

## **STARTER**

Starting in the sport of swimming looks, to most people, simple, straightforward and easy. Well it can be but it also can be difficult and involved.

To keep it simple, straightforward and easy is the secret and is mainly in the hands of you, the Starter.

So much rests on how you conduct yourself. To be calm, relaxed but still in control, requires certain capabilities of an individual that not everyone has.

Your voice and command must be clear but calm. Your requests, commands or instructions should be at the same pace, the same level and given in the same manner.

Remember you are trying to keep the swimmers relaxed and ready, not making them nervous and hesitant.

A good Referee will only hand the swimmers over to the Starter when they are relaxed – stationary – and ready. When this happens you need to decide when you feel they are as well and then give them your command. Only when they are all stationary do you give the start signal.

A Starter should be fit, healthy, have a good wide peripheral vision, good eyesight, quick reactions and decisions, and be very decisive. You only have a very brief time with the race in your control and most incidents will happen quickly while being part of everything else that is going on at the start.

Be firm and clear on your comments or recommendations to the referee.

With this in mind we now go into detail regarding rules and requirements for starting in the sport of swimming.

### **Competitions**

There are normally two Starters appointed. The idea is to share the races and for finals it would be one for the men and one for the women. It is recommended both Starters assist each other, work as a team and look for advice or comment on each other's start. Assist, if necessary, with the false start rope while the other starts.

Your position should be approximately 5 metres from the end of the pool and in an area where you can see all of the starting platforms and swimmers clearly.

Be familiar with the equipment you will be using at that competition you are appointed to. Pencils/pens/ clipboard and SNZ Rule Book should be in your possession plus obtain a programme from the organisers.

You may be required to brief the swimmers before their race or this may be carried out by the Clerk of the Course. This position is usually appointed to a qualified Starter or someone who knows the requirements of a Starter.

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Duties for briefing are:

- Check which swimmers are present.
- Advise them of the event, distance and stroke and if heats or finals.
- Detail the requirements for a good start.
- Endeavour to have them relaxed and ready.

## **SW 2.2 STARTER**

**SW 2.2.1** The Starter shall have full control of the swimmers from the time the Referee turns the swimmers over to him (SW 2.1.5) until the race has commenced. The start shall be given in accordance with SW 4.

**SW 2.2.2** The Starter shall report a swimmer to the Referee for delaying the start, for willfully disobeying an order or for any other misconduct taking place at the start, but only the Referee may disqualify a swimmer for such delay, willful disobedience or misconduct. Such disqualification shall not be counted as a false start.

**SW 2.2.3** The Starter shall have power to decide whether the start is fair, subject only to the decision of the Referee. If the Starter believes the start is not fair, he shall recall the swimmers after the signal of start has been given, except after a false start has occurred, when the Starter shall not recall the swimmers after the signal of start has been given. (See SW 4.4)

**SW 2.2.4** When starting an event, the Starter shall stand on the side of the pool within approximately five metres 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.

## **SW 2.3 CLERK OF COURSE**

**SW 2.3.1** The Clerk of Course shall assemble swimmers in the designated marshalling area and shall have control over those swimmers in that area until they are turned over to the Referee.

**SW 2.3.2** Any swimmer who fails to report as required in the meet rules; disobeys the instructions of the Clerk of Course; fails to remain in the designated marshalling area after reporting; or performs any undisciplinatory act shall be reported to the Referee who may disqualify the offender.

**SW 2.3.3** If the Clerk of Course becomes aware that re-seeding an event is an option then the Referee should be informed. The Referee should consult with the Chief Recorder over the matter. Any re-seeding will be done by the Chief Recorder. The Clerk of Course will inform swimmers of the heat number and lane number that they will swim in.

## **SW 4 THE START**

**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 platform. When all swimmers are stationary, the Starter shall give the starting signal, (shot, horn, whistle or command).

**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 4.3** In Olympic Games, World Championships and other FINA events the command “take your marks” shall be in English and the start shall be by multiple loudspeakers, mounted one at each starting platform. The sound of these loudspeakers shall be sufficiently loud that repetition of the signal (**SW 4.5**) will give adequate recall signal for a false start.

**SW 4.4** The Starter shall call back the swimmers at the first false start and remind them of not starting before the starting signal. After the first false start any swimmer starting before the starting signal has been given shall be disqualified. The starting signal sounds before the disqualification is declared, the race shall continue and the swimmers or swimmers shall be disqualified upon 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, be reminded by the Starter of the penalties, and start again.

**SW 4.5** The signal for a false start shall be the same as the starting signal but repeated along with dropping of the false start tope. Alternatively, if the Referee decides that the start is false, he shall blow his whistle, which shall be followed by the Starter’s signal (repeated) and dropping of the false start rope.

**SW 4.6** If an error by an official follows a fault by a swimmer, the fault by the swimmer may be expunged.

To assist you in the role of starting a good sound knowledge of all strokes is recommended. These are:

<b>SW 5</b>	<b>FREESTYLE</b>
<b>SW 6</b>	<b>BACKSTROKE</b>
<b>SW 7</b>	<b>BREASTSTROKE</b>
<b>SW 8</b>	<b>BUTTERFLY</b>
<b>SW 9</b>	<b>MEDLEY SWIMMING</b>
<b>SW 10</b>	<b>THE RACE</b>

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Most Starters will have their Inspector of Turns qualification, which covers these rules.

It is even more advantageous if, as a Starter, you have Referees qualifications. A Starter and Referee work very closely together and a Referee will on many occasions confer with the Starter.

Although the role and time span of a Starters duties are short it does pay to keep a watchful eye on all aspects of the race.

### **Duties of a Starter**

1. Report to the Referee an hour before first session and at least half an hour for subsequent sessions. Discuss the procedures and requirements you or the Referee may have, to ensure you work as a team.
2. Check all equipment. Starting blocks should be firm, ready and not slippery. Sound system for you and swimmers needs to be checked along with the starting signal.
3. Starting podium or area should be clear from obstruction and distractions.

4. False start rope should release easily and fall evenly over all lanes. Ensure the outside lanes are fully covered with the rope.
5. Check with Referee if briefing is required by you or the Clerk of Course.
6. Establish with the Referee when after a false start, “swimmers, one start rule applies” should be given. Ideally this should be when all swimmers are all behind their starting blocks on the concourse.
7. Check with your other appointed Starter, ensure you agree on procedures and who is starting, which races.
8. Watch for clearance signal indicator from control room that they are clear and ready for the next race. Pass this onto the referee. Light comes up on microphone.
9. Advise the Referee of any misconduct or incidents that effect you or the starting of the race.
10. When the race is in your hands, instruct the swimmers in a manner that ensures you have control.
11. Check to ensure the false start rope is ready to be activated and that someone is in control of that.
12. Know which race you are starting, ie. Event 23, 200 metres Breaststroke, Heat 3.
13. Mark in your programme the completed races and any relevant notes you wish to record of incidents or infringements. This assists you in any later discussion.

### **Expectation of an Official**

As with all swimming officials we expect a high standard of expertise, attitude and personal appearance to convey to the swimmers and public that we are proud and confident with ourselves, position and sport.

We must set an example of fairness, decisiveness and consistency.

### **Role of a Starter**

The role of a Starter requires all of the above expectations. Remember you are in control when nothing else is happening. The people in the pool area are watching the swimmers reaction to your instructions and signals. You will have many observers and critics. As long as you are confident, positive and decisive you will not be aware of the pressure that can be placed upon you.

Like all successful events, if the approach, research and preparation have been carried out thoroughly then the end result will surely be a success.

You are there to ensure that each swimmer has A FAIR AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR A GOOD START. Quite simple.

If you achieve this, you have done a good job. Good luck. It is a great challenge to consistently achieve ‘THE ROLE OF A STARTER’ as quoted above.

## **ONE START RULE**

SW 4.5        When using the One Start Rule, 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 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, be reminded by the starter of the penalties, and start again.