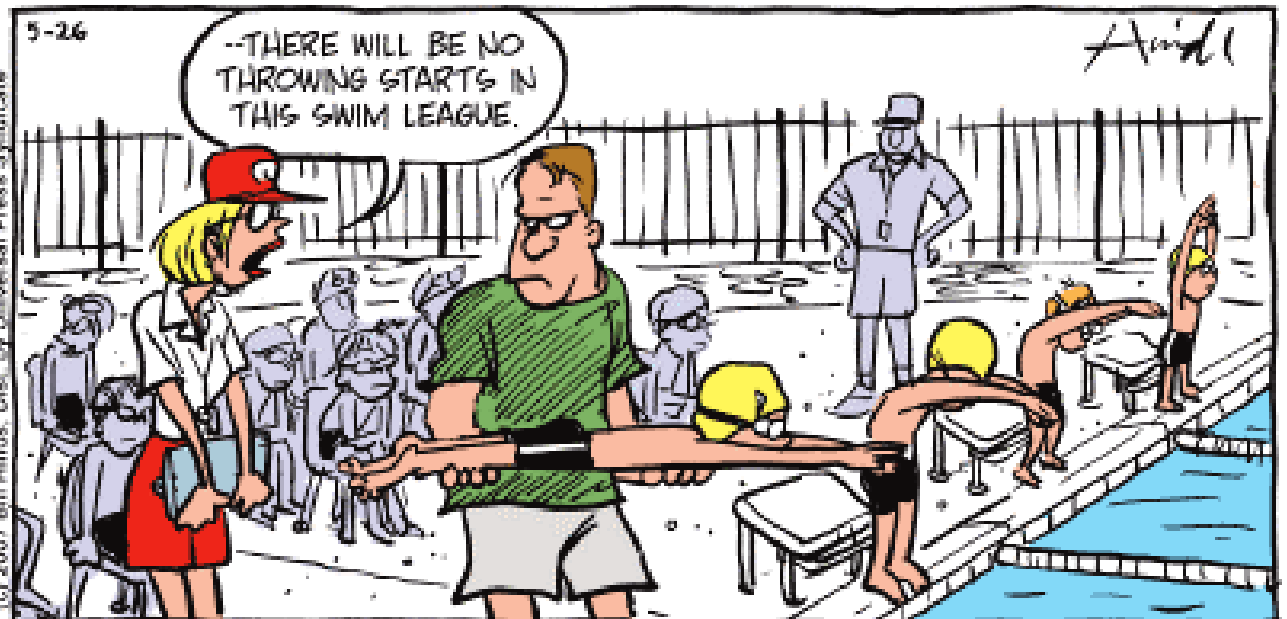


STARTER CLINIC



November 2015

Outline

Role of the Starter
Before the Meet Starts
The Start
Good Habits
After the Meet
Situations & Discussion
Questionnaire

Practice

- Many people are initially nervous about starting.
 - It is recommended that the new starter begin at a club time trial and other low pressure meets.
 - Starters are encouraged to try higher level meets as their confidence and enjoyment of the experience increases.

Practice, Practice, Practice.

Position on Deck

SW 2.3.4 When starting an event, the starter shall stand on the side of the pool within approximately five meters of the starting edge of the pool where the timekeepers can see and/or hear the starting signal and the swimmers can hear the signal.

Starter's Role

- The starter position is critical in the running of a successful meet.
- The central point of the starter's role is to ensure a fair start for all swimmers. (**SW 2.3.3**).
- The Starter and the Referee must work as a team to ensure fair and consistent starts throughout the session.

Performance

To exercise your function as a Starter you :

- must have a good working knowledge of the rules.
- must be **consistent** and exercise good judgment.
- must earn the confidence of the referee and the swimmers.
- must respect the swimmers and enjoy the sport.

Performance

SW 2.1.6

A disqualification for starting before signal must be observed and confirmed by both the starter and the referee.

SW 2.3.3

The starter shall have power to decide whether the start is fair, subject only to the decision of the Referee.

Before the Meet Starts

- Re-read the rules (***SW 2.3: Starter*** and ***SW 4: The Start***) and check for any new or meet-specific changes.
- Find out the type of starting equipment to be used.

On the day of the meet:

Arrive early – at least one hour before the start.

- Check the starting equipment and become familiar with the pool layout.
- Have the electronics been set up and operational?
- **TEST** all equipment.
- Are all loudspeakers, horns, and strobe lights working?
- Set and test the volume levels.
- Confirm with Meet Manager effective back-up starting mechanism.

Before the Meet

- Are any races starting at the turn end of the pool?
 - If so, the starting equipment should be moved by the electronics people and tested.
- Or is there equipment set up at both ends?
- Check the Starter's Platform.
 - Is it in the correct position / location (5 meters)?
 - Adjust to suit your location.

Briefing with the Referee

- The meet shall run under FINA and IPC start rules.
- Check meet package, for type of meet:
 - Age Group, Masters, Swimmers with a Disability (PARA).
- Be aware of duties the Referee may ask you to perform besides Starter (i.e. meet timeline, sweeps, lap counting, turn judge).
- Procedure to handle problems or movement of equipment.
- Meet Flow: Discuss any time constraints and solutions.
- Discuss the starting protocol. (**SW 2.1.5**).

SW 2.1.5

At the commencement of each event;

- the referee shall signal to the swimmers by a series of short whistles to prepare for the race,
- followed by a long whistle indicating they shall take their position on the starting platform (or the backstroke swimming and medley relays to immediately enter the water).
 - A second long whistle shall bring the backstroke and medley relay swimmer immediately to the starting position.

SW 2.1.5 – con't

- When the swimmers and officials are prepared for the start,
- the referee shall gesture to the starter with stretched out arm, indicating the swimmers are under the starter's control.
- The stretched out arm shall stay in that position until the start is given.

Briefing with the Referee

- Establish the Procedure for Normal Starts.
- Does the Referee want you to “advise swimmers” to adjust their position in the water?
 - asking swimmers to stay in, or to leave the pool, when the races finish, etc.
- Will the Starter be announcing the event number and heats?
- Are there different Starters (and Referees) for male & female, age groups, strokes?
- Or only one Starter?
- How have the starts been in earlier sessions?
- Type of DQs or other problems?

Briefing with the Referee

Establish Procedure for False Starts.

- Referee and Starter to confer and agree on any false starts before disqualifications are made.
- Ensure rules are understood to ensure consistency,
- Procedure for “Stepping Down”.
 - Starter relinquishes control back to referee?
- Note: DQ for “Delay of Meet” can be recommended by the starter but can only be declared by the Referee.

Before the Start

Watch Check.

- Find the Chief Timer.
- Confirm when, where & if a watch check will occur?
- Ensure all Timekeepers can see or hear the starting device (flash/strobe).

Distance Event.

- Lap counting lead swimmer.
- Double Lane Swimmers - announcement.
- Bells & bell lap.

The Start

Preparing for the start of the race.

- Remember: The Starter has the best communication system with the swimmers.
- At the commencement of each heat the Referee signals the swimmers to the starting platforms.
- When the swimmers and officials are ready for the start, the Referee shall signal to the starter with an outstretched arm.
- This indicates the swimmers are *now under the Starter's control*.

The Start Rules

SW 2.3.1.

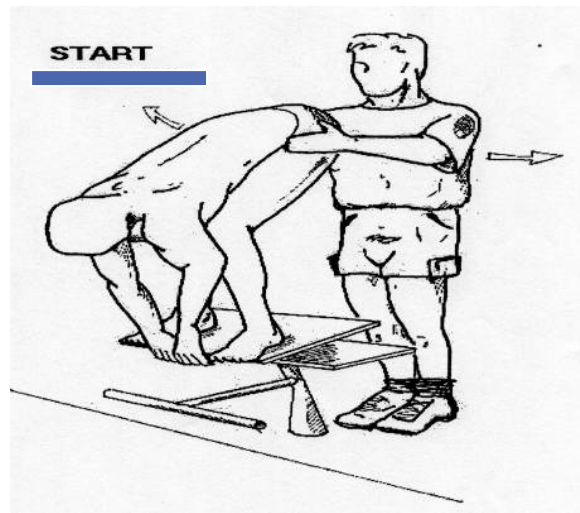
The Starter shall have full control of the swimmers from the time the Referee turns the swimmers over to him until the race has commenced. The start shall be given in accordance with SW 4 THE START.

The Start Rules

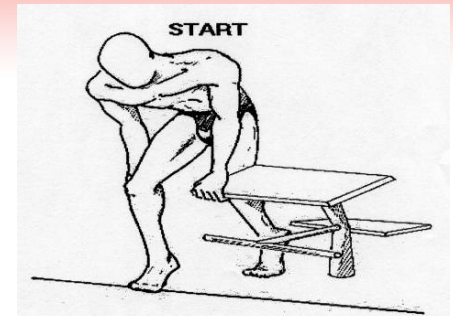
The start in Freestyle, Breaststroke, Butterfly and Individual Medley races shall be with a dive.

- **SW 4.1** *The start in Freestyle, Breaststroke, Butterfly and Individual Medley races shall be with a dive. On the Long whistle (SW 2.1.5) from the referee the swimmers shall step onto the starting platform and remain there. On the starter's command "take your marks", they shall immediately take up a starting position with at least one foot at the front of the starting platforms. The position of the hands is not relevant. When all swimmers are stationary, the starter shall give the starting signal.*
- **IPC 3.1.3.1** *For a swimmer with a visual impairment, on the long whistle from the referee the swimmer shall be permitted to orientate themselves prior to the starters command 'take your marks'.*

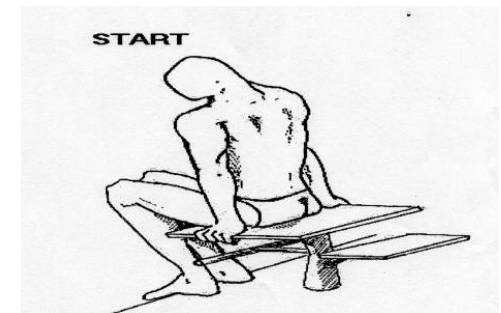
IPC 3.1.3.2 *The swimmer who has balance problems ie standing stationary, may have assistance to balance themselves on the starting platform ie hold at the hips, hand, arm etc, by one Support Staff. Support Staff may aid the swimmer to remain stationary at the start, however the Support Staff shall not allow the swimmer an unfair advantage by being held beyond 90 degrees vertical position on the starting platforms. Giving momentum to the swimmer at the start is not permitted.*



IPC 3.1.3.3 A swimmer may be permitted to start beside the starting platform.



IPC 3.1.3.4 A swimmer with a lower limb disability may be permitted to take up a sitting position on the starting platform.

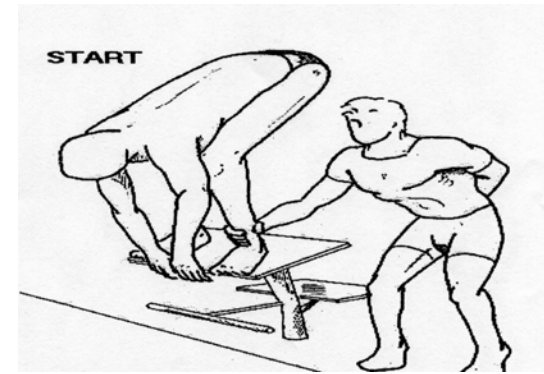


IPC 3.1.3.5 A swimmer may be permitted to start in the water but is required to have one hand in contact with the starting place until the starting signal is given. Standing in or on the gutter or on the bottom is prohibited.

IPC 3.1.3.6 Sport Class S1-3 swimmers are permitted to have their foot/feet held to the wall, until the starting signal is given. Giving momentum to the swimmer at the start is not permitted.



IPC 3.1.3.8 To prevent abrasion, one layer of towel, or the like, may be placed on the starting platform.



IPC 3.1.7 In the case of a S1-10 and S14 swimmer who additionally is deaf, Support Staff shall be permitted to convey the starting signal to the competitor by the use of a non verbal instruction, when no starting light is available.

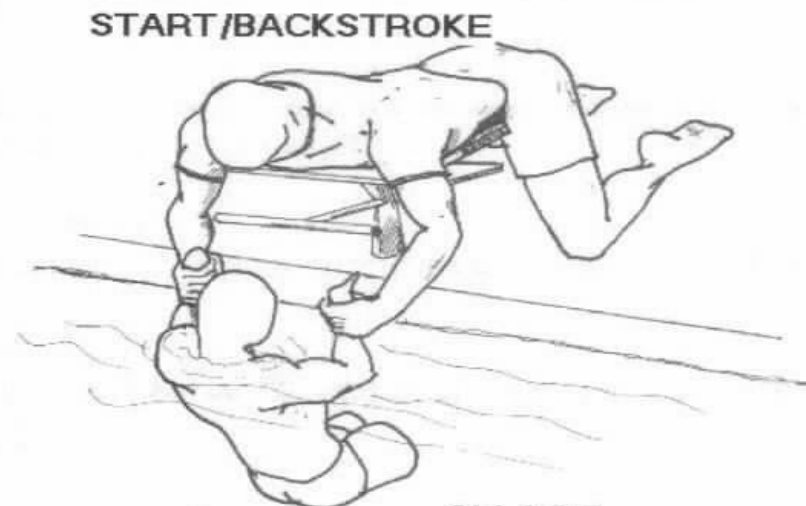
IPC 3.1.8 In the case of a swimmer with visual impairment who additional is deaf, Support Staff shall be permitted to convey the starting signal to the competitor by the use of a non-verbal instruction.

The start in Backstroke and Medley Relay races shall be from the water.

SW 4.2 *The start in Backstroke and Medley Relay races shall be from the water. At the referee's first long whistle (SW 2.1.5), the swimmers shall immediately enter the water. At the Referee's second long whistle the swimmers shall return without undue delay to the starting position (SW 6.1). When all swimmers have assumed their starting positions, the starter shall give the command "take your marks". When all swimmers are stationary, the starter shall give the starting signal.*

SW 6.1 *Prior to the starting signal, the swimmers shall line up in the water facing the starting end, with both hands holding the starting grips. Standing in or on a gutter or bending the toes over the lip of a gutter is prohibited.*

IPC 3.1.3.7 *Where a swimmer is unable to grip the starting place, in a water start, the swimmer may be assisted by a Support Staff and/or starting device. The device shall be cleared and deemed safe by the IPC Swimming personnel prior to the commencement of the competition. Giving momentum to the swimmer at the start is not permitted. The swimmer shall have part of the body in contact with the wall until the starting signal is given.*



The Start

- Swimmers are turned over to the Starter by the Referee's outstretched arm.
- Give the command "**Take Your Marks**" in a *slow, steady, non-military voice*.
- A Starter must establish an *even, consistent cadence* with his/her starting commands.

The Start

- The Starter shall activate the starting device when all competitors are **stationary** and **complying with the starting rules**.
- Some swimmers will fidget until the referee turns the race over to the starter; (this is okay).
 - *S1, S2, and S3 swimmers that start in the water with their feet held against the wall must remain stationary and **NO** sculling.*
- Swimmers may stand wherever they wish on the starting platform and may take any starting position with at least one foot at the front of the platform.
- Some will roll backward after grabbing the starting platforms. A momentary pause before rolling backward is permitted.

Achieving a Fair Start

- The “rule of thumb” is “If the signal goes, the race goes”.
- **SW 4.4** - *Any swimmer starting (moving forward) before the starting signal may be disqualified – at the end of the race.*
- Any DQ because of a “Delay of Meet” is at the discretion of the Referee.
- Any protests about the Start should be directed to the Referee.
- If PARA swimmers are involved, the Referee and/or Technical Advisor (TA), have the final decision on all DQs

SW 4.4

Any swimmer starting before the starting signal has been given, shall be disqualified. If the starting signal sounds before the disqualification is declared the race shall continue and the swimmer or swimmers shall be disqualified upon the completion of the race.

If the disqualification is declared before the starting signal, the signal shall not be given, but the remaining swimmers shall be called back and start again.

DQ Exceptions

False Start Exceptions (SW 2.3.3):

- Loud noises or camera flashes or other external sounds can influence start.
- If the Starter holds the swimmers too long, while waiting for all swimmers to come down, causing a ragged and unfair start: THEN: The race should be recalled and another start attempted with no DQs assigned (Official's Error).

DQ Exceptions

If the starter errors and starts the race before all swimmers are stationary:

- Recall the race and advise the Referee of an official's error.
- NO disqualification.
- If the Starter calls back a race - this is an "Official Error" and no disqualification is assigned.

Masters Swimming

- Some competitors may have difficulty getting on the block. It is appropriate to allow a deck official or timekeeper to assist them and stand beside them so they can steady themselves until the start is given.
- The Starter may also say “relax swimmers” instead of “step down” in an aborted start in such situations.
- If an action deliberately delays the start, the Referee will call a DQ for “delay of meet”

Good Habits

- Record start time for each heat and missing swimmers on heat sheet for each race
- Record Step-Downs

If you are working an age group meet with novice swimmers, be patient they are just learning the start position.

After the Meet

- Ensure that the equipment used is secured.
 - Starter's electronic equipment is shut down.
 - Clip board is returned.
- Give the heat sheets for the session just worked to Meet Management, in case any questions.
- Attend a debriefing with the Referee or Management Committee. Comment on both strengths and areas of improvement for the next session.
- Check the Officials' schedule for the next session that you work.

Discussion

How should a Starter handle the following scenarios?

Scenario 1

- **Following the command “Take your Marks”, the swimmers assume a starting position (stationary), and a swimmer begins to move forward before the starting signal:**
 - Signal not given - “Step Swimmers Down”; Referee and Starter confer and agree on DQing offending swimmer for “False Start”. Re-start
 - Signal given - Race continues and DQ after the race.

Scenario 2

- **If a swimmer does not respond to the command “Take your Marks.”**
 - As a starter, do not activate the starting signal.
 - Instruct the swimmers to step down.
 - Discuss with the Referee: Did the swimmer hear the command, (PARA swimmers)? The Referee may disqualify the swimmer if it is agreed that the swimmer was not obeying the command.
 - If disqualified, the DQ’d swimmer’s lane shall remain empty. This would not be a false start but a “Delay of Meet” call, after which the race reverts to the referee.

SW 2.3.2

The starter shall report a swimmer to the Referee for delaying the start, for wilfully disobeying an order or for any other misconduct taking place at the start, but only the Referee may disqualify a swimmer for such delay, wilful disobedience or misconduct.

Scenario 3

- **On starting the race, a swimmer topples from the starting platform before the starting signal is given.**
 - The other swimmers are instructed to “step down” (PARA may have a problem getting down and back up, maybe relax would be better).
 - The race shall revert to the Referee.
 - The Referee & Starter discuss:
 - Did the swimmer slip because of a slippery starting platform?
 - The benefit of doubt shall go to the swimmer.
 - **SW 4.4** - If the swimmer is at fault, a DQ has occurred.

Scenario 4

- **The swimmers come down in a very uneven, disorganized manner as they take their marks.**
 - Ask the swimmers to “step down” or “Relax” if PARA involved, but this is not a false start.
 - The race should revert to the Referee for another start attempt.
 - Discuss handovers with the Referee
 - ✓ Ragged starts are often caused by a referee turning a race over to the starter before the swimmers are ready.
 - ✓ In this situation the starter may wait until he/she feels a fair start can be achieved or
 - ✓ instruct the swimmers to “step down”.

Scenario 5

- **The swimmer in Lane 6 comes down “too slowly” to his mark and Lane 7 topples into the water.**
 - A subjective judgment call. There is nothing in the rules regulating “how fast” a swimmer must take his mark. As long as a swimmer is moving in an attempt to take his mark after the starter’s command, he/she should not be called for an infraction.
 - Did Lane 7 come down very quickly and could not hold his mark?
 - **DQ Lane 7.**
 - Was there undue delay in obeying the start command by the swimmer in Lane 6 – causing Lane 7 to False Start?
 - Instruct the swimmers to “step down” and the Referee will decide if Lane 6 should be DQ’d for “Delay of Meet”.

A starter always has the option to step the swimmers down without declaring a false start if he/she feels a fair start might be difficult to achieve.

Scenario 6

- **A swimmer leaps onto the starting platforms:**
 - After the Referee turns the swimmers over to the Starter.
 - If possible “Step swimmers down” & return control to the Referee
 - After the Starter says “Take your Marks”
 - Whenever possible “Step swimmers down” and return control to the Referee.
 - If unable to prevent giving the Start and a fair start occurs then continue and let the referee DQ as a late scratch at the conclusion of the race.