

## Swimming Referee and Starter Responsibilities

The following information is located in the 2017-18 Swimming Officials Guidelines Manual and provides the responsibilities before, during, and after the contest.

### The Referee – Before the Meet

Before the meet begins, the referee should survey the pool, paying particular attention to the following:

- Survey the physical layout of the pool, including markings, lanes lines and deck area for any safety or rule concerns. Determine how the entire pool will be officiated and how officials will communicate with each other during the meet. Share this information with the full officiating crew.
- The water level, depth at the starting end, temperature and clarity.
- The starting block height and stability of the blocks.
- The location and adequacy of the backstroke flags and 15-meter markings.
- The starting and timing systems, including touch pads centered in the lanes, recall device and backup timing procedure.
- Availability of an adequate number of operable lap counting devices.
- The ordering and numbering of the lanes.

### The Referee – During the Meet

- Prior to each heat, not let swimmers step onto the blocks, or into the pool, until they are directed to do so by the referee. Call the swimmers to the starting platforms without delay (see starting infractions and starting protocol). Inform the starter when it is time for the starting commands to begin. The referee must be aware that any swimmer can request to start from the deck or in the water.
- Be prepared to handle any declared false starts.
- Be in position between 5 to 15 feet from the starting end and carry a sounding device (i.e. air horn), to recall the start in the event of an unfair start due to crowd noise or other unforeseen circumstances, *if necessary*. The referee shall notify competitors and coaches of any starting infractions. An entire heat may be recalled without charging any swimmer with a false start.
- Determine disqualifications and promptly notify competitors and/or their coaches of infractions resulting in a disqualification. This notification may be accomplished with a verbal announcement if the competitor and/or coach cannot be reached without further delay of the meet. Swimmers committing a false start are disqualified either before the starting signal is given or at the conclusion of the race, depending on the circumstances.
- Resolve any disagreement about a race in a timely manner.
- Determine when it is appropriate to integrate backup times.
- Keep the meet progressing without unnecessary delays and have the results announced promptly, when possible.
- Before the 500-yard/400-meter freestyle, meet with the lap counters and instruct them to count the competitor's laps by changing the numbers to the next higher or lower number. Each school has the duty to adequately train individuals to serve as lap counters for their own competitors. However, if the lap counter has no experience, the official may need to instruct of the basic responsibilities.

- Be aware of how many laps each swimmer has completed in the 500-yard/400-meter freestyle to confirm the lap count is correct.
- Signal, by raising one hand over the head with open palm, immediately upon observing any swimming violation, except for relay takeoffs and no-recall false starts in meets using dual confirmation.
- Prohibit the use of bells, sirens, horns or other noise makers, as well as signs, cheers and remarks that could be deemed as offensive or unsporting, during the meet. Be aware of any state association policies regarding the same. This might include cell phones that could affect the start of a race.
- It is recommended that the referee record the unofficial order of finish for each heat. Be in position to independently determine the order of finish for all lanes. Record the order of finish for each lane of each heat and keep a record of disqualifications.
- Declare a dual meet a forfeit, score 12-0, when the following conditions exist:
  - Without notification to the host team, the visiting team is not ready to begin within 30 minutes of the scheduled starting time. Be aware of state association policies concerning this issue.
  - A team refuses to continue competition after the meet has started.
  - A coach has been ejected from the competitive area and no authorized school personnel are present to assume responsibility for the team.
- For outdoor meets, be familiar with the NFHS Lightning Guidelines and be prepared to stop or suspend a meet when required. Be aware of any local host school policies and local/state health department regulations.
- Bring non-compliant swimmer/diver attire to the attention of the coach. Coaches should be reminded of what is not permitted to be worn or displayed during warm-ups and competition.

#### **The Referee – After the Meet**

- Check the scorer's calculations to ensure an accurate final score, sign the official scoresheet and record the time the meet was completed. This is the official score, unless a clerical error is discovered within 48 hours.
- If the state association requires, file reports for any disqualifications for unsporting conduct or other similar necessary reports.
- Discuss with the host meet management any concerns regarding the facility or other on-site concerns.

#### **The Starter- Before the Meet**

- Become familiar with the starting end of the pool and be aware of any concerns that may interfere with the fair starts, i.e. traffic flow, obstructions, photographers, etc.
- Check the starting and recall equipment, and become familiar with that equipment.
- Be sure the volume of the sound system is adequate so all swimmers can easily hear the starting commands.
- Check the position of the strobe light to ensure it can be seen by all swimmers on the blocks, as well as the timers.
- Review starting procedures and protocol with the referee.

### **The Starter – During the Meet**

- Have an unobstructed view of the swimmers on the starting blocks and be located within 5 feet +/- of where the side wall of the pool meets the end wall.
- Speak slowly and clearly and give the starting commands in a conversational tone. A good thought is that you are “inviting” the swimmer into a starting position. Avoid speaking rapidly and in sharp tones.
- Direct his/her attention toward the entire field during and immediately after the start. The starter should NOT turn his/her attention away from the swimmers to hang up the microphone immediately after starting the race.
- If a fair start is impossible to achieve after giving the “Take your mark” command, have the swimmers stand up. Give any reminders that may be needed to ensure a fair start and repeat the starting sequence. The referee may need to blow another long whistle and ask for quiet if there is crowd noise that, in the opinion of the starter, interferes with a fair start.
- Disqualify a swimmer at the completion of the heat if he/she is observed in a non-compliant suit.
- Activate the recall device immediately if an entire race is being recalled due to an unfair start. If using the horn or other sounding device for the recall, be sure all swimmers have surfaced before discontinuing the sounding device so swimmers can hear the recall.
- Confer with the referee to confirm all false starts when a referee and starter are present, when requested.
- Discharge, or by way of the starter’s designee, a sounding device when the lead swimmer in the 500-yard/400-meter freestyle has two lengths plus 5 yards remaining in the race.
- It is recommended that the referee record the unofficial order of finish for each heat. Be in position to independently determine the order of finish for all lanes. Record the order of finish for each lane of each heat and keep a record of disqualifications.