

HEAD STARTER RESPONSIBILITIES

The following is a set of guidelines that a person should follow when performing the duties of a Head Starter whether it is a national championship or an LSC level meet. Some items may not apply as heavily at an LSC level but should still be considered. The level of the meet and how long starters have worked together will determine the degree to which each is followed.

The Head Starter should:

1. Get acquainted with the team of referees and starters.
2. Assign the starter/recall starter and possibly the referee rotation IF requested by the referee. If pre-meet communication is difficult, have a tentative schedule prepared.
3. Meet with the referee to answer/ask questions about specific procedures and then meet with the starters to discuss details of the meet, commands, and protocol.
4. Check equipment and make sure starters know how it works; check daily. Also, assist the referee by checking the blocks and pool layout.
5. Be a mentor – observe, offer positive comments and encouragement, constructive criticism when asked or following the meet.
6. Be a part of the leadership team and set a positive example.
7. Do other tasks as requested by the meet referee or your deck referee.
8. Be prepared, for the referee and other starters, to verbally evaluate the starting team AFTER the meet.
9. Let each starter develop his or her own rhythm and stay out of the way unless there is a serious concern – discuss the concern with the referee before talking to the starter.
10. Know the differences between NCAA, HIGH SCHOOL, USA Swimming, and FINA rules – there are differences.
11. Observe starter candidates at time trials and prepare written observation reports – provide copies for the candidate, National Officials Chairman, and yourself as Head Starter. These reports shall not change once distributed.

The following should be considered:

- a) Be honest – don't perpetuate an impossible situation
- b) Base observations on current national championship starting philosophies
- c) Meet with the candidate at the earliest possible opportunity to discuss the observation
- d) Be an educator and offer suggestions for improvement
- e) Inform the candidate(s) that a recommendation for an assignment does not always bring an assignment; don't promise assignments at future meets; don't promise a recommendation on the next attempt as a starter candidate;
- f) Be consistent in your evaluations using the following areas for consideration:
 - 1) Voice
 - 2) Eye
 - 3) Spacing
 - 4) Calmness and control
 - 5) Position on the deck and holding the cord
 - 6) Response to unusual situations