

## Deck Referee and Starter Best Practices

1. The first DR & Starter of each session are to make sure that everything is ready to begin the session. This includes checking the starting blocks, verify that the pads are in place, check the volume of the speakers, conduct a test start and run a timers meeting if necessary. This is all done before the meet, in time to start the events on time.
2. The DR & Starter need to develop a working rhythm and pace as a team, remembering that the timeline is a guideline, not a rule.
3. Starters should find their position on the deck for both forward and backstroke starts, then the DR should position himself on either the right or left of the Starter so the Starter can see him.
4. The starting sequence is a series of short, crisp whistles to signal the next event or heat is about to start, which is followed by a long whistle to signal the swimmers to step onto the blocks or in the water. (There is an additional whistle for backstroke events to direct the swimmers to place their feet). If flyover starts are being utilized, the timing of the whistle protocol should be amended.
5. The Starter should raise the microphone at the long whistle and be ready for the DR's extended arm.
6. When the DR is comfortable that the heat is ready to begin, he will extend an arm to turn over swimmers to the Starter. It is at this point that the heat is closed. If an open lane exists, the DR may wish to delay his arm extension to make sure that no swimmers are moving to the blocks.
7. After the swimmers have been turned over, the Starter simply asks the swimmers to "take your mark" in a calm, conversational tone. When the swimmers are stationary (not motionless), the Starter activates the horn to start the field.
8. If there is need to reset a heat on the blocks (or in the water), the Starter should request the heat to "stand, please" (or "stand down, please"). If the stand request is used twice, the heat should be asked to step down. After a short pause, the Starter may ask the swimmers to "step up please" or the DR may use a long whistle to have the swimmers step up on the blocks. No heat should be left standing on the blocks or in the water for any extended length of time due to circumstances beyond their control.
9. No commands should be given to a single swimmer through the microphone. If an athlete needs to be addressed, the DR will go to the block to speak with the swimmer.
10. If the Starter or DR observes movement during a start, they must note the lane and circle it independently. The Starter then should approach the DR saying 'I have a potential false start'. The DR and Starter should compare their notes without conversation and if they agree, the DR will confirm the false start and proceed to process the DQ. The DR should notify the swimmer of the false start.
11. If the Starter observes anything that impacts the start of a race such as a loud noise or flash, the Starter should step down the field and the DR should address the situation. If the disruption occurs during the start, the Starter may recall the race and restart the field. If an apparent false start takes place during a recalled race, the entire field is allowed to restart.
12. After a successful start, the Starter should slowly lower the microphone and follow the swimmers until he concludes that there was a fair start. The DR should step away from the Starter and direct his attention towards the swimmers and the entire pool.
13. The Starter should record across-the-board finishes for all heats on the deck sheets supplied by meet management. All DR and Starter deck sheets should be passed on to the next DR/Starter team and turned in at the end of each session to the Admin. Ref. or meet host.
14. Off DR's and Starters should be ready to work their next rotation or whenever the need may arise but not congregate around the Hot Box.
15. The most important trait that a Starter should practice is Patience, never rushing a start to satisfy a timeline, a DR or a Meet Referee. Your duty is to ensure that all swimmers receive a fair, equitable and hopefully the best possible start within the rules.