

Starter Preparations, Duties, & Rules

Personal Equipment

Uniform prescribed for meet	Cards (green, yellow, red, yellow/black, red/black, red/white)	Whistle, earplugs
Red shirt/coat/arm sleeve	Speaker(s), microphone, batteries	Pencil, 3x5 cards or small notebook
Raingear, sunscreen, sunglasses, hat	Pouches for shells	Water, small washcloth
.32 or .38 caliber pistol, holster, ammo	Stepstool or ladder	Tape measure
Rule book (applicable book)		Gun cleaning kit

Pre-Meet Preparations

1. Arrive at least one hour early; attend officials meeting if conducted; deal with any view obstructions to views
2. Check with Meet Director & Referee - verify meet schedule, specific equipment to be used (personal blocks, headphones/radio communication systems, etc.), or special needs athletes
3. Check with Clerk of the Course - review schedule, review instructions of clerks & starters so no overlap; synchronize watches w/Clerk and Announcer for meet schedule
4. Check with Head Finish Judge - verify signals or communication between starter and finish judges (if any)
5. Check with Timers - check all equipment, verify equipment locations, and signals between starter & timer
Help conduct the zero gun test if using electronic timing
6. Check with Announcer - signals for and timing of PA announcements in regard to reporting, race starts, music
7. Check with blocks & hurdle crews re: when to move, when & which lanes to set up for subsequent races
8. Check with television reps (if applicable) regarding schedule & intros; make necessary accommodations
9. Meet with Starter crew:
 - a. Walk the track: ID start lines; set locations of: starter/recall starter, speakers, electronics & power sources; review movement of stand/ladder, speakers, electronic connections and stand; check condition of blocks
 - b. Review schedule; assign positions & duties; review: hand signals & how to discuss possible false starts & use of cards, safety concerns; synchronize watches; keep clear of signage, TV, and microphones

Starts

1. See chart below re: starting blocks; crouch or standing start; false starts; DQs; and recalls
2. Ensure starting blocks are set up within the competitor's lane
3. Throwing & jumping events – be aware of athletes beginning their attempt (particularly indoors); coordinate with head officials of those events to avoid disruption of starts
4. Start races promptly after athletes have been turned over to the starter by the Clerk
5. Positioning of starter:
 - a. Races started in lanes on the curve (staggered) – be equidistant from all runners – approx. 20 meters inside the curve, opposite middle lane start line. (Note: if starter is 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)
 - 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
 - c. Recall starters, if used, are placed at opposite ends of the start line to clearly see each competitor;
 - d. Have clear line of sight to FAT tent, all start lines, Recall Starters
6. After athletes are on their marks, give the command to “Stand Up” if all are not ready to proceed
7. Recall starters observe lanes as assigned; indicate ready for “Set” command by show of open palm
8. If multiple starters, confer regarding any apparent false starts
9. Inform all competitors of warnings or DQs by use of verbal communication and cards (see chart below)
10. Recall point - USATF 10m; NCAA 50m (see chart below). 50m from the start line is at the mark in lane 1 for the indicated flight of the 400m hurdles:
1500m – mark for 4th flight; Mile – mark for 1st flight, less 4.4m; 3000/5000m – mark for the 7th flight, less 5m;
10,000m – mark for 1st flight, plus 5m.
11. Be aware of rules for youth and masters athletes (USATF 302, 303, 332) - if applicable
12. Signal by bell/pistol the start of the last lap of the race (high school)
13. Reload gun after every race

Safety Considerations

1. Always look before you step onto the track or into another lane when runners are setting blocks or taking strides

USATF OFFICIALS BEST PRACTICES

Starter Rules

Blocks & Positions																										
Use of personal blocks	IAAF: Technical Delegates' decision; no damage to track, no unfair advantage USATF & NCAA: Games Committee decision HS: Games Committee may provide blocks																									
Use of starting blocks required	IAAF & USATF: Required - races & 1st relay leg up to/including 400m; not allowed >400m NCAA: Optional - races < 800m & 1st relay leg < 600m; not allowed in other races HS: Not addressed																									
Crouch & 4-point start position required	IAAF & USATF: Required for races & 1st relay leg up to/including 400m; both hands & at least one knee in contact w/ground; both feet in contact w/foot plates NCAA: Not required HS: Not addressed																									
The Start																										
Runners delay in coming to a set position	IAAF & USATF: 1st - Warning, 2nd - DQ (by Start Referee) NCAA: 1st - Warning, 2nd - DQ; HS: Warning																									
False starts & disqualifications	All: 1st false start = DQ (but see below for exceptions)																									
False starts - Combined events	IAAF: 1st - Warning to Field, 2nd - DQ; USATF & NCAA: 1st - Warning to Athlete, 2nd - DQ; HS: Not addressed																									
False starts - Youth ages 7 - 14	USATF: 1st - Warning to Athlete, 2nd - DQ																									
False starts - Youth ages 15-18	USATF: 1st - DQ																									
False starts - Masters	USATF: 1st - Warning to Athlete, 2nd - DQ																									
Disqualification & warnings – card colors	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></th> <th style="text-align: center; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">No Violation</th> <th style="text-align: center; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">Warning</th> <th style="text-align: center; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">DQ</th> <th style="text-align: center; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">Compete Under Protest</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;">IAAF:</td> <td style="text-align: center; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">N/A</td> <td style="text-align: center; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">Yellow/Black</td> <td style="text-align: center; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">Red/Black</td> <td style="text-align: center; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">N/A</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;">USATF:</td> <td style="text-align: center; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">Green</td> <td style="text-align: center; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">Yellow/Black</td> <td style="text-align: center; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">Red/Black</td> <td style="text-align: center; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">Red/White</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;">NCAA:</td> <td style="text-align: center; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">Green</td> <td style="text-align: center; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">Yellow</td> <td style="text-align: center; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">Red</td> <td style="text-align: center; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">N/A</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;">HS:</td> <td colspan="4" style="text-align: center; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">Not addressed</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		No Violation	Warning	DQ	Compete Under Protest	IAAF:	N/A	Yellow/Black	Red/Black	N/A	USATF:	Green	Yellow/Black	Red/Black	Red/White	NCAA:	Green	Yellow	Red	N/A	HS:	Not addressed			
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Practice starts on starter's command	IAAF, USATF, & HS: Not addressed NCAA: Not allowed in immediate area of starting line																									
Recalls																										
Recall of races not started in lanes	IAAF: No recall unless part of unfair start USATF: Recall for unfair start or a fall wholly part of an unfair start, within 10 m of start line NCAA: Recall for an incident resulting from an unfair start within 50 m of start line HS: Runner falls in 1st 100m due to contact																									
Staggered Starts	Number of turns run in lanes/alleys:																									
400 m	IAAF, USATF, & NCAA: 2; HS: 2 *																									
800 m if start in lanes or alleys**	IAAF & USATF: 1; NCAA: 1 (2 Indoor); HS: 1 *																									
> 800 m if start in alleys**	IAAF, USATF, & NCAA: 1; HS: 1 *																									
4 x 100 Relay	IAAF, USATF, & NCAA: 2; HS: 2 *																									
4 x 200 Relay	IAAF & USATF: 4 (3 Indoor); NCAA: 4; HS: 4 *																									
4 x 400 Relay	IAAF, USATF, & NCAA: 3 (2 Indoor); HS: 3 *																									
Sprint medley	IAAF: Not addressed; USATF & NCAA: 3; HS: 3 *																									
* Check your state H. S. Association for possible modifications to the number of turns run in lanes.																										
** Staggered Alleys																										
When # of runners is greater than # of lanes, split of groups:	IAAF, USATF, & NCAA: 2 groups; 2/3 on waterfall at start line (across entire track); and 1/3 on waterfall at the stagger HS: Not addressed																									