

Race Starter – Process & Procedure

The following is a quick outline of the requirements for starting a race between the Referee and Starter for BSC meets, but is aligned to Swim England rules.

Starter Setup

- 1) The starting system should have been put on charge prior to the meet, normally by one of the technical team.
- 2) Placement of the starting system depends upon the location of the Referee and any attachment required to the electronic timing system (AOE). At Berkhamsted Sportspace, as you view the pool looking from the gallery, it is on the far wall on the left alongside the starting blocks. In Knox Johnston again looking from the gallery it is the far wall to the right alongside the starting blocks.
- 3) The starting system sits atop a tripod on a horizontal platform (at the top of the tripod) and a small screw on this platform then holds the starter system in place.
- 4) The mic needs to be plugged into the Microphone 1 port and the AOE cable in the Starter Output port. (currently AOE is not used at Berkhamsted Sportspace).

Initial Starter Test Prior to Start

- 5) Prior to the meet starting, the Starter needs to do a test start, announcer will normally make it known (if we have one). If AOE is in use, the technical teams also need to know so that the systems do not think it is the beginning of the meet.
- 6) The test should consist of a short test statement, by pressing in and holding in the lever on the side of the mic and saying “this is a test start”, followed by pressing the red button on top of the mic.
- 7) Check that the light in top of the starting system then flashes and the system also makes a loud noise.

Starting Races

- 8) At the start of a race, once the Referee is happy they will blow 4 short whistles to get the swimmers attention.
- 9) They will then blow a longer whistle to get the swimmers to mount the blocks and assume a ready position (this is up to the swimmer if they assuming the full starting position).
For backstroke this single whistle means get in the pool, the Referee will then blow again to get the swimmers to place feet on the wall/backstroke blocks.
- 10) The Referee will then raise their arm to show that they are now handing over to the Starter.
- 11) The Starter then says “Take your marks”.
 - a. For younger inexperienced swimmers, make sure the swimmers have toes curled over the edge if on the block (this ensures they don’t slip when starting), holding the base to stabilise themselves. The experienced swimmers will set themselves up as suits them.
 - b. Starting backstroke in the water, feet must be on the wall, not in the gutter.
 - c. If the swimmers are not still or when you speak you get a whistle from the speaker stand the swimmers down and move away from the speaker, then start again from point 8).
 - d. If someone falls in or moves and you have not pressed the red button, stand the swimmers down. Under normal circumstances the swimmer would then be disqualified, but our internal events we do not. The coach will go and have a quick word.
- 12) Then press the red button to start the race.
- 13) If someone has false started then this needs reporting to the Referee.
- 14) Take a breath, smiles 😊. Once a race has finished then you can leave the swimmers in the pool until the start of the next race (except for backstroke), if we are not time limited. Always ask them to get out at the sides, but not over any timing boards (good practice to get them into the routine).