

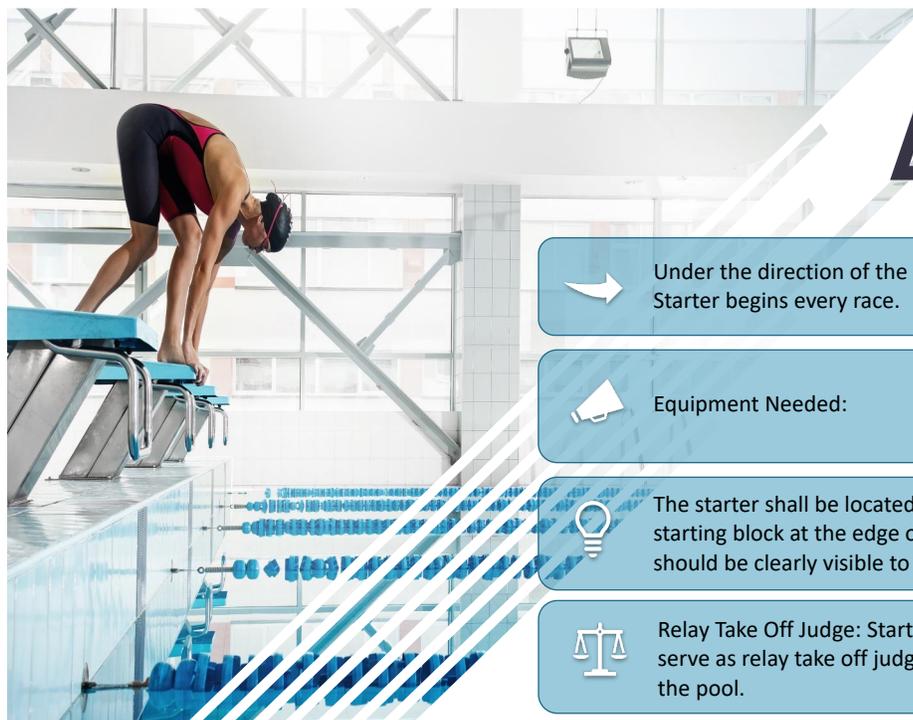
REQUIREMENTS

Rappahannock Swim League requires Starters to be USA Swimming, high school, or YMCA certified, or have attended a RSL clinic for Starters within the current calendar year.

First-Year Starters should shadow a starter with at least two years experience for half a meet during which time they should practice forward and backward starts.

Starters who have served in that position in previous seasons in RSL are not required to shadow after the first year except at the discretion of the Officials Committee.

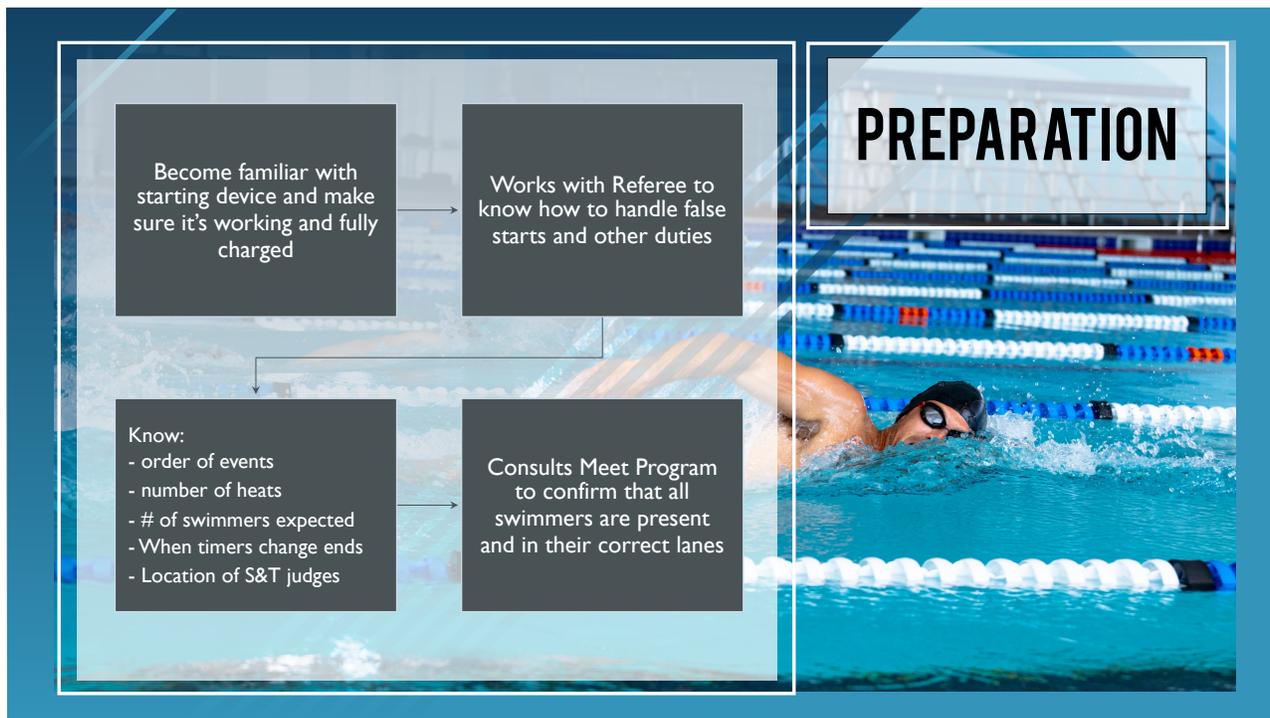




DUTIES

RSL RULE 10.5

-  Under the direction of the Head Referee, the Starter begins every race.
-  Equipment Needed: Electronic Starting System
Clipboard, Pen or Pencil
Air Horn
-  The starter shall be located within 10 feet of the starting block at the edge of the pool. The light strobe should be clearly visible to the timers.
-  Relay Take Off Judge: Starters may also be asked to serve as relay take off judges at the starting edge of the pool.

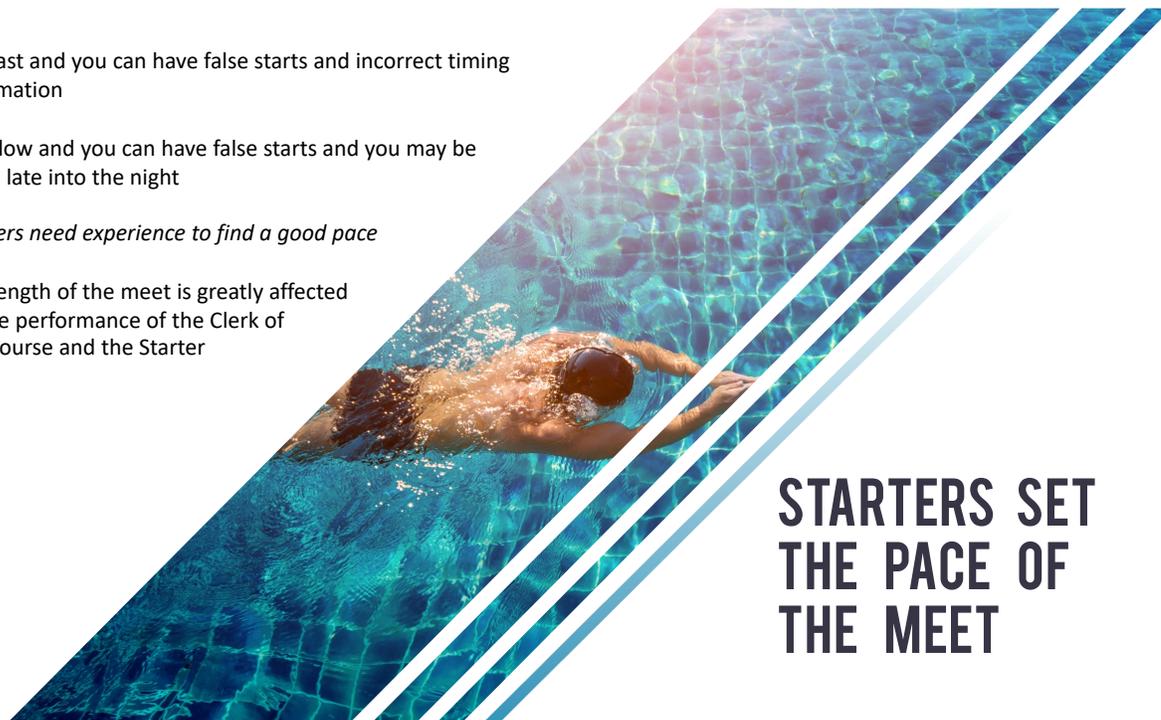


Too fast and you can have false starts and incorrect timing information

Too slow and you can have false starts and you may be there late into the night

Starters need experience to find a good pace

The length of the meet is greatly affected by the performance of the Clerk of the Course and the Starter



**STARTERS SET
THE PACE OF
THE MEET**

THE STARTING SYSTEM

Teams are responsible for having their own starter systems

Away teams should bring theirs to each meet in case of a home team starter malfunction

Someone on your team is assigned to be responsible for the starter mechanism – usually the Head Starter

This person should make sure it is plugged in for charging 24 hours prior to the meet

This person also sets up the starter equipment at the meet

It is necessary to have an air horn in case both starter mechanisms fail at the meet



When all swimmers are at the blocks, check for:

- Safe and conducive starting environment
- Swimmers are prepared and ready to start
- Each swimmer has one foot at front of blocks
- Calmly say “take your mark” in a conversational tone, without cadence
- Swimmers must assume a stationary starting position
- Many swimmers will bend down to grab the block. The swimmer may grab any part of the block, but doesn’t have to grab the block at all



If a swimmer does not respond to “take your mark” command, or otherwise is unprepared to start, you should stand the heat and use the following sequence to provide correction:

- First attempt: stand the heat and restart without further instruction
- Second attempt: stand the heat and provide general correction (ex: “swimmers remember your toes must be below gutter”)
- Third attempt: stand heat and work with coaches to correct the offending swimmer
- If a swimmer is purposefully delaying a start or showing other signs of misconduct, confer with your Referee

PROCEDURES



For each event, the Referee blows 4 to 7 short whistles. Next, the Starter clearly states the following:

- Event Number
- Heat Number
- Boys/Girls
- Age
- Distance (Yard/Meter)
- Stroke(s) to be used and order, if applicable
 - Do not abbreviate stroke.
 - Use "Individual Medley" not "IM", "Freestyle" not "Free"

FORWARD STARTS

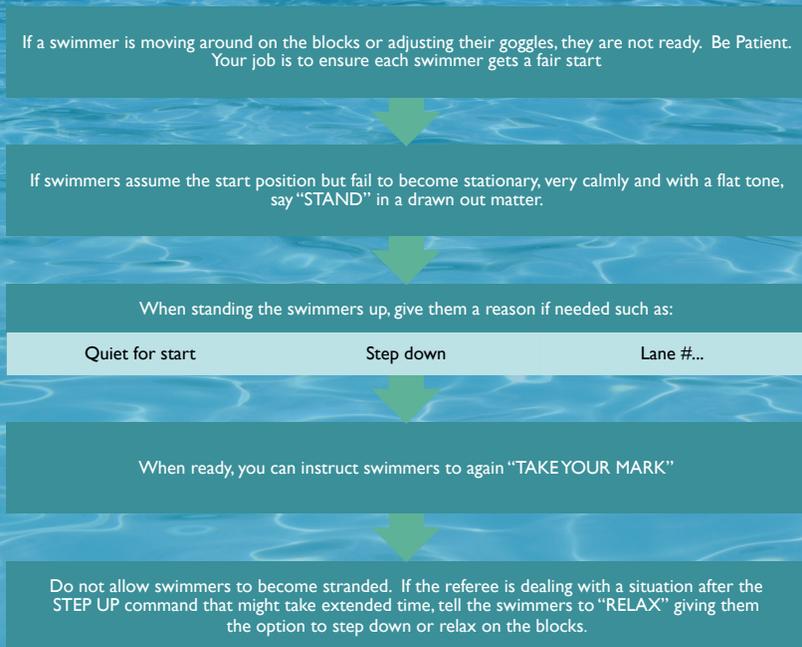
Referee	Starter	Referee	Starter	Starter	Starter
One long whistle	Instruct Swimmers "STEP UP"	Holds Arm Out	Instruct swimmers "TAKE YOUR MARK"	Give swimmer sufficient time to come to starting position with at least one foot at the front edge of the platform or deck, or one hand on the wall (in-water start)	Initiate Starting System (horn and light) when all swimmers are stationary



BACKWARD STARTS



WHEN SWIMMERS AREN'T READY



FALSE START



A False Start is when a swimmer leaves the starting position before the start signal is sounded.

When this happens, all swimmers shall be recalled at once.

The Starter will give a recall signal, as well as the referee who blows the whistle to indicate the false start

FALSE START RULES

False Starts may be charged when a swimmer:

- Leaves the blocks before the starting signal is given
- In backstroke or leadoff in the Medley Relay – when a swimmer fails to maintain feet in legal position after being warned

Swimmers can be charged with a false start by the starter only if it was witnessed by a Referee or Assistant Referee.

The Starter shall indicate who is charged with the false start.

A Swimmer charged with committed two false starts shall be disqualified and not permitted to swim that event.

If the race is permitted to continue, no infraction for illegal starting position or false start is permitted.

A swimmer who purposely delays the start (e.g. jumps in for fun) can be disqualified immediately for Delay of Meet by the Referee

MODIFICATIONS

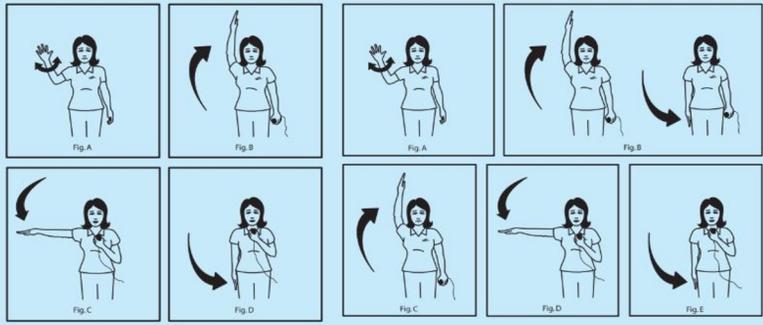


FIGURE 1: FORWARD START
 A. Twist hand at chin level — short whistles
 B. Arm overhead — swimmer steps onto starting block
 C. Arm moves to shoulder level — signal to "take your mark"
 D. Arm moves to side of body — starting signal

FIGURE 2: BACKSTROKE START
 A. Twist hand at chin level — short whistles
 B. Arm overhead — swimmer enters water; drop arm to side while swimmer enters water
 C. Arm overhead — swimmer returns to backstroke start position
 D. Arm moves to shoulder level — signal to "take your mark"
 E. Arm moves to side of body — starting signal

The Referee may reassign lanes within the swimmer's heat so that the strobe light or Starter's arm signal can be more readily seen by the deaf or hard of hearing.

For Backward starts, the light should be positioned so that swimmers don't have to turn their heads to look backwards.

Excerpt from USA Swimming Rule Book 2019



TAKE OFF JUDGE

The Starter and Referee may serve as relay take-off judges at the starting end of the pool.

The Starter should look:

First- at the departing swimmer's feet to leave the starting block Next- the incoming swimmer's touch

Referees can provide additional guidance on properly judging relay take-offs.

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL STARTERS



Work with the Referee and Clerk of Course to ensure a steady flow of swimmers

Speak in a conversational, but clear, tone. "Take Your Mark" should be said with the same emphasis as "Shut the Door"

Invite swimmers to swim, do not command them

When swimmers are stationary, give the starting signal. Stationary does not mean motionless

Do not attempt to "catch" swimmers on their starts

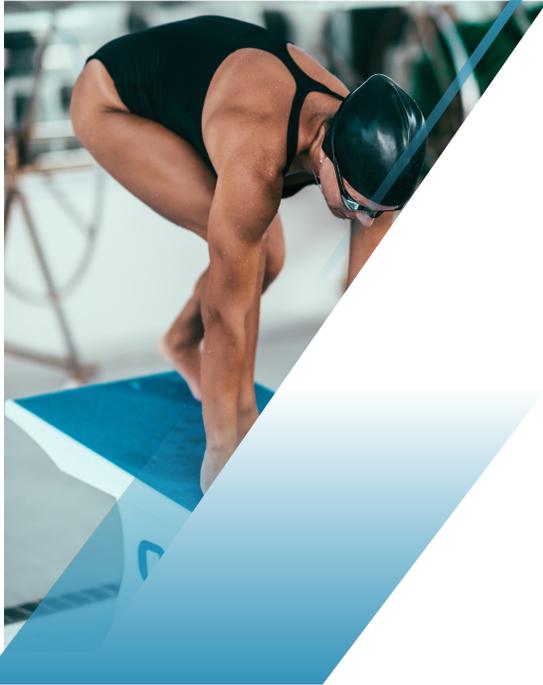


ORDER OF FINISH

While not required, It is recommended that you document order of finish for each race. This is a back-up for the timing/data system should something go wrong.

This is not a difficult task, but it may take some time to get used to doing it accurately. Simply write down the lane numbers of the swimmers in the order they finish (e.g. 3 4 1 6 5 2)

Write it directly onto your heat sheet in case the Data Table needs the information.



TIPS ON START POSITIONS

- For the Forward start, feet can be anywhere on the block at “STEP UP” but after “TAKE YOUR MARK” one foot must be at the front of the block
- For the Forward start, swimmers can be on the block, deck, or in the water. At least one hand must touch the wall when starting in the water.
- For Backstroke start, the hands must be placed on the gutter or on the starting grips
- For Backstroke start, the toes must not be over the lip of the gutter before or after the start
- Before the start, you are responsible for the toes not being over the lip. After the start, the Stroke and Turn Judge is responsible.

TIPS ON DIFFICULT HEATS





TIPS FROM AN EXPERIENCED STARTER

1. Preparation.

Starter shall ensure starting device is charged and fully operational PRIOR to the meet day. It helps to have another spare microphone cord as they are usually the piece that fails during a meet.

A starter must know the sequence of events for the meet. Even though the Scorekeeper will provide the starter with a copy of the event sheet (Events, Number of Heats and Swimmers in each heat), the starter will need to make sure the timers know when to switch from shallow to deep end of the pool in order to keep the meet running smoothly.

It helps to keep a clear sheet of plastic over your event sheet to make sure it doesn't get soaked (it will) and become unreadable — The Scorekeeper only makes so many copies of the event sheet.

2. Actions During the Meet.

Starter is responsible for ensuring a fair start for all swimmers. A starter should speak clearly and slowly and adjust the microphone volume so as to have the clearest sound possible for the swimmers and officials - indoors, it sometimes helps to turn the volume down a bit. It helps to have a coworker stand on the other side of the pool and let you know about the sound prior to the meet.

Let the Head Timer do their job! Most meets have the starter yelling into the microphone asking each lane if they are ready, etc. That is the Head Timers job. The fastest and most efficient way to run a meet is to say, "Head timer, give me a thumbs-up when your timers are ready." This way, they take ownership of their timers and the starter can focus on preparing for the next round of swimmers.

Younger Kids Need More Time. Summer swim is about having fun, making sure the kids (and swim parents...) have a good time at the meet while still following the rules. Don't expect a 5/6 year-old to obey and understand all commands given by the starter. Take more time with them. Many times, the younger kids are delayed/confused at the blocks, may be on the wrong lane, etc. Follow the rules, BUT, understand that this one race (the 25Y Freestyle for example) may be the only race this 5/6 year old is swimming and when they miss it—both the exhausted family working on the pool deck and the swimmer will be very upset. Make up the time with the older kids.)

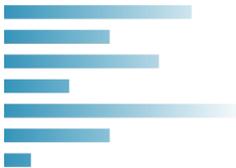


Watch the US Swimming Starter Training Video on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p-0rZ10SyBk>

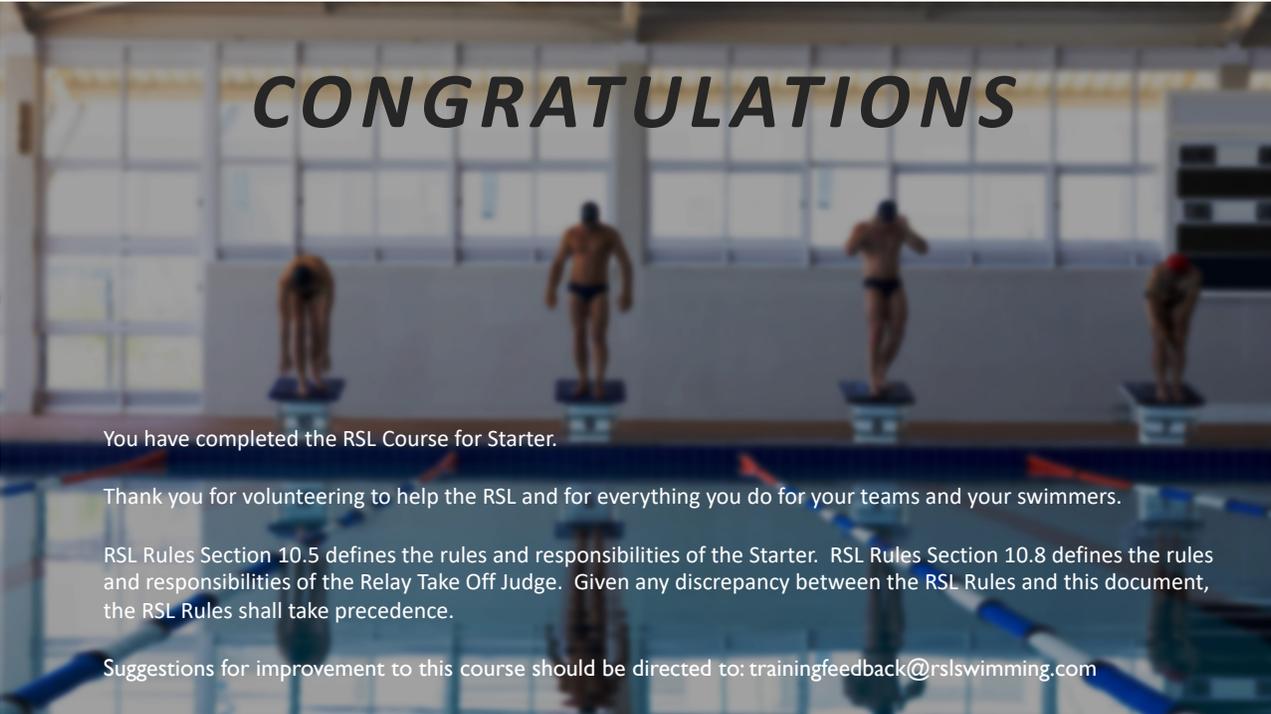


WANT TO KNOW MORE?



Starters play a vital role towards a fair and equitable competition. Recognizing the importance of this position, Starters may want to review this 30 minute USA Swimming video.





CONGRATULATIONS

You have completed the RSL Course for Starter.

Thank you for volunteering to help the RSL and for everything you do for your teams and your swimmers.

RSL Rules Section 10.5 defines the rules and responsibilities of the Starter. RSL Rules Section 10.8 defines the rules and responsibilities of the Relay Take Off Judge. Given any discrepancy between the RSL Rules and this document, the RSL Rules shall take precedence.

Suggestions for improvement to this course should be directed to: trainingfeedback@rslswimming.com



THANK YOU

Any questions?