



Starter Apprentice (XS)

Name _____

Club _____

Email _____

Date _____

Prior to 1st Apprentice Session:

- Certified as a Stroke & Turn Judge for at least 3 months
Have worked at least 4 sessions over a min of 2 meets
- Maintain an Official Membership – It must be in Good Standing
- Complete the Starter Clinic & Assessment

For your Apprentice Sessions:

- Try to contact the Meet Referee prior to the scheduled session.
- Bring your Apprentice paperwork with you to each session.
- Attend the sessions' Officials Meeting (Requirement)
- You will be assigned a Mentor for each session.

Requirements for Certification:

- Apprentice a minimum of 4 Training Sessions at a min of 2 different meets with 2 different Mentors***
- Show that you meet the Certification Performance Requirements for Certification included in this document
- Submit your Apprentice paperwork to your Officials Area Representative.

Session	Meet Name	Date	Mentor xx	Meet Referee	Always Make Comments
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					

*** - Freestyle only sessions do not count

xx-Mentors, please review the performance requirements with Apprentice.

During your apprenticeship you must maintain your USA Swimming Official Membership in Good Standing. Failure to have a current USA Swimming Membership will exclude you from working on deck.

Bring your Apprentice paperwork with you to each and every sessions that you work. This is documentation to show sessions completed and notes from your Mentors/Meet Referees. Your sessions in this log needs to match your OTS report. If there is a difference we will work with you to get this corrected.

Remember that requirement for completing the apprenticeship is a min of 4 sessions and showing you meet the performance requirements listed on the next page of this document. If after your 4th session you feel that you need more time, you are welcome to continue apprenticing. When you feel that you are ready for certification, talk with your Meet Referee, during the Officials breifing, at your final meet and ask to review the performance requirements and recommendation for certification. If it is determined that after your requested review that more time is needed, the Meet Referee and you will develop an Action Plan on what needs to be worked on so that you can be successful in gaining this certification.

Once a Meet Referee signs the Performance Requirements, this is your recommendation for certification. You will need to make sure that a scan of the log sheet and the completed Performance Requirements forms are submitted to your Officials Area Rep. (Contact information is below.) The Area Rep will review the paperwork and submit it to the Official Chair for certification. You should see your new certification in your OTS record within a week of submission. If you do not see that certification please feel free to reach out to the Area Rep and Officials Chair.

Area 1 Rep	John Dupee	johndupee@bellsouth.net
Area 2 Rep	Bart Smith	bls9714@yahoo.com
Area 3 Rep	Deanna Kaufman	deanna.kaufman@outlook.com
Area 4 Rep	Carl Moore Jr	camoore@fsu.edu
Area 5 Rep	Jen Seluk	tribeseluk@comcast.net
Area 6 Rep	Dave Nesper	dnesper68@gmail.com

		OFFICIAL'S NAME			
		CERTIFIER'S NAME			
STARTER CERTIFICATION					
DEFINITIONS					
Certifier: An official designated by the LSC OC to certify training is complete.					
Clinic: Formal in person or online training clinic, recorded in Officials Tracking System (OTS).					
Certification: Starter able to officiate at all LSC meets.					
Satisfactory Performance: Able to demonstrate Performance Requirements. Deficiencies must be provided by LSC OC or designee in writing to the affected official with an Action Plan to success.					
Sessions: At USA Swimming sanctioned or approved meets, recorded in OTS.					
Trainer: Designated by the Referee at a meet or LSC OC, an official who has been USA Swimming certified in the position for 1+ year. If a 1+ year experienced official is not on deck, the Referee may select the most experienced certified official(s) to be a trainer(s).					
Training Sessions: Meet sessions that include strokes and/or relays. Time Trials and Freestyle Only sessions may not count toward training session requirements. Sessions shall be recorded in OTS.					
USA Swimming Member: Completed all USAS member associated requirements before on deck apprenticeship.					
Apprenticeship Requirements					
	USA Swimming Member				
	Certified Stroke & Turn Judge for a minimum of 3 months. Worked at least 4 sessions at a minimum of 2 meets since ST				
	Attend Starter training clinic				
	Apprentice as Starter for at least 4 training sessions total, over 2 meets with 2 trainers. Trainer can be the Deck Referee. OR Coach and Athlete Members with 5+ years of USA Swimming experience shall apprentice as a starter for at least 2 training sessions with a trainer.				
	Pass the USA Swimming Starter online certification test with a score of 80% or more.				
Certification Performance Requirements for Certification May be evaluated during last apprentice session and use MR sign-off for each session. Y-Yes, N-No, ND - Not Demonstrated					
	Arrives on-time, prepared with necessary personal equipment and properly & professionally attired				
	Knows the rules for starting				
	Demonstrate ability to start swimmers across a wide range of age and proficiency				
	Understands basic starting protocols and procedures (distance counting, OOF, etc.)				
	Understands how to start swimmers with disabilities				
	Demonstrates the start for a hearing impaired swimmer				
	Demonstrates both forward and backstroke starts				
	Understands how the starting system operates				
	Establishes a comfortable starting position on deck for both forward and back starts				
	Demonstrates ability to communicate and interact with the DR (positioning, inserting swimmers, etc...)				
	Prepared and in position prior to each heat; comfortable holding microphone and securing cord				
	Delivers TYM calmly and with necessary volume				
	Shows PATIENCE before delivering TYM and starting signal				
	Understands the use of Other Commands				
	Understands and practices the False Start Protocol				
	Always gives the benefit of the doubt to the swimmer.				
	Understands performance criteria as outlined in Starter Professional Document				
	Understands USA Swimming Safe Sport and MAAPP rules.				
Comments (if needed)					
Signature of MR (Final)					
Recommend Certification as Starter Certification must be complete within one year of the SR clinic. Understands need to return completed evaluation form to the official's LSC Officials Chair or designee.					
STARTER RECERTIFICATION EVERY 3 YEARS					
	Be a current non-athlete member of USA Swimming in good standing.				
	Work at least 8 sessions, within a 3 year period, as a Starter				
	Attend clinic (recommend Starter Clinic) every 3 years				
	USA Swimming recertification test every 3 years for the highest certification held				
	Satisfactory performance				

The “Professional” Starter -or- It’s more than three short words!

The “Professional” Starter should:

- **Know the Rules** and the protocols, procedures, and philosophies for being a successful starter
- **Be on time for each session and officials’ briefing, dressed appropriately in a professional manner**
- **Be flexible and adaptable to all procedures made by the Meet Referee or Head Starter that may differ from the suggested guidelines offered in this document**
- **Confirm assignments, rotations, and invigilating schedule with the Head Starter:**
 - Be aware how heats will run – fly-overs, cleared pool, flighting, or events or heats alternating by gender
 - Confirm the meet procedures for Starters that may include additional responsibilities, including:
 - timer instruction - be aware of timing system (number of buttons and watches or cameras) and provide instruction to timers at the designated time established by meet director
 - a rotation involving stroke or turn judging, taking order-of-finish, distance counting, ringing the bell for the lead swimmer in a distance heat, relay take-off judging or head timer responsibilities
 - Be aware of swimmers with disabilities who may require special starting accommodations and know the rules and procedures
- **Confirm meet protocol and procedures for the Starter-Deck Referee (DR) teams and with the individual Deck Referees with whom you are teamed:**
 - Work as a team with the Deck Referees and Chief Judges
 - Be aware when jurisdiction will be turned over to Starter, indicated by Deck Referee’s out-stretched arm
 - Confirm how to make Deck Referees aware of next-up swimmers behind the blocks affected by suit malfunctions, cap or goggle issues or unexpected empty lanes
- **Pre-Meet and Pre-Session:**
 - Become familiar with the starting system by checking the equipment during the session warm-up period
 - There are a variety of microphones in use. Practice with the mic during warm-ups to feel comfortable with the device
 - Omega microphones display a green light when the timing system is ready for the next start. When outdoors, confirm you can clearly see the green light and be prepared to notify the DR when the green light has not been displayed
 - Check your voice level in the microphone with another Starter monitoring the audio level in all lane speakers
 - After confirming with the equipment staff, perform a test start to get a feel for how sensitive the starting button may be
 - Find your optimum deck positions for both forward and back starts so that all swimmers can be clearly and individually viewed
 - Find out where the Deck Referee will stand adjacent to your position. Ask him or her to extend their arm so that it can be seen in your peripheral vision, without blocking your view of the swimmers. Make sure you and the DR are standing close enough that you can converse quietly. It may be about swimmer issues, green lights, step down requests, etc.
 - Be prepared with a master starter heat sheet if you have been asked to use one for marking all false starts, no shows, declared false starts, and any other notes. Also acquire an OOF (Order Of Finish) heat sheet, if the meet’s procedures call for the off-duty starter to take OOF
- **During the Start:**
 - Assume your deck position to start the upcoming heat prior to the finish of the current heat. In some cases, the previous event’s results are scrolled on the scoreboard, allowing for a bit more time to take position
 - Your body language should convey that you are relaxed and confident
 - On the long whistle (second long whistle for the back start), have the microphone in a “ready” position
 - Secure the cord by holding it with your free hand
 - When all swimmers have stepped on the blocks the Deck Referee will turn over jurisdiction to the Starter

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- Be patient when allowing all swimmers to assume the position on the blocks they want to use for the start. Watch to see their feet are in the final chosen position. The swimmers will then show you when they’re ready to hear the “Take Your Mark” instruction
 - If “track style” starting platforms are used, swimmers may require a bit more time to assume their position
 - If “backstroke ledges” are used, ensure at least one toe from each foot is in direct contact with the end wall or timing pad prior to the start, but not curled over the top of the pad, gutter or end wall or above them
- Deliver the “Take Your Mark” instruction in a calm, conversational tone that’s loud enough for the swimmers to hear over any possible crowd noise, but not so loud the instruction sounds like a shouted command. Use a cadence that is inviting with a slight falling in pitch
- Swimmers start the heats – not the starter! Be patient - the swimmers will show you through their body language when they are ready to hear “Take Your Mark” and for the starting signal
- When that “sweet spot” moment is achieved, and the swimmers are stationary, push the starting button
- After the start be ready to take the mic in the event the heat needs to be recalled
- The microphone should be to a position where it can’t be bumped, and the cord isn’t in a traffic zone that could cause tripping
- Step out of the starting area to allow more room for Deck Referee, Chief Judge and Stroke Judge
 - Avoid conversing with the DR unless it involves a possible false start or another timely matter
- Using the Starter’s heat sheet, confirm the next heat’s swimmers are reporting to the assigned lanes. Note on the heat sheet any “no shows”, “declared false starts”, false starts or other matters for which there should be a record
- Begin preparations to start the next heat
- **Use the False Start Protocol:**
 - Remember the definition of a false start: *Any swimmer **starting** before the starting signal is given, shall be disqualified if the Referee independently observes and confirms the Starter’s observation that a false start occurred.*
 - After the start and the microphone is replaced, calmly mark the Starter heat sheet to indicate which heat and lane the false start was observed. Double-check that mark for accuracy of heat and lane
 - Any mark can be used as long as the Deck Referee can tell a particular heat and lane has been indicated, whether it’s circling the lane number, underlining the lane number and name, placing a visible dot next to the lane, etc.
 - Show the marked heat sheet to the Deck Referee and implement the procedure discussed prior to the start of the meet. It should include pointing out the heat and lane, as well as verbally indicating a false start was observed. The Deck Referee should also show the Starter his/her marked heat sheet as confirmation of a false start. Under no circumstance should a false start confirmation be based solely on a discussion.
 - When a Chief Judge is available, they will fill out the disqualification form and hand it to the Starter for signature. Double check the event, heat, lane and, possibly the name and team, have been correctly noted and the false start box was checked before signing and handing the form back to the Chief Judge
 - When a Chief Judge is not available, the Starter completes and signs the disqualification form before handing it to the Referee for final sign-off
 - If necessary, note any peculiarities to the false start on the heat sheet for later reference; possibly when advising a coach or swimmer of the observed action
 - Don’t hesitate to use the recall option if you feel an external noise (ex. coach’s whistle) or motion (activity around the starting blocks) has interfered with a swimmer’s ability to achieve a fair start
- **When Using Other Commands;**
 - To address the athletes with the microphone, refer to the swimmers as “Ladies” and “Gentlemen”
 - Remember to use “Please” and “Thank you”

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- If it is necessary to stand the field after the TYM instruction, for both forward and back starts, say, “Stand *please*”
- If the Deck Referee asks for the swimmers to step off the blocks, say, “Ladies (Gentlemen), step down carefully please”
- The Deck Ref may request you clear pool by saying “Thank you Ladies/Gentlemen.” If more instruction is needed, say, “Ladies/Gentlemen, please clear the pool”
- Use of the “Relax please Ladies/Gentlemen” instruction means it will be a prolonged period before the starting sequence will begin. The “Relax” instruction should not be used in place of a “Stand Please” instruction for backstroke starts
- If a swimmer’s toes are curled over the top of the pad, or not in contact with the pad when ledges are used prior to the start of the backstroke, address the swimmer by saying, “Lane 7, toes please”

Please refer to the Certification Requirements for Starter for information on N2 and N3 evaluations, certification, and recertification.

<https://www.usaswimming.org/officials/national-certification-evaluation>