

Five Points for a Successful Start

- 1) Let the field settle, do not rush your start! A Referee may be in a hurry but as a Starter, you should never be in a hurry. Remember, before you get to the point of saying "Take Your Mark", you want to be confident all the swimmers are ready to swim.
- 2) While waiting for all swimmers to settle, when is it time to "Stand The Field"?
 - If you lose the field (e.g. swimmers who were set start twitching) or
 - When one or more swimmers take an excessively long time to set (won't assume a motionless starting position) or
 - When you have swimmers "Leave Their Mark" (whether they catch themselves or not) or
 - You do not feel right about the situation.

Remember that swimmers are not required to stand up when given a stand command. If you are not certain you were heard try a second "Stand Please" to the field but do not force a swimmer to stand.

If for any reason you issue a second "Stand" command, the Starter should request that all swimmers step off the blocks. Let the field take a breath, then the Starter should request that the swimmers "Step Up" and resume at point 1.

- 3) Give the starting signal as soon you determine the whole field (6, 8, 10 lanes) is set. Not a second before and not a second after! However a word of caution, be careful of starting the instant the last swimmer sets -- particularly if one swimmer is taking longer than most.
- 4) Sound the recall signal if an unfair start has occurred and is not chargeable to one or more of the swimmers. Reasons for this recall may be:
 - An extraneous light flash or noise, or
 - A starting system gives an unexpected type of start signal (or double beep) that might or did confuse the field, or
 - Observing that some swimmers did not hear the start signal based upon their response to the start, or
 - Interference by timers, or
 - Interference by a swimmer from the previous or next heat, or
 - You started the heat too early (before all swimmers were set).
- 5) Once the heat is off successfully (no false start or recall possibility):
 - You should turn your attention to the swimmers behind the blocks getting ready for the next heat, not watch the race in the water, with the exception of the distance events.
 - You should look for such things as to whether anybody is having last minute equipment problems, any confusion about who should be where, whether all the expected lanes are reporting promptly, etc.

If there is clearly a problem, you should quietly tell the Referee to possibly delay the short chirps or the long whistle until the issue is resolved. Swimmers should not be called to the blocks if there is a real or potential problem.