

Starter Preparations & Duties

Personal Equipment

Uniform prescribed for the meet	Earplugs
Red arm sleeve	Whistle on lanyard
Raingear	Disqualification cards (red, yellow, green)
Sunscreen & Sunglasses	Rule book (applicable book)
Hat (outdoors)	Water, small washcloth
.32 caliber pistol; 22 caliber (indoor)	Pencil and 3x5 cards or small notebook
.32/.22 caliber blank black powder shells	Stepstool

Duties

1. Ensure starting blocks are set up within the competitor's lane
2. Start races promptly after athletes have been turned over to the starter by the clerk of the course
3. Inform all competitors of warnings /or disqualifications through use of verbal communication and cards:
 - a) Green – no violation
 - b) Yellow (NCAA) – warning
 - c) Red (NCAA) – DQ
 - d) Red & Black (USATF) - DQ
4. Be aware of rules for youth and masters athletes (302, 303, 332) - if applicable
5. Signal by bell/pistol the start of the last lap of the race (high school)

Pre-Meet Preparations

1. Arrive at least one hour early; attend officials meeting (if scheduled)
2. Walk the track – be familiar with start/finish lines, exchange zones, location(s) for starter/recall starter, electronic equipment location(s), safety concerns, condition of blocks
3. Check with Meet Director and Referee - verify meet schedule, any specific equipment to be used (personal blocks, headphones/radio communication systems, etc.)
4. Check with Clerk of the Course - review schedule, review clerk/starter instructions so no overlap
5. Check with Head Finish Judge - verify signals between starter/finish judges (if any)
6. Check with timing personnel - check all equipment, verify equipment locations, verify signals between starter & timer
7. Check with Announcer & Clerk to synchronize watches for time schedule of meet, and timing of PA announcements in regard to reporting & race starts
8. Meet with Starter crew – walk the track, review schedule of duties, positions (straight-aways & turns), hand signals, synchronize watches, assign positions
9. Meet with television reps (if applicable) regarding timing, schedule; make necessary accommodations

Starts

1. Positioning
 - a. Races started in lanes on the curve (staggered) – be equidistant from all runners – approx. 20 meters inside the curve, opposite middlelane start line. (Note: if a Starter stands 25 meters away from lane 1 and 70 meters away from lane 8 when the gun is fired for a 400m race, Lane 1 will hear the sound in .08 seconds; Lane 8 will hear it in .21 seconds, a difference of .13 second). (Recall starters, if used, are placed as assigned by the head starter to clearly see each competitor.)
 - b. Races started on a straightaway or waterfall – be approx. 4 meters in front of the start line and 5 meters to the inside, to allow sight of all runners in a narrow field of view. (Recall starters, if used, are placed at the opposite end of the start line.)
2. Starting blocks:
 - a. NCAA < 500 m – crouch w/ or w/out blocks
>5000 m standing at “step-up” line;
 - b. USATF ≤ 400m (open & relays) must use blocks
> 400m standing at “step-up” line
3. Practice starts may not be made in conjunction with start commands and the gun – NCAA
4. After athletes are on their marks, give the command to “stand up” if all is not ready to proceed
5. If there are multiple starters, confer regarding any apparent false starts
6. Recall starts in the event of an unfair start, or upon hearing a false start acoustic signal. Recall starts for falls by athletes when: USATF – a fall is associated with, and within 10 meters of the start; NCAA – a fall occurs because of contact with another runner in the first 100 meters.

Safety Considerations

1. Always look before you step onto the track; sprinters warming up – watch before stepping into another lane as sprinters are getting blocks set
2. Throwing & jumping events – be aware of athletes beginning their approach/run-up (particularly indoors); coordinate with head officials of those events regarding your starts.