #5**

Exactly the same facts as scenarios #2 and #3 above. However, when the Starter gives the “stand please” command a swimmer(s) other than the offending swimmer instantly bolts from the blocks and enters the water. Rule 101.1.3D applies. The swimmer(s) clearly started in reaction to the “stand” command. This is NOT a false start.

### **FALSE START SCENARIO #6**

The swimmer, upon hearing the command “take your mark” starts down to take a set or stationary position. The swimmer loses his/her balance before coming set and falls into the pool. Rule 101.1.2C applies. The swimmer should be given the opportunity to come to his/her set or stationary position prior to the start. A loss of balance prevented that, and clearly this swimmer never engaged in any starting action. This is NOT a false start.