

SUBURBAN SWIM LEAGUE: *STARTER TIPS - 2017*

1. PREPARATION

- Review Rules: USA Swimming and SSL
- Check equipment: Gun (or electronic), Starting blanks, Whistle, Rulebook, Attire (hat, sunglasses, etc.)
- Decide on starting position – must be able to see all lanes

2. INSTRUCTIONS

- If the Referee & Starter are separate officials, the Referee will blow the whistle. The Starter will give commands.
- Make sure ALL swimmers can hear your instructions; ask for QUIET, or stand swimmers down, if necessary.
- Use conversational tone; speak calmly; Avoid “barking” at swimmers; talk as if inviting swimmers to swim.
- Avoid unnecessary voice inflections – keep tone/pitch even.
- Give precise instructions – use language in the Rules; Avoid unnecessary words; keeps instructions brief.

3. FORWARD STARTS

- Check that the Head Timer is ready. *Verify that any empty lanes are supposed to be empty.*
- **Blow whistle** - swimmers step up to starting line, with at least one foot at edge of pool.
- **Announce event** – stroke and distance.
- **“Take your mark”** - when swimmers are ready. Don’t rush wording. (as if saying “shut the door”.)
- Allow swimmers to assume any starting position; must keep at least one foot at edge of pool.
- Give **Starting signal** - when all swimmers are ‘stationary’. (Must have stopped their downward movement.)
- Swimmers may NOT use towels, unless for ‘safety’ reasons. Advise both Teams.

4. BACKSTROKE STARTS

- Ask swimmers to **‘step into’** the water. (Swimmers who dive should NOT be disqualified, but should be advised of the rule and may be given one false start.)
- Check that Head Timer is ready. *Verify that any empty lanes are supposed to be empty.*
- **Blow whistle** when swimmers are **in the water and standing at the wall**. Swimmers should assume a legal starting position. *Toes MAY be above the water surface, but cannot be above or curl over the gutter.*
- **Announce event** – stroke and distance.
- **“Take your mark”** - when feet are properly placed and swimmers are ready. Don’t rush wording.
- Give **Starting signal** - when all swimmers are ‘stationary’.
- Swimmers may use a towel, placed over edge and along wall, which must be removed after the start.
- Swimmers may hold legs below knees of a swimmer on deck; feet may not extend over edge of pool. One swimmer only – no chaining.

5. FALSE STARTS

- **Single confirmation by the starter is used to call a False Start.**
- A swimmer *enters the water by initiating a starting action* before the ‘starting signal’ - False Start.
- A swimmer *is in a starting motion when the ‘starting signal’ is given* - a False Start.
- Race must be recalled with 1 (or 2) pistol shots. (Whistles help.) Make sure you have at least one extra blank.
- No false start for a swimmer who simply loses their balance & falls in. Do NOT fire gun.
- No false start for a swimmer who enters water as reaction to ‘stand’ command, or the movement of another swimmer.
- Note: Younger swimmers might be moving, but not attempting to start. Some swimmers delay, or ‘rock back’ into ‘track’ start.
- Direct swimmers to **‘Stand’** if swimmers do not become stationary, or a swimmer loses balance or enters water, or a swimmer leaves the mark before the starting signal.
- *A swimmer may be charged with one False Start for deliberate delaying a start, disregarding the Starter’s commands, or reporting late for an event and causing a delay..*
- *A swimmer may be charged with one False Start for failing to assume a proper starting position after being warned.*
- A Swimmer charged with TWO False Starts must be disqualified. If both Coaches agree, the swimmer may be allowed to swim as ‘Exhibition’, at discretion of the Referee.

6. GUN POSITION

- Pull hammer back on pistol before raising above head. Raise starting pistol prior to saying ‘Take your mark.’
- Hold gun so Timers can see the ‘flash’.
- Remain motionless during and immediately after the Start. Don’t distract Swimmers.

7. OTHER

- Prepare for and give appropriate instructions for any swimmers with special needs. Use hand signals for swimmers with hearing difficulties. Discuss procedures with Coach, before start of Meet.
- Concentrate. If a ‘bad’ start, forget about it. Make next Start a ‘good’ one.