



MIDWESTERN SWIMMING

Flyover Start Protocol

Midwestern Swimming is adopting the use of flyover starts, which are forward starts where a heat is started while the previous heat's swimmers are allowed to remain in the water at the conclusion of the race. This type of start offers meet management a tool to help manage session time lines. For swimmers, flyover starts provides the benefit of allowing in water swimmers a moment to catch their breath before having to exit the pool and allow more time for the next heat of swimmers to assume their start positions without holding up the pace (time line) of the meet. By adopting flyover starts, MWS swimmers will be accustomed to these types of starts, which are sometimes used by other Local Swim Committees and in higher level meets such as Zones and Nationals.

Guidelines for Use of Flyover Starts:

- Based on estimated time lines, the Meet Director/Meet Referee may elect to use flyover starts provided its use is included in the meet announcement. Examples where flyover starts are appropriate include the following:
 - Meet time line has one session ending within a short period of time prior to the start of the warm-ups of the next session.
 - Meet time line precludes finishing the meet within the prescribed pool rental time.
- Situations where flyover starts shall not be used:
 - Backstroke and Relay (Medley and Freestyle) starts
- In a prelims/finals format meet, flyover starts shall not be used in the finals session.
- Flyover starts will not be used for any session that has only manual timing.
- For consistency and safety reasons, a meet shall either use or not use flyover starts consistently for the age groups represented at the meet, e.g., flyover starts are used for all 11&O sessions and not used in the 9-10 sessions.

Flyover Start Protocol:

- After the last swimmer in the heat passes the 15m mark from the start/finish end, the Referee will sound the four or five short whistle chirps. Depending on the pace of the race, the Referee should adjust the timing of the "four or five whistle chirps" for purposes of consistency; such that there is a 10 to 15 second gap between the "four or five whistle chirps" and the "long whistle" (see below).
- The announcer/starter will announce the heat number/long event name.
- As the last swimmer passes under the flags closest to the finish the referee sounds the long whistle for the swimmers to step on the blocks. The exact timing of the long whistle will be at the discretion of the Meet Referee in an effort to avoid delays in the start of the next heat of swimmers.
- All swimmers at the conclusion of their race shall move to the corner of the lane and remain stationary until after the next heat has started. While waiting in the

water, swimmers should please remain as still as possible with legs hanging straight down or standing to the side and shall not hold onto the starting blocks or talk.

- When the swimmers on the starting blocks are in place, the Referee turns the heat over to the Starter by extending his/her arm to the Starter.
- When the swimmers on the starting blocks are ready the Starter issues the “Take Your Mark” command, and when appropriate gives the start signal.
- After the start of the race, the in-water swimmers shall quickly exit the pool.

Guidance to Officials:

- The use of flyover starts does not change our current practice of requiring swimmers to exit the pool prior to starts of backstroke or relay races.
- If there is a large dispersion of swimmers in a race, swimmers who finish well ahead of the last swimmer may exit the pool. However, once the Referee has sounded the four or five whistle chirps to signal the start of the next heat, swimmers in the water shall remain in the water as described above until after the start of the next heat.
- Set timing console parameter “Pad delay at start” to at least 15 seconds. The Referee shall review timing console parameters to ensure correct settings for flyover starts.
- Flyover starts may be used in a meet where two pools are in use. Starts in the two pools shall alternate as in current practice.
- If there is significant delay (equipment malfunction, seeding confusion, resolution of a disqualification, etc.) in starting the next heat, the Starter may request the in-water swimmers to exit the pool.
- Flyover starts should generally be avoided for the first heat involving forward starts in individual events that follow immediately after either backstroke or relay events. Those swimmers probably do not realize a transition is about to occur and will expect to climb out of the water.
- Flyover starts may be used when a swimmer wishes to start from the deck at the side of the starting block. In this situation, the swimmer in the water and the swimmer starting on the deck should be on opposite sides of the lane.
- If a swimmer wishes to start in the water for a forward start, the previous heat should be asked to exit to the pool prior to the start.
- To achieve the session time line reduction benefit, disqualification procedures should be in place that allows the Deck Referee to maintain the start rhythm. This may require having Chief Judge(s) that can do the initial evaluation of disqualifications and make recommendations to the Deck Referee or issuing radios to Stroke & Turn Judges to call in disqualifications to the Deck Referee.

Summary of Responsibilities: The following are additional responsibilities for the various roles in support of flyover starts.

- Meet Referee: In conjunction with the Meet Director, determine the parameters for using flyover starts.
- Deck Referee: Determine pacing of whistle chirps; ensure compliance of the above procedures. For safety reasons or special situations, such as swimmers with disabilities (physical or visual), flyover starts may be deferred for any heat. While adopting flyover starts is to help reduce the session time line, the Deck Referee needs to understand that the time line is only one consideration for

determining the pace of the session. The Deck Referee's first responsibility is to the swimmers and to ensure a fair and equitable competition as possible.

- Starter: Brief timers on the timing protocol for flyover starts. Ensure in-water swimmers are stationary at a corner of the lane, not holding onto the starting block and quiet. If necessary, use minimal verbal commands to request in-water swimmers to adhere to the guidelines described in this document. Notify Deck Referee of any unusual situations that may delay the next heat. This will avoid the situation of calling the swimmers to the blocks too early.
- Timing System Operator: Ensure timing system parameters allow at least a 15 second delay at the start but not too long as to miss the first pad touch after the start. Observe swimmers exiting the pool after the start and be prepared to take away a pad touch if needed.
- Coaches: Instruct swimmers on the flyover protocol. Prior to the start of a meet session notify the Referee of any circumstances that may affect the use of flyover starts, such as swimmers with disabilities or if a swimmer will start from the deck or in-water for forward starts.

Timer Procedure to Support Flyover Starts:

The following procedures should be used, assuming timing pad in water and two timers per lane with two watches per timer.

- Each timer has two watches, which are worn around the neck by a lanyard.
- At the start of a race, timer starts a watch (Watch A) and ensures the watch is operating correctly.
- At the conclusion of the race, timer simultaneously stops Watch A and presses the button.
- Without clearing Watch A, timer allows Watch A to hang from the lanyard for the moment and picks up Watch B in preparation for the start of the next heat.
- After starting Watch B for the next heat and ensuring Watch B started successfully, timer allows Watch B to hang from the lanyard and picks up Watch A to record the time for the previous heat on the Lane Timer sheet. After recording the time, the timer clears Watch A in preparation for the next race and times the current heat with Watch B.
- This process is repeated alternating Watch B and A as appropriate.