

# Midlakes Whistle Start Procedure

1. **Referee signals the swimmers to get into position behind the blocks and ready to step up or in by blowing a series (more than 3) of short whistles ("chirps").** This will usually happen just after the last swimmer of the previous heat has completed their distance (or possibly even earlier). This signal needs to be timed such that you can keep the meet moving along.
2. **Announcer (or Starter, if necessary) calls out the event, heat and instructs the swimmers to the back of the blocks.** The Announcer then hands the heat over to the Referee. Referees should coordinate the timing of the whistles and announcements with the Announcer prior to the beginning of the meet.
3. **Referee signals swimmers to step up onto the blocks or into the water by blowing one long whistle blast** (for backstroke, a second long whistle blast when the Referee is ready to have swimmers return to the wall and place their feet). This will be fairly quick in meets that are being run as fast as possible, and not so quick in other circumstances (such as Finals where the swimmers names are being announced, or where the Referee is waiting for something to finish or occur before getting the swimmers up/in). If the swimmers do not respond in a reasonable period of time, the Referee may indicate by arm motion to step up/in.

**There are still optional instructions that may be given by the Starter. These are:**

- Event, stroke & distance.
  - Advise the heat of a swimmer attempting a time at an initial distance.
  - Place your feet (for backstroke starts).
  - Notify relay swimmers to leave the pool promptly.
4. *In most cases, we combine Starter/Ref, so we don't use this step except in prelims/A champs. When ready to turn swimmers over to the Starter, the Referee will signal with an out-stretched arm to the starter (the Referee should be in a position for the Starter to see the arm). This action "closes" the heat. Referees should continue to use their discretion at this point for any late arriving swimmers. If needed, have the Starter step the heat down, and find out why the swimmer was late. The out-stretched arm shall be kept there until the swimmers leave the blocks.*
  5. The Starter, upon being given control by the Referee, will check for any starting problems (toes in backstroke, swimmers or timers in the way, etc), and correct any observed problems. There will now be a pause (take a deep breath, scan the field up and down, or whatever works for you to ensure that a pause happens). When the field is ready, say "Take Your Mark". That is ALL you say.
  6. Observe the field getting into position (at least one foot at the front edge of the platform). Once everyone is in position and has stopped moving, issue the start signal. Be patient for the swimmers to become still. But don't wait too long, if necessary, instruct them to "Stand/Stand Up." When swimmers are motionless, give the start signal.
  7. Should one or more swimmers move before the starting signal, the Starter will instruct them to "Stand/Stand Up." If a swimmer starts before the starting signal and the starting signal has been given, the recall signal will be given and swimmers return to the starting area. The Starter will call the swimmers back into position and say "The first false start is charged to the field, the next false start will be charged to the lane." and the starting procedure is repeated. If there is a second false start (by any swimmer), that swimmer is disqualified from swimming. It is the discretion of the Starter/Ref as to allowing that swimmer to compete as exhibition.
  8. Swimmers may also be disqualified if there is significant delay in their response to the starting instructions. This is a "delay of meet" disqualification.