



# Starter

## **STARTER**

Starting in the sport of swimming looks straightforward and easy to most people. To keep it this way depends on how you conduct yourself - to be calm and 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 at all times.

A good Referee will hand the swimmers over to the Starter only when they are relaxed and ready. Only when they are all stationary do you give the start signal. If the swimmers do not settle the command to stand up should be given, then when they are settled, asked to take their marks again.

Requirements for a good Starter

good eyesight & peripheral vision  
fit with good, quick reactions  
self disciplined, calm but decisive

A race is under your control for a very brief time 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 and recommendations to the Referee.

Characteristics of good technical officials

be knowledgeable and perceptive  
have a positive attitude  
be fair, consistent and accurate in what they do  
be tolerant of stress, of a personal nature or due to factors such as audience reaction, bad working conditions, length of meet, etc

With this in mind, detailed herein are rules and requirements for starting in the sport of swimming:

## **Competitions**

There are normally two Starters appointed for National and International meets. They share the races, and for finals there is one Starter for men and the other for women's races. Starters should work as a team. Assist if necessary with the false start rope while the other Starter is starting a race.

Starters are positioned approximately five metres from the end of the pool in an area where all the starting platforms and swimmers can be clearly seen.

Starters should be familiar with the equipment being used at the competitions they are appointed to. They should have pens, the FINA / SNZ rules and an up-to-date programme from the organisers.

Duties for any briefing by the Clerk of the Course are  
check the swimmers are present and confirm their lanes  
advise the event, distance, stroke & heat/final  
any aspects pertinent to the meet  
detail the requirements of a good start  
endeavour to have them ready & relaxed

For Swimming Auckland interclub and regional championship meets usually only one Starter is appointed; clearly the workload is greater. It is essential in these circumstances that a consistent standard is maintained in order to ensure a fair and equal start for all swimmers.

## **Fina Rules for Starters**

In summary

If a swimmer breaks at the start of a race the race shall continue and the swimmer is disqualified at the conclusion of the race.

If a swimmer breaks before the starting signal is given all remaining swimmers are to be stood down and a recommendation made to the Referee to disqualify the offending swimmer.

Starters should be conversant with the following Fina rules.

## **SW 2.12 Officials' Decision Making**

SW 2.13.1 Officials shall make their decision autonomously and independently of each other unless otherwise provided in the Swimming Rules.

## **SW 2.3 Starter**

SW 2.3.1 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 2.3.2 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.

SW 2.3.3 The starter shall have power to decide whether the start is fair, subject only to the decision of the Referee.

## **SW 2.4 Clerk of Course**

SW 2.4.1 The clerk of course shall assemble swimmers prior to each event.

SW 2.4.2 The clerk of course shall report to the Referee any violation noted in regard to advertising (GR 7) and if a swimmer is not present when called.

## **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 platforms. The position of the hands is not relevant. When all swimmers are stationary, the Starter shall give the starting signal.

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.

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 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.

To assist you in starting a sound knowledge of all strokes is recommended. These rules are

- 1) SW 5 *Freestyle*
- 2) SW 6 *Backstroke*
- 3) SW 7 *Breaststroke*
- 4) SW 8 *Butterfly*
- 5) SW 9 *Medley Swimming*
- 6) SW10 *The Race*

Most Starters will already have an Inspector of Turns qualification that covers these rules, and this enables the Starter to work efficiently and effectively during a meet.

## **STARTER'S ROLE & POOL POSITION**

### *The Role*

The Starter position is critical in the running of a successful meet.

The Starter and the Referee must function as an effective team to ensure that fair starts are achieved consistently throughout the meet session.

The central point of the Starter's role is to ensure a fair start for all swimmers. See Rule: SW 2.3.3

To exercise your function as a Starter, you must:

have a good working knowledge of the rules

be consistent and exercise good judgement

earn the confidence of the swimmers

respect the swimmers and enjoy the sport

frequently work meets to gain experience and ensure by practice that these goals are achieved

Starting can be a nerve wracking time for people new to the role of Starting. It is strongly recommended that the new Starter begin at club nights, move to include other low-pressure meets (e.g. Swimming Auckland level 3) and progress to higher level meets as confidence and experience increases.

### *The Position*

SW 2.3.4 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.

## **PERFORMANCE OF THE POSITION**

### A. Before The Meet

a) Arrival time should be at least one hour before the start of the first session and at least half an hour before the start of subsequent sessions.

b) Report to the Session Referee or Meet Director if the Referee is not available. At least one of these persons needs to know of your presence as early as possible each session.

c) Check the starting equipment and become familiar with the pool layout.

is a gun or electronic starting equipment to be used?

have the electronics been set up and operating? TEST the equipment.

are all loudspeakers, horns, and strobe lights working?

set and test the volume levels for start signal AND voice.

is a standby start system available? If so check the operation of it.

d) Are any races to be started from the turn end of the pool?

if so, is the starting equipment to be moved and how?

or is there equipment set up at both ends? TEST all equipment.

e) Check the Starter's Podium.

is it in the correct position? Adjust to suit your preferences.

f) Briefing with the Referee

the meet shall be run under FINA start rules.

what type of meet is it? Age Group, Masters, etc. Ensure you have reviewed and are familiar with the appropriate rules.

are there duties the Referee wants you to perform besides being Starter?

discuss with the Referee whistle protocol (SW 2.1.5 refers)

What process to handle equipment problems, or movement of equipment?

are there different Starters (& Referees) for male & female? or one Starter for all races?

how have other sessions gone in regards to starting? What DQ's or other problems?

g) Establish the Procedure for Normal Starts

does the Referee want you "to advise swimmers" to adjust their position on the blocks, or in the water? (i.e.: toes below the water line, asking swimmers to stay in or to leave the pool when the races finish, etc.)

h) Establish the Procedure for False Starts

Referee and Starter to confer & agree on any false starts before any disqualifications are made. Ensure rules, tolerances etc. are understood to ensure consistency – positions.

If the Referee and the Starter cannot agree on the swimmer that caused the false start, (one says lane 3, “late coming down”, the other says lane 4, “movement before the starting signal”), there should be no DQ (benefit of the doubt must go to the swimmer).

i) Meet Flow

discuss any timeline problems (need to speed up or slow the meet down).

j) False Start Rope

who will operate it?

how is it operated?

who will move it for 50 metre races? Or is there a second rope already in place in the correct position? What about a 25m pool – is there a false start rope 15m from each end?

B. During the Meet

a) Preparing for the start of the race. At the commencement of each event, the Referee shall signal the swimmers to the blocks. When the swimmers and officials are prepared for the start, the Referee shall gesture to the Starter with a stretched out arm, indicating that the swimmers are under the Starter's control. The stretched out arm shall stay in that position until the start is given (SW 2.1.5)

b) 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.

ensure all Timekeepers can hear/see the starting device (signal or flash)

comply with all the rules for “the Start” as stated in SW 4

Starter may also act as a Turn Judge if requested by the Referee

Starter must establish and maintain an even, consistent cadence for the command “Take Your Marks”

activate the starting device when all competitors are stationary and complying with the starting rules (SW 4.1 & SW 4.2)

it is a good practice for the Starter to keep the heat sheets of sessions worked for a reasonable amount of time in case questions arise later.

c) 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. Such disqualification shall not be counted as a false start.

the Starter cannot disqualify a swimmer for undue delay of the start.

if, for example, a swimmer suddenly mounts the blocks in an empty lane after the race has been turned over to the Starter, or if a swimmer who has no intention of holding on the start and dives into the water, the Starter shall ask the swimmers to “Step Down” and then confer with the Referee. It must be the Referee who makes the disqualification.

d) SW 2.3.3 The Starter shall have the power to decide whether the start is fair, subject only to the decision of the Referee.

False Start Exceptions may be

loud noises or camera flashes building may affect the start

if the Starter held the swimmers for an unreasonable amount of time while waiting for all swimmers to come down and hold, causing a ragged and unfair start. (The race should be recalled and another fair start attempted with no DQ's assigned)

Prior to each subsequent attempt to start, the race shall revert back to the Referee who shall again signal the swimmers to the blocks, and with an outstretched arm pass the race over to the Starter with the command "Take your marks".

Do not call back a race on an official's error and also disqualify a swimmer for starting early.

### C. The Start

SW 4.1 The start in Freestyle, Breaststroke, Butterfly, and the Individual Medley race 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 the 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.

a) All swimmers must be STATIONARY before the Starter gives the starting signal.

this is the only FINA statement on "false starts"

if any swimmers are moving, the Starter must not give the starting signal

if swimmers are moving and the Starter gives the signal, causing a "ragged" start, the race is recalled with no disqualifications, due to the Starter's error in giving the signal while swimmers were not stationary

if all are stationary, and a swimmer "jumps the gun", that swimmer is disqualified after the race.

b) There is no definition in the rules that states what constitutes what we know as a "false start". The only thing stated is that starting before the signal is given will result in a disqualification.

c) The Starter shall not start the race until all swimmers are stationary.

some swimmers will fidget until the Referee turns the race over to the Starter (this is quite OK)

the position of the feet is not defined in rule SW 4.1, so swimmers may stand wherever they wish on the starting platform prior to the Starter's command "take your marks".

swimmers may also take the starting position with both hands gripping the starting blocks prior to the command. Swimmers must move forward to have at least 1 toe over the edge.

d) The swimmers are turned over to the Starter by the Referee's outstretched arm, usually pointing towards the starter.

SW 4.2 The start in the Backstroke and Medley 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.

Even when the swimmers have entered feet first and are all in position on the wall, a second whistle is blown when all heads surface.

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 the gutter or bending the toes over the lip of the gutter is prohibited.

## **ONE-START RULE:**

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.

A race may be recalled with no "false start" declared:

when a fair start has not been achieved

when there is outside interference at the start

when there is an official's error

If a swimmer false starts and the starting signal was given, the disqualification is done after the race.

A recall for a DQ under the one-start rule is an official's error. This error nullifies the DQ (GR 8.6 If an error by an official follows a fault by a competitor, the fault by the competitor may be expunged)

SW 4.4 (continued) 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 (i.e. asked to "step down" or "relax").

control of the swimmers will revert back to the Referee, and a fair start shall be attempted again

the "rule-of-thumb" for the one-start rule is: "If the gun goes; the race goes" (this applies, of course, only if a fair start was achieved and there was no official's error or outside interference at the start)

## **Common Sense Applications**

If one swimmer "jumps the gun" because of the movement of another swimmer and commits a false start, DQ only the swimmer causing the false start.

If one swimmer, or more than one swimmer, moves forwards on the starting blocks just before the starting signal is given, and the Starter cannot avoid activating the starting signal, DQ after the race.

At the moment of pressing the starting button the Starter must be very attentive. If movement occurs, do not start the race. If one or more swimmers initiate forward movement a fraction before the starting signal “sounded”, any and all who moved must be disqualified after the race (“fidgeting” is not normally an infraction). Swimmers can only be disqualified when there is no official’s error.

If the Starter errs and starts the race before all the swimmers are stationary, the race should be recalled and the Referee advised that it was a Starter error. There can be no DQs in this situation.

If the Referee and Starter cannot agree on which swimmer(s) false started the benefit of the doubt is given to the swimmer(s) and no false start is declared.

If you are working at a meet with many novice swimmers, the Referee may allow some leniency. Be clear in your understanding of the extent of this.

Be alert when swimmers use the “track start”. Some will roll backward after grabbing the blocks. A momentary pause before rolling backward is permitted.

#### D. After The Meet

The Starter should ensure that  
the equipment used is secured

Starter’s electronic equipment is shut down

false start rope is secured

he/she checks the Officials’ schedule to determine the next session being worked

### **SITUATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

How might a Starter handle each of the following situations?

Situation (1) Following the command “take your marks”, the swimmers assume a starting position, and a swimmer begins to move forwards before the start signal (SW 4)

Signal not given : Hold the start signal until the swimmer becomes stationery or falls in. (a) if the latter “Stand Swimmers Down”, DQ the offending swimmer, re-start. (b) if stationery start the race

Signal given : Race continues and DQ after the race (SW 4.4)

Situation (2) A swimmer does not respond to the command “take your marks” e.g. does not take his starting position with one or both feet at the front of the blocks

as a Starter do not activate the starting signal.

instruct the swimmers to stand up.

discuss with the Referee (did the swimmer hear the command, etc?). The Referee may disqualify the swimmer if it is agreed the swimmer was at fault in not obeying the command.

if disqualified, the DQd swimmer's lane shall remain empty. This would not be a false start but a "delay of meet" call, after which race control reverts back to the Referee.(SW 2.2.2)

Situation (3) On the SECOND attempt at starting the same race, a swimmer resumes his starting position and then topples from the blocks before the starting signal is given

the other swimmers are instructed to "stand down ". Did the swimmer slip because of a slippery or loose block? If there is any doubt, the benefit of that doubt would go to the swimmer, and the swimmer should not be DQd the race control shall then revert back to the Referee

If it is judged that the swimmer did not hold his mark (SW 4.4) then the swimmers are instructed to step down.  
the offending swimmer shall be DQd.  
the race is turned back over to the Referee.  
the race shall be started again, with the lane empty.

Situation (5) The swimmers come down in a very uneven and disorganised manner as they take their marks

It is the Starter's job to wait until all swimmers are stationery. If this is not achieved within a reasonable time, ask the swimmers to "stand down ", but this is not a false start the race should revert back to the Referee for another start attempt.

Ragged starts may be caused by a Referee turning a race over to the Starter before the swimmers are ready. The Starter may wait (but not too long!) until he feels a fair start can be achieved or instruct the swimmers to "stand down".

Situation (6) The command "take your marks" is given. The swimmer in lane 6 comes down "too slowly" to his mark and lane 7 topples into water

This is a subjective call. There is nothing in the rules regulating the 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.

a) Did lane 7 come down very quickly and could not hold his mark? If so, DQ.

b) Was there undue delay in obeying the start command by lane 6?

If YES, this might indicate that lane 6 "caused" lane 7 to false start. Instruct the swimmers to "step down" and only disqualify the swimmer in lane 6 for "delay of meet". (SW 2.3.2)

If NO, instruct the swimmers to "stand down" and disqualify the swimmer in lane 7 for starting before the starting signal. (SW4.4)

c) A Starter always has the option of stepping the swimmers down or up without declaring a false start if he/she feels a fair start might be difficult to achieve.

Situation (7) While taking the starting position, the swimmer in lane 3 doesn't come to a complete stop, but takes his mark and leaves the block in a continuous motion, as the starting signal is given.

The race shall be recalled

The Starter should have waited until all swimmers were stationary before activating the starting device. (SW 4.1 & SW 4.2)

An error by an official (activating the starting signal when swimmers were not stationary) after a fault by a swimmer (not holding his mark) may expunge the fault by the swimmer. (GN 7.5)

The race reverts back to the Referee with no disqualification.

## **And Finally.....**

### **REVIEW**

Regularly review the start rules SW 2.2 and SW 4. It refreshes the memory and minimises the possibility for rule misinterpretation.

### **“OVER” or “UNDER” OFFICIATING THE STARTS**

With the one start rule swimmers know they have one chance only at the start. They are generally into a start position before any voice command to “take your marks” is given, and if not will assume the start position almost immediately the command is given.

A start sequence of “take your marks” followed by the swimmers being held on the blocks in the start position for a lengthy period of time before start signal activation is to be queried. Either the swimmers are not settled (in which case what is the cause of the delay?) or there may be a problem with the start process (was this a one off occurrence or is it happening at almost all of the starts?)

A start sequence of “take your marks” followed immediately without pause by the start signal is unlikely to be a fair start. Either not all swimmers were in a ready position and stationary (was the start signal activated accidentally – problem with equipment or its operation?) or there may be a problem with the start process (was this a one off occurrence or is it happening at almost all of the starts?).

### **STARTER SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW**

Some questions (and suggested answers) as an aid to the theory examination required to become a qualified Starter. You are welcome to discuss these with Technical Committee to clarify any areas of uncertainty.

#### A. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

##### **What organisation governs the sport of swimming in Auckland?**

*Swimming Auckland (Auckland Swimming Association) and Swimming New Zealand*

##### **How do you become a member of Swimming Auckland?**

*You become a member of Swimming Auckland by being a financial member of a club, or regional association*

**Name the 3 organisations under whose rules ASA meets are swum?**

*ASA, Swimming New Zealand, FINA*

**Describe the characteristics of good technical officials?**

*They must .....*

*be knowledgeable and perceptive*

*have a positive attitude*

*be fair, consistent and accurate in what they do*

*be tolerant of stress of a personal nature or due to circumstances such as audience reaction, bad working conditions, length of meet, etc*

**What requirements should you have to be a good Starter?**

*good eyesight & peripheral vision*

*be fit with good, quick reactions*

*be self disciplined, calm but decisive*

*be able to withstand pressures of meet and circumstances*

**When would a Starter arrive at the pool and to whom would they report?**

*Starters should arrive one hour before the start of the first session and at least a half hour before the start of subsequent sessions, and report to the Referee*

**What actions should you take once you have arrived at the pool?**

*- Report to the Referee and discuss procedures*

*- Check all equipment related to starting e.g. false start recall rope and release system (check the rope falls evenly over all lanes)*

*- Check as to whom will be operating the false start rope*

*- Check all starting blocks at both ends of the pool to ensure there is no movement and the surface is not slippery*

*- Check and position the Starter's platform or area, the view you will have and ensure there are no problems such as glare, obstructions, etc*

*- Check the starting system and sound including microphone and ensure you can be heard clearly at all starting blocks*

*- Check with the Referee when false start instructions should be given to the swimmers*

*- Obtain an up to date programme of events*

**What equipment would you take to a meet?**

*Pen / pencil, pad, FINA & SNZ rules, whistle*

**B. RULES KNOWLEDGE**

**Describe 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 (stood down) and the race restarted after disqualification of the offending swimmer(s).*

**Who disqualifies a swimmer in the start?**

*The Referee*

**What role does the Starter's play in such disqualification?**

*The Starter should report to the Referee what he/she saw – i.e. lane 5 broke or that was a deliberate false start, causing delay to the start*

*The Starter should complete the DQ form and hand to the Referee*

*The DQ form must state the event, heat and lane number, the rule number(s) being infringed (& in Swimming Auckland with suitable description of the infraction using the wording of the rule as applicable, but if this is not done it is subject to protest).*

**Explain a deliberate false start?**

*The swimmer intentionally dives in or does not hold when the command 'take your marks' is given and starts before the signal to start is given*

**If a swimmer is, in your opinion, responding too slowly to the "Take your marks" command, what can you do?**

*it is recommended you ask the swimmers to "stand up", which should leave them on the blocks*

*the Starter should advise the swimmers of the problem e.g. lane 6 too slow to assume start position"*

*the command "take your marks" is given" and the race started*

*if the same swimmer takes the same action, stand down the swimmers and report the problem and your decision to the Referee. e.g.. Lane 6 delaying the Start – recommend DQ. It is then the Referee's decision*

**When, after the command "take your marks" do you start the race?**

*When all the swimmers are stationary*

**Why do you need a meet programme?**

*To be aware of what event/race you are starting*

*You could be asked at any time by the Referee what race is next*

*To note any problems you have in the start of an event – esp. relating to a DQ*

*Once annotated, it provides a record that can be referred to in the case of a protest*

**Who has the authority to decide if a start is not fair?**

*The Starter*

*The Referee*

*"the Starter shall have the power to decide if the start is fair, subject only to the decision of the Referee"*

**If the Referee decides the start is not fair what would he/she do, and what action should follow?**

*Blow long blasts on their whistle*

*The Starter should fire the recall sound*

*Ensure the false start recall rope is dropped*

**The swimmers are on the block and the “take your marks” command has been given when a swimmer enters the water before the start signal - what action should you take?**

*Ask the remaining swimmers to “stand down”*

*Report the offending swimmer to the Referee*

**If the signal to start is given and a swimmer starts ahead of the signal and the Starter in error fires the recall, what should you do?**

*You need to decide in conjunction with the Referee, whether your error had any effect on the swimmer who offended*

*The general rule is “if an error by an official occurs after an error by a swimmer that error may be expunged” (refer FINA GN 7.5)*

**If the clerk of the course is to brief the swimmers what should the briefing cover?**

*Check the swimmers are present and they know their lane number*

*Confirm with them the event, stroke, distance, and heat/semi-final/final*

*Try to leave them relaxed and ready*

**If a swimmer does not attend for marshalling/briefing and then presents themselves for the race – what action would be taken & why?**

*Inform the Referee what has occurred*

*Only the Referee has the power to disqualify a swimmer (SW2.3.2)*

**What individual events start with a dive?**

*Freestyle, Breaststroke, Butterfly, Individual Medley*

**In a freestyle race a competitor indicates they are going to swim backstroke. Where would they start and why?**

*On the starting blocks*

*In freestyle, the swimmer must start with a dive*

*Time can only be a freestyle time.*

**What record can a butterfly swimmer break in a freestyle race?**

*A freestyle record*

**Describe the start of a freestyle, breaststroke or butterfly race?**

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

*On the long whistle from the Referee the swimmers shall step onto the starting platform and remain there - (note : When the Referee is satisfied the swimmers are settled and ready he/she indicates to the Starter with an outstretched arm that remains there until the race has started)*

*On the Starters 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 competitors are stationary the Starter shall give the starting signal*

**What starting signals may be used?**

*Shot, Horn, Whistle, Voice (command)*

*Strobe light may also be used and is the main method for deaf competitors*

**What is the order of strokes in a) an individual medley and b) medley relay races?**

*a) Butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, freestyle*

*b) Backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, freestyle*

**Can a protest be lodged prior to the start?**

*Yes*

**Given a protest has been lodged at the start of a race, what if anything are the swimmers told?**

**If the protest cannot be decided before the race, competitors must be informed the race is run under protest**

**What is the correct starting procedure and position of the swimmers for backstroke and medley relay races?**

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

*At the Referee's first long whistle the swimmers shall immediately enter the water*

*At the Referee's second long whistle when all heads have surfaced the swimmers shall return without undue delay to the starting position (note : The starting position is in the water facing the blocks with both hands holding the starting grips not gutter.*

*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*

*What should the Starter continually check?*

*If using electronic systems, check for "ready" light before starting the next race*

*The false start recall rope is in place and attended*

*Which event/race you are starting*

**Give some instances where a swimmer could be declared as "delaying the start" (SW 2.3.2)**

*Late or slow to step onto the starting platform after the Referee has signalled to do so*

*Slow to take their marks after the command to do so*

*Deliberate and excessive movement on the platform when they should be stationary*

*Swimmers who follow after the first swimmer who has broken (review with Referee)*

*Deliberate and excessive dive into the water before the start signal is given*

*A backstroke swimmer not returning immediately to the starting position following the Referee's second long whistle*

**For what activities can a Starter report a swimmer to the Referee?**

*The Starter shall report a swimmer to the Referee for delaying the start*

*wilfully disobeying an order*

*any other misconduct taking place at the start*

### C. FACILITIES KNOWLEDGE

**What is the minimum area of the starting platform?**

= *0.5m x 0.5m*

**What is the maximum degree of angle of the slope of the surface of the blocks?**

= *10 Degrees*

**What is the minimum and maximum height of the platform above the water?**

= *0.5m to 0.75m*

**What is the minimum height of the false start recall rope?**

= *1.2 m*

**What is the minimum depth at the 5m mark?**

= *per FINA a minimum depth of 1.35 metres, extending from 1.0 metre to at least 6.0 metres from the end wall for pools with starting blocks. A minimum depth of 1.0 metre is required elsewhere*

**What is the minimum height of the backstroke turn flags?**

= *1.8m*

**In simple terms, describe the role of a Starter?**

*to ensure all swimmers have a fair and equal start for their race*

# STARTER QUESTIONNAIRE

Please circle the true statement(s) on the answer sheet provided. There may be more than one true statement for each question.

1. The FINA Start rules includes:

- a. one start
- b. two starts
- c. a choice of one or two starts

2. The FINA Start shall be used for:

- a. all SNZ meets
- b. all international meets
- c. all regional competitions including interclub and championship meets
- d. all the above
- e. none of the above

3. In Swimming Auckland sanctioned meets, the starting signal may be:

- a. electronic beep
- b. a loud abrupt sound of an electronically activated horn
- c. a short whistle blast

4. Some responsibilities of the Starter are to:

- a. ensure that each race is started fairly
- b. discuss signals between Referee and Starter
- c. disqualify swimmers who use illegal stroke techniques
- d. announce swimmers before each race
- e. call the swimmers to attention before the race using a whistle
- f. ensure Timekeepers are ready before starting the race
- g. start the race once all swimmers have taken their marks and are motionless
- h. disqualify swimmers for delaying the progress of the meet
- i. perform other duties as assigned by the Referee
- j. report to the Referee any swimmer for delaying the start, wilfully disobeying an order, or any other misconduct taking place at the start

5. The Starter shall have control of the swimmers from the time:

- a. the Referee checks that the IOTs are ready
- b. swimmers take their positions of readiness at the front of the blocks
- c. the Referee blows the long, loud whistle
- d. the Referee gestures to the Starter with a stretched-out arm

6. The Referee may not interfere once the Starter has control of the swimmers:

- a. correct
- b. incorrect

7. The command that immediately precedes the starting signal shall be:

- a. "ready"
- b. "get set"
- c. "a vos marques"
- d. "take your marks"
- e. "on your marks"
- f. "take your mark"

8. In the event of the malfunction of the starting device the Starter shall:

- a. leave the swimmers poised and attempt to repair the malfunction
- b. direct the swimmers to "relax" and announce that it is not a false start
- c. call a false start and proceed immediately with another attempt
- d. leave the swimmers poised and try the start device again
- e. in the best interest of the swimmers, ask them to step down until the malfunction is corrected

9. During the start, the Referee or Starter may:

- a. recall the race and restart it if a fair start has not been achieved
- b. direct swimmers to "step down" or "relax" and re-attempt to start the race, without assigning a false start or a DQ
- c. not recall the race, even if a fair start has not been achieved
- d. DQ a swimmer who false starts after the swimmers told to "step down or "relax", even though the starting signal has not been given
- e. disqualify at the end of the race, any swimmer who leaves his/her mark early (jumping the gun)
- f. prior to the starting signal, disqualify any number of swimmers until a fair start has been achieved

10. Whenever swimmers have been asked to step down and relax due to any action or lack of action on the part of the swimmer(s), the control of the race reverts to the Referee:

- a. correct
- b. incorrect

11. A "False Start" occurs when:

- a. a swimmer starts before the starting signal has been given
- b. when the starting signal misfires
- c. when there is an official's error
- d. when there is forward movement on the starting block just prior to the start signal being given

12. Authority to call a "false start" lies with:

- a. Referee
- b. Judge of Stroke
- c. Turn Inspector
- d. Starter

13. The swimmers are in the water for the start of the:

- a. 200m Individual Medley
- b. 400m Freestyle
- c. 400m Medley Relay
- d. 200m Backstroke

14. For Backstroke events, the swimmer:

- a. must be in the water facing down the course
- b. must be in the water facing the starting end
- c. shall hold the wall or starting grip(s) with both hands
- d. must have both feet in contact with the end of the wall
- e. must have toes below the water line
- f. may have the toes grip the gutter
- g. must have feet level on the wall
- h. shall immediately enter the water and assume the starting position without undue delay

15. For events requiring a dive start, the swimmers:

- a. shall stand behind the blocks until the Referee's whistle is sounded
- b. shall step on to the starting platform with both feet the same distance from the front and remain stationary
- c. on the command, "take your marks", shall take their position with at least one foot at the front of the starting block
- d. may use a track start
- e. may, when using the track start, adjust the back foot position
- f. may start from the pool deck when circumstances warrant
- g. must grasp the starting block with their hands while awaiting the starting signal
- h. must have both feet at the front of the block
- i. shall step onto the starting platform and remain there until instructed by the Starter to do otherwise

16. The following statements about the Start are true:

- a. the Referee and/or Starter may raise a DQ on a swimmer for a false start before the start occurs
- b. the Referee and/or Starter may raise a DQ on a swimmer for a false start after the start occurs
- c. a disqualification that occurs after a successful start has been achieved is charged to the swimmer at the end of the race
- d. swimmers may be directed to "step down" or "relax" prior to a successful start without a false start or disqualification being assigned

## Eligibility Criteria for New Zealand Technical Examinations

The following are the current requirement for New Zealand Examinations:

Minimum Age to Sit Examinations: for IOT is 16 Years

### **Inspector of Turns**

Must be regionally qualified & have completed 5 centre/region\* meets as an IOT.

### **Starter**

Must be regionally qualified & have completed minimum of 5 centre/region\* meets as a Starter.

Prior to application being accepted recommendation from the National Examiner or member of the SNZ Technical Panel is to be obtained.

### **Referees**

Must be regionally qualified & have completed a minimum 5 centre/region\* meets as a Referee.

Prior to application being accepted recommendation from a member of the SNZ Technical Panel is to be obtained.

To sit the National Referees examination the candidate must have passed the National IOT and Starters examinations and held the most recent one for minimum of six months.

A candidate may request to sit an examination earlier than the criteria listed above, but will only be approved for certification if they are considered suitable and ready by the SNZ Technical Committee member for that region.

Centre/region meets must be run in compliance with the SNZ Regulations.

## STARTER ANSWER SHEET

Please circle the true statement(s) or fill in the appropriate answer(s). There may be more than one true statement for each question.

1. a b c
2. a b c d e
3. a b c
4. a b c d e f g h i j
5. a b c d
6. a b
7. a b c d e f
8. a b c d e
9. a b c d e f
10. a b
11. a b c d
12. a b c d
13. a b c d
14. a b c d e f g h
15. a b c d e f g h i
16. a b c d

*Ask your club for a copy of the FINA Technical DVD to check your answers.  
Or check the FINA Handbook.*



## **Welcome to the World of Sports Officiating!**

Officials make a valuable contribution to the New Zealand sports scene. Without judges, Referees, Starters, timekeepers and others, sport in New Zealand just wouldn't happen.

Sport needs officials at all levels. Effective officials help to make sport a healthy positive experience for everyone and great opportunities are open to officials who enjoy sport and are keen to learn.

Training and development for sports officials:

Are you a beginner?

Do you want to improve your performance as an official?

Do you want to build a career in sport?

Whatever your aim SPARC provides support for the training and development of sports officials through a series of resources and short courses that can be delivered either generically through your regional sports trust or as part of your sport specific programme.

SPARC resources to assist the training and development of sports officials include

Becoming a more effective official

People management

Fitness and injury prevention

Legal issues and risk management for sports officials

These resources are packed with information, exercises and general tips to help new officials get started and experienced officials get better. To find out more about how you can improve your officiating skills, contact your regional sports trust, your regional or national sports organisation, or visit SPARC's officials' website at [www.sparc.org.nz/officials/](http://www.sparc.org.nz/officials/)