

Quick Guides¹
Starter REVISED 2020

The purpose of officiating is to create a fair and welcoming environment for the competition. An official is impartial, non-intrusive, and aware at all times of activity and people (athletes, coaches, distractions) in the competition area. Officials contribute to the athletes' positive experience of the event.

Starter Responsibilities include:

1. Before the meet,
 - a. Clarify with the track referee or meet director the call back guidelines for distance races (e.g., 1500 m) in event of a fall shortly after the start.
 - b. Confer with Photo Finish Judge (PFJ) signals for confirming a race is ready to go.
 - c. Discuss with your starts team including other starters and the Chief Starter's Assistant (CSA) your respective roles and how you will communicate verbally, through hand signals, and mutually satisfactory placements of the Starter, Recall Starters, and CSA.
2. Before the day's events, check all start lines to determine
 - a. Whether start lines are visible.
 - b. Correct start lines for different staggered starts (e.g., 200, 400, 800m – see WA diagram).
 - c. Best vantage place for the starter to stand to ensure they see all athletes simultaneously and all athletes are equidistant from the gun.
3. Before the day's events, conduct a Zero Gun Test in collaboration with the PFJ.
 - a. Blank white sheet of paper is taped along and on top of the finish line where the camera can focus on it.
 - b. Transponder is placed on the paper just past the finish line.
 - c. Cocked gun is placed just in front of the finish line on top of the paper so that the camera can record the flash/smoke on the finish line simultaneous to the gunshot triggering the transponder.
 - d. When PFJ is ready, the starter fires the gun.
 - e. A successful gun test creates a readout of $\leq .001$ seconds, meaning that the camera is well enough calibrated that it will give an accurate reading at a sensitivity greater than is needed in any track event (track events recorded to .01 seconds)
4. Before the first race, conduct a test fire of the gun next to the transponder at your first start line to ensure the transponder is still working. Check with PFJ to be sure signal was captured. The gun should be held 6 to 12 inches away from the end of the transponder. The hole at the end of the transponder should be pointed towards the gun.

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5. For Each Race:

- a. Take control of the athletes once given them by the CSA.
 - i. Until turning athletes over to you, the CSA is still in charge of the start line.
- b. Visually ensure athletes are in their correct positions:
 - i. behind the assembly line (3 metres behind start line) or behind the blocks
 - ii. in their correct positions after the “on your marks” command
 - iii. in their correct set positions and still after the “set” or “on your marks” commands
- c. Starting positions.
 - i. 9 – 13 you may use either 2-point (standing) or 4-point (crouched) start through 400m races, but must use standing start for all races > 400m. *May not use blocks.*
 - ii. 14 – 34 you *must use* 4-point crouched starts *with blocks* and one knee on the track through 400m races, and standing start for all races > 400.
 - iii. Masters athletes (>65) are not required to use blocks and may start from either a standing start or from a crouched start without two hands on the ground. There is a current debate about whether masters athletes must use blocks in the conventional manner or whether they can use blocks in a non-conventional manner. Currently within BC, we allow masters athletes to use blocks as they see fit.
- d. Call the start commands.
 - i. For races \leq 400m, the start procedure is
 1. “on your marks” after which athletes are required to move to their on your marks position *without delay.*
 2. “set” after which athletes are required to get into their starting stance *without delay.*
 3. fire the gun.
 - ii. For races > 400 metres, the start procedure is
 1. “on your marks” which again brings the athletes from the assembly line to the start line *without delay.*
 2. fire the gun.
- e. Respond to all athletes being in the correct position by giving the next command.
 - i. *Do not rush* the athletes.
 - ii. *Be responsive to the athletes* by calling the next signal when all athletes are ready, but also intervening if:
 1. any athlete takes so long to get ready that other athletes are inconvenienced.
 2. any athlete is unable to stay still or is falling out of their stance.
 3. any athlete or spectator does something to obviously distract other athletes.
- f. When the Starter detects such problems before firing the gun, they should command the entire heat to “stand up”, and then explain the problem to the athletes (sometimes better to let CSA explain it as they will be closer) before resuming the start procedure.
- g. Look for and call illegal or disruptive behaviour in the starting area, including
 - i. taking too long to get into position (verbal warning, possible green card for first offense, yellow card if repeated).
 - ii. failing to remain still once in a position (verbal warning, possible green card for first offense, yellow card if repeated).
 - iii. Distractions or other mishaps such as athletes falling out of blocks or spectator noise distracting athletes (verbal warning, but green card and not charged to any athlete).
 - iv. false starts.

h. False starts:

- i. False starts are defined as any motion by an athlete that includes or results in one or both feet losing contact with the foot plate(s) of the starting blocks, one or both hands losing contact with the ground any forward movement of the hands or feet or other body movement that would naturally result in such movement. The critical point here is forward movement. (2020 rules 16.7, 16.71, 16.72). Starters should be attentive to “rolling starts”, i.e., continuous movement by the athlete without an overt set position and should not be overzealous in calling false starts to athletes in standing starts who are unsteady in their on your marks positions.
- ii. Movement that is not forward (e.g., flinching upward, rocking backward) is not a false start, but can result in a stand up command and a warning.
- iii. For JD athletes 13 and younger, as well as for athletes in combined events (Pentathlon, Heptathlon, Decathlon), the first false start in a heat leads to a Yellow Card warning to the entire field (e.g., “false start, lane 7, charged to the field”). The second false start in a heat leads to a Red Card disqualification to the athlete committing the false start (e.g., “false start, lane 7, disqualification”). The starter will announce the decision and the CSA will signal to the athletes the charge (red/black card for DQ, yellow/black for warning, green for “no charge”).
- iv. For athletes 14 to 34 years (midget, youth, junior and senior athletes), *any* false start leads to disqualification and a red card.
- v. For Masters athletes (35 and above), each athlete is allowed one false start and is only disqualified when they personally false starts a second time in the same heat.

i. Ensure fair starts. Sometimes events happen outside the starting area or immediately after the gun shot that interfere with fair starts and the Starter must interrupt a start procedure or recall a race in these events. The most common such events are:

- i. Crowd noise or other extraneous distractions - in the event of external distractions, the Starter can call “stand up”, and then ask for the offending external distraction to be discontinued.
- ii. Falls in waterfall starts in distance races that occur very shortly after the gun is fired. Most starters and Track Referees agree that such pileups or falls occurring in the first 5 – 10 metres of distance races deserve a recall to ensure a fair start.
- iii. Block slippage resulting in falls or stumbles in sprints – sometimes an athlete’s blocks will slip resulting in an unfair start. Recall starters and SAs must be alert to spot such block slippage.

j. Confer with recall starters and starter’s assistants before making a decision

- i. About false starts – what did others see?
- ii. About distractions or other interruptions to the start procedure.
- iii. But the starter for any individual race makes the final decision at the start line.
- iv. In the event of a yellow card warning or appeal of a false start call or disqualification, the Starts Referee (if one is assigned) or Track Referee has the ultimate authority although in local meets this will often be delegated to the chief starter.

6. At end of day:

- a. Return transponder to the photofinish operator.
- b. Clean gun with wire brush and cloth; ensure it is totally dry when put away.
- c. Put away unused ammunition returning to your own stores or to the meet director.



BC ATHLETICS OFFICIALS Athletics Competitions Start Line Report

Distance of Event: _____ Heat Sheet Event Number: _____

Athlete Name: _____ Competition #: _____ Lane: _____

Men Women Heat Quarter Semi Final

Infraction

False Start TR 16.7.1 TR 16.7.2

Improper Conduct with the Start TR 16.5.1 TR 16.5.2 TR 16.5.3

Was there Interference? Yes No

Description of Infraction and who saw it: _____

Starter: _____ Signature: _____

Recall Starter: _____ Signature: _____

Chief Starter: _____ Signature: _____

Referee Decision

No Action: Warning: DQ:

Time: _____ Rule #: _____

Decision Maker: _____ Signature: _____

Please send this form along with the heat sheet to the Competition Secretary.