



Florida Swimming

STARTER

Clinic Packet





STARTER APPRENTICE

BEFORE STARTING APPRENTICESHIP

1. Minimum age of eighteen (18)
2. Completion of Starter clinic taught by a CCI for this position prior to beginning the apprenticeship.
3. Completion of two tests with a minimum score of 80%.
 - **STARTER CERTIFICATION**
 - **TIMING JUDGE CERTIFICATION**

SUCCESSFUL APPRENTICESHIP

4. Individual must have completed a minimum of twelve (12) combined sessions worked as a certified Stroke and Turn Judge or Chief Judge at a minimum of three (3) different meets.
5. Completion of Apprenticeship
 - A. Completion of a **minimum** of twenty (20) hours apprentice time on deck
 - B. Mentored/instructed by three (3) or more different certified Starters
 - C. Completed at a minimum of three (3) different meets & at least five (5) sessions.
6. Completion of the Starter Review with the final Instructor
7. Approval of the Meet Referee of the final meet apprenticed by the official.
8. Submit the completed apprentice paperwork to the Officials Area Representative for final approval.

STARTING PROCEDURES & TIPS

1. The rules for starting are not difficult, but the actions of a Starter help establish the tempo and tone of a meet. The Starter is responsible to give the swimmers a fair start. The Referee will determine the pacing and any modifications of the starting procedures.
2. Use a calm, conversational voice. The Starter's voice needs to be clear and not hurried. You need to make sure all swimmers can hear the Starter's commands, yet not shout. Let the equipment amplify the Starter's voice
3. So as to not interfere with the starting procedure, starters do not use a radio headset.

FLORIDA SWIMMING **STARTER GUIDELINES**

PRE-MEET DUTIES

1. If possible, contact the Meet Referee prior to the date of the meet to better plan training and choose the best mentor available.
2. Arrive at the pool at least 15 minutes prior to the officials' meetings.
3. Report to the Meet Referee for specific assignment. Starter Apprentices will be advised of any meet information necessary to work with the referee.
4. Pacing of heats is the responsibility of the referee and the Starter's will be apprised of how it should flow.
5. Test the starting equipment used to make sure the device is operating and the sound system is adequate for the Starter's voice level.
6. As the assigned Starter, when advised by the Meet Referee, work with the Head Timer to give the Lane Timers instructions, keeping in mind most Timers do not time at meets regularly and need to have aspects of their role explained by the Starter.
7. A stopwatch check should be done so that Timers will be familiar with the equipment being used for timing.
8. The Starter should determine the desired position within 10 feet of the starting end of the pool, and that Timers can see the starting device.

OUTLINE

The following is a general outline of the starting procedure process. A sequence of events for all starting procedures is set by these procedures, and will help determine the interaction of the Starter with the Referee you are working with.

REFEREE: *“At the commencement of each heat, the Referee shall signal to the swimmers by a short series of whistles to remove all clothing except for swimwear” (At least 4 whistles)*

ANNOUNCER: The Announcer announces the event and/or heat. If directed to do so by the Referee, the Starter may act in the place of the Announcer.

REFEREE: *Indicates via “a long whistle that the swimmers should take and maintain their positions on the starting platform.”*

Note: In backstroke and medley relay events, at the Referee’s first long whistle the swimmers shall immediately enter the water and at the second-long whistle shall return without undue delay to the starting position.

REFEREE: *When the swimmers and officials are ready, the Referee shall signal with an outstretched arm to the starter that the swimmers are under the Starter’s control.*

Note: At that point the “the swimmers are under the Starter’s control”. Make sure the swimmers can hear the Starter’s instructions.

Note: At this point a swimmer not at the block may be considered to be a “no show” and the appropriate penalty, if any, may be assessed. When appropriate, an alternate may be called. Although a swimmer can be disqualified for “delaying the meet” for not immediately stepping to the block – if the swimmer is not at the block then he/she is considered a ‘no show’. Keep in mind that there cannot be a DQ and a ‘no show’ together. The swimmer is either disqualified for delay of meet and no alternate may be called, or is listed as a ‘no show’ with the possibility of an alternate.

STARTER: When the heat is ready give the command “take your mark” – “the swimmers shall immediately assume their starting position, with at least one foot at the front of the block”. “When all swimmers are stationary, the starter shall give the starting signal.”

Note: Waiting a few seconds for the swimmers to ‘settled down’, i.e. adjusting goggles, etc., before the command “take your mark” will often create a better start. Conversely, waiting too long is not fair to the other swimmers. The Starter’s only job at this point is to give the swimmers a fair start.

STARTER “When a swimmer does not respond promptly to the command “take your mark”, the starter shall immediately release all swimmers with the instruction to “Stand Up, Please”, upon which the swimmers may stand up or step off the blocks. Once the swimmers are refocused on the start, the starter may begin the starting process again by delivering the “Take Your Mark” instruction.

***REFEREE:** If at any time before the start, the Referee withdraws his outstretched arm, the starter no longer has control of the swimmers, and would not proceed with the start.*

FALSE STARTS

1. All meets in USA Swimming use the “no recall” start. The first start generally is the swimmer’s best effort. Therefore, swimmers should not be penalized for a good start by having a race recalled due to someone else false starting. Under the “no recall” starting procedure, the penalty for a false start is imposed on the offender after completion of the swim. This starting procedure emphasizes the swimmer’s responsibility to concentrate on the start and the race and not be affected by actions of the other swimmers on the blocks. Also note that, under this procedure, informing the athletes about a disqualification for a false start after the event is consistent with all other disqualifications under the swimming rules.
2. “Any swimmer starting before the starting signal is given shall be disqualified if the Referee...confirms the Starter’s observation that a violation occurred. Swimmers remaining on the starting blocks shall be relieved from their starting positions with the ‘stand up’ command and may step off the blocks. The starter shall restart the race upon signal by the Referee.”
3. “If the starting signal is sounded before the disqualification is declared, the race shall continue without recall and the swimmer or swimmers who have false started shall be disqualified by the Starter with the concurrence of the Referee...upon completion of the race.”

Note: Using the “Silent Ballot, Dual Confirmation” system for False Starts, dictates that the Starter and Referee individually mark their heat sheet as to the lane observed for the false start. Next, the Starter, after allowing the Referee sufficient time to mark his/her heat sheet, initiates the process by informing the Referee that a false start was observed. The Starter shall present the Starter sheet without discussion, with the offending lane(s) marked, to the Referee. If the Referee also observed a false start in the same lane, and so marked his/her heat sheet, the swimmer may be disqualified. The swimmer is informed at the end of the race.

4. "If the recall signal is activated inadvertently, no swimmer shall be charged with a false start and the Starter shall restart the race upon signal by the Referee."
5. The Starter or Referee may recall a heat for unusual circumstances, such as a lane line break, sudden noise interfering with the start signal, or anything that may be judged to impair a fair start or fair conduct of the race.
6. "With the exception of relays, in events of 500 yards or longer, the Starter or a designee shall sound a warning signal over the water at the finish end of the lane of the lead swimmer when that swimmer has 2 lengths plus 5 yards/meters to swim."

STANDARD COMMANDS

<u>Command</u>	<u>Use</u>
<i>Take your mark</i>	<i>Prepare swimmers for start</i>
<i>Stand up, Please</i>	<i>Release swimmers from mark</i>
<i>Place your feet</i>	<i>Backstroke swimmer to set their feet</i>

OPTIONAL COMMANDS

<u>Command</u>	<u>Use</u>
<i>Relax</i>	<i>Swimmers may leave block or wall</i>
<i>Announce the event</i>	<i>Supplement Announcer</i>
<i>Swimmer in lane # is going for an initial distance</i>	<i>Advise swimmers in the heat</i>

OTHER

1. Note any empty lanes, scratches, and advise referee if not already noted.
2. After the start, observe the field to confirm a fair start, and that nothing interfered.
3. At the finish, always note the order of finish (OOF), referred to as 'across the boards', in case of an Automatic timing equipment breakdown.
4. Do not request swimmers to clear the pool unless requested by the referee, and do not assume any other duties unless asked to by the referee.
5. On occasion you may be asked to "double up" as a Stroke & Turn Judge or as a relay take off judge.
6. Finally, if any part of this clinic raised questions ask questions for future understanding. Always feel free to ask questions of the Referee or clinic instructor.
7. During all races that are over 16 lengths of the pool, use an appropriate form to track the order of swimmers for each lap to the finish.

	Event:						
Lap #	Yards	Heat #					
2	50						
4	100						
6	150						
8	200						
10	250						
12	300						
14	350						
16	400						
Bell Lap	450						
20	500						
22	550						
24	600						
26	650						
28	700						
30	750						
32	800						
34	850						
36	900						
Bell Lap	950						
40	1000						
42	1050						
44	1100						
46	1150						
48	1200						
50	1250						
52	1300						
54	1350						
56	1400						
Bell Lap	1450						
60	1500						
62	1550						
Bell Lap	1600						
66	1650						

	Event:					
Lap #	Meters	Heat #				
2	100					
4	200					
6	300					
8	400					
10	500					
12	600					
Bell Lap	700					
16	800					
18	900					
20	1000					
22	1100					
24	1200					
26	1300					
Bell Lap	1400					
30	1500					

	Event:					
Lap #	Meters	Heat #				
2	100					
4	200					
6	300					
8	400					
10	500					
12	600					
Bell Lap	700					
16	800					
18	900					
20	1000					
22	1100					
24	1200					
26	1300					
Bell Lap	1400					
30	1500					

The “Professional” Starter - or - It’s more than three short words!

The “Professional” Starter should:

1. **Know the Rules** and the protocols, procedures and philosophies for being a successful starter
2. **Be on time for each session and officials’ briefings, and dress appropriately in a professional manner**
3. **Be flexible and adaptable to all procedures made by a Meet Referee or Head Starter that may differ from the suggested guidelines offered in this document**
4. **Confirm assignments, rotations and invigilating schedule with the Head Starter:**
 - Be aware how heats will run – fly-overs, cleared pool, etc.
 - Be aware of any event flighting or events or heats alternating by gender that affect starting rotations Confirm the meet procedures for Starters that may include additional responsibilities, including:
 - timer instruction: be aware of timing system (number of buttons and watches or cameras) and provide instruction to timers at the designated time established by meet director
 - a rotation involving stroke or turn judging, taking order-of-finish, distance counting, ringing the bell for the lead swimmer in a distance heat, relay take-off judging or head timer responsibilities
 - Be aware of swimmers with disabilities who may require special starting accommodations. *Know the rules and procedures*
5. **Confirm meet protocol and procedures for the Starter-Deck Referee (DR) teams and with the individual Deck Referees with whom you are teamed:**
 - Be aware when jurisdiction will be turned over to Starter, indicated by Deck Referee’s out-stretched arm
 - Confirm how Starter will be notified of “No Shows” and “Declared False Starts” prior to event start
 - Confirm how to make Deck Referees aware of next-up swimmers behind the blocks affected by suit malfunctions, cap or goggle issues or unexpected empty lanes
6. **Pre-Meet and Pre-Session:**
 - Become familiar with the starting system by checking the equipment during the session warm-up period
 - There are a variety of microphones in use. Practice with the mike during warm-ups to feel comfortable with the device
 - Some microphones display a green light when the timing system is ready for the next start. When outdoors, confirm you can clearly see the green light and be prepared to notify the DR when the green light has not been displayed
 - Check your voice level in the microphone with another Starter monitoring the audio level in all lane speakers
 - Perform a test start to get a feel for how sensitive the starting button may be
 - Find your optimum deck positions for both forward and back starts so that all swimmers can be clearly and individually viewed
 - Find out where the Deck Referee will stand adjacent to your position. Ask him or her to extend their arm so that it can be seen in your peripheral vision, without blocking your view of the swimmers. Make sure you and the DR are standing close enough that you can converse quietly. It may be about swimmer issues, green lights, step down requests, etc.
 - Be prepared with a master starter heat sheet if you have been asked to use one for marking all false starts, no shows, declared false starts, and any other notes. Also acquire an OOF (Order Of Finish) heat sheet, if the meet’s procedures call for the off-duty starter to take OOF
7. **During the Start:**
 - Assume your deck position to start the upcoming heat prior to the finish of the current heat. In some cases, the previous event’s results are scrolled on the scoreboard, allowing for a bit more time to take position
 - Show that you are relaxed and confident in your starting ability with your body language
 - On the long whistle when the swimmers are stepping up (second long whistle for the back start), show that you are prepared for starting by having the microphone in a “ready” position
 - Make sure the microphone can’t fall in the water or someone doesn’t trip over the cord and unplug it from the starting unit either by holding the cord with your free hand or stepping on the cord
 - When all swimmers have stepped on the blocks the Deck Referee will turn over jurisdiction to the Starter
 - BE PATIENT when allowing all swimmers to assume the position on the blocks they want to use for the start. Watch to see their feet are in the final chosen position. The swimmers will then show you when they’re ready to hear the “Take Your Mark” instruction
 - If “track style” starting platforms are used, swimmers may require a bit more time to assume their position
 - If “backstroke ledges” are used, ensure each swimmer’s toes are in direct contact with the end wall or timing pad prior to the start, but curled over the top of the pad, gutter or end wall
 - Deliver the “Take Your Mark” instruction in a calm, conversational tone that’s loud enough for the swimmers to hear over any possible crowd noise, but not so loud the instruction sounds like a shouted command. Use a cadence that is inviting with a slight falling in pitch

The “Professional” Starter - or - It’s more than three short words!

- SWIMMERS START THE HEATS – NOT THE STARTER!** BE PATIENT - when allowing the swimmers to show you they are ready for the starting signal
- When that “sweet spot” moment is achieved and the swimmers are stationary, push the starting button
- After the start keep the microphone in a “ready” position in case the heat needs to be recalled
- Watch the swimmers until all heads have surfaced. Then replace the microphone to a position where it can’t be bumped and the cord isn’t in a traffic zone that could cause tripping
- Step out of the starting area to allow more room for Deck Referee, Chief Judge and Stroke Judge
 - Avoid conversing with the Deck Referee unless it involves a possible false start or another timely matter
- Using the Starter’s heat sheet, confirm the next heat’s swimmers are reporting to the assigned lanes. Note on the heat sheet any “no shows”, “declared false starts”, false starts or other matters for which there should be a record Begin preparations to start the next heat

8. Use the False Start Protocol:

Remember the definition of a false start: *Any swimmer **starting** before the starting signal is given shall be disqualified if the Referee independently observes and confirms the Starter’s observation that a false start occurred.*

- After the start and the microphone is replaced, calmly mark the Starter heat sheet to indicate which heat and lane the false start was observed. Double-check that mark for accuracy of heat and lane
 - Any mark can be used as long as the Deck Referee can tell a particular heat and lane has been indicated, whether it’s circling the lane number, underlining the lane number and name, placing a visible dot next to the lane, etc.
- Show the marked heat sheet to the Deck Referee and implement the procedure discussed prior to the start of the meet. It may include pointing out the heat and lane, as well as verbally indicating a false start was observed. The Deck Referee should also show the Starter his/her marked heat sheet as confirmation of a false start. Under no circumstance should a false start confirmation be based solely on a discussion
- When a Chief Judge is available, they will fill out the disqualification form and hand it to the Starter for signature. Double check the event, heat, lane and, possibly the name and team, have been correctly noted and the false start box was checked before signing and handing the form back to the Chief Judge
- When a Chief Judge is not available, the Starter completes and signs the disqualification form before handing it to the Referee for final sign-off
- If necessary, note any peculiarities to the false start on the heat sheet for later reference; possibly when advising a coach or swimmer of the observed action

9. When Using Other Commands;

- To address the athletes with the microphone, refer to the swimmers as “Ladies” and “Gentlemen”
- Remember to use “Please” and “Thank you”
- If it is necessary to stand the field after the TYM instruction, for both forward and backward starts, say, “Stand *please*”
- If the Deck Referee asks for the swimmers to step off the blocks, say, “Ladies (Gentlemen), step down please”
- If the swimmers are taking a prolonged amount of time to leave the pool after their swim (before or after the next start) say, “Thank you Ladies/Gentlemen.” If more instruction is needed, say, “Ladies/Gentlemen, please clear the pool”
- Use of the “Relax please Ladies/Gentlemen” instruction means it will be a prolonged period before the starting sequence will begin. The “Relax” instruction should not be used in place of a “Stand Please” instruction for backstroke starts
- If a swimmer’s toes are curled over the top of the pad prior to the start of the backstroke, address the swimmer by saying, “Lane 7, toes please”

Tips and Tricks

- Don’t hesitate to use the recall option if you feel an external noise (ex. coach’s whistle) or motion (activity around the starting blocks) has interfered with a swimmer’s ability to achieve a fair start
- All officials make mistakes. Don’t allow an inadvertent mistake to inhibit your performance. When mistakes occur, intervene, if possible. Take responsibility for your mistakes, learn from them, forgive yourself, and move on
- The Starter displays confidence (and not over-confidence) in his/her ability to start well anywhere, anytime, anyplace
- It is not unusual for Starters at high level meets to feel a certain level of anxiety or nervousness. While a certain amount of nervousness has been shown to enhance performance, public displays of anxiety can interfere with the ability to act (addressing swimmers on the microphone, asking heats to stand please, etc.) and may generate increased anxiety in others on the deck, including the swimmers. Championship starters have learned to use their anxiety to aide deck performance
- BE CONFIDENT AND RELAXED. There are (too) many opinions about starting, even at the highest levels. The Championship Starter has learned when to listen to opinions, suggestions and feedback, and when to ignore them
- Work as a teammate with the Deck Referees and Chief Judges. Confirm the Referee has her/his whistle and the Chief Judge has a pen

TIMERS' BRIEFING

Watch and button times are frequently used to establish or confirm official times because electronic timing equipment frequently malfunctions and/or swimmers sometimes do not trigger touch pads. Your help is very important and appreciated. **Thank You!**

HEAD LANE TIMER: (One timer per lane is the designated head lane timer)

- A. Check the full name for correct swimmer of each race. Also check names on relay cards and those swimmers are listed in the order they will swim. Notify the referee of any deviations from the heat sheet.
- B. Record all watch times on the provided heat sheet and on relay cards
- C. 1. Check the box "**Soft Touch**" on the lane timer's sheet; if so equipped.
2. Otherwise, notify the Chief Timer if a swimmer delays touching or misses the touch pad.
- D. Write your name and lane number on your heat sheet and return it to the Chief Timer with your watch, writing implement, & clipboard, at the completion of the session.

ALL LANE TIMERS:

1. Sit in timer's chair for the start. Keep all swimmers, except the starting swimmer, behind your chairs until after the start (including relay team members). This helps maintain quiet with no movement for the start. After the start allow only the swimmer in the next heat in front of you. This is to help keep the area clear for the timers and officials.
2. Start watch on strobe light flash (start watch at the sound of the horn if the strobe is not visible).
3. Check watch after each start to make sure the watch is functioning.
4. If watch malfunctions raise a hand or otherwise get the attention of the Chief Timer. They will replace your watch with another started for the race.
5. Count the lengths swum in each race so you know when the race will be finishing. (Record scoreboard or watch splits, if requested.)
6. At the finish, STAND directly at the finish end of your lane to get a full view of the swimmer and end wall.
7. At the finish, push the electronic timing button and stop the watch immediately (do not anticipate) when any part of the swimmer touches any part of the pad or wall. Using your index finger to push your finish button produces the most accurate backup results.
8. Avoid placing watches, buttons, pencils, and clipboards on the steps or blocks, and keep the cables from being in the way of swimmers.
9. Return to chair to record watch time. If you suspect that a watch time or a button time is not accurate, please note that on your heat sheet.
10. Please ask the swimmer to clear the pool and move behind the starting block before you respond to a request for times. This helps the next swimmer prepare for his/her race.
11. Clear watch after time is recorded and checked.
12. Notify the Chief Timer if a break is needed.

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!



FLORIDA SWIMMING
OFFICIALS CERTIFICATION APPLICATION
STARTER APPRENTICE LOG



APPRENTICE PROCEDURE

1. On the day of the meet - Report to the Meet Referee.
 - (A) Present your Officials Certification Application form.
 - (B) You will be assigned to a mentor for that session.
2. While performing their own duties, your mentor will:
 - (A) Guide you on proper position and procedures.
 - (B) Explain the pacing for that meet along with starting procedures.
 - (C) Ask you to observe the instructions given to all timers.
 - (D) Mentor & Meet Referee are to sign your form upon finish of each session.

When all requirements are completed, including Mentor part on back of log & FINAL REVIEWS on this page, you are to send a copy of this form to your Area Representative (*keep a copy*).

CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR STARTER

1. Attend a clinic (*before 1st session*) conducted by a Certified Clinic Instructor, approved by the Area Officials Rep.
2. Successfully pass the USA-S online examinations (*before 2nd session*)
 - A. Certification - Starter
 - and B. Certification - Timing Judge
3. Apprentice on deck, under the direct supervision of a Certified Starter, for a minimum of 20 hours; with at least 3 different Starters, at a minimum of 3 different meets; 5 sessions or more. Have your Instructor and Referee sign to verify the hours.
5. Apprentice Starters may not apprentice at LSC Championships.
6. The Meet Referee, based on their judgment, is to complete and sign the recommendation given below.
7. When requirements above are met, and form completed, send it to the Area Officials Rep. for final approval.
8. FL-S and Officials Chairman notified and deck pass updated.

FINAL MENTOR REVIEW

MENTOR FINAL REVIEW (Starter)	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	GOOD	EXCELLENT
1. Knows starting procedure in meet management?			
2. Alert in observing swimmer's readiness to compete?			
3. Has knowledge of proper commands and uses them?			
4. Has voice control and is understandable?			
5. Understands role of working with deck referee?			
6. Knows what a false-start is and proper procedure?			
7. Conducted Timer's Briefing effectively?			
8. Knows what a false-start is and proper procedure?			

(Last Starter Mentor) Signed _____ Date _____

Mentor - Printed name _____

MEET REFEREE REVIEW

1. Five questions were asked on starting commands & rules - correct answers were given 5-4-3-2-1- times (*circle one*).
2. It is my opinion that this person apprentice 1-2-3 (*circle one*) more sessions Yes _____ No _____
3. It is my opinion that this person is ready for certification as a starter. Yes _____ No _____

(Meet Referee) Signed _____ Date _____

MR - Printed name _____



STARTER APPRENTICE LOG

Please make a few notes of the apprentice's experiences and the need for any specific need for training.

Mentor Initials	
Date	
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