



Potomac Valley Swimming

Starter Clinic





- ***Philosophy of Starting***
 - ***Significance of the position***
 - ***This position is the only position with consistent interaction with the swimmers.***
 - ***The Starter sets the tone and the tempo of the meet.***
 - ***Starter is the second in command of the meet.***
 - ***Should something happen to the Referee, the Starter must step in.***
 - ***Also, the Starter may have to fill in as a Stroke & Turn official if short-handed.***





- **Characteristics/attributes of a good starter**
 - **Outwardly calm**
 - *Even when things aren't going your way*
 - **Project confidence**
 - *Lack of confidence is infectious to swimmers (and the referee!)*
 - **Be professional at all times**
 - *The Starter's job is no place for casualness, or sloppiness.*
 - *Be aware of tendency to get tired toward end of meet.*
 - *Arrive early (min 30 mins before warm ups) to assist the referee.*
 - *Dress professionally.*





- **Characteristics / attributes of a good starter** – cont'd

- **Be totally focused and alert during the whole meet, but especially at “the start”**
 - **Make sure you are positioned where you want to be.**
 - **Must be within approximately 5 meters of starting end.**
 - **Make sure that you can see the whole field.**
 - **Clear the starting area of lingering swimmers, or timers, that might be a distraction.**
 - **For backstroke starts, position yourself even with the swimmers so that you can see the swimmers’ toes (under/over the pool edge).**
- **Don’t involve yourself with matters, concerns, controversies, etc., that do not involve you.**





- **Characteristics / attributes of a good starter – *cont'd***

- **Be FAIR**
 - **Be consistent (call it the same throughout the entire meet).**
 - **Give the swimmer the benefit of the doubt**
 - **A “false start” may have been caused by some external cause.**
- **Be patient, particularly with the swimmers.**
 - **Allow for goggles to be adjusted.**
 - **Allow for swimmers with a disability.**
 - **Stand up swimmers if they are too restless.**
 - **Do not rush the swimmers.**
 - **Remember, your sole purpose is to ensure that all competitors get a crisp and fair start.**
 - **Give the swimmers adequate time after, “take your mark”, to settle down into their starting position.**





- **Characteristics / attributes of a good starter** – *cont'd*

- **Not all individuals can be good starters.**
- **Need a calm, confident voice**
- **Tone should be conversational, not strident: crisp and concise**
 - **“Invite” the swimmers to swim. Don’t “order” them to swim.**
- **If you get flustered easily, this job may not be for you.**
- **Don’t be too wordy.**
- **Use the least amount of verbiage possible.**
- **Use standard, consistent commands.**
- **Remember, your voice is an audio queue to the swimmers that “it’s time to swim”. If they hear it too much, it loses its effect. You are not the “announcer”. If an announcement needs to be made, let the Announcer, or the Referee make it.**





C. Characteristics/attributes of a good starter – cont'd

- **Develop the proper “inflection” to your commands.**
- **Never, “Take your mark!!” Remember, - “conversational “.**
- **Practice the commands:**
 - **“Take your mark.”**
 - **“Step in”, or “step up”, or “step down”**
 - **“Place your feet”**
 - **“Stand”, or “stand, please”, or “stand down”**
 - **“Thank you, ladies/gentlemen” – to clear the pool**
 - **“Clear the pool, please”, (gentlemen/ladies”)**
 - **“Gentlemen/ladies, lane X is attempting a lead-off split of 50 meters”**
- **Don’t develop a pattern to your starting cadence (“take, your, mark, beep”).**
 - **This encourages the swimmers to anticipate the start.**
 - **The swimmers will let you know when they are ready !**





- **Pre-meet responsibilities:**

- **Equipment check**

- **Make sure starting system is, or has been, charged**
- **Make sure starting system works**
 - **Set up system if not previously done**
 - **Test sound & amplification (including check for far side speakers)**
 - **Check connection of starting cable**
- **Check stability of starting blocks**
- **Make sure you have your bell before distance events**
- **Make sure you have lap counting sheets for distance events**
- **Check for location and status of backup system in case it is needed**





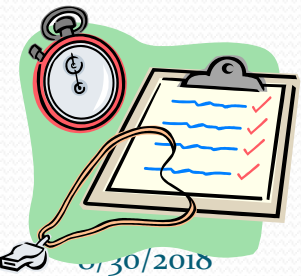
- **Pre-meet responsibilities** - cont'd:

- **Check status of timer check-in**

- *Put out Timers sign-up sheet*
- *If short of Timers, let Meet Director know.*
- *All lanes must be covered before you start.*
- *Check with referee as to extent of coverage required before starting*

- **Timers briefing**

- *Schedule for 15-20 mins prior to start of meet*
- *Notate on timers signup sheet*
- *Refer to Timer Briefing notes, (available on PVS website), and make comprehensive presentation.*
- *(see Appendix for details)*





- ***Pre-meet responsibilities*** - cont'd:
 - ***Coordination with the referee***
 - ***Know the warm-up procedures for the meet.***
 - ***You will probably be in charge of the pool during warm-ups while referee is attending officials' briefing***
 - ***“Assigned” or “Open” lanes, etc.***
 - ***Ask about the use of “dive-overs”***
 - ***Are there any swimmers with special needs?***
 - ***Review procedures for possible false start calls.***





- **Starting protocol / sequence**

- **With an Announcer**

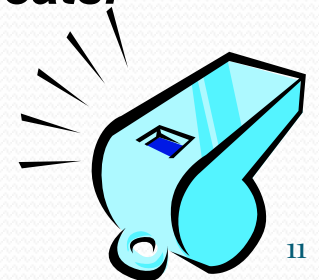
- ***The Announcer should announce the event #, age group, gender, and perhaps the heat #, including the # of heats in the event., --- after the chirps.***
 - ***Clarify this with the Announcer before the meet begins.***
 - ***Be consistent with this protocol.***

- **Without an Announcer**

- ***The Starter should assume the role of the Announcer, by stating the same above information, again, --- after the chirps.***
 - ***The full announcement just at the beginning of the event.***
 - ***Just the heat number before all subsequent heats.***

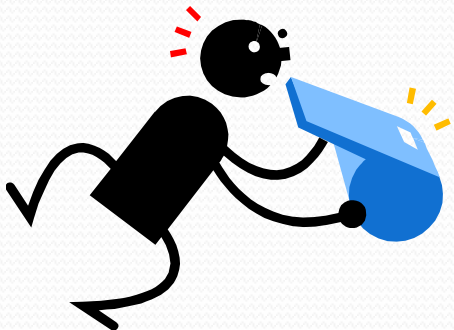


8/30/2016





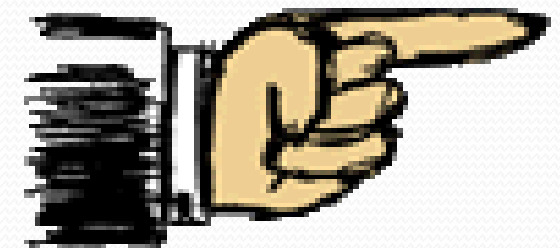
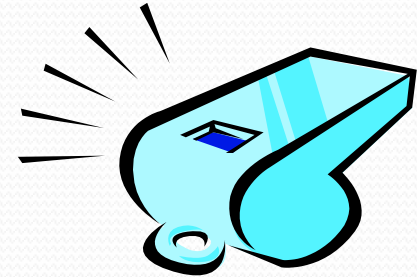
- **Starting protocol / sequence** – cont'd
 - **The Referee will issue a series of short chirps on his/her whistle.**
 - **This indicates to the swimmers the need for them to disrobe of any extraneous clothing and to approach the starting line.**
 - **Announcer, (or Starter), announces event, heat, etc.**





E. Starting protocol / sequence – cont'd

- ***The Referee will then blow a long whistle.***
- ***Referee then raises his/her arm towards the Starter.***
- ***This raised arm turns the start over to the Starter.***





- **Starting protocol / sequence** – cont'd

- **For backstroke starts, there will be two (2) long whistles, after the chirps; -- the first to invite the swimmers to enter the water, -- the second to have the swimmers place their feet on the wall.**



- **The start now belongs to YOU!**





E. Starting protocol / sequence – cont'd

- **Pause. Take a breath.**
- **“Invite” the swimmers to “Take your mark.”**
 - **“Talk” the swimmers down.**
- **Allow the swimmers to take their starting position, at a “reasonable” pace. Again, the swimmers will tell you when they are ready.**
 - **If one of the swimmers takes a significantly longer time to do so, -- “stand” -- the field up.**
 - **Don’t want any single swimmer to “control” the start.**
 - **Swimmers must have at least one foot at the front of the starting block, or edge.**
 - **Backstrokers may have toes out of the water as long as they are not curled over the edge, or in gutter.**
 - **If there seems to be too much movement, --- “Stand” them up.**
 - **If there is too much noise or a distraction, “Stand” them up.**
 - **If two “stands”, step them down**
 - **(Check with Referee)**

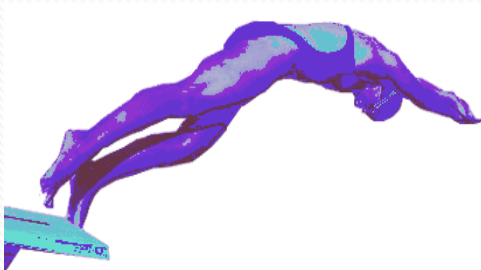


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- **Starting protocol / sequence - cont'd**
 - **Once all of these conditions have been met, (the swimmers are set, have taken their mark, and are “stationary”), --- push the starting button.**
 - **Wait “One extra heartbeat” – Pat Lunsford**
 - **Swimmers must be “stationary”, not necessarily “motionless”**
 - **Keep your finger over the button just in case there is reason to call them back.**

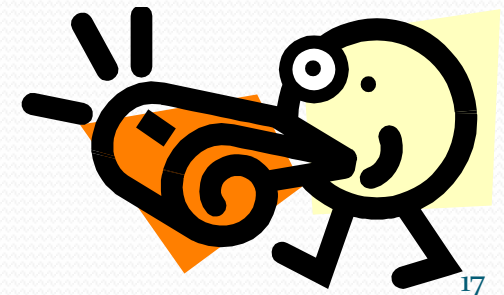


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- ***Starting protocol / sequence*** cont'd
- ***OK to issue a recall if there has been some outside distraction just prior to the start.***
 - ***Try to catch the swimmers in the air.***
 - ***No false start is to be charged.***
 - ***Stay on the recall a reasonable length of time. Otherwise, if swimmers keep swimming, try to catch them at the next wall.***
 - ***Don't panic if they swim too far. There are procedures for a re-swim.***
 - ***NEVER encourage another swimmer to jump in after a swimmer!!!***



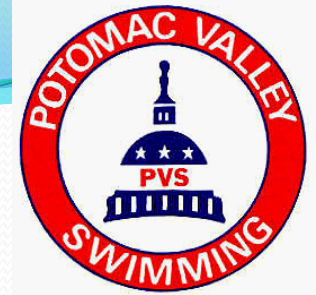


F. What to do when all does not go well!

- ***When swimmer goes into water before the starting signal (ie. signal is not given)***
 - ***First, “Stand” the rest of the field up. Have them step down, with the referee’s concurrence.***
 - ***Then determine in your own mind, why did the swimmer enter the water.***
 - ***If swimmer tried to anticipate the signal, --- **False Start.*****
 - ***If swimmer reacted to another swimmer’s movement, - **False Start.*****
 - ***If swimmer slipped and fell, --- **no False Start.*****
 - ***If swimmer reacted to outside influences (camera, noise), --- **no False Start.*****
 - ***If swimmer reacts to the “stand” command, **no False Start.*****

- - over -

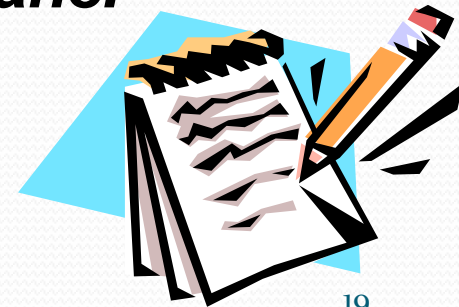




- ***What to do when all does not go well!*** -

cont'd

- ***Swimmers charged with a False Start due to an early start before the horn shall be notified by the Referee, or Chief Judge.***
 - ***This allows for the swimmer to provide input, if any, as to the reason.***
- ***When swimmer is in motion prior to starting signal (and signal has been given)***
 - ***No recall!***
 - ***Make immediate note of the correct lane.***

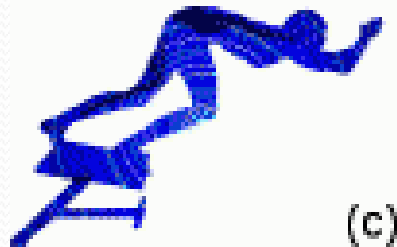




- ***What to do when all does not go well!***

– cont'd

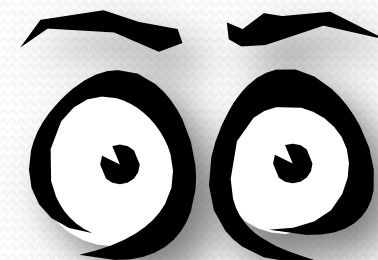
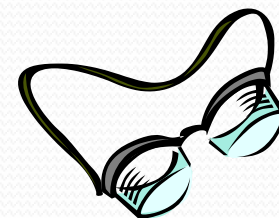
- ***Starter must initiate the call with the Referee***
 - ***“I have a problem.”***
 - ***Show marked program/heat sheet to Referee***
 - ***Referee must concur!***
- ***Starter (or Chief Judge, if used) writes up DQ slip.***
- ***Swimmers may be recalled if Starter is not comfortable with the start.***
 - ***No False Start is charged.***

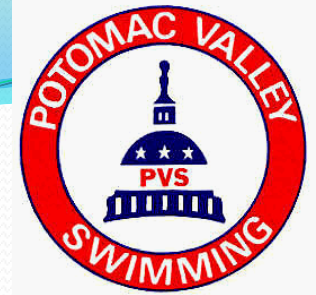




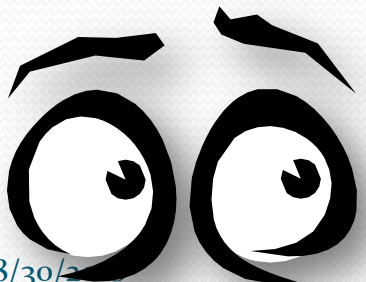
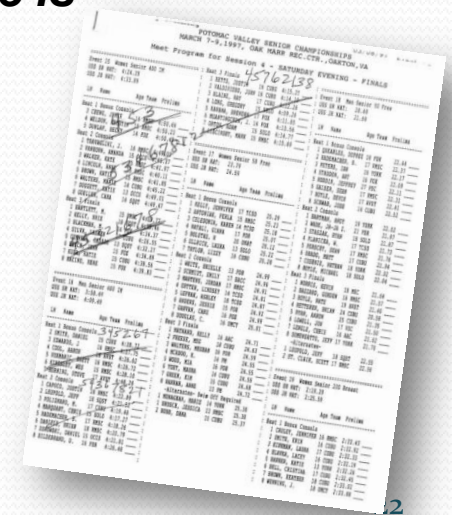
- ***What to do after the start***

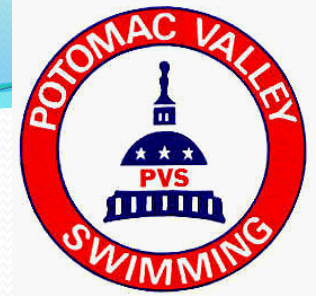
- ***Keep eyes on departing swimmers until all heads have “popped” up***
- ***Inform ETS Operator of empty lanes if requested***
- ***Maintain timeline log, if requested by referee***
- ***Observe swimmers preparing for the next heat***
 - ***Note any swimmers that might appear inordinately nervous or “twitchy”***
 - ***Try to observe where any unexpected empty lanes may occur, making DR aware of as previous heat finishes***
 - ***Help referee to keep track of last swimmer in the water, (especially if using “dive-overs”)***
 - ***Stay focused on the next swimmers behind the blocks for any last second suit adjustments that may be occurring***
 - ***Broken goggles, drag suits still in place, etc.***
 - ***Have mic in hand ready to go for next heat***





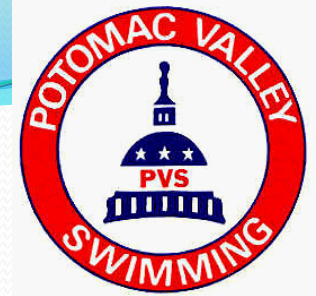
- **What to do after the start** – cont'd
 - You will probably be asked to be a “Place (or Sweep) Judge” -- **mandatory at all meets** – must be taken diligently & conscientiously.
 - This is typically referred to as “OOF” – “Order of Finish”
 - A separate common clipboard is maintained
 - Typically assigned to the “Off Starter” if more than one Starter working
 - “OOF” is used to verify placement of swimmers if there is a pad/button/watch malfunction
 - Very important to be as accurate as possible





- **What to do after the start – cont'd**
 - **Distance events - USAS Rule 101.1.4**
 - ***“With the exception of relays, in events 500 yards or longer, the Starter or a designee shall sound a warning signal over the water at the finish end of the lane of the leading swimmer when that swimmer has two lengths plus five yards or five meters to swim. As an alternative, a bell warning signal may be given over each lane by a lane judge or timer for that lane.”***
 - **Covers 500, 1000, 1650 yards, plus 800 & 1500 meters – freestyle only**
 - **Usually a bell**
 - **Ring from backstroke flag in, to backstroke flag out**
 - **Must keep track of laps on lap counting sheet**

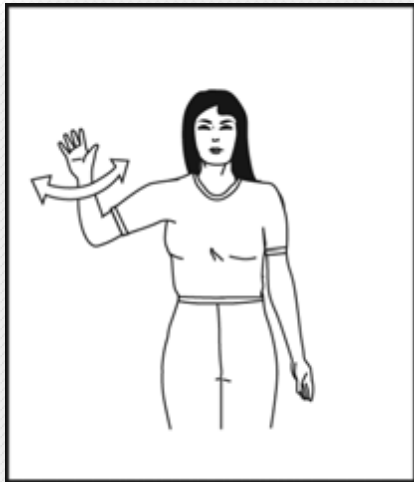




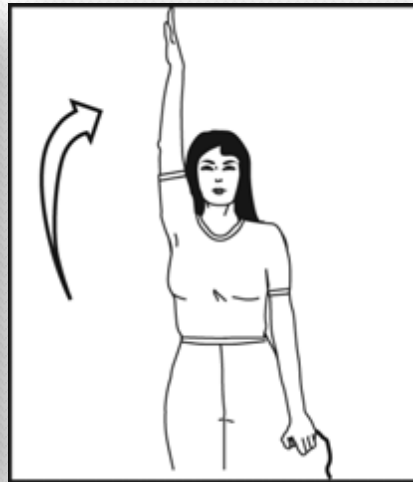
H. Special situations

1. Starting protocol for swimmers with a hearing disability

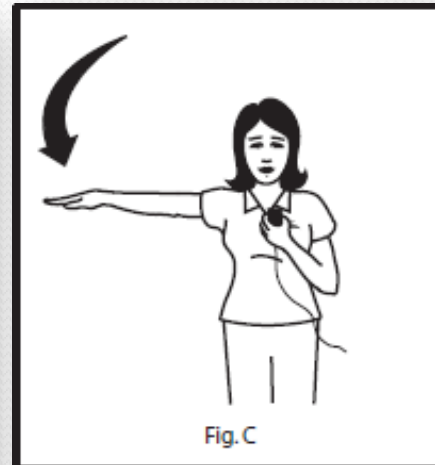
i. Use hand signals (effective May 1, 2013)



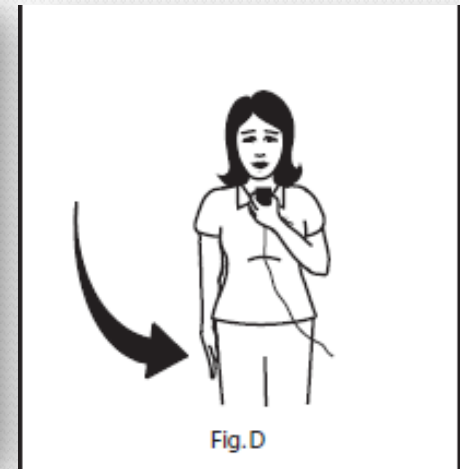
Chirps



Long whistle



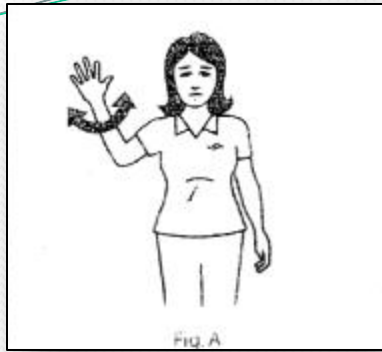
“Take your mark.”



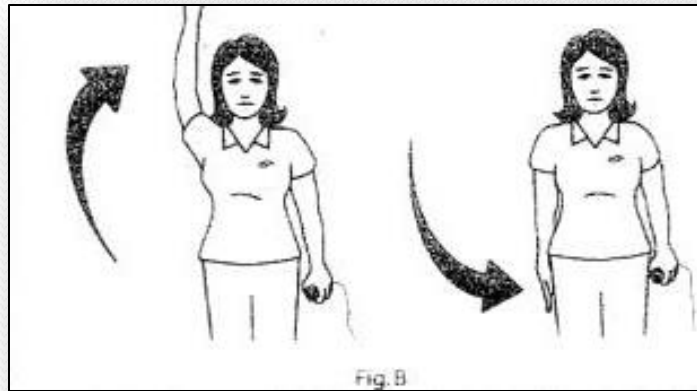
“Beep”!

Forward start

Backstroke start



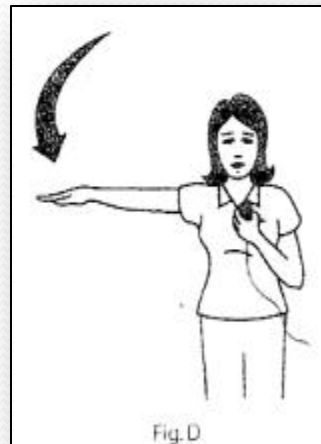
Twist hand at short whistles



Arm overhead-swimmer enters water:
drop arm to side while swimmer enters water
(1st long whistle)



Arm overhead-swimmer
returns to backstroke
start position
(2nd long whistle)



Arm moves to shoulder level
-Signal to "Take your mark".



Arm moves to side of
body-starting signal

• Certification & Recertification Procedures



• Certification

- 18 years or older
- Be a certified S&T for at least 1 year, with at least 15 sessions worked as S&T in previous year
- Attend PVS Starter clinic
- Be registered with USA Swimming
- Six training sessions at a minimum of 3 different PVS -sanctioned meets
- Start sufficient heats to allow DR or SR-mentor to evaluate performance, and perform at least 125 starts (heats) overall
- Encouraged to train at at least one distance session
- Be favorably observed at last session by authorized PVS Evaluator, and have this performance reported to PVS on the PVS Starter Evaluation Form
 - **PVS would also appreciate your evaluation, --- of the Evaluator, --- through link on the PVS website: pvswim.org/EvaluateTheEvaluator**
- Pass Starter and Recert S&T tests with 90% or better
- Complete all within one year
- Good for 2 years

• Recertification

- Attend clinic every 2 years
- Take recertification tests – 2 parts
- Work at least 4 sessions per year





PVS Officials Transfer Policies

For Officials Joining Potomac Valley Swimming

The arriving official (or the acquiring club's Officials Chairman) should contact the PVS Certification Officer (currently Lynne Gerlach) with the following information:

- Name, Phone Number, and Club Affiliation of the official
- USA Swimming Local Swimming Committee (LSC) from which Official Is Transferring – including whether that LSC is in compliance with USA Swimming's minimum standards for becoming a certified official Position(s) for which Certified to Work in the Current LSC
- Date(s) Certifications Expire
- The official will then be entered into the PVS officials database as a transferring official.





PVS Officials Transfer Policies

Stroke and Turn Judges and **Starters** (and Referees serving in those capacities) may perform those duties as a "visiting official" until the earlier of two years has elapsed or until the certification from their former LSC expires. Stroke and Turn Judges may receive their PVS Stroke and Turn Judge certification by attending a PVS conducted or approved training clinic and passing the USA Swimming test.

“Similarly, transferring **Starters** may receive their PVS certification as Starter by attending a PVS conducted training clinic, passing the USA Swimming test, and being observed at least one session by a PVS official designated to evaluate starters.”





Appendix



Colorado "Infinity" Starter



Strobe



Connector Panel

Speaker

12v Battery
Charger Input

Speaker Volume
Control

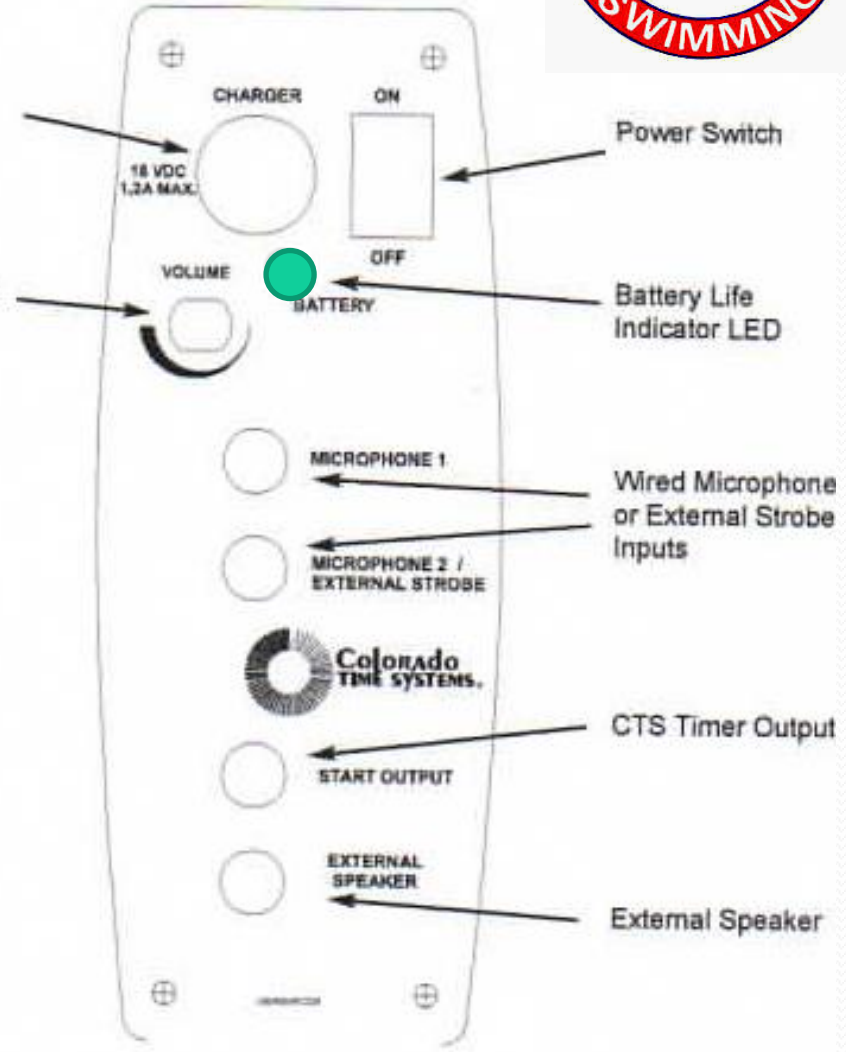
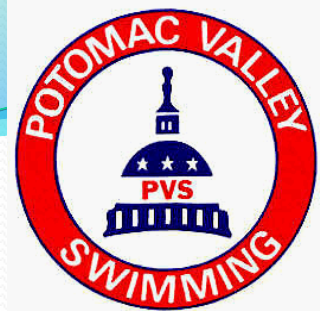


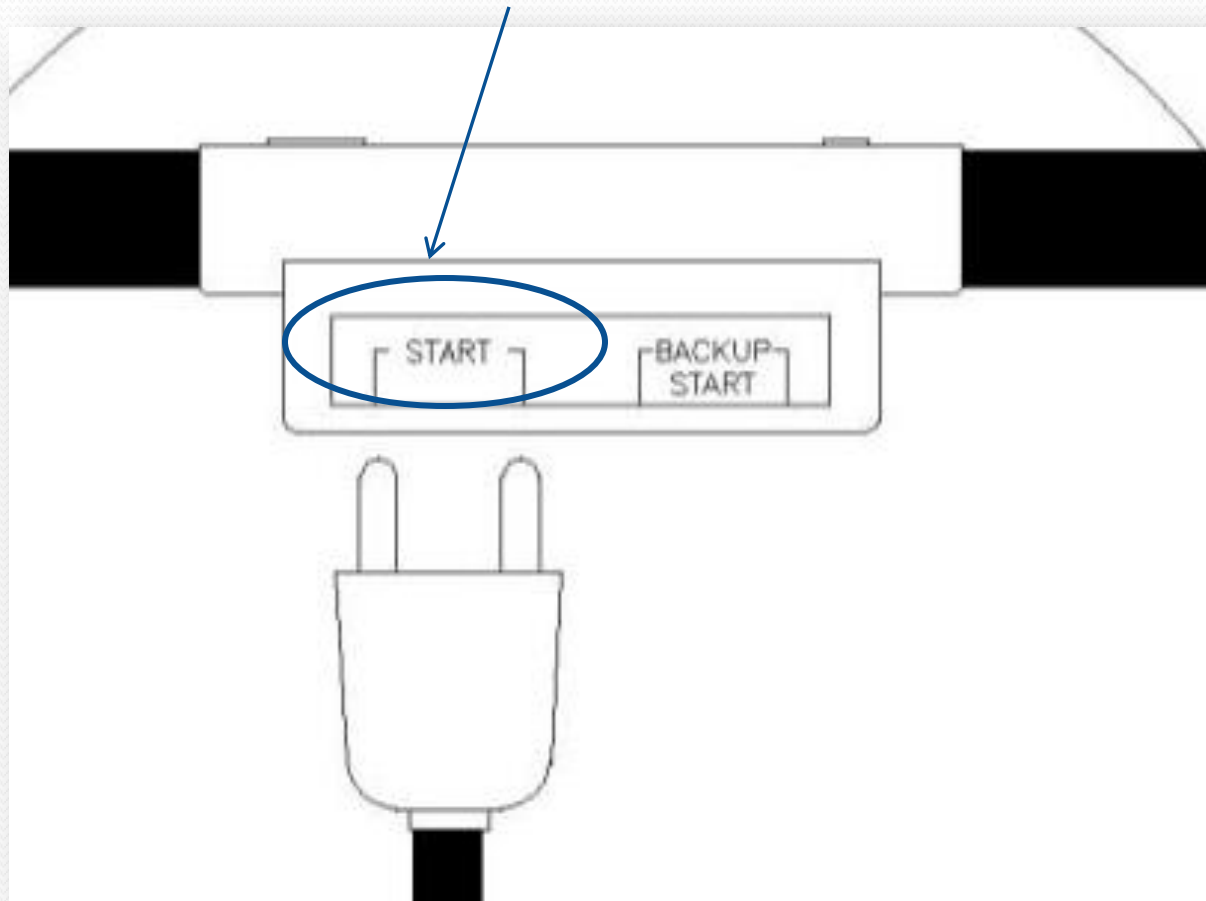
Figure B: Infinity Connection Panel

Colorado "Infinity" Starter



Make sure this is used!

Harness
connection



Colorado “Infinity” Microphone



- Press to talk
- Hold down until assured of no recall needed



- Press to initiate “start”
- Press again to initiate recall

Other starting systems used within PVS








Lap recording sheet (Vers #1 - abbreviated):

- Available for all distance events.

500 YARD FREESTYLE

EVENT _____		HEAT _____
lap	yard	order of touch
2	50	
4	100	
6	150	
8	200	
10	250	
12	300	
14	350	
16	400	
 450		
	500	

EVENT _____		HEAT _____
lap	yard	order of touch
2	50	
4	100	
6	150	
8	200	
10	250	
12	300	
14	350	
16	400	
 450		
	500	

EVENT _____		HEAT _____
lap	yard	order of touch
2	50	
4	100	
6	150	
8	200	
10	250	
12	300	
14	350	
16	400	
 450		
	500	



Lap recording sheet – (Vers #2 - abbreviated):

- Available for all distance events.

Five Hundred Sheets

	<u>Event</u>		<u>Heat</u>							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
50 (2)										
100 (4)										
150 (6)										
200 (8)										
250 (10)										
300 (12)										
350 (14)										
400 (16)										
450 (18)										
500 (20)										

	<u>Event</u>		<u>Heat</u>							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
50 (2)										
100 (4)										
150 (6)										
200 (8)										
250 (10)										
300 (12)										
350 (14)										
400 (16)										
450 (18)										
500 (20)										

Lap recording sheet - Vers #3

- "Home made!"
- Good for all short course distance events



1650 Yard Freestyle																																				
Ln\Turn#	Event # _____													Heat # _____																						
	2	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64	66			
1																																				
2																																				
3																																				
4																																				
5																																				
6																																				
7																																				
8																																				

1650 Yard Freestyle																																					
Ln\Turn#	Event _____													Heat # _____																							
	2	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64	66				
1																																					
2																																					
3																																					
4																																					
5																																					
6																																					
7																																					
8																																					



• Split recording sheet , used by timers

(abbreviated):

- Placed on timers' clipboards for recording of split times off of scoreboard

500 Yard Freestyle

Split Recording Sheet

Event #: _____

Men

Women

(circle one)

Laps	Yards	Heat #: _____	Heat #: _____	Heat #: _____
2	50			
4	100			
6	150			
8	200			
10	250			
12	300			
14	350			
16	400			
18	450	Bell	Bell	Bell
20	500			



Timer Briefing

Thank You for Stepping Up to Help Today!

- With your help and attention each swimmer will receive an accurate official time.
- Introduce yourself and the Head Timer.
- Any new timers? That's great! It's easy to learn and we'll teach you how right now.
- Please start by turning off cell phones, any device that could distract you or the swimmers.
- Remember that watches are important, but **buttons are critical**.
- **Before the Race:**
 - Timer with the clipboard, please verify that the correct swimmer/relay is present and in the correct lane, heat, and event.
 - Except for backstroke, remind previous heat to stay in the water for overhead starts.
- **At the Start:**
 - Make sure you can see the strobe; observe the strobe light and start the watch at the moment of the flash.
 - Strobes do fail occasionally; in that case, start the watch on the sound.
 - Please start the watch even if your lane is empty, just in case a backup is needed.





Timer Briefing - cont'd

Immediately After the Start:

- Check the watch to ensure it has started and is working properly.
- If you miss the start or if the watch malfunctions, raise watch overhead to signal the Head Timer.

During the Race:

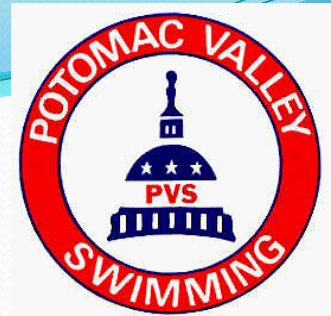
- Keep track of the race and the distance completed by your swimmer.
- Timer with the clipboard should be verifying the swimmer in the next heat.
- If a swimmer misses a heat, send the swimmer to the Referee.



At the Finish:

- Come forward to the edge of the pool, look directly down the wall.
- Stop the watch **and the button** when any part of your swimmer touches the end of the racing course.
- **Remember, buttons are critical!**
- Timers and officials share deck space at the finish—please be considerate of one another.





Timer Briefing cont'd

After the Finish:

- Step back to make space for the next swimmer.
- Timer with the clipboard records the watch time(s) on the sheet in the same order for each heat.
- Record “NS” if the swimmer missed the race.
- Note any other problems (late or missed pad, etc.)
- Remind swimmer to remain in the pool (except for Backstroke, or if dive-over starts not being used)
- **Additional Instructions (depending on circumstances):**
 - Cameras not permitted behind the blocks.
 - Do timers need to move to opposite end of the pool for any events?
 - Are swimmers starting any events from opposite end of the pool?
 - For relays, verify the order of the swimmers on the relay team.
 - For distance events, are timers counting lengths or ringing bells?
 - Any other special instructions?
- **Again, Thank You for Supporting Your Swimmers Today!**



Mini-Meets: 25 yard events go to other end of pool.

Long Course Meters: 50 meter events, swimmers start from other end.

Situations: (Source USAS 4/5/2012)

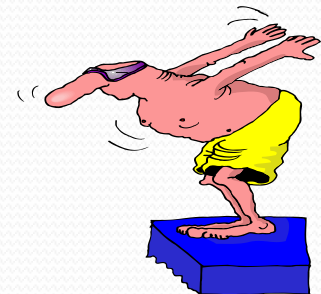


FALSE START SCENARIO #1

Swimmer leaves the set or stationary position prior to the starting signal. The starting signal is then given. The race proceeds and, assuming the Starter observed the early start and the Deck Referee independently observes and confirms the Starter's observation, the offending swimmer is disqualified at the conclusion of the race. Rule 101.1.3B applies. **This is a false start.**

FALSE START SCENARIO #2

Swimmer leaves the set or stationary position prior to the starting signal. The swimmer upon realizing the early starting motion attempts to catch himself/herself. Starter says absolutely nothing, and the swimmer fails to halt the forward motion and goes into the pool. Rule 101.1.3A applies. **This is a false start.**



Situations:



FALSE START SCENARIO #3

Exactly the same facts as #2 above, but this time the Starter says “stand please” after the swimmer leaves the set or stationary position. The seven other swimmers stand or step down from the blocks. The offending swimmer struggles, but once again is unable to halt the forward motion and falls into the pool. Unlike scenario #2 above, here the starter said “stand please”, but that does not change the false start result. The rule is clear that the "stand" command is for the benefit of the other swimmers on the starting blocks. When the stand command is issued, the athletes have the option of standing or stepping off the blocks. The offending swimmer did neither. He fell into the pool just like the swimmer in scenario #2. Rule 101.1.3A applies. **This is a false start.**

FALSE START SCENARIO #4

Exactly the same facts as scenarios #2 and #3 above. However, this time when the command “stand please” is issued, the offending swimmer struggles, but is able to stand or step off the blocks. Rule 101.1.3A applies. **This is NOT a false start.** Why? Because the swimmer remained on the blocks or deck like everyone else in the heat, and no starting signal ever sounded.

Situations:



FALSE START SCENARIO #5

Exactly the same facts as scenarios #2 and #3 above. However, when the Starter gives the “stand please” command a swimmer(s) other than the offending swimmer instantly bolts from the blocks and enters the water. Rule 101.1.3D applies. The swimmer(s) clearly started in reaction to the “stand” command. **This is NOT a false start.**

FALSE START SCENARIO #6

The swimmer, upon hearing the command “take your mark” starts down to take a set or stationary position. The swimmer loses his/her balance before coming set and falls into the pool. Rule 101.1.2C applies. The swimmer should be given the opportunity to come to his/her set or stationary position prior to the start. A loss of balance prevented that, and clearly this swimmer never engaged in any starting action.

This is NOT a false start.



Remember: “Treat every start like it is the last start you will ever make!” -- Pat Lunsford – Olympic Starter 2004



***Thank you!
Good luck!
See you on deck!***

