

VBSL Whistle Commands at the Start

Adapted from Article 101 from 2014 USA Swimming Rule Book.

A. At the commencement of each heat, the Referee shall signal to the swimmers by a short series of whistles (4-6 short whistles) to remove all clothing except for swimwear. For races that finish at the start end, the short whistles should be blown when the last swimmer crosses the backstroke flags. For those races that finish at the turn end, use your best judgment as some swimmers may need extra time to exit the pool.

B. After the short whistles are blow, the starter or announcer shall announce the next heat or event. When the referee ensures the deck is ready (i.e., stroke and turn officials and timers are ready) they shall blow one long whistle. The long whistle indicates to the swimmers to take and maintain their positions on the starting platform, the deck, or in the water.

C. For backstroke and medley relay events, at the Referee's first long whistle, the swimmers shall immediately enter the water. When the last swimmer's head breaks the surface of the water, a second long whistle shall be blown. The second long whistle alerts the swimmers to return to their starting position without undue delay.

D. When the swimmers and officials are ready, the Referee shall signal with an outstretched arm to the Starter that the swimmers are under the Starter's control.

E. On the Starter's command "take your mark", the swimmers shall immediately assume the starting position, in the forward start, with at least one foot at the front of the starting platform or the deck. Swimmers starting in the water must have at least one hand in contact with the wall or starting platform. When the swimmers are stationary, the Starter shall give the starting signal.

F. When a swimmer does not respond promptly to the command "take your mark", the Starter shall immediately release all swimmers with the command "stand up" upon which the swimmers may stand up or step off the blocks.

G. If the Referee and/or Starter observe a swimmer leaving the starting block before the start signal, the race shall be recalled by either the official. The Referee and Starter shall confer and discuss which swimmer left early. If they both concur, that swimmer shall be charged with a false start. If they are in disagreement, the benefit of the doubt goes to the swimmer. If more than one swimmer left early, they all shall be charged with a false start.