

A Guide Dog's View to Starting



Starting Athletic Track Events

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2015 Edition

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Introduction

This book includes suggested ways to achieve the outcomes required by the IAAF for track starting. It is written from 45 years' experience as a starter for Athletics Canterbury New Zealand, with the help of a very new pup who was lucky enough to attend the IAAF Regional Starters' Conference as one of three representatives for the Oceania held in Jakarta in September 2011.

Starting track events is a skill that takes many years to develop, through regular practice and ongoing critique. It is our hope that this book will make the rules easier to interpret and procedures of starting easier to understand and undertake for beginners and that experienced starters will read it to critique and improve their own practice.

Our main goal of the book is to ensure that athletes, not the starters determine the outcome of each track race. By this we mean that in any one race the athletes, not the procedures and processes undertaken by the start team decide who wins the race. Our hope is that an athlete upon finishing his or her race will not be cognisant of anything untoward in the start procedure. Starters are there to encourage athletes to perform to their potential.

Another important goal is to ensure consistency in start procedures across New Zealand. This in itself will make racing fairer for athletes who compete at regional and national level events including: New Zealand Secondary Schools' competitions, New Zealand Children's Athletics competitions (particularly the 12-14 year levels), Paralympics New Zealand events, regional, North and South Island Parafed events and Athletics New Zealand interprovincial, open and age graded national championship events.

Electronic False Start Equipment (EFSE)

International starting and the use of false start detection equipment are on briefly considered in this book however they are not a major focus in the book as it would require a world class athletic event to see this equipment used in New Zealand.

Acknowledgements

There are many people who have enabled us to write this book, and to them we are very grateful. Ted's wife Lesley has supported him for years as he disappeared to the track many afternoons and days each season. She has also helped him put his ideas down on paper, this huge input in

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truly appreciated. Wendy's husband Mike Riley has also added his critical eye to the book as it has evolved. Trevor Spittle Athletics New Zealand, and Warren Hastings, chief starter Athletics Canterbury have also helped us formulate ideas and critiqued the book. Finally thanks to all those starters throughout New Zealand who have engaged with us in conversation and debate about start procedures.

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Athletics Canterbury
January 2010,
Updated by Wendy Fox-Turnbull February 2015

This book has the support of Athletics Canterbury and the National Technical Officials Committee of Athletics New Zealand.

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Chapter 1: The Starter

Why am I here?

To see that the 'start', carried out within the rules, is fair, without drama and therefore

- the start must be fair for each and every athlete
- the starter must be fair and consistent to each athlete
- the starter shall display professionalism, integrity and remain impartial through all phases of competition
- the starter is a person, who, within the rules, allows athletes competing in '*laned events*', to determine the outcome of a race.

The four maxims above fully encompass all the responsibilities of a Start Panel.

Fair

- conforming to the rules or standards
- in a correct and just way (as deserved - justly)
- pleasant and courteous
- civil, elegant and correct in speech and grammar.

Fair-minded

- just and impartial.

It will take a starter many years to establish him/herself in a position where athletes will put their faith and trust in his/her skills and expertise, to provide a good fair start (every start). It can take just a few seconds to destroy that faith and trust. Starters are never remembered for good starts; only the bad ones.

Valuable Assets

Valuable assets a good starter needs in abundance are:

- knowledge
- patience
- respect
- politeness
- consideration
- consistency
- professionalism
- putting athletes first.

A good starter will read signals from every athlete to inform him/her when the athlete is ready to move on to the next stage of the race.

The success of a good start procedure depends on how the start team works together to ensure that the process is efficient, fair and within the

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relevant rules for competition. All team members must know the rules and their roles. They all should know and understand the signals they are to observe and use. Above all, they should relay all information they have to each other to ensure the start is conducted fairly (IAAF 2014-2015).

Use of Voice

The starter's voice should not distract the athletes from their focussed thought programme. Different levels of control are communicated to athletes through the starter's voice. Communication with athletes must be calm, orderly and should preferably be a request to athletes to ensure they are able to remain fully focussed on their start.

Politeness

Communication is conveyed to the athletes through voice tone, pace, pitch and register. Figure 1 shows the use of the voice on a continuum from least to most preferable. An athlete must **never** be forced into a rapid mental or physical response as a result of the way a request/command has been given. An athlete must never be intimidated or feel pressured by an official. Once the start procedure commences, each athlete must be able to hear and concentrate on, any verbal communications being given by the starter. For example a starter who raises the gun up to the firing position and then takes an unreasonably long time to give the request 'set' could be intimidating the athletes.

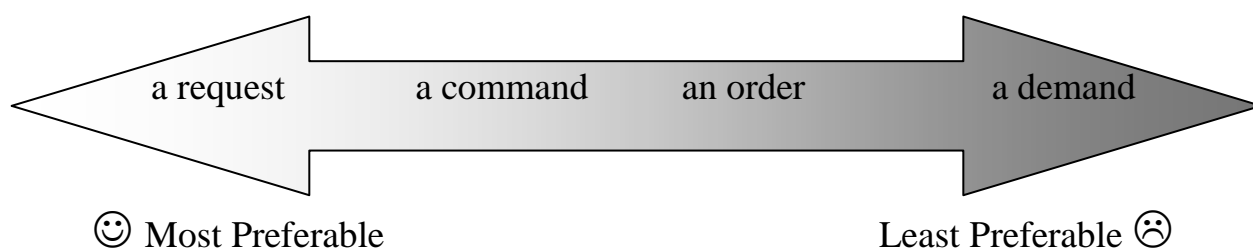


Figure 1: Continuum for Starter's voice.

There are two approaches to asking a field to take their marks or to stand up. A brisk command sounds like an order. The field may well ask 'What is this all about?' and be on the defensive or distracted from their race. A request 'stand up please' will be received in a more relaxed manner. The addition of the word 'Please' with 'stand up' softens the tone and therefore the reaction to the words used. This is not a weakness; it is a sign of confidence and respect by the starter (Blanchet, R. (2008) *Le Juge Arbitre-The Referee*, translated by D. Blanchet).

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On Your Marks

The voice register for each word should be the same. When the register differs across an instruction the athletes may note the different tones and bring them into conscious thought before moving. This is an unnecessary distraction for athletes.

Set

This is the crucial 'request' in the start process and **MUST** be given in a straight register (no dipping down or climbing up).

After a false start or 'stand back' all competitors should be back on their assembly marks, before the starter advises them of decisions affecting the 'restart'.

Consistency

Consistency is the most important aspect of a starter's skills, knowledge and abilities. The starter's requests, communication with athletes, approach to each start and mannerisms should not vary and be the same to all athletes. Imagine during a restart the starter says to an offending athlete that he/she would "sort you out". How would you feel? What are the implications for you as a track athletics starter?

Understanding

The following is often heard when there is discussion about the abilities of officials participating in other sports codes. 'That guy knows the rules but most certainly does **not** understand the game'. The starter must be very familiar with all the IAAF rules relevant to all start procedures and be able to apply these rules very quickly and under pressure.

Concentration

Two of the corner stones of a starter's contribution to the start are observation and concentration. In an event requiring starting blocks the starter is fully committed to observation, and concentration from the request 'On your marks', through to the gun being fired. If the gun is raised too early, two, possibly three situations will arise:

1. The starter's arm will complain bitterly and demand a large share of his/her concentration and attention.
2. The athletes will be unsure when the request 'set' will take place.
3. If there is manual timing (for back up), the time keepers will lose their concentration as they key their reaction to the signal of the lifted gun.

A remedy: after the request 'On your marks', the athletes will be settling into their blocks, and the starter's level of adrenaline/concentration will be beginning to lift. When the starter observes that the athletes are nearing the

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stage for the request 'set' he/she raises the gun slowly so as to use as little concentration as possible. Once the gun is raised the athletes expect the request 'Set' to follow soon after. Within this timeframe the starter's adrenaline and intense concentration will mask the complaints from the arm until after the start gun is fired or an approved starting apparatus is activated (from this point forward when we refer to 'the gun' this also includes 'approved starting apparatus').

Preparation

The starter should arrive at the meeting venue at least 45 minutes before start time. For a **major** meeting, the reporting time should be at least one hour prior to start time. Falling out of a car, after battling traffic for 40 minutes to start an event is not a helpful practice. A priority should be to obtain a programme for the meeting and be comfortable with *your* understanding of it. The equipment for electronic timing and photo finish equipment should be collected, set up and tested as soon as possible. There must be time for the Start Area Co-ordinator to allocate starting and recalling responsibilities to each starter and the duties for other members of the start team. The co-ordinator will, if required, advise the start group of any extra events to be held during the meeting.

Observing Pre-start Warm Up

Starters should, where possible take up a position to observe athletes' warm up starts and their preparation, attitudes, and take in the activity. This gives the starter a feel for the field and can add some insight into what to expect when the start is being formed. This is especially relevant for senior sprinters who are often ritual led in their behaviour and starting routine.

Chapter 2: The Start Area Positioning and Procedures

The Start Area and Panel

Start Area Definitions

For events run in lanes, and 800 meters when started in lanes:

that area enclosed by the start line, the assembly line(s), the inner lane curb and the outermost lane marking is defined as the start area.

For events where there is no 'set':

that area between the start line and where the athletes assemble, the pole line and the outermost lane marking is defined as the start area.

The Start Panel

The Start Panel is responsible to ensure that races are conducted in accordance within the rules within an appropriate time frame, and that the start is fair to each athlete. A full panel should consist of a Start Area Coordinator and three starters who rotate between being a starter and recallers. The Start Area Coordinator may or may not allocate starts to him/herself. It is important that the starters have absolute faith and trust in each member of the panel. The IAAF has decreed that for 'straight line' events, the starter shall be *inside* the track and be in front of the athletes. In the ideal situation there should be four starter's assistance allocated. Should the starter or the recallers consider the start to be unfair, a recall gun shall be fired?

Starter

The starter is *responsible* for the 'start'. Warnings and disqualifications may be applied only by the starter. The starter must be 100% committed to the start. Rather than giving orders, he/she must invite the competitors to take their places in order to take a **good start** at the right moment.

Recallers

The Recallers will be 80% committed to the start and will *observe* the start. When the start gun is fired, and they consider the start to be unfair, the Recallers will fire a recall gun. The Recallers shall report their observations to the starter, who will decide whether, and to whom a warning (in multi events only) or a disqualification will be issued. **Rule 129 - 6.** (A lack of officials will often require a recaller to be the Start Line Official (SLO) at the start and then move away to 'recall'). Neither recaller should stand too far away from the starter so that communication with the starter in the event on a restart is efficient and timely. Recall starters are extra eyes and ears for the starter. The rules relating to 'false starts' and the 'run under protest', make it very clear that recall starters

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must take their positions where the view of the athletes allocated to them is clear and defined, with no potential distractions or movement from waiting athletes, officials or spectators.

Recaller 1:

The first recaller should position him or herself so they he/she can see a similar view to that of the starter, generally on the same side of the track. The main focus of the Recaller 1 is the athletes in Lanes 1-4.

Recaller 2:

The second recaller should position him or herself so they he/she can see a differing view to that of the starter, and may not be on the same side of the track as the starter. The main focus of the Recaller 2 is the athletes in Lanes 5-8.

Starter's Assistants (SA)

At major meetings there should be four starter's assistants, one of whom will be appointed the Chief Starter's Assistant by the Start Area Coordinator. At minor meetings only one or two Starter's Assistants may be available. The Chief Starter's Assistant will then delegate responsibilities to the remainder of the SA team.

Chief Starter's Assistant

The chief starter's assistant will

- organise the other available Starter's Assistants and ensure they know their duties
- take on the role of one of the following starter's assistants.

Starters' Assistant 1: Start Line Official (SLO)

One starter's assistant will be designated the start line official (SLO). This official has several duties. These are as follows:

- in straight lane sprints and non-lane events does not have to be a starter
- in straight laned events will ensure that athletes meet the physical requirements of the hands i.e. fully behind and not in contact with the start line
- in straight lane sprints will also check athletes' feet are in contact with the blocks at all times during the start- from 'on your marks' to the report of the gun
- will observe the anchorage of the starting blocks during a straight laned event
- in split starts will ensure that the field meets the physical requirements of the start on the ***normal*** start line.

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- in unlaned events, will ensure athletes meet the physical requirements of the start, e.g. feet fully behind the start line and no hands on the track.
- when all requirements are met by all starters the SLO will step back from the start line and move his/her arms behind the back and stand still (subsequently referred to as 'stand back'). This will signal to the starter that all is ready for the start.
- if there is an issue the SLO will quietly ask the athlete to correct the fault by either moving hands from the line or move feet to ensure contact both the blocks. If this process takes too long the starter may ask the athletes to stand up and reset the start.

The start line official has no brief to consider whether the field is still and ready during Phase 1 of the start. The starter is responsible for that consideration.

When required, the SLO will check that competitors are in their allocated lanes, are showing their competition numbers, and are wearing their correct uniforms.

Starters' Assistant 2: Check-in Official (CIO)

The Check-in Official (CIO) is the "meet and greet" official and is the first person athletes meet as they check in for competition at the start line. The CIO needs to be a 'people person' with strong communication skills, patience and the ability to deal with any problems that arise. Top level CIO are invaluable as they allow athletes to move through from the 'check in' area to the competition area in a relaxed and focussed manner. Other duties may include making sure the athletes are correctly uniformed and registered. In smaller local competitions the CIO will also be responsible for the lane draws.

Starter's Assistants 3 & 4:

If available Starter's Assistants 3 & 4 assist Starter's Assistant CIO with the 'Meet and Greet' and place the athletes on the line. They recheck athletes' numbers and names and check they are in the correct lane. In laned races they also check the athletes' feet are in contact with the blocks in the "on your marks" and "set" positions. Starter's Assistant 3, Lanes 1-4. Starter's Assistant 4, Lanes 5-8. They do this from behind the athletes as they move forward into their blocks. Once satisfied they then quickly and quietly move from the starter's field of vision and stand still.

Start Area Coordinator:

The start area co-ordinator is responsible for the organisation of the start area, and for the meeting running to time. The co-ordinator liaises with the, the starter, recallers and their assistants. The co-ordinator details the 'starts

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and recalling duties' for each starter. The coordinator also signals to the starter when to initiate a start. Before each start the start area coordinator should scan the field and track to ensure all is in place for the start of the race. Things to note are such things as:

- placement of brake line in 800m events
- field events are not encroaching on the track,
- hurdles are ready
- the track is clear

This is not to say that the Start Area Coordinator is responsible for these things rather just to ensure a smooth and fair start for athletes.

The Start Referee:

The Start Referee plays an important role in all starts. It is appropriate and good practice that the appointed person be a specialist and experienced starter. If that is the case, his / her observations will be based on a technically sound background. Start referees fulfil several obligations, specifically he/she:

- is not a member of the starting team
- but works alongside the start team
- does not interfere or comment on starts, except when issues need addressing
- is required to keep an accurate record of all starts
- ensures the Start Area Coordinator carries out an initial check of the false start equipment and a photo timing zero test at the beginning of each track session when applicable
- monitors the operation of false start equipment by any commercial provider
- communicates with athletes only as a result of an official protest about a start or a warning /disqualification (in this context, the Start Referee can allow an athlete, who immediately protests, to run the race, subject to the protest being considered afterwards)
- imposes and notifies the imposition to the athletes of a 'disciplinary' or conduct warning by presenting the athlete with a yellow card.

If an athlete has already has one conduct warning and been presented with a yellow card during the same competition a subsequent yellow card must be given and then followed by a red card to disqualify the athlete. The Start Referee should only intervene when start procedures are not conducted within the rules of competition.

Athletes' Physical Requirements:

From this point forward when we refer to Athletes' Physical Requirements we refer to hands behind the line and feet in contact with

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the blocks in sprint starts and in standing starts that athletes' feet are behind and not in contact with the line and hands are not in contact with the ground.

Start Panel Positioning

Athletic tracks are left handed, this means Lane 1 is on the inside of the track and the athlete's left hand is always nearest the inner lane curb. For all track events, the starter will be positioned to maximise the best view of all athletes. Please remember athletes may be intimidated by the officials moving too close to them while checking the athlete's physical requirements. This should be done as surreptitiously as possible.

Straight Line Sprints (60m, 100m, Sprint Hurdles)

The starter is positioned:

- about five to eight metres in front and three metres infield of the start line approximately 12 metres from the nearest competitor

Recall 1 is positioned:

- inside the track, within approximately three metres from the Starter and check all lanes with a main focus on Lanes 1-4
- to observe that the anchorage of the starting blocks is secure during the start sequence
- to observe that the start was in accordance with the rules and fair to each athlete.

Recall 2 is positioned:

- outside the track about four to five metres in front and about three to four metres outside Lane 8. She/he will check all lanes with a main focus on Lanes 5-8.
- to observe that the start was in accordance with the rules and fair to each athlete.

The SLO is positioned:

- events just in front of the start to ensure that the athletes' hands meet the physical requirements of the start
- when requirements are met he/she stands back.

Starter's Assistants 3 & 4 are positioned:

- to walk in behind the athletes as they move to "on your marks" and check athletes' feet meet the physical requirements. They then move out of field of vision of the starter. Figure 2 shows the positioning and subsequent movement of Recalls 3 & 4 in a 100m start. Please note that we suggest that the start referee move slightly back to ensure he/she does not obstruct the view of the starter.

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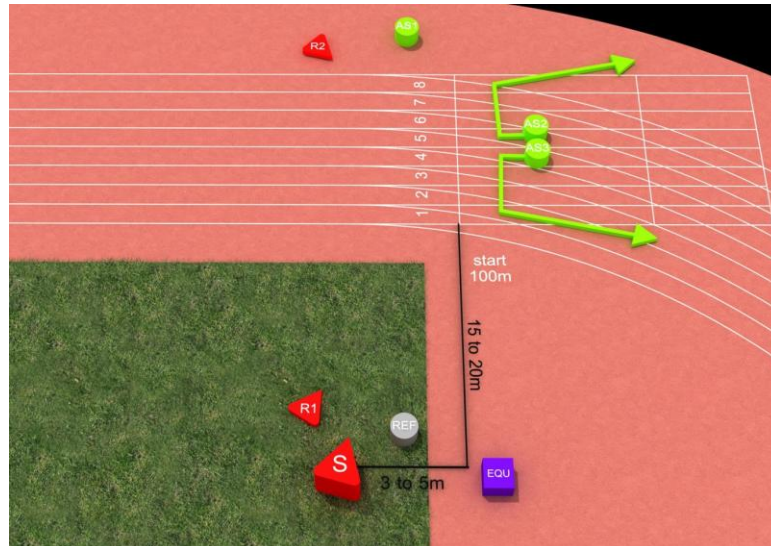


Figure 2: Suggested start positions and movement in 100m starts (thanks to Alan Bell for the use of this slide)

Key:



Starter (S) Recaller 1 (R1) Recaller 2 (R2)



Start referee (REF)



Starter's Assistants (AS 1= SLO, AS 2= SA3 & AS3= SA4)



EQU Electronic false start equipment & staff

Curved Sprints (200m, 400m, distance hurdles, sprint relays)

The procedures, standards, levels of concentration and observation displayed shall be no less for all other track events than for 'straight line events'

The starter is positioned:

- with a clear view of all athletes
- in 200m - behind the athletes on the inside of the track, looking down the left shoulders of the athletes
- 400m- outside of the track looking down the back of the athletes
- where the athletes are in as narrow a field of vision as possible.

Recall 1 is positioned:

- close to the starter
- to check the inner lanes
- on the track behind and to the left side of athletes in Lane 1-4
- to move and check the physical requirements of the athletes in Lanes 1-4 (if SLO, SA 3 & SA 4 are not available)
- to ensure an unobstructed view of athletes in the inner lanes.

Recall 2 is positioned:

- to check the outer lanes
- outside the track and behind the athletes as it is closer to the starter in the event of an 'incident'

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- to ensure an unobstructed view of athletes in the outer lanes, Lane 5-8
- to move and check the physical requirements of athletes in Lanes 5-8 (if SA 3 & SA 4 are not available).

The SLO is positioned:

- outside the track, to ensure athletes in Lanes 1 & 2 meet the physical requirements of the start
- when requirements are met he/she stands back

Starter's Assistants 3 & 4 are positioned:

- outside the track, to ensure athletes in Lanes 3-8 meet the physical requirements of the race start (see Figure 3 for movement flow)
- when requirements are met he/she stands back

Figure 3 shows the positioning and subsequent movement of SA 3 & 4 in the 200 m start.

Note:

The following events all start in lanes: 200, 300, 400 and 800 metre events and 4x100, 200 and 400 meter relays. There is a specific start line in each lane for each event. Starting blocks are compulsory for all these events. The starter with assistance from the SLO should ensure athletes are using the correct start lines, especially at the 400m, 800m, 1 x 400m and 4 x 400 m start area where there can be confusion especially from junior athletes.

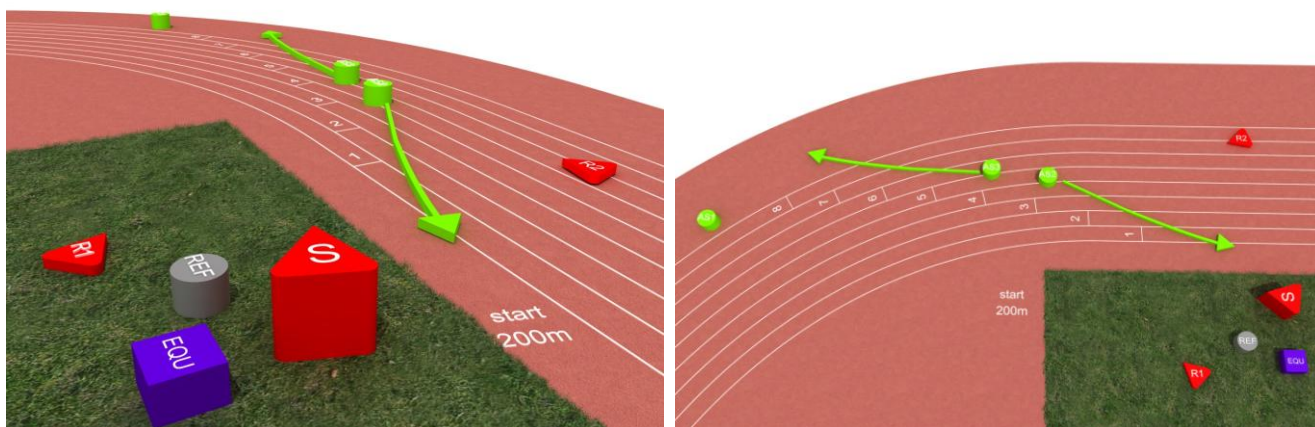


Figure 3: Suggested start positions and movement in 200m starts (thanks to Alan Bell for the use of the slides)

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Figure 4 shows the alternative movements for recallers when starter's assistants are not available at the 200 m start.

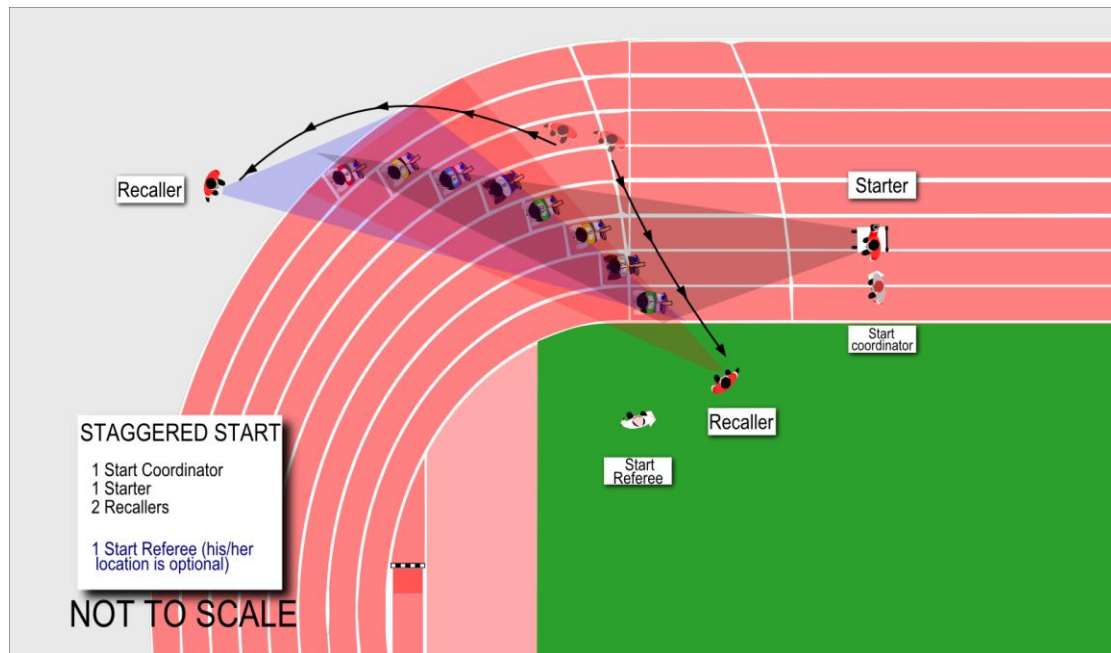


Figure 4: Suggested start positions and movement in 200m starts when no starter's assistants are available.

At the 400m start distances between the athletes on the start are further than at the 200m therefore consideration needs to be given to how the physical requirements of the athletes can be checked in a timely manner. Figure 5 shows the suggested positioning of the start team when three starter's assistants are available. If all three are not available it is important that the recallers and available starter's assistants work together to ensure a timely check of the physical requirements for athletes in all lanes. If recallers should be required to check the physical requirements of athletes they should finish their check in or near the final position from which they will be checking the race.

800m

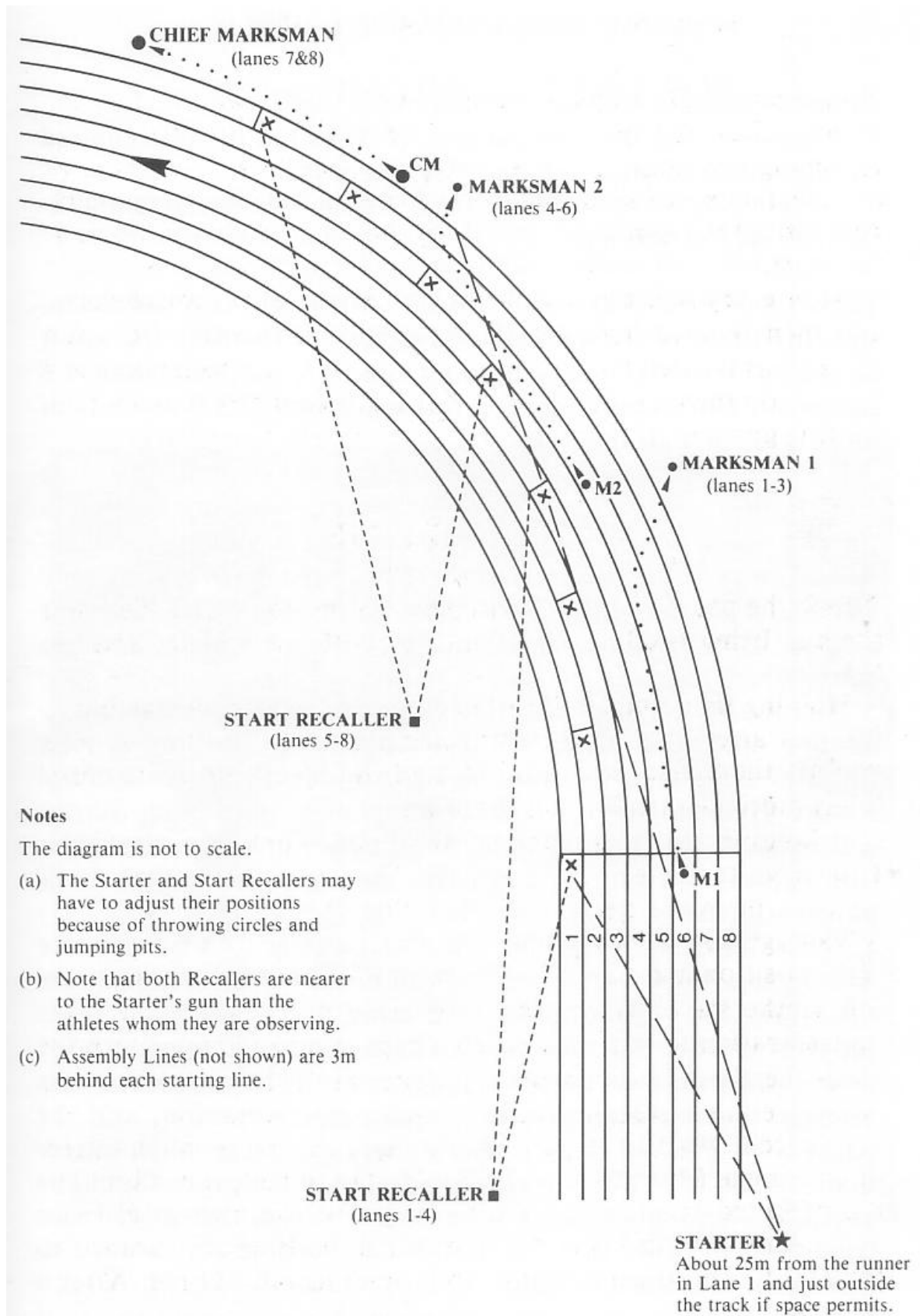
The starter is positioned:

- in a laned start on the inside of the track behind the athletes looking down their left shoulders of the athletes
- in a curved line start on the inside of the track, five to eight in front of the athletes and two to three metres infield.

Recall 1 is positioned:

- inside the track
- to check the athletes starting from the inner lanes or left half of the field

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Notes

The diagram is not to scale.

- (a) The Starter and Start Recallers may have to adjust their positions because of throwing circles and jumping pits.
- (b) Note that both Recallers are nearer to the Starter's gun than the athletes whom they are observing.
- (c) Assembly Lines (not shown) are 3m behind each starting line.

Figure 5: The suggested positioning at the 400m start with three starter's assistants available.

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Recall 2 is positioned:

- outside the track
- to check the outer athletes
- about four to five metres in front and about two to three metres outside Lane 8 in a laned event
- about four to five metres in front and about two to three metres outside the outer runner in an unlaned event.

The SLO is positioned:

- outside the track, to ensure athletes in Lanes 1 & 2 meet the physical requirements of the race start in a laned start
- outside the track, to ensure all athletes meet the physical requirements of the start in an unlaned event
- when requirements are met he/she stands back.

Starter's Assistants 3 & 4 are positioned:

- outside the track, to ensure athletes in Lanes 5 & 6 meet the physical requirements of the race start in laned events
- so that when requirements are met he/she is able to stand back.

Starter's Assistants 3 & 4 are not required in an unlaned event.

Note:

Athletes competing in an 800 m event will only run in lanes until they reach the break line at the start of the back straight, where they are free to move to the inner lanes. When there is a large field the 800 metres, it is permissible to place two athletes in each lane with faster athlete in each lane on the inside.

Non-laned Events (1500m, 3000, 5000m, 10000m)

The starter is positioned:

- inside the track, five to eight in front of the athletes and two to three metres infield (Blanchet, R., 2008, *Le Juge Arbitre-The Referee*, translated by D. Blanchet, p 34).

Recall 1 is positioned:

- inside the track and check the inner athletes.

Recall 2 is positioned:

- outside the track and check the outer athletes.

The SLO is positioned:

- just in front of the start, to ensure all athletes meet the physical requirements of the start
- so that when requirements are met he/she stands back

Starter's Assistants 3 & 4 are not required at the start line:

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Split Starts (3000m, 5000, 10000m)

The starter is positioned:

- inside the track to see both the inner and outer groups of athletes

Recall 1 is positioned:

- outside the track
- to check the athletes starting from the *normal* start line

Recall 2 is positioned:

- outside of the track
- to check the athletes starting from the *split* start line have met the physical requirements of the start
- to check athletes starting from the *split* start line

The SLO is positioned:

- to check that the physical requirements of the start have been met on the *normal* start
- so that when requirements are met he/she stands back

Starter's Assistants 3 & 4 are not required at the start line:

The Start Procedure

Three Phased Start: Sprint Events (100m, 200m, 400m & 4x100m, 2x200m, 4x400m relays)

In sprint events a three phased start is used. The first begins with the command "on your marks" in which the athletes move to and settle into their starting blocks. Before the 'on your marks' command it is advantageous for all athletes to be lined up together each approximately two to three metres from his/her blocks, as this facilitates the athletes reaching their blocks at a similar time. In the 'on your marks' position athletes must have two feet in contact with the blocks (this must be maintained during the whole start of the race and is to do with calibration of the EFSE used at international meets). At least one knee must be in contact with the surface of the track and hands and fingers must be behind and not touching the start line. Phase 2 begins with the 'Set' command and the third with the retort of the gun.

Most obvious in straight line sprints, athletes go through two main stages within each phase of the start procedure. The first is the physical preparation, once this is completed, they then move into the next stage by preparing themselves mentally for the next phase of the race. When both are complete they are in what we call their 'state-of-readiness'. The switch to state-of-readiness is indicated by subtle movements indicating a change in focus for the athletes. Athletes remain in their 'state-of-readiness' for only a short time. It is the starter's goal to move to the next phase of the race when all athletes are prepared both physically and

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mentally- or in a 'state of readiness'. Figure 6 indicates this process for one athlete.



Figure 6: 'Stages-of-readiness' on the start line during a three phased start. (see Figure 7 for the key)

Points C and E/F indicate the two points of 'state-of-readiness'. At Point A the 'on your marks' command is given and the athlete moves him or herself into the blocks. Physical preparation is indicated by green shading. Preparation intensity is indicated through a stronger gradient of colour. First the athlete prepares physically by moving towards the blocks, often stretching his/her legs, checking hair, positioning hands and settling into the blocks and then at Point B he/she will usually lower the head and drop the shoulders and switch to a metal preparation for the next phase of the race. This stage I call 'first state-of-readiness'. The completion of which occurs at Point C.

At Point C the 'set' command is given. The athlete physically prepares for the race beginning by raising hips, lifting knee off the track and moving shoulders forward. The hips then sink a little and at Point D the athlete switches to a final mental preparation for the race. This is the second 'state-of-readiness' and is illustrated between Points E and F. The changes between points D and E are very subtle and often difficult to see for the inexperienced starter. They involved a mental switch in the athlete with the physical indicators of a very slight shift in hips, head and the shoulders may ripple. At this point the athlete is ready for retort of the gun to start the race.

If left too long at Points C and F the athlete will lose his/her 'state-of-readiness'. Indicated as red in the diagram after the second state-of-readiness only. The athlete will change first mentally then begin to move physically indicating the switch out of the 'states-of-readiness'. If this occurs the athlete should be stood up and reset into the race.

Obviously this process increases in complexity with the number of athletes in a field. Different athletes take differing amounts of time to reach their 'states-of-readiness' as illustrated in Figure 7. Some settle quickly into their blocks, others take longer. Similarly some pop up quickly on the 'set' command while others raise slowly. It is the challenge of the starter to have all athletes in their first 'state-of-readiness' before they give the 'set' command and in their second 'state-

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of readiness' before firing the gun. This is the optimal start time for the race and is indicated by the black line with the blue hue in Figure 7.

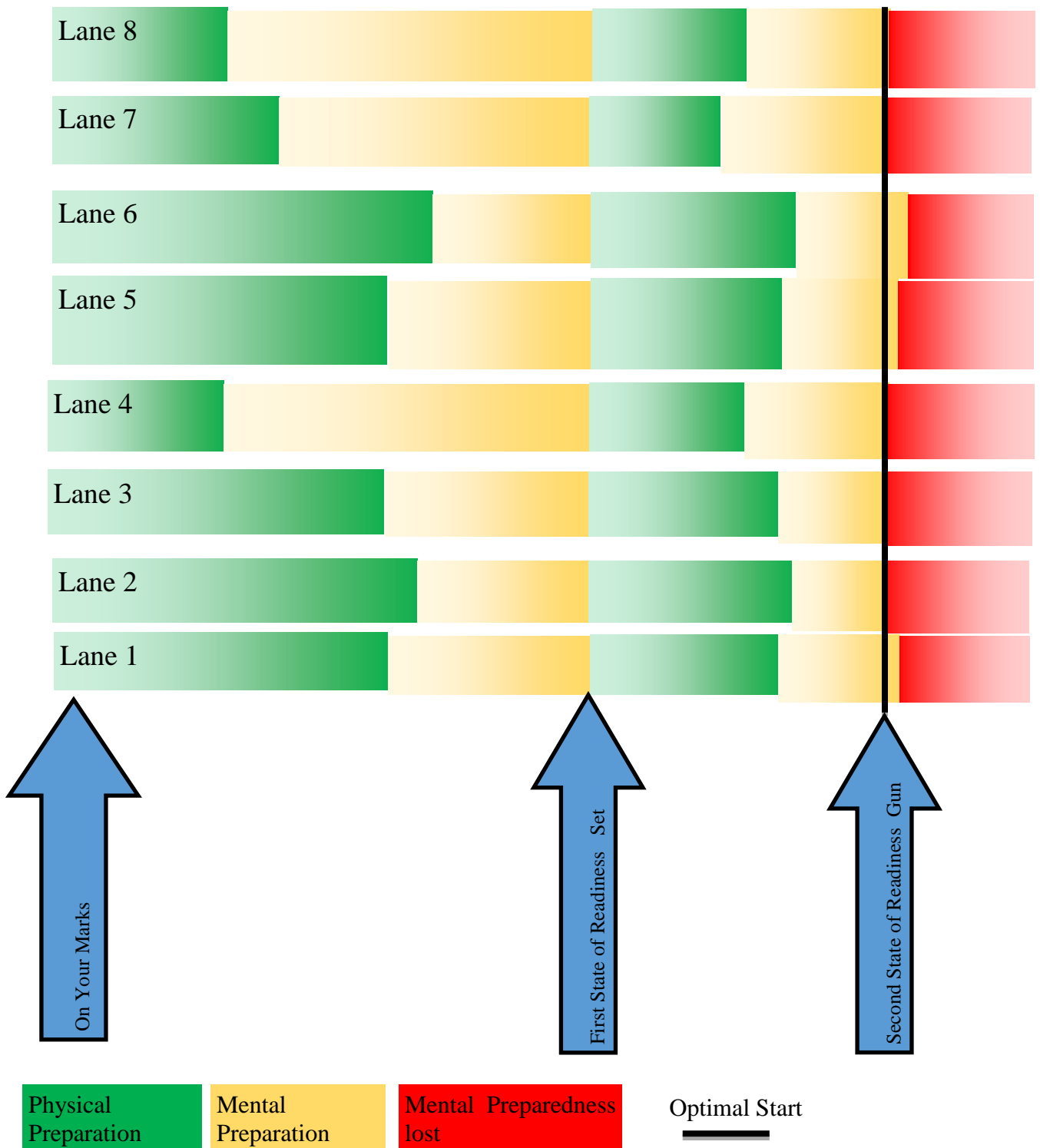


Figure 7: Athletes Preparation for Straight Lane Start

800 Metre Races (laned but two phased start)

Although this event usually starts in lanes, the start procedure is very different to other laned events. The start, depending on the calibre of the athletes, can take place in a very short space of time and is often referred to as a high speed start. After the request 'on your marks', the athletes will move up to their start line (on occasions athletes, usually seniors, almost run up to their start lines), place their front foot behind the line, place the second foot behind them for balance, squat slightly and quickly switch to a 'state-of-readiness' for the race start. If left too long on the line the athletes again lose their 'state-of-readiness' and should be stood back and the race reset.

Track Events 1000 Metres and Over (Two Phased Start)

Before starting a non-laned race the starter should ensure all athletes are approximately the same distance (approx. two metres) from the start line. As the start line is curved athletes will also be in a curved line when lined up ready for the race. In a 1500m because the race is started on a bend we suggest that athletes are moved slightly away from the inside track rail to enable all athletes a straight start.

After the request 'on your marks', the athletes will move up to the start line and as with the 800m on occasions athletes, usually seniors, almost run up to the start line, they place their front foot behind the line, place the second foot behind them for balance and quickly switch to a 'state-of-readiness' for the race start. If left too long on the line the athletes lose their 'state-of-readiness' and should be stood back and the race reset, however the loss of 'state-of-readiness' in these races appears to take slightly longer than in the 800m races.

Chapter 3: Coloured Cards Used in the Start Area

The IAAF mandates the use of cards to transmit critical information to the athletes. These cards should be A4 in size (210mm x 297mm). The recent increase in size of the cards assists not only the athletes but actual and television audiences to understand what is happening on the track. It is therefore important that the cards are the same front and back so the athletes and audiences are receiving the same message.

Green Card

The colour *green* is recognised worldwide as a colour or signal indicating that it is safe to proceed or the way forward is clear. It is important that the selected shade of green is easy for people with a colour recognition deficiency to recognise that the card as being green. This situation is, by no means, a rare occurrence.

A green card (Figure 8) shown to athletes to indicate there is no warning being given. This usually follows an instruction from the starter or when other athletes in the field have been shown another card.

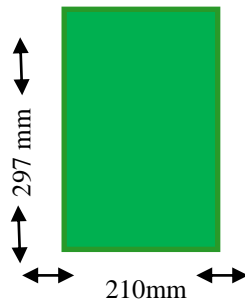


Figure 8: An A4 green card

Red Cards

There are two sorts of red card used in the start area. The display of an A4 plain *red* card (Figure 9) indicates that a **disqualification** has been issued by the Start Referee for a second behavioural or conduct warning. It does not indicate a false start.



Figure 9: An A4 red card

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The second sort of red card is half red and half black across the diagonal as seen in Figure 10. It is also given for disqualification but indicates a false start and is given to any athlete who false starts in a race except in combined events when it is given to the athlete who subsequently false start after a first false start warning (yellow card) has been given. The starter determines when and to whom this card will be shown. She/he may make this decision in consultation with recall starters. The starter then requests that the SLO Starter's Assistant to disqualify the athlete by saying "Starter's Assistant, please disqualify the athlete in Lane X". The SLO will then walk into the disqualified athlete's lane and hold the card up at approximated head height. This is to occur even if the athlete has left the lane.



Figure 10: An A4 red false start card

Yellow Cards

Like the red cards there are two sorts of yellow card used in the start area. The display of an A4 plain **yellow** card an athlete (Figure 11) during a "start" will only be given by the start referee and will indicate a behaviour or conduct warning has been issued. This warning will be disciplinary matter. In the event that the athlete has already received a conduct warning, yellow card, earlier in the same competition, then the displaying of the yellow card will be followed by the plain red card as two conduct warnings in any one competition mean disqualification.

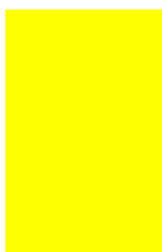


Figure 11: An A4 yellow conduct warning card

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The second sort of yellow card is half yellow and half black across the diagonal as seen in Figure 12. It is given for the first false start in any race in Combined Events competitions only. The athlete who subsequently false starts after a first false start will be disqualified and receive a red false start card.



Figure 12: An A4 yellow false start card used only in Combined Events

Communication with Athletes

One of the corner stones of the start is that it be 'user-friendly'. Coloured cards are the major means of conveying statements to athletes. If an official gives a verbal statement to an athlete, there is opportunity for the athlete to question the official. There could be the potential for misunderstanding a verbal statement. The question of language barriers is also eliminated by using the cards.

Communication with Meeting Officials

The Start Referee shall report giving of all cards by filling in and sending a report to the TIC room. Figure 13 is an example of a report template that a Start Referee might use to do this.

The Starter Area Coordinator should also keep a record of all disqualifications and inform photo finish immediately a false start disqualification has occurred. The photo finish need to know the lane the athlete was disqualified from and his/her name and/or number if applicable.

Start Referee's Incident Report	
Referee:	_____
Meeting:	_____
Meeting Dates:	_____
Infringement of: <i>(please tick)</i>	
Rule 162.5	<input type="checkbox"/> Disqualification due to false start.
Rule 125.5	<input type="checkbox"/> Unsporting Conduct Warning (yellow card given)
Rule 125.5	<input type="checkbox"/> Unsporting Conduct Exclusion (yellow and red cards given)
Athlete Name/ Number:	_____
Event Number:	_____
Heat Number:	_____
Lane Number:	_____
Comment if required:	_____

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Figure 13: Start Referee's Incident Report Template

Chapter 4: Start Procedures

The Phases of a Start

A three phase start is a track event when starting blocks are used.

A two phase start is a track event where starting blocks are not permitted.

A three phase start: Phase 1 On Your Marks; Phase 2 Set; Phase 3 a start gun shall be fired.

A two phase start: Phase 1, On Your Marks; Phase 2, and a start gun shall be fired.

Note: Rule 208: The start line ruling. An athlete shall not touch either the start line or the ground in front of it with his hands or his feet when on his marks (IAAF Rule Book 2014).

Pre-Start Procedure.

The CIO (Check in Official) Starter's Assistant will meet and greet the athletes as they arrive at the start area. Should the number of competitors be too many for a fair and safe start, the start area co-ordinator and track referee should consider either one of two options: two races or a 'split start'.

Two to Three minutes before race start time a Starter's Assistant will assemble the field four meters behind the start line and two minutes before the race the 'start officials' will move to their respective positions. Approximately one minute before start time the Chief Starter's Assistant will give the call 'prepare for competition', having first received the all clear signal from the Start Area Coordinator who is in liaison with photo finish and the track manager.

"Prepare for Competition"

Athletes train for, and attend track and field meetings to take part in competition. The call 'prepare for competition' will be given by the Chief Starter's Assistant. This call requires two outcomes:

1. a request for the athletes to remove final warm-up clothing and take up their position on the assembly lines to await the first phase of the start.
2. the Chief Starter's Assistant is handing the field to the start panel.

A Three Phase Start

Phase 1 (on your marks)

Requirements:

- each athlete shall comply with the start line requirements
- each athletes' feet shall be in contact with the foot pads of the starting blocks and maintain contact throughout the whole start process
- each athlete shall have at least one knee in contact with the ground
- each athlete shall have both hands in contact with the ground behind the start line (see Figures 14 & 15)
- when the athletes have complied with the requirements of Phase 1, Phase 2 will follow.



Figure 14: Acceptable as hand is fully behind the line

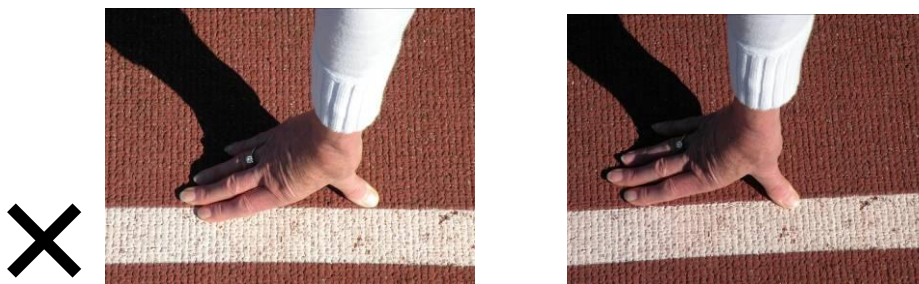


Figure 15: Unacceptable as hand is not fully behind the line

When the athletes have complied with the requirements of Phase 1 and are in their first 'state-of-readiness', Phase 2 will follow.

During Phase 1 'on your marks' the starter temporarily hands the field to the SLO and other Starter's Assistant to observe that the requirements of

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the start will be complied with. The Starter is asking the athletes to proceed to their start stations, settle into their starting blocks and comply with the Start Line Rule:

- 1) have both feet in contact with the foot pads on the starting blocks
- 2) have both hands in contact with the ground behind the start line
- 3) have at least one knee on the ground.

Should the field fail to meet the requirements of the start within a reasonable time, the starter will request that athletes move back from the line. A restart will take place.

When the requirements of the start have been complied with in a reasonable time, the Starter's Assistants will then step back from the track and shift their arms behind his/her back and stand still.

Phase 2 (set)

With the request 'set' all athletes shall immediately assume their set and final position. When the field is 'still and ready' and all athletes are in their second 'state-of-readiness' Phase 3 will follow.

Requirements:

- with the request 'set' all athletes should immediately assume their set and final position
- athletes' feet must retain contact with the foot pads on the starting blocks
- the hands of each athlete must remain in contact with the ground
- when the starter considers the field is still and ready all athletes should be in their second 'state-of-readiness' and Phase 3 will follow
- When the athletes are 'still and ready' the starter will then raise his/her arm to fire the gun. The arm should not be lifted too early as it tires the arm and signals too early to hand timers that the gun is about to be fired.

Note: Athletes' feet must continue to retain contact with the foot pads on the starting blocks at all times during the start procedure. The hands of each athlete must retain contact with the ground.

Phase 3 (the start gun)

The start gun will be fired. Should the starter or the recallers consider the start to be unfair a recall gun will be fired.

The Lane Draw

'Thou shalt not alter the lane draw.' On a normal competition day the Chief Starter's Assistant will, in all probability conduct a lane draw prior to each race. A bag with numbered discs or marbles is often used. If the meeting involves championship events, or there are special events, a lane

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draw will be delivered to the Chief Starter's Assistant and the Start Area Coordinator at the start from the control room. This draw will have been generated by the Competition's Committee. If the meeting is a national championship or an international meeting the lane draw and the athletes will be delivered to the Chief Starter's Assistant at the start. Again the lane draw will have been generated by a Competition's Committee.

A Two Phase Start (a standing start)

Start requirements:

- There is no request 'set'.
- Hands are not to touch the ground during the start.
- Starting blocks shall not be used.
- The Start Line Rule (Rule 208) must be complied with.

Each athlete must be aware that-

- starting blocks are not permitted
- hands must not make contact with the ground during the start
- the start line rule will be observed during the start.
- there is no request 'set'

Phase 1: On Your Marks.

The athletes will approach the start line and comply with the requirements of Phase 1. When these have been met Phase 2 will follow.

The starter is:

- 1) requesting the field to move up to the start line and comply with the requirements of Phase 1
 - 2) is preparing the field with the assistance of the SLO for their race.
- When the SLO determines that the field has complied with the physical requirements of the start he/she will move back. If during the build-up of a start there is a start line infringement the start line official should ask the athlete to correct the infringement. If this process takes too long or is disruptive to other athletes then the starter will request the athletes move back from the start line. A restart would take place.

Phase 2: The Start Gun.

When the field is still and ready, the start gun shall be fired.

Walking in with the Field

In distance races of 800 metres and longer the trend for starting these events has changed in recent years. Athletes want to spend a minimum amount of time at the start line before the gun is fired. Observation shows that most athletes approach the start line – slap down the leading foot, drop the back foot onto the track and are ready to race. To make sure there is no undue delay the following procedure is recommended:

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1. assemble the athletes two to three metres behind the start line
2. after the request 'On your marks' the starter should begin lifting the gun
3. as the athletes reach the start line to comply with the start requirements the gun should have just reached the position from which it will be fired. This practice is sometimes referred to as 'walking in with the field.'

Note: 800 Metres, although this event usually starts in lanes, the start is a 'two phase start'.

Recalling a Race

If the start is not within the rules or considered unfair to any athlete the recall gun shall be fired and the athletes brought back to behind their start lines. The athletes must be informed of the reasons for the recall and appropriate cards given. If the start is unfair a green card must be shown to the whole field.

Successive Starts

A false start will be a litmus test for the starter during the restart. If the starter is consistent with a time to allow the athletes to be 'still and ready' after the 'set' command then that same requirements should be applied to the restart. If the starter *shortens* the time between 'set' and the gun during a restart, the athletes have had a victory because they may sense the starter is worried about his/her performance. Starters should consistently maintain their normal time difference and behavioural expectations between 'set and the gun'.

Insight into the Set Position

How consistent are the starters? The start must be fair **for** each athlete. The starter must be fair **to** each athlete.

According to the I.A.A.F there is no perfect holding time in the set position. In reality, there must be a discernable hold to ensure all athletes are steady and in the correct starting position. There will be many occasions when an athlete has a poor start, and the reason given would, in all probability, have been "*I was not ready*". In all probability this will mean that the next phase of the race was begun before the athlete was in his/her 'state-of-readiness'.

The above raises a question, are 'steady' and 'ready' the same thing? It is one thing to be 'steady', however, was the athlete 'ready'? There is a physical and a mental aspect to be considered, these are discussed in detail in Chapter 2. The physical aspect is straight forward. The athletes are physically still and appear ready for the start. The mental aspect requires

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the starter to be able to recognise the subtle changes in an athlete's physical appearance such as changes in an athlete's facial colour, a tilt of the head forward, and the eyes focusing on an area of the track. There is often a change of colour in the upper arm and a minimal drop of the athletes' shoulders. Some or most of these changes indicate that the athlete is mentally ready for the start. This relates more to straight line events because they are explosive starts and the starter is close enough to the athletes to observe the subtle changes in the athlete. In laned events 'running the bend' some of the changes also occur but often the start team is too far away to recognise some of them. In non-lane events, top level athletes will indicate, probably mentally, in a very subtle way, that they are ready to go.

The Start in Detail: Straight Line Events

It is strongly recommended that where a specific event will have heats, possibly semi-finals, and a final, the same starter is responsible for all the starts. This is right and fair for the athletes. Each competitor will have experienced first-hand how the starter organises the start. There should be no surprises for the athletes as they progress through an event.

Pre-start

The Starter should know:

- who the SLO will be
- who will be recalling and from where
- who will check the feet on starting block pads
- who will be the corner recaller
- that the gun has ammunition
- that the photo finish is ready to record the finish
- the number of heats or semi's involved
- the time the event is scheduled to start
- that the athletes have arrived for competition
- that the start gun and the transducer are in the area where the starter will start the race
- that the whistle is readily accessible for use.

About two minutes before start time, the start co-ordinator will signal the officials to move to their respective positions. At about the same time or just before the CIO will ask the field to prepare for competition. The athletes shall move out to their assembly lines and prepare for the request 'On your marks'. Just before the request 'On your marks' is given, the starter will blow a whistle to alert athletes, possible hand timers and spectators that a race is about to begin.

Phase 2: Still and Ready

The starter should be able to combine intense concentration with a slowly increasing adrenaline flow to increase the awareness of mental contact between the starter and the athletes. This process starts prior to the request '*On your marks*'. It is the period between '*On your marks*' and '*set*' that the adrenaline/concentration mode increases as the starter observes the countenance and rituals of each athlete. After the request '*set*' the adrenaline /concentration condition will increase again.

After the request '*set*' the starter will have around 2 seconds to get the full awareness of the mental contact, (plus another pulse of adrenaline) to read the signals from the athletes that they are ready, and for the Starter to observe that the athletes are still. The gun will then be fired.

It will take several track seasons to recognise the subtle physical and mental signals moving between the athletes and the starter. Sometimes there may be unexpected signals, just before the request '*set*'. If this should happen it may be a warning that after the request '*set*' there may be a quick getaway attempt by an athlete.

Discipline

If an athlete delays the start by raising a hand or sitting up, the starter shall ask the field to stand back. The Start Referee will evaluate the reasons given by the athlete for stopping the start. If the reasons are considered to be invalid or frivolous the Start Referee will give the athlete a personal warning for improper conduct by way of a yellow card. A green card will be shown to all other athletes to indicate that a false start was not committed.

Note: The warning remains with the athlete until the end of the competition.

Delaying the Start

In a start there may be several athletes who settle into their starting blocks very quickly after the request '*On Your Marks*'. Other athletes may take longer to settle into their starting blocks but still be within a reasonable time span. One or two athletes may '*push the limits*' before settling into their starting blocks. If the starter considers that an athlete is purposely or otherwise delaying the start, the field shall be requested, by the starter, to '*stand back*'. The Start Referee will adjudicate in such situations. Determining the use of this strategy by an athlete is more difficult to detect in laned events run on the bend. After the Start Referee has made a decision, a green card will be displayed to other athletes, indicating no penalty was given to them. Athletes delaying the start in any event are liable for a personal warning; a yellow card.

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Standing Starts and the Start Line Official

The start of middle distance track events, especially 1500m, 3000m and 5000m & 10000m can be quite rapid. If an infringement occurs the starter should request the field stand back, state the reason, and then restart the race. Top athletes can be very focused and impatient. The start of a race walk is in general at a more pedestrian pace.

Chapter 5: Infringements

False Start

Rule 162-6 An athlete, after assuming a full and final set position, shall not commence his starting motion until after receiving the report of the gun or approved starting apparatus. If, in the judgement of the Starter or the Recallers, he does so any earlier, it shall be deemed a false start. It shall also be deemed a false start if, in the judgement of the starter:

Rule162-6a An athlete fails to comply with the commands “On your marks” or “Set” as appropriate after a reasonable time.

Rule162-6b An athlete, after the command “on your marks,” disturbs other athletes in the race through sound or otherwise.

Rules 162-6a/162-6b. These two rules will be “adjudicated upon” by the Start Referee.

The I.A.A.F. has decreed that on and after the first of January 2010 that,

- a) in standard track events there will be **NO** false starts permitted.
- b) in combined events that only **one false** start will be permitted in each race.
- c) the starter only should disqualify (or warn in combined events) the athlete or athletes who, in his / her opinion, were responsible for the false start. The starter or any recaller may, with justification, fire a recall gun. In non-lane starts, offending athletes are identified by their registration or competition numbers. In laned events they are identified by their lane number. All disqualified athletes should be escorted from the track enclosure by a starter's assistant.

In standard events any athlete awarded a false start will be disqualified and subsequently shown a red and black card. When all athletes are back behind their assembly lines, the starter will say: “Starters Assistant please disqualify the athlete(s) in Lane(s) X (state the lane number(s) of the offending athlete(s)). Lane X please leave the competition”. When an athlete is disqualified, it must be done with respect and politeness. More than one athlete can be disqualified in any one race. Technically all athletes who begin their starting mode and leave the starting blocks within 1000th of a second (0.001) before the gun are considered to have false started. If multiple athletes who are **not** in neighbouring lanes break then quite possibly more than one person will be disqualified. However if the athletes who break are in neighbouring lanes, usually only the first athlete to offend is disqualified.

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In combined events only one false start per race is permitted without a disqualification. For the first false start, when all competitors have returned to their start lines, the starter will say "Lane(s) X (state the lane number(s) of the offending athlete(s)) false start. To each competitor your first and final warning". Each competitor will be shown a yellow and black card.

With second and successive false starts, after all competitors have returned to their start lines, the starter will say "Starter's Assistant please disqualify the athlete in Lane(s) X (state the lane number(s) of the offending athlete(s). Lane X please leave the start area". The offending athlete(s) will be shown a red and black card.

An Unfair Start

An unfair start is where the starters' concentration and attention is directed away from the start. A major contributor to distraction is the public address system. Very few people (athletes and officials) are able to ignore what is being said. If the **start** is forming as the public address system chimes in, it is unlikely the athletes will hear the starter's requests. In this case it is wise to delay the start until conditions return to normal. The basic question for the start panel is 'Will the start be fair to each athlete?'

Another distraction is movement behind a straight line start. This can be difficult because of the need for the starter to have a high sense of awareness to movement when trying to give the athletes a fair start. Sometimes it is not possible to pull one's cap down far enough to avoid seeing or ignoring the movement. If the starter thinks about people moving behind the start line then he/she is distracted from the task of starting the race and therefore puts the fairness of the start into question. To avoid unnecessary delay, competitors should be marshalled well back from the start or even around the corner. The 200 metre start is an area where a number of *stand-ups* may occur because of movement. There is quite a large arc of athletes for this event. If people are outside the track and are walking past the start, they are in the starter's vision for some time. In this case the starter must ask him/herself 'Will the start be fair?' 'Was the start fair?' If there is any doubt about the start being fair, the starter has no option, but to stand the field up, or recall the start, and advise the athletes the reason for the restart.

A Recall

When there has been a recall, the starter must allow the athletes to return to their assembly lines before any decisions are verbalised to them. There is no reason for a decision to be given earlier, because as athletes return to the line, they are often deep in thought or in a position where they are

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unable to hear the starter. Each athlete is entitled to hear the reason for the recall whether it is an unfair or false start.

Recalling the Start- a False or Unfair Start for Standard Events

With the rule of having **NO** false start per race, without a disqualification, there is added pressure on the starter and the recaller to ensure that each race meets all the requirements for a fair start.

Who Recalls a False or an Unfair Start?

In general the practice would be, that if the official starter or recallers see an unfair or false start, they would recall it- *'if you see it you pull it'*. If three shots ring out so be it. Most unfair and false starts are clear cut but some false starts can be very marginal indeed. If a starter or a recaller has to think about and consider whether there was a false start it would, in all probability, be a wise move to let it go. The starters need to consider whether they can justify the call. If the answer is 'no' then leave it, remembering that in most cases, other starters are involved in the start.

Presentation of Cards to Athletes-Straight Line Events

For a starter, the issue of a yellow card to an athlete is relatively minor. The issue of a red or red and black card is serious. Any red card displayed and presented in an aggressive manner does not help the 'Start Panel' or the remaining athletes. The showing of cards must be carried out in a calm confident manner. No coloured cards should be visible until the starter has stated the penalty. The cards are shown to each athlete by an official at walking pace. The red card should be displayed by an official to the athlete concerned, at head level. The official should be positioned about a meter in front of the athlete. Cards should be visible to the audience and TV cameras if applicable.

For laned events started on a bend, it will need two people to show the athletes a green card, to avoid the wasting of time. However, very few Saturday meetings will have enough officials to run a meeting, let alone wave green cards. In this case start officials can only do their best.

Protests and Appeals

For internal competition within New Zealand, the use of False Start Detection Apparatus is unlikely. A Jury of Appeal is appointed before any major meetings take place.

Rule 146 – 4a

In a track event, if an athlete makes an immediate oral protest against having been charged with a false start, the Start Referee may allow the athlete to compete under protest, in order to preserve the rights of all

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concerned (in local competition the meeting manager shall convene a Jury of Appeal). Irregularities at the start can merit an allowable protest e.g. blocks slipping or crowd disturbance.

Infringing the Start Line Requirement

Crouch Starts: If athletes are making contact with the start line, it is permissible to request them to move their hands back from the line. This action should avoid a “stand back” call.

Standing Starts: When athletes are infringing the start line requirement the starter shall stand the field back and state the reason for the restart. If no penalty is given then a green card should be shown to all athletes.

Chapter 6: Equipment and Facilities

The Gun

Maintenance of a start gun, be it a cap gun or a revolver is important. A cap gun needs regular attention, because the Black Powder used in the caps finds its way into the trigger mechanism. Without maintenance a cap gun becomes unreliable. A revolver needs attention and lubrication to maintain a smooth reliable trigger pressure.

A start gun must be comfortable in either hand and feel like part of the body, similar to a favourite glove. The trigger of a gun should be *squeezed* not *hauled on*. The report of a start gun is considered to be a key element in an athlete's thought processes during their 'start'.

Straight Line Events: An *IAAF* directive requires that the starter must be inside the track and in front of the field. The actions of the starter will be read by the athletes. A start gun should be lifted slowly and deliberately so as to take a minimum of concentration away from the start. The faster the gun is hoisted, the less concentration the starter has for observing the field. The movement of the start gun at high speed, combined with clipped, terse commands, is not conducive to good fair starts.

Note: Before moving to a start position, the starter should check that the start gun(s) have adequate cartridges or caps for the start. Consider: you have one live cartridge left and you are about to request 'set' in a serious sprint final. Are you fully prepared? Was it a wise move? If you are caught in this position it is wise to continue otherwise you may lose all credibility with the athletes. Take the risk, you have two recallers, but in future check the gun!

The starter must be comfortable using the gun in either hand because of differing circumstances at each start. For example at straight lined sprints starters may find their view impaired when their right arm is raised. Using the left hand removes this distraction entirely.

A cap gun weighs approximately 450g. With cap guns the trigger often needs the removal of sharp edges and reshaping. A 38 start revolver and an 8 mm revolver each weigh 800-900 grams. A .22 start revolver weighs 600-700g. The arm has minus tolerance when it has to hold an object up in the air. This situation *may* affect the start if the gun is lifted too early, especially sprint events.

The Whistle

The whistle is a 'back up' should a recall system fail. The whistle, when blown at a start, is to advise athletes, officials and spectators that a race is about to be started.

Electronic Timing (Test Procedure)

Sometimes called the "zero test" at all major meetings, the electronic timing system should be tested one hour before each competition session. In local competition, the accuracy test should be carried out on a regular basis. Either the Track or Start Referees must witness this test. It should be carried out by the Start Area Coordinator with the Start Referee in attendance. The acceptable level of tolerance is < 0.001 (1/1000) of a second.

Procedure. (Observed by the Start Referee)

In collaboration with the photo finish team, and when the photo and timing team are fully operative, the transducer (an electronic trigger) is placed on the finish line. The start gun, if it is a cap gun, is placed on the start line with the caps and hammers close to the transducer. When the chief photo finish official advises that the team are ready for a test, the cap gun, while on the finish line, will be fired. If the start gun is used the muzzle is placed close to the transducer and on the inner boundary of the line (towards the 100m) and the flash must face the camera. This test should occur one hour before competition begins, this includes the beginning of field events.

Rule 165-14. The overall delay between the report from the muzzle, and the start of the timing system, must be constant and less than $1/1000^{\text{th}}$ of a second (0.001 sec).

Starting Blocks

Starting blocks shall:

- be used for all races up to and including 400m and the first leg of the 4 x 200m and the 4 x 400m races. These are all three phase starts
- shall not be used for any other race
- be fitted with anchor spikes the maximum length allowable for the track, and should be in good condition.
- must provide sound anchorage for a set of starting blocks. The pressure exerted on starting blocks by experienced sprinters in straight line events is quite substantial. At away track and field meetings, the starters should observe, as soon as possible, the anchorage of the starting blocks to the track surface and also

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observe, if possible, senior sprinters warming up. Any concerns shall be referred to the start co-ordinator.

Rule 161 (part of.)

1a: The Starting Blocks shall be of a rigid construction and shall give no unfair advantage to the athlete.

1d: The starting blocks shall consist of two foot plates, against which the athlete's feet are pressed in the starting position. The foot plates shall be mounted on a rigid frame. They shall be fixed to the track by a number of pins or spikes. The anchorage shall permit no movement during the actual start.

The Athletic Track

A standard athletic track is 400 metres in length, and consists of two straights of the same length, and two bends, whose radii shall be equal. The inner lane shall be bordered by a kerb of suitable material, and shall be 5cm wide and 5cm high. Athletic Tracks are referred to as 'Left Hand Tracks' with Lane 1 always nearest to the inner lane curb.

The Finish Line

The finish line is 5 cm wide, and is painted white across the track. The athletes shall be placed in the order in which any part of their body (i.e. torso - as distinguished from the head, neck, arms, legs, hands or feet) reaches the 'Vertical Plane' of the nearer edge of the finish line.

Start Lines

The start line is 5cms wide, is white, and is painted on the track. The distance of the race is measured from the edge of the start line farthest from the finish to the edge of the finish line nearest to the start. During a start no part of an athlete may be in contact with the start line, or the ground in front of the start line, until the athletes hear the report of the start gun (see Figures 16 & 17).

In non-laned events there is an increasing practise by athletes, that, after the request 'On Your Marks', of placing the front section of a shoe over the perpendicular plane of the near edge of start line although not in contact with the ground. The front section of the shoe makes no contact with the start line, the heel of the shoe does make contact with the ground but not the start line. The lengths of athletes' shoes over the perpendicular plane of start line are not uniform.

The interpretation of **Rule 162 Section 3** is that the foot positions in Figure 16 meet the requirements of the start line rule. Figure 17 indicates foot positions that do not meet the requirements of the start line rule.

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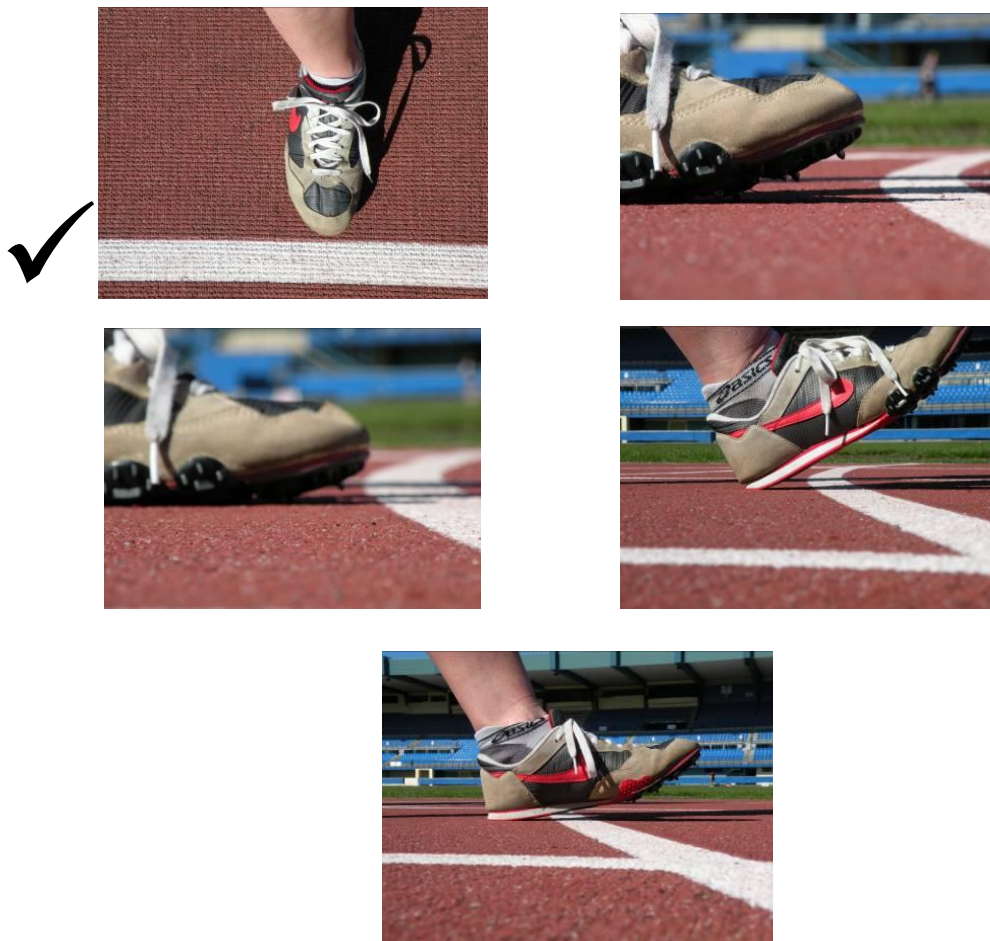


Figure 16: Acceptable because they meet the Start Line rule

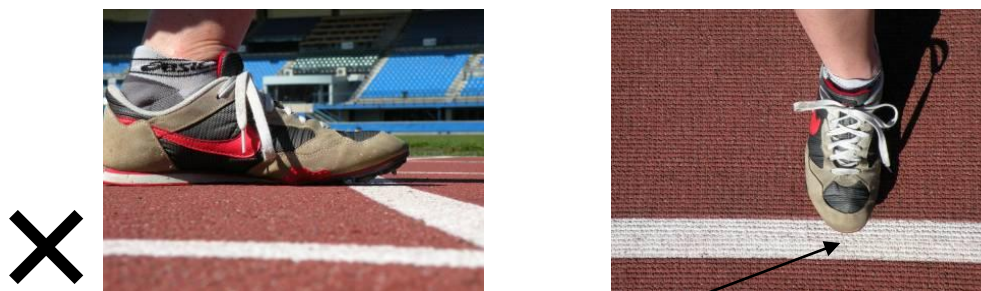


Figure 17: Unacceptable because the athlete's shoe is in contact with the start line and does not meet the Start Line rule

Laned Events-including 800 metres

For each event there is a specific 'start line' in each lane. The start line is straight and is painted across the lane. All lane markings are five centimetres wide and are painted white.

Non Laned Events- 1000m to 10 000 Metres

The Start Lines for these events are five centimetres wide, painted white and are curved. Each curve is calculated to ensure that each athlete will run

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the same distance from any point on the curve. When the number of athletes in a field permits, the athletes may be moved out across the start line from Lane 1 while still retaining their draw, to enable a more orderly approach to the first corner. Steeplechase start stations are dependent on where the water jump is positioned.

Split Starts

This applies to 1000m, 2000m, 3000m, 5000m and 10000 m races; 1500 m races do not allow for split starts. Split starts are permitted when the field is too large to allow a safe and fair start on the normal start line. Often, the number of athletes competing in a non laned event is too many to be placed safely and fairly on the start line for one race. The track manager with the start area co-ordinator will consider either a second race or a split start.

In a *split* start 65% of the field starts on the normal start line for the event and 35% of the field start on another start line in the outer lanes closer to the finish line. This line is white, five centimetres wide and is curved so that all the athletes run the same distance. The line is placed across the track to 'take in' Lanes 5-8. The athletes in these lanes are referred to as the 'outer group'.

65% of the field will usually start on the *normal* start line and 35% of the field will usually start on the *split* start line.

The SLO will be check the normal start line for physical requirements and Recall 1 for false and unfair starts. The Recaller 2 will check the outer group's start requirements are complied with. The starter will be positioned infield and equidistant between the normal and split start lines. When SLO and Recaller 2 are satisfied start line requirements are met. They will step back and place their hand behind their back.

2000 and 10 000 Metre Event

The start line for these events is at the start/finish area. Cones will be placed on the outer edge of Lane 4, from the split start to the 800 metre break line, at the start of the back straight. When the race has been started, the outer group cannot join the inner group until they have passed the 800 metre break line.

1000, 3000 and 5000 Metre Event

These events start at the end of the back straight. Cones will be placed on the outer edge of Lane 4, (see Figure 18) between the split start and a break indicator cone will be placed on a mark on outer edge of Lane 4 to indicate the beginning of the finish straight. Once the race has been started, the

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outer group must pass the indicator cone before merging with the inner group.

Mark between Lanes 4 &5 to indicate the beginning of the straight and after which the split field may merge.

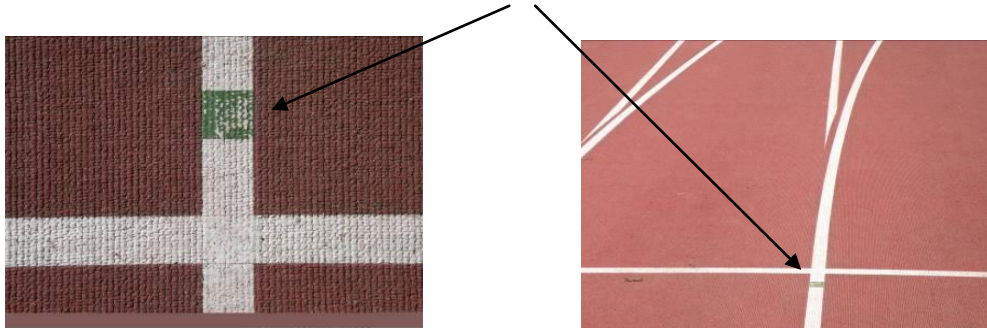


Figure 18: Break Indicator Mark

‘There should be three recallers officiating at laned events run on the bend, instead of two as stated in a recent I.A.A.F. statement’ (Blanchet, R. (2008) *Le Juge Arbitre-The Referee*, translated by D. Blanchet.)

Chapter 7: Starting Children's Athletic Track Events

The Start

Children's Athletics is a microcosm of adult athletics and could also be considered as an apprenticeship division for tomorrow's senior athletes and officials. Children run many of the same distances up to 1500 meters as senior athletes. They also run some shorter distances e.g. 60 m and some hurdle races. They do not run steeple chase, or 300m and 400m hurdles.

The distances run by children start from designated start lines and finish at the finish line. The procedure for starting track events is the same as that used for senior and international competition.

Start Officials

It is rare to have more people available than you need. The start can operate with two starters, ideally three are required, and two starter's assistants. The starters should rotate between being the starter and a recaller. The two starter's assistants would organise and supervise the flow of athletes as they arrive for competition. There will be situations where there will be heats for a specific event. It is recommended that the **same** starter is responsible for the start of each heat. The same starter should also be responsible for further competition in that event, e.g. semi-final and finals.

The reason for this recommended practice is to give each athlete the same opportunity and experience i.e. the same starter, as no two starters are the same. The presentations of starters can be **markedly** different. It would be expected that each starter would be given the responsibility for sets of heats, possibly semi-finals, and finals.

Trust

A starter must establish a rapport and empathy with young athletes. The word 'please' should be used. There is a world of difference between the request 'Stand up' and 'Stand up please'. There are many advantages in having a quiet patient approach in the start area as athletes are more likely to remain calm and focused on their upcoming race. This can decrease problems on the start line.

Concentration and Background Movement

In straight line events there could be a large number of heats to provide competition for up to 80 or so athletes especially at the bigger events at national and provincial meetings. With this number of athletes it is impossible, and nor is it desirable, to curtail all movement in the

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background as athletes wait for their races. There will always be talk, noise and the usual activities of younger athletes as they wait for their competition, however the start must be fair for each athlete and the starter must be fair and consistent to each athlete.

Experience tells us that background movement and public address system intrusions are probably the cause for about half of all 'second attempt' or delayed starts. Much of the background movement in children's athletics occurs in straight line events because successive heats have been marshalled too close to the start. The starter must be inside the track and be in front of the athletes. When heats are too close to start, the starter cannot avoid being distracted by the movement of athletes waiting for their competition. For this reason it is suggested that athletes are marshalled at about 18 metres behind the start line. In 100m races the marshalling of athletes will take place on the final bend.

Routines

In open or senior athletics there are *routines* to be followed by both athletes and officials routines are also very important for children and are an excellent way of managing behaviour. Children like to know what is expected of them and why, however routines also had to be user friendly, but most importantly, the younger athletes would need to see where the routine was taking them and why it is important. Young children are adaptable and will follow routines well if given the opportunity to understand their purpose.

Prior to Competition

The Routine

The following routine is used for straight line (sprints) and 200m events. In a series of heats, the first heat would report to the start and prepare for competition. The second heat would wait at a point some 18 meters back from the start line. Each successive heat would wait three meters behind the heat in front of them and the process repeated as required. As each heat leaves for competition the remaining heats would move forward three meters and each athlete would be able to see that progress was visible. As a 'heat' approaches the 18 metre line, the athletes will probably begin to focus on their start. Their final walk down the track to their start area would be the 'mental build up' for their competition. In 200m events the assembly line is three metres back from the start line in each lane.

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Straight Line Events

As there is approximately 18 meters between the start line and the next heat of athletes, the starter will be able to take up a position to have a good view of the field. It should be possible for the starter to have a minimal, if any, view of the next heat.

100 Metre Events

It is likely that heats would be marshalled and assembled on the final bend of the track. When a heat has left their marks in competition the next heat would move to the start and prepare for their competition.

200 Metre Events

There is half the back straight to marshal athletes into heats for competition. It is important to remember that the starter must be inside the track. Depending on where the starter is standing, (often dictated by field events) it may be necessary to keep subsequent heats well back from the start area so that the starter cannot see the next heat of competitors. Cones may be required to be set on each side of the track, to identify the limits where athletes must wait.

The Start Line Rule

Each start line is five centimetres wide, white and is painted on the track. Between the request "*on your marks*" and the firing of the start gun, no athlete shall touch the start line or the ground in front of the start line. The finish line is also five centimetres wide, white and is painted across the track.

Starting Blocks

Seven to Nine Years

Starting blocks must not be used for seven to nine year old age groups. These athletes usually do a standing start but a crouch start is allowed. These children are not permitted to wear shoes capable of taking spikes, but may wear spike less running shoes, socks or compete in bare feet.

10-14 Years

Athletes may wear spiked shoes. The use of starting blocks and a crouch start is compulsory for all athletes. Multipurpose adjustable starting blocks have been considered by many to be too complicated. To see young athletes set up sets of blocks in about 30 seconds is common place. Athletes with good guidance at club night or training, should master the skills of setting up a set of blocks without difficulty. The weight and balance of starting blocks can be a major concern for some young

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athletes. There can be a considerable amount of time lost on the start line when an athlete attempts to set up blocks without tuition at club level.

Starting for Children.

The start procedure and requests, are those used for all starts regardless of their importance in the world scene of athletics (this includes Parafed and Special Needs athletes).

Communication with Athletes

It is important that start officials talk 'with' athletes not 'at, around, or over' them. When helping and starting young athletes, there are degrees of tolerance relating to athletes being still and ready. Guidance from experienced starters should be sought. With small children (up to 10 years of age) there is a difference between wiggling on the start line and moving forward to gain advantage. The degree of tolerance mentioned above relates to this movement and whether or not the athlete is purposefully trying to gain advantage by starting early.

Phases of a Start

In races for children from aged seven-9, athletes are required to use starting blocks and a crouch start. In a race you may have some children crouch starting and some using a standing start. In races with 10 -14 year olds all the children have blocks to settle into. It is important to note the following: A three phased start: 'On your marks', 'Set' - the gun is used. After the first command athletes will take a varied amount of time to prepare for the next phase. If you do have a race with some standing and some crouching those children who are doing a standing start tend to be considerably quicker than those doing a crouch start and/or using blocks This means sometimes those standing begin to wriggle, move or lose balance before the 'crouchers' are 'still and ready'. Again a degree of tolerance is needed in this situation. The starter needs to consider whether there is undue advantage or disadvantage to any athlete before requesting a 'stand-up' or calling a false start.

Events that are run entirely in lanes

Events up to and including 400 m and 4x100m relays are run entirely in lanes and use a three phase start.

Any event that is not run in lanes

800 m and 1500 m and all children's 'race walk events', use a two phase start,' On your marks'-the gun is fired.

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Medley Relays

The medley relay uses a three phase start for all athletes regardless of the distance the first runner is running. This means the 800m or 1500m runners who are first runners, need to be aware that the start will be a three phase start, and that blocks and a crouch start will be mandatory.

Coloured Cards

Use of coloured cards are the same for children as adults. Please read Chapter 3 carefully.

Start procedure

The following start procedure is based on the athletes being at the start and having had their lane draw. The starter must be at a place where they can obtain a clear view of the athletes. For straight line events (sprints) the starter will be in front of the athletes by about five to eight metres and infield by three or four metres. For 200m, 300m and 400 m races the starter may be behind the athletes.

Straight Line Events. 60-100 m

1. On arrival at the start the first heat will have set up their starting blocks if required and have a run-out.
2. The Starter's Assistant will ask the athletes to 'prepare for competition'. The athletes will remove surplus clothing and move to the assembly line three metres behind the start line.
3. The starter, when the field is settled, will give the request 'on your marks'. The athletes will move to their starting blocks and prepare for competition.
4. The starter, after the athletes have met the requirements of the 'on your marks' phase of the start, will give the request 'set'. The athletes will immediately rise to their set and final position.
5. When the field is 'still and ready' the start gun will be fired.
6. If the starter or the recallers consider the start to be unfair, a recall gun will be fired immediately. The starter is responsible for decisions relating to any recalls.

References

Blanchet, R. (2008) *Le Juge Arbitre-The Referee*, 11th edition, translated by D. Blanchet.). French Federation of Athletics Endorsed by IAAF

http://www.iaaf.org/mm/Document/Competitions/TechnicalArea/05/10/27/20090803084952_httppostedfile_TheReferee2008_online_12565.pdf

International Association of Athletics Federations Competition Rules 2014-2015.

Chapter Eight: Glossary of Terms and Phrases

Common to all track events and in alphabetical order.

Check In Official (CIO) : The first person the athletes meet as they 'Check in' for competition, the meet and greet person.

Double Banked Start: when in distance events, athletes are placed on the start line more than one person deep.

False Start Explanation: If there is a false start, a recall or a stand-up, the starter should state the reason for the action taken, and identify the offending athletes either by the lane number in laned events or by registration or competition number in unlaned events.

The Field: This is the name given to a group of athletes who are all competing in the same event. The term is heard regularly within the start area. A 'field' could consist of any number between one to twenty plus athletes.

Gun: All Track Events '*Start*' when the athletes hear the report of the start gun.

Intuition: 'first sense' perception or insight. Knowledge or perception not gained by reasoning or intelligence. Instinctive knowledge or insight. 'First Sense' often a gut feeling that needs to be tempered by a touch of perception.

Insight: Capacity for understanding one's own or another's mental process. These abilities will be enhanced by some serious "watching and reading" of athletes as they prepare for a start.

Microcosm: A small representation of something.

On Your Marks: All Track Events have '*On your marks*' as the first request.

Phase One-On Your Marks:

- (1) The starter is asking the athletes to approach their start stations and comply with the requirements of hands and feet.
- (2) The starter is handing the athletes over to the "Start Line Official" to observe that the requirements of Phase One are being complied with.

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The display of **green** card indicates the field has complied with the requirements of Phase One and the field is being returned to the starter for the next phase of the start.

The display of a **yellow** card indicates that the field has not complied with the requirements of Phase One. The starter shall stand the field "up and back." A restart would follow.

Prepare For Competition: The Chief Starter's Assistant request to athletes to move out to their assembly area. This signals the handing over of the field to the start panel.

Physical Requirements: Refers to the start requirements of feet, block, and hands at the start line as stated in the rules.

Reasonable Time: Several times throughout the book we mention 'reasonable time' in relation to the start procedure. Athletes need to be allowed to be fully focussed on their start and their performance. If starts are delayed too long their concentration moves from their race to thinking about when the race will start. At this point it becomes unfair to the athlete. 'Within reasonable time' should see all athletes still focussed on their start and performance at the time of either the 'set' or the gun.

Recallers: Observe that the start is within the rules and fair to each competitor. When a recaller considers the start to be unfair, she/he shall immediately fire the recall gun to recall the start. Decisions relating to the recall shall be made by the starter.

Set: The second phase of a three phase start. The starter is asking the field to assume their set and final position, be ready, still, to await Phase Three the report of the gun.

Start Area Coordinator: Responsible for the overall operation of the start area.

Start Line: An athlete shall not touch either the start line or the ground in front of it with his hands or feet when on his marks.

Start Lines:

Laned: In all events starting in **lanes** there will be a specific start line for each distance. The start lines are white and are painted straight across each lane. For 800 metre start lines there is a green inset in each start line. In 4x400 meter relay start lines there is a blue insert in each start line.

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Non-Laned: In non-laned events each start line is 5 centimetres wide, painted white and is **curved**. The curve is calculated so that an athlete, starting at any point on the curve, will run the same distance.

Start Line Official: A starter's assistant or starter who has been detailed to check that the requirements of the start are being observed.

Start Time: The 'start time' of a track event is the time shown on a programme or a **Lane Draw:** The time shown is **not** the time to 'report in' for a track event. Athletes are requested to '*prepare for competition*' two to three minutes before the event is programmed so that the start will be 'On Time'- the time stated in the programme.

Starter: Is responsible for conducting the start in accordance with the rules and ensuring a fair start for each competitor .The starter is able to recall the start if it is unfair.