



Including Swimmers with a Disability: Hints for Starters

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The mission of the Disability Swimming Committee is the full inclusion of swimmers with a disability in USA Swimming programs

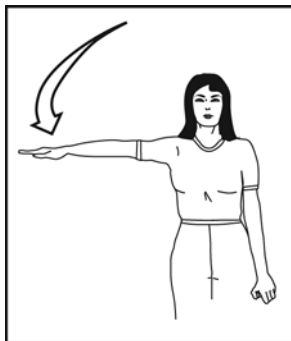
- Notate the events and heats on your copy of the program, indicating that you will have a swimmer with a disability so you won't rush the start and to give him/her more time to get in the water or get set on the block or edge of the pool.
- Practice the arm signals for a swimmer who is deaf or hard of hearing. It is sometimes awkward to hold the microphone and execute the signals.



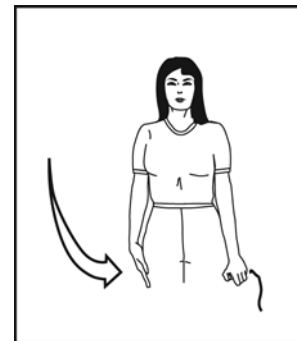
1. Twist hand at chin level:
short whistle



2. Arm overhead:
swimmer steps onto starting block



3. Arm moves to shoulder level:
signal to "take your mark"



4. Arm moves to side of body:
starting signal

- The referee may make the decision to move the strobe light for a swimmer who is deaf or hard of hearing. Or the referee may ask you, the starter, to move the strobe light to a position where the swimmer can see you more readily without craning the neck.

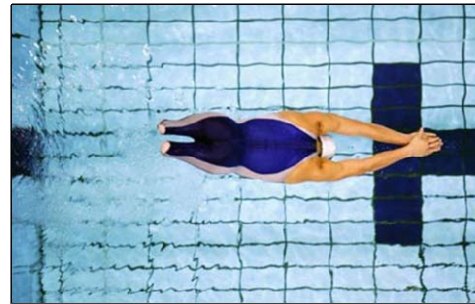
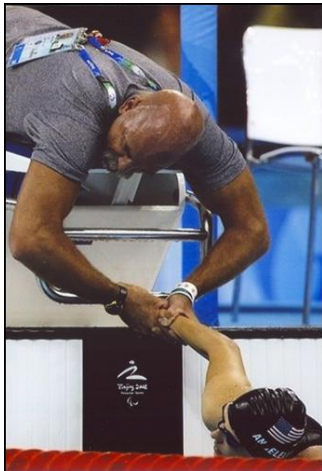
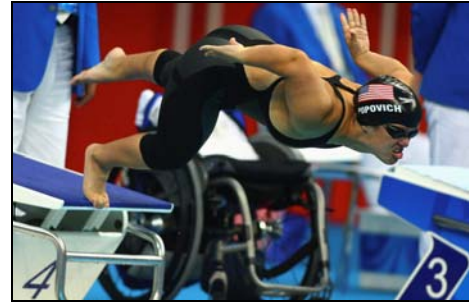
- Be aware that some swimmers will have personal assistants to help them to the block and also steady them once they're there.



- You may have a heat where there are swimmers in the water and on the side of the pool and on the blocks – PATIENCE!



More Starting Positions



- Swimmers who start in the water must remain stationary. There should be no sculling with the hand not in contact with the wall/block.
- Some swimmers, because of disability, will not be entirely stationary on the block. Give them the “benefit of the doubt” and start when you are comfortable.
- The main thing to remember is to give the entire field the best start they have ever had.
- A physical touch may be needed to signal a blind swimmer for a relay take-off when his/her relay teammate has touched the wall. The specific method may be tailored to the swimmer’s preference.
- Once again – PATIENCE, PATIENCE, PATIENCE!