

Northwest Swim Circuit Starter Training





Northwest Swim Circuit Starter Training

- Introduction
- Importance of Officiating
- USA Swimming Rules
- Starters Role – Fair Start for ALL Competitors
- Voice
 - Tone
 - Slight drop in Pitch
 - Don't order
 - Wait until ready
 - Don't rush to Start
 - Things to Avoid
- Stand-up Command
- False Starts
- Be Professional
- Additional Information
- Other Responsibilities
- Questions and Answers





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- Fairness and consistency.
- If not, the ones working hard and doing it right get punished.
- Learning to do it right.
 - $1+1 = 2$, regardless of age
 - If someone ALMOST makes a shot in basketball you wouldn't give them the 2 points.
- REMEMBER -- SWIMMERS DISQUALIFY THEMSELVES. YOU ARE ONLY RECORDING IT.





- Where to Stand:
 - On the side of the pool within approximately 2-5 meters of the starting end of the pool
- The Start:
 - On the Starters command, the swimmers shall immediately assume the starting position. When the swimmers are stationary the Starter shall give the starting signal.
 - In the forward start, the swimmer must have at least one (1) foot at the front of the starting platform or the deck.
 - Swimmers starting in the water must have at least one (1) hand in contact with the wall or starting platform.
 - In the Backstroke, the swimmer's toes may be above the water level however the swimmer is not allowed to start with her/his toes above or placed over the top of the gutter. It is the responsibility of the Starter to correct the swimmers prior to the start. (A disqualification for this infraction which occurs after the start is the responsibility of the Stroke and Turn Judges)
 - Any swimmer starting before the starting signal is given shall be disqualified ...





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- To ensure a Fair Start for ALL Competitors
 - Take a position that will afford an optimal view of the starting field.
 - Begin each event by advising the swimmers, judges, and timers of the event number, heat number, event name and, if appropriate, the order of strokes.
 - Keep swimmers off the starting blocks until all swimmers are prepared to get on the starting blocks. Observe the pool and assure that it is the appropriate time to instruct the swimmers “Swimmers on the Blocks” or “Swimmers Enter the Water”. Swimmers are to be standing behind the front edge of the block.
 - Ask “Judges and Timers are you Ready?” Do not proceed until you are reasonably sure that all officials and timers are ready. ***Know the answer to this question before you ask it.***
 - When the starting field is ready, state “Take Your Mark” in a calm, conversational tone.
 - Ensure that all swimmers come down together and are motionless prior to executing the start.



- Conversational tone
 - Flat or slight drop in pitch.
 - Some suggest using the expression “Open the Door” or “1, 2, 3” as an example.
- Don’t order the swimmers to swim. Invite them to swim
 - Be pleasant, set the right tone, SMILE!
- Wait until the swimmers are ready, but not too long
 - If one or more swimmers are slow to take their positions or if they are not motionless after a reasonable amount of time, ask the swimmers to “Stand-up”. During the start of the backstroke it may take a little longer for the swimmers to get set.
- You are the Starter - not the swimmers

THINGS TO AVOID

- Sing-Song
- Rushing – **DO RUSH** between heats
- **DO NOT RUSH YOUR STARTS!!**
- Becoming a machine
 - Don’t develop a repeatable pattern when it comes to sounding the tone; vary your timing of release; within reason, based on each heat.





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- If the Starter is not comfortable with what is occurring after giving the starting command, then
 - Say “Stand-up” or “Please Stand”
 - Use a voice tone that is softer than normal as not to cause a False Start.
 - In the Backstroke, instruct the swimmers to place their toes below the top of the gutter (address the entire field and not a particular swimmer by lane number).
- After standing the swimmers up
 - Pause to let the swimmers get readjusted; use this time to gather yourself as well.
 - When the swimmers appear ready, give the command “Swimmers Take Your Mark”.
- Remember that you can be ready a lot faster than the swimmers can be.
- IF NEED BE, ask the swimmers to “Step DOWN” (or “Relax” for the backstroke).





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- The Starter is the **SOLE JUDGE** for determining a False Start and False Starts ***charged to the field*** shall be restarted
- A false start occurs if the Starter ***“detects any motion by a swimmer that the Starter believes resulted in an unfair advantage over the rest of the field”***. This can occur when the field is coming down together to a motionless position, when the field is awaiting the starting signal, or immediately after the start tone has sounded. The detectable motion could be a motion that distracts the other swimmers.
- Rolling starts are not permitted on initial starts.
- Signal the False Start Technician by a series of blasts by the tone generator.
- The first False Start of a heat is charged to the field. A subsequent False Start in the same heat is charged to the swimmer or swimmers, which results in disqualification. ***“Only one False Start shall be allowed per heat”***.





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- You are the most visible official on deck, therefore, the way you look and act can make a big difference; **SMILE!**
 - Dress right
 - Be on time
 - Be in position
 - Stay focused
- Always be calm - or at least appear to be calm.
- Avoid cheering for one swimmer or one team.
- Refer to the swimmers as “swimmer” or by gender when necessary.
- Because of your visibility you will frequently be asked a number of questions -
 - some you can answer, most should be referred to the Meet Director, etc.





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- Practice, Practice, Practice
- Work on your voice
 - Develop your mantra.
 - I say the command while exhaling as a way to relax and to achieve the slight change in pitch
- Watch other Starters
 - Both Good ones and Bad ones.
- Ask for feedback
 - A lot of the coaches have years of swim experience at all levels and are usually more than willing to give their opinions. Introduce yourself to them and let them know that you are interested in hearing their comments, good or bad.
- Focus on the field, not one swimmer
 - I try hard to see the field as one group as opposed to 6 to 8 swimmers on the blocks. I typically don't read the names on the heat sheet so as to not be influenced by who I know. It can be hard to disqualify on your own swimmer (son or daughter) but it has happened!!!





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- Test the system (and check the speakers) if you are the first half starter.
- Check the starting blocks and lane lines after warm-ups.
- Be present at the Head Timers Meeting to assist in providing answers to questions that may be asked. Remind the Timers to ***stand behind the blocks*** at the Start; Timers should not be a distraction to the swimmers.
- Assist in checking the starting field for correct number of athletes in the proper lanes.
- Fill-out DQ slips on a False Start that results in a disqualification.
- Note all empty lanes on starter's heat sheet.
- Always pay attention to what is happening after the start. The starter is not a Stroke & Turn Judge, but should be aware of what is going on in and around the pool at all times!
- **SMILE!!!**





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Northwest Swim Circuit Swim Season and Dual Meet Operations Guide

<https://nwsc.swimtopia.com/documents>

South Texas Swimming Official Page

<https://www.teamunify.com/Home.jsp?team=szstxlsc>

USA Swimming Officials Page

Rules

<https://www.usaswimming.org/officials/rules-regulations>

Training

<https://www.usaswimming.org/officials/popular-resources/officials-documents>

Starter Philosophy

<https://sftest.usaswimming.org/video/the-start-philosophy-and-protocol>

Unabashedly stolen and modified by
Mike Worley. Which was adapted from
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Ron Zolno
USA Swimming