

Chief Starter - Suburban Parochial League

Last amended 2026-02-11

CHIEF STARTER

1. Pre-Meet Preparation

- a. Starter should familiarize him/herself with all track markings, including appropriate start lines and exchange zones to be used for the meet.
- b. Starter will meet with volunteer workers from Staging and Relay Exchange Zone Judges so everyone understands their responsibilities and to facilitate a smoothly run meet.

2. Responsibilities and Authority

- a. The Starter shall have entire control of the competitors at their marks and shall be the sole judge of whether or not any competitor has committed a false start.
- b. The start of the race shall be clearly marked on the track. When starting, all competitors must be behind the starting line and they must not touch the starting line or the surface in front of it with any part of the body. Starting stations in events at all distances shall be numbered from left to right, facing the direction of running.
- c. The commands of the Starter shall be "on your marks" and "set," and when all competitors are "set," the pistol/starting device shall be fired. In races longer than 400 meters, the command shall be "on your marks" and when all competitors are steady, the pistol/starting device shall be fired. The starter shall not fire the pistol/starting device while any competitor is in motion after the command "set" nor before the Starter has ascertained that each competitor is steady and in the correct starting position. When appropriate, the Starter may assemble the competitors at an actual or imaginary line behind the starting line and have the athletes move up to the starting line on the command "on your marks."
- d. All running events shall be started by the report of a pistol or approved device fired upward after the Starter has ascertained that competitors are steady and in the correct starting position.
- e. Prior to each running event, the Starter shall give instructions to competitors concerning the commands to be used. Before any starting commands, the Starter shall ascertain that the Timers and Judges are ready.
- f. All questions concerning the start shall be decided by the Starter.
- g. When a universal start is used, or if lanes are being shared, the Starter may, at his or her discretion, call the race back if an incident occurs within a reasonable time and/or distance after the start that an athlete's status in the race has been unfairly compromised. Most starters use 100 yards or meters as the point at which a race should be recalled if there is an incident causing a runner to be knocked down.
 - i. If the starter determines the contact was unintentional, the race will be restarted.
 - ii. If the starter determines the action was intentional, the starter should disqualify the runner at fault.
- h. The Starter, who is of the opinion that the start was not fair, shall recall the competitors by firing a pistol.
- i. The Starter is also a judge and therefore can report fouls and possible disqualifications for relay passes outside the "exchange zone" markings, improper lane usage or misbehavior such as throwing the baton on the track.

Change Brief

2026-02-11

Updated formatting and numbering to align with other procedure documentation.
Rewrote Section 2g for clarity.