

Officials' Training Programme

Learner Guide

Starter

2016

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Contents

1	TRAINING PROGRAMME	2
2	FINA CODE OF ETHICS.....	3
3	FINA CODE OF CONDUCT.....	3
4	FINA RULES	4
4.1	FINA SWIMMING RULES 2015 – 2017	4
SW 2	OFFICIALS.....	4
SW 2.1	Referee	4
SW 2.3	Starter	5
SW 2.13	Officials’ Decision Making.....	5
SW 4	THE START.....	5
SW 6	BACKSTROKE.....	6
5	STARTING.....	7
5.1	ROLE OF THE STARTER.....	7
5.2	STARTING EQUIPMENT.....	7
5.3	STARTING PROCEDURES.....	8
5.4	FORWARD START.....	8
5.5	BACKSTROKE START.....	8
5.6	STARTING POSITIONS.....	9
5.7	FALSE STARTS	9
5.8	DELAYING THE START	9
5.9	DISABLED SWIMMERS	10
5.10	IMPORTANT POINTS	10
6	DISQUALIFICATION PROCEDURES	11
6.1	FINA INFRACTION CARD	11
7	OFFICIALS POOL PLACING (50 Metre Pool)	13

1 TRAINING PROGRAMME

Training of officials is absolutely essential to ensure that they are fully competent to perform their duties at swimming galas.

Competence is the ability of an individual to do a job properly and is combination of practical and theoretical knowledge, skills, behaviour and values used to improve performance.

In order to determine competence, officials are required to undergo both knowledge and practical training and to be assessed in both aspects. These assessments will comprise:

- A written test of knowledge, based upon the contents of this Learner Guide
- A practical assessment, under supervision of an experienced official ,during a gala

The written test will take place after the classroom training session has been completed.

The arrangements for the practical assessment will be issued to candidates at a later date.

Having passed both assessments, candidates will be officially certified as starters and are able to register with Swimming South Africa, through their districts and provinces, to perform duties at district, provincial or national galas.

Once officials have sufficient experience, they will be encouraged to undertake additional training and progress to other officiating roles.

Swimming galas can only take place with the assistance of volunteer officials and everyone in the sport would like to thank you for taking part in this training programme. Hopefully, this will only be the start of the process and all of the other volunteer officials look forward to your participation and progress over the years to come.

The Starter's training assumes full knowledge of the Judges' and Timekeepers' Courses, including information regarding swimming organisations. Both Learner Guides contain essential additional information and is readily available. It is strongly recommended that they should be read, or, reviewed prior to commencing Starter training.

2 FINA CODE OF ETHICS

It is the aim of the FINA and the entire Aquatic family to promote the highest possible values within the sport of Aquatics.

In furtherance of this aim, the FINA Bureau has approved a Code of Ethics, briefly summarised as:
(full details of the code are available at:

http://www.fina.org/sites/default/files/fina_codeofethics.pdf)

EQUALITY

- No discrimination on the basis of gender, race, religion, or political opinion shall be tolerated.

DIGNITY

- All forms of harassment, be they physical, psychological, professional or sexual, are strictly prohibited.

FAIR PLAY

- Fair play is the basic guiding principle in the sport of Aquatics.

3 FINA CODE OF CONDUCT

FINA also has a Code of Conduct, the purpose of this Code is to guarantee that the FINA Rules will be executed in a fair manner without disturbance and to sanction incidents, which damage the image of the FINA activities or bring them into disrepute. Further details on this Code can be found at: http://www.fina.org/sites/default/files/fina_codeofconduct.pdf

4 FINA RULES

FINA has various rules governing competitions, the most relevant of which follow. Further information on each set of rules can be found on the web-links or by visiting <http://www.fina.org/content/fina-rules-regulations>.

4.1 FINA SWIMMING RULES 2015 – 2017

http://www.fina.org/sites/default/files/finaswrules_20150907.pdf

These notes have been compiled using the rules governing swimming competitions which are set by the FINA. Only rules relevant to this level of training have been included in this Guide.

SW 2 OFFICIALS

SW 2.1 Referee

SW 2.1.1 The referee shall have full control and authority over all officials, approve their assignments, and instruct them regarding all special features or regulations related to the competitions. He shall enforce all rules and decisions of FINA and shall decide all questions relating to the actual conduct of the meet, and event or the competition, the final settlement of which is not otherwise covered by the rules.

SW 2.1.2 The referee may intervene in the competition at any stage to ensure that the FINA regulations are observed, and shall adjudicate all protests related to the competition in progress.

SW 2.1.4 The referee shall ensure that all necessary officials are in their respective posts for the conduct of the competition. He may appoint substitutes for any who are absent, incapable of acting or found to be inefficient. He may appoint additional officials if considered necessary.

SW 2.1.5 At the commencement of each event, the referee shall signal to the swimmers by a short series of whistles inviting them to remove all clothing except for swimwear, followed by a long whistle indicating that they should take their positions on the starting platform (or for backstroke swimming and medley relays to immediately enter the water). A second long whistle shall bring the backstroke and medley relay swimmer immediately to the starting position. When the swimmers and officials are prepared for the start, the referee shall gesture to the starter with a stretched out arm, indicating that the swimmers are under the starter's control. The stretched out arm shall stay in that position until the start is given.

SW 2.1.6 A disqualification for starting before the starting signal must be observed and confirmed by both the starter and the referee.

SW 2.1.7 The referee shall disqualify any swimmer for any other violation of the rules that he personally observes. The referee may also disqualify any swimmer for any violation reported to him by other authorised officials. All disqualifications are subject to the decision of the referee.

SW 2.3 Starter

SW 2.3.1 The starter shall have full control of the swimmers from the time the referee turns the swimmers over to him (SW 2.1.5) until the race has commenced. The start shall be given in accordance with SW 4.

SW 2.3.2 The starter shall report a swimmer to the referee for delaying the start, for willfully disobeying an order or for any other misconduct taking place at the start, but only the referee may disqualify a swimmer for such delay, willful disobedience or misconduct.

SW 2.3.3 The starter shall have power to decide whether the start is fair, subject only to the decision of the Referee.

SW 2.3.4 When starting an event, the starter shall stand on the side of the pool within approximately five metres of the starting edge of the pool where the timekeepers can see and or hear the starting signal and the swimmers can hear the signal.

SW 2.13 Officials' Decision Making

SW 2.13.1 Officials shall make their decision autonomously and independently of each other unless otherwise provided in the Swimming Rules.

SW 4 THE START

SW 4.1 The start in Freestyle, Breaststroke, Butterfly and Individual Medley races shall be with a dive. On the long whistle (SW 2.1.5) from the referee the swimmers shall step onto the starting platform and remain there. On the starter's command "take your marks", they shall immediately take up a starting position with at least one foot at the front of the starting platforms. The position of the hands is not relevant. When all swimmers are stationary, the starter shall give the starting signal.

SW 4.2 The start in Backstroke and Medley Relay races shall be from the water. At the referee's first long whistle (SW 2.1.5), the swimmers shall immediately enter the water. At the Referee's second long whistle the swimmers shall return without undue delay to the starting position (SW 6.1). When all swimmers have assumed their starting positions, the starter shall give the command "take your marks". When all swimmers are stationary, the starter shall give the starting signal.

SW 4.3 In Olympic Games, World Championships and other FINA events the command "Take your marks" shall be in English and the start shall be by multiple loudspeakers, mounted one at each starting platform.

SW 4.4 Any swimmer starting before the starting signal has been given, shall be disqualified. If the starting signal sounds before the disqualification is declared, the race shall continue and the swimmer or swimmers shall be disqualified upon completion of the race. If the disqualification is declared before the starting signal, the signal shall not be given, but the remaining swimmers shall be called back and start again. The Referee repeats the starting procedure beginning with the long whistle (the second one for backstroke) as per SW 2.1.5.

Interpretation:

After all swimmers are “stationary” (SW 4.1), any swimmer who moves before the starting signal may be disqualified when such movement is observed and confirmed by both the starter and referee (SW 2.1.6). When video-tape timing system (FR 4.7.3) is available, it may be used to verify the disqualification.

SW 6 BACKSTROKE

SW 6.1 Prior to the starting signal, the swimmers shall line up in the water facing the starting end, with both hands holding the starting grips. Standing in or on the gutter or bending the toes over the lip of the gutter is prohibited. When using a backstroke ledge at the start, the toes of both feet must be in contact with the end wall or face of the touchpad. Bending the toes over the top of the touchpad is prohibited.

5 STARTING

5.1 ROLE OF THE STARTER.

The Starter's responsibility is to help the swimmers to achieve the best start possible.

The Starter is the only official who directly communicates with the swimmers. "Take your marks" are the three words every swimmer will listen for and respond to. Not only must the starter attempt to achieve a 'fair start' but must also make every effort to prevent a 'false start'.

Starters are charged with a great deal of responsibility in seeing that one swimmer does not gain an advantage over the others in the start. This responsibility requires concentration, quick reactions and fair decisions. It takes practice to become a good starter. With experience, the starter will be able to accurately predict when the field is ready to race. This will help to prevent the false starts caused by swimmers being jumpy or in a hurry because they are not ready. The Starter is required to be fully alert and must exercise the desired concentration when starting an event.

Starters should speak in a slow, distinct voice, avoiding rapid instructions and sharp commands. The voice of a good starter should lead the swimmers into their starting positions and not break their concentration with unexpected orders or remarks. The starter must ensure that all competitors are given a fair start and no swimmer is allowed to gain an unfair advantage.

The Starter and Referee must agree or there is no false start. The Referee, however, has the authority to call any disqualification. No confirmation is required.

5.2 STARTING EQUIPMENT.

The starter should be familiar with the equipment that will be used.

When automatic or semi-automatic officiating equipment is used it is activated by the Starter's starting device. This starting device normally includes both the microphone and the transducer that are connected to the loudspeakers at each starting block, the timing equipment and the strobe light.

The Starter's commands and the starting signal can thus be heard equally and simultaneously by each swimmer and the officials.

A test run of the starting and timing equipment must be carried out well before the advertised starting time and the position of the strobe light must be finalised so that all timekeepers have a clear view of it.

Since start systems are electrically operated, it is important to know how to prevent common

malfunctions and how to repair simple problems that may occur. The false start recall signal should be tested.

5.3 STARTING PROCEDURES.

The 'One start rule' is now the only start recognised by FINA and should be utilised at all galas.

When the 'One start rule' is applied any swimmer starting before the starting signal has been given shall be disqualified. Exception can be made if the Referee decides that one swimmer caused others to go in, the swimmers can be reinstated, but not the one who started before the signal.

If the starting signal sounds before the disqualification is declared, the race shall continue and the swimmer/s shall be disqualified upon completion of the race.

If the disqualification is declared before the starting signal, the signal shall not be given, but the remaining swimmers shall be told to 'stand down'. The starting procedure is then begun again.

At the commencement of each race, the Referee shall signal to the swimmers by a short series of whistles inviting them to remove all clothing except for swimwear (SW 2.1.5), and to move forward to a position behind the starting platforms.

5.4 FORWARD START.

The start in Freestyle, Breaststroke, Butterfly and Individual Medley races shall be with a dive. When the swimmers are all positioned behind the starting platforms the Referee shall give a long whistle to signal to the swimmers that they must take up their starting positions on the starting platform.

On the Starter's command 'take your marks' they shall immediately take up a starting position with at least one foot at the front of the starting platform. The position of the hands is not relevant. When all swimmers are stationary the Starter shall give the starting signal. (SW 4.1)

5.5 BACKSTROKE START.

The start in the Backstroke and Medley Relay races shall be from the water.

At the Referee's first long whistle the swimmers shall immediately enter the water. At the Referee's second long whistle the swimmers shall return without undue delay to the starting position.

When all swimmers have assumed their starting positions, the Starter shall give the command 'take your marks'.

When all swimmers are stationary the Starter shall give the starting signal. (SW 4.2)

NB: The second long whistle is a communication between the Referee and the swimmers in the water.

5.6 STARTING POSITIONS.

There is no difference in short and long course starts.

When the swimmers mount the block, after the long whistle in forward starts, they do not have to stand in a perfectly upright position on the block.

Prior to the command, 'take your marks' the swimmer can stand upright or bent over with the feet in any position on the block. The position of the hands is not relevant.

In the forward start, on the command 'take your marks', the swimmer can be in an upright or bent over position but must have at least one foot at the front edge of the starting platform before the start signal is given.

In the backstroke start, the feet can be above the water level for the start. Curling the toes over the gutter is not allowed at any time after the command 'take your marks' and before the start. Both hands must be holding the starting grips.

5.7 FALSE STARTS

If the Referee decides that a fair start has not been achieved, for one or more of the following reasons:

- due to a technical failure of equipment (starting equipment, a loose starting platform etc.)
- a poolside disturbance, (eg. distracting noise or flash)
- an error on the part of the Starter, (eg. before all swimmers are ready)

the whistle shall be blown, which shall be followed by the starter's recall signals (with most ETD systems this can be activated by holding down the start signal button) and the dropping of the false start rope.

The following reasons for "Disqualification at the Start" are issued as a guide to Referees regarding infractions at the start. Please note that they are not mandatory and are to be used at the Referee's discretion.

5.8 DELAYING THE START

The infraction of 'Delaying the Start' can comprise one or more of the following actions, for which

the Referee may disqualify the competitor concerned:

- Deliberate slow movement to the starting position after a warning.
- Swimmer fails to respond to the 'second long whistle' at the start of a backstroke event.
- Arrives late for the start.
- Delays starting procedure without proper consideration for other competitors.
- Unreasonable time taken while splashing.

5.9 DISABLED SWIMMERS

The starter should be familiar with any special starting rules and requirements, which may apply to some swimmers with disabilities.

These can include:

- Use of holding devices (normally towels) during a backstroke start
- Only holding with one hand during a backstroke start
- Use of additional strobe lights for deaf swimmers
- Not 'holding' swimmers for too long between announcing 'take you marks' and giving the starting signal (particularly with physically disabled swimmers)

5.10 IMPORTANT POINTS

To ensure the fairest possible competition, starters must:

- **Know the rules** – know and understand them and keep regularly updated
- **Apply the rules uniformly** – age or disability should make no difference
- **Observe swimmers** to verify conformity with the rules – pay attention to all swimmers within your jurisdiction
- **Call disqualifications** when the rules are broken – there is no middle ground, a rule is either broken or it is not. If a judge or inspector is unsure, then the swimmer should not be disqualified – the benefit of any doubt must be in favour of the swimmer.

6 DISQUALIFICATION PROCEDURES

Disqualification (DQ) slips are generally used to report infringements to the referee and there is no common format prescribed.

However, SW 2.6.6 requires that the report details “the event, lane number, and the infringement”. It is normal to also record the date of the event for administrative purposes.

Some DQ slips include the details of the swimmer’s name or club but this is generally not considered appropriate as this is not relevant, could lead to accusations of unfairness and may be inaccurate due to changes in the final race programme.

The announcer should write the time that the disqualification was announced on the slip – this is to confirm that a public announcement was made, should there be any issues raised regarding the period of time allowed for making protests.

The slip should be clearly written so that there can be no misunderstandings of the information provided.

6.1 FINA INFRACTION CARD

FINA provide its officials with Quick Reference Infraction Cards, as shown below, to aid writing DQ slips.

They advise officials to use the exact wording of the infraction from the cards on any slip, together with other relevant information such as, which length or turn the infraction took place.

Officials may make additional notes on their programmes to support their decisions, such as which hand touched, or did not touch, which hand touched first in the case of a non-simultaneous touch, or which turn the infraction was committed at.

Some senior officials ask for some or all of this additional information to be written onto the slip. A referee is in overall charge of the event and so such requests must be complied with.

SWIMMING RULE QUICK REFERENCE INFRACTION CARD



This card is to assist as a quick reference guide for Judges of Stroke, Inspector of Turns. It must not be used as a substitute for the thorough knowledge of FINA Rules 2015 - 2017

FINA RULE	STARTS	FINA RULE
SW 2.1.6	A DQ at the start must be confirmed by both starter and referee	SW 2.1.6
SW 4.4	Any swimmer starting before the starting signal will be disqualified	SW 4.4
FREESTYLE SWIMMING		
FINA RULE		FINA RULE
SW 5.1	Form style swim in Freestyle leg of medley	SW 5.1
SW 5.2	Swimmer did not touch the wall at the turn	SW 5.2
SW 5.3	Swimmer's head did not surface at or before 15m mark following the start or turn	SW 5.3
SW 5.3	Swimmer totally submerged (except for first 15m at start & turn)	SW 5.3
SW 10.5	Swimmer walked or pushed off the bottom of the pool	SW 10.5
BACKSTROKE SWIMMING		
FINA RULE		FINA RULE
SW 6.1	When using a backstroke ledge both feet must be in contact with the wall or touchpad	SW 6.1
SW 6.2	Swimmer left position on the back (other than to execute continuous turning action)	SW 6.2
SW 6.3	Swimmer totally submerged, except in first 15m following the start or turn	SW 6.3
SW 6.4	Swimmer did not start executing the turn immediately after turning into the breast	SW 6.4
SW 6.4	Swimmer did not touch the wall during the turn	SW 6.4
SW 6.5	Swimmer did not finish race whilst on the back	SW 6.5
SW 10.5	Swimmer stood on the bottom of the pool	SW 10.5
BUTTERFLY SWIMMING		
FINA RULE		FINA RULE
SW 8.1	Body not on the breast (except when executing a turn)	SW 8.1
SW 8.2	Arms not brought forward over the water	SW 8.2
SW 8.2	Arms not brought forward simultaneously	SW 8.2
SW 8.2	Arms not brought backward simultaneously under the water	SW 8.2
SW 8.3	Movements of the feet not simultaneous	SW 8.3
SW 8.3	Alternating movement of legs of feet	SW 8.3
SW 8.3	Swimmer used breaststroke kick	SW 8.3
SW 8.4	Touch at finish or turn with one hand, or touch not simultaneous, or hands not separated	SW 8.4
SW 8.5	Swimmer's head did not surface at or before 15m mark following the start or turn	SW 8.5
SW 8.5	Swimmer totally submerged (except in first 15m after start and turn)	SW 8.5
SW 8.5	More than one arm pull under water (following start or turn)	SW 8.5
SW 10.5	Swimmer stood on the bottom of the pool	SW 10.5

FINA Swimming Rule Quick Reference Infraction Card (2015 – 2017)

FRONT

FINA RULE	BREASTSTROKE SWIMMING	FINA RULE
SW 7.1	More than one butterfly kick before first breaststroke kick	SW 7.1
SW 7.2	Body not on the breast (except when executing a turn)	SW 7.2
SW 7.2	Arm movements not simultaneous	SW 7.2
SW 7.2	Arm movements not in the same horizontal plane	SW 7.2
SW 7.3	Hands not pushed forward together from the breast	SW 7.3
SW 7.3	Hands brought back beyond the hip line (after the 1st stroke following the start and turn)	SW 7.3
SW 7.3	Elbows over water except for last stroke before the turn, during the turn or the final stroke at the finish	SW 7.3
SW 7.4	Head did not break the surface before arms reached widest point in second stroke after start or turn	SW 7.4
SW 7.5	Leg movements not simultaneous (or alternating movement)	SW 7.5
SW 7.5	Feet not turned out in the propulsive part of the kick	SW 7.5
SW 7.5	Executed a downward butterfly kick (except after the start and after the turn as in SW 7.1)	SW 7.5
SW 7.6	Stroke cycle not 1 arm stroke to 1 leg kick - except at the last stroke before turn and finish where an armstroke not followed by a leg kick is permitted	SW 7.6
SW 7.6	Touch at finish or turn with one hand, or touch not simultaneous, or hands not separated	SW 7.6
SW 10.5	Swimmer stood on the bottom of the pool	SW 10.5
MEDLEY SWIMMING		
FINA RULE		FINA RULE
SW 9.1	Incorrect style order (correct: fly, back, breast, free - 1/4 each)	SW 9.1
SW 9.2	Incorrect medley order (correct: back, breast, fly, free)	SW 9.2
SW 9.3	Finish of each style not in accordance with rules for the particular stroke	SW 9.3
THE RACE		
FINA RULE		FINA RULE
SW 10.2	A swimmer, swimming the course alone shall cover the whole distance to qualify	SW 10.2
SW 10.3	A swimmer must remain and finish in the same lane as started	SW 10.3
SW 10.4	A swimmer when turning shall make contact with the end of the pool	SW 10.4
SW 10.5	Standing on the bottom during freestyle events or during the freestyle portion of the medley events shall not walk	SW 10.5
SW 10.6	Pulling on the lane rope is not allowed	SW 10.6
SW 10.8	Any kind of tape of the body is not permitted - unless approved by the FINA Sport Medicine Committee	SW 10.8
SW 10.8	Use of power bands or adhesive substances not permitted	SW 10.8

FINA Swimming Rule Quick Reference Infraction Card (2015 – 2017)

BACK

7 OFFICIALS POOL PLACING (50 Metre Pool)

The following diagram illustrates the pool equipment used on a 50m pool together with the placing of officials:

