



## STARTS

The start of the race is a very important aspect of competitive swimming, and in accordance with World Aquatics rules, a one start rule is enforced. Be aware of medical conditions which may restrict out of water starts, but be sure to practice the starts the athletes will be competing with.

### Common Disqualifications

- DQ Code 4.4 - Any Athlete who initiates a start before the signal may be disqualified.



### Number of 2023 World Games Disqualifications

**FALSE START - 39**



# STARTS

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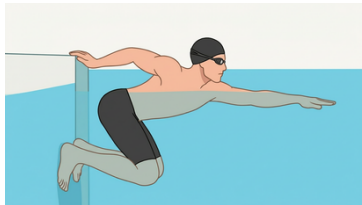
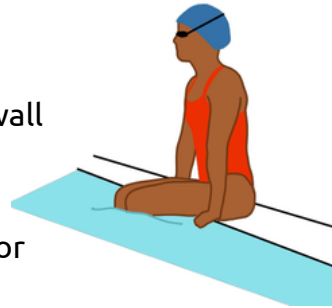
## Standing Start



- Can be off the blocks or side
- Curl toes over the front edge
- On the starter's signal, push off the block/concourse
- Enter water in the streamline position
- Freestyle/Butterfly - kick to surface
- Breaststroke - swimmer may do a pull out or glide

## Sitting Start

- Sit on pool concourse
- On the starter's signal, push off from the wall into the streamline body position
- Freestyle/Butterfly - kick to surface
- Breaststroke - swimmer may do a pull out or glide



## In-Water Start

- Hold onto side of pool while in the water with either hand
- Place both feet on the wall, with knees slightly bent
- Extend the other hand in the water in the direction of travel or to the other end of the pool
- Look forward to the other end of the pool
- On the starter's signal, push off the side into the streamline body position
- Freestyle/Butterfly - kick to surface
- Breaststroke - swimmer may do a pull out or glide

# DRILLS TO AVOID DQ Code 4.4

## Progression 1: On Deck Explanation/Videos

- Explain how the starting process begins. Include visual demonstrations from videos, emphasizing the rules and timing of the starting sounds. Demonstrate each method of starting (blocks, side, in-water).

## Progression 2: Teach the Water Entry

- After demonstrating each start, determine which start is most appropriate for the athlete. See progressions on page 2 for each start. Have athlete practice until comfortable with the skill of starting.

## Progression 3: Teach the Starter's Signals

- First whistle is a series of short, quick chirps from the referee, signaling swimmers to prepare, and get behind the starting blocks.
- This is followed by a single, long whistle, which directs swimmers to step onto the block, curl toes over the edge, or enter the water, depending on chosen start. Backstroke includes a second long whistle indicating the swimmers return to their starting position.
- Starter then says "Take Your Mark" which signals swimmers to move into their starting position and hold perfectly still.
- The Start is the audible beep and/or visual strobe.

## Progression 4: Practice, Practice, Practice

- Practice various starting signals. Not all competitions will have access to electronic starting devices/systems.
- Practice various times to hold starting positions (without movement).
- Practice meet situations during practice (with/without starting systems).

## TIPS FROM MICHAEL & KIERA

### Visualize the Race

Visualization helps athletes rehearse success. Have them close their eyes, walk through each part of the race (start/strokes/turns/finish). When they mentally practice the routine, they are calmer under pressure and less likely to make errors. It's just as important as physical training.



**Michael Phelps** is the founder of the Michael Phelps Foundation, Father of 4 boys, and the most decorated Olympic Champion of all time (23 gold medals). **Kiera Byland** is an athlete, leader and coach for Special Olympics Great Britain. She currently sits on the Special Olympics International Board and the Global Athlete Congress Chair.

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



## Swimming Coaching Guide

- More specific drill progressions
- More detailed stroke work
- Additional Special Olympics Swimming Training information.



## Make Every Race Count Website

- New Coaches Standards
- DQ Data
- Training Videos

