

USA SWIMMING DECK REFEREE & STARTERS GUIDELINES

STARTER:

1. Takes deck position which affords an optimal view of the starting field.
2. Assists in checking starting field for correct number of athletes in proper lanes.
3. Raises microphone upon hearing long whistle and awaits referee's extended arm.
4. When the starting field is ready says: "Take Your Mark" in a calm, invitational voice.
5. Completes the start only after all swimmers have assumed an observable stationary position.
6. Notes all empty lanes and time of start on starter's record.
7. Takes the finish order on starter's record (if another starter is not available).

DECK REFEREE:

1. Signals "prepare to swim" with a series of short whistles.
2. Checks starting field for correct number of swimmers in proper lanes.
3. Sounds long whistle indicating swimmers should take a position on the blocks, deck, or in the pool.
- A second long whistle is sounded on backstroke starts to request swimmers move to the wall and prepare for the start. Given when the last head 'pops up' so all athletes can hear it.
4. When issues, if any, have been resolved, turns control of the swimmers over to the starter with an extended arm.
5. Carefully observes the start, noting the lane(s) of any swimmers who started before the starting signal on the deck referee's record, and then focuses attention on the athletes during their swim.

FALSE START PROCEDURE:

1. If the starter observes that a swimmer started immediately before the starting signal, the race shall continue without recall, and the lane(s) of the offending athlete(s) noted, in writing.
2. The starter should advise the deck referee of a "possible false start".
3. If the deck referee agrees that there was a false start, the starter should show the noted lane number(s) to the deck referee without further discussion.
4. When there is agreement on the noted lane(s) by the deck referee and the starter, the deck referee shall confirm the false start and implement the meet protocol for handling disqualifications.
5. If a swimmer starts and the starter signal is not given, the starter should release the rest of the field by saying "please stand", note the lane that started, and follow 2, 3 and 4 above.

REMEMBER:

A. NEVER:

- Force a start by commencing a starting sequence before the swimmers are ready.
- Keep swimmers on the blocks or in the water for an extended time prior to start.
- Congregate in the starting area when not working an event.

B. ALWAYS:

- Practice PATIENCE, PATIENCE, PATIENCE.
- Use the word PLEASE when giving any command or instruction other than "Take your mark".
- Be alert for requests from the deck referee [especially notice to recall a heat]
- Be conscious of any outside interference that might affect the start.
- As the first starter and deck referee of the session, check starting blocks and starting system operation and volume.
- Be ready to step in for any official when requested.