

VPSU TIPS FOR STARTERS¹

1. Before meet, set up and **test starting equipment** and **check stability of blocks**.
2. Very often, referees will assign starters the task of doing the **timer briefing**. Be prepared to do this.
3. Speak slowly, clearly, and loudly into the microphone—*practice beforehand to get the feel for the microphone and volume levels*.
4. Limit speaking over the microphone to essential commands. Do not add introductory language such as "Swimmers" before your commands.
5. Always ensure fair starts for all swimmers.
6. If too much noise at the start, wait or ask for quiet.
7. Starter should stand reasonably close to the end of pool, but where s/he can see all swimmers at once.
8. Watch the whole field, rather than focusing on specific swimmers.
9. If a start is recalled because of a "false start," advise the swimmer by indicating that "a false start has been charged to the swimmer in Lane ____."
10. Each swimmer is responsible for his or her own start so if Swimmer B leaves his mark in reaction to Swimmer A's false start, Swimmer B must also be charged with a false start by the starter/referee.
11. If a swimmer leaves his mark in response to "Stand up" command, starter/referee may relieve the swimmer of the false start.
12. If you stand a heat up because a swimmer is moving, and that swimmer's movement takes him into the pool, generally that swimmer should be charged with a "false start."
13. If a heat is stood up a second time, usually it is best to ask swimmers to consider stepping the swimmers off the blocks, wait a few seconds, then try again.
14. If you make a mistake or some external factor interferes with a fair start, recall the race and do not disqualify anybody.
15. With starter/referee permission, swimmers may do a forward start from within the water (at least one hand in contact with starting platform/end wall).
16. A swimmer who fails to report for the initial start of his heat is disqualified.

¹ Adapted from Virginia High School League Tips for Starters.