

SOUTHWESTERN OHIO DISTRICT
PROTOCOL - USE OF WHISTLES AS PREPARATORY COMMANDS

INTRODUCTION

The NFHS has authorized the State Associations to experiment with the whistle preparatory commands prior to starting a race. The OHSAA has also authorized Districts to participate. The SW District's Cincinnati and Dayton Officials Associations have adopted the use of whistles on a trial basis for the 2004-05 regular season competition. PROCEDURE

The following is the complete procedure that can be accomplished if staffing allows:

FORWARD STARTS

1. The Referee will signal to the swimmers with a short series of whistles (4 or more) to remove all clothing except swimwear and approach the blocks followed by the announcer or starter announcing the event or heat.
2. When all swimmers have approached the blocks, a long whistle is blown for the heat to step onto the block and take their preparatory positions.
3. Once certain all swimmers are present, the Referee shall immediately turn the heat over to the starter.
4. The Starter, when certain the swimmers are prepared to swim, will say "Take Your Mark".
5. When the swimmers are stationary, the Starter will activate the starting signal.

BACKSTROKE STARTS

1. The Referee will signal to the swimmers with a short series of whistles (4 or more) to remove clothing except swimwear and approach the side of the blocks.
2. When all swimmers have approached the side of the blocks, a long whistle is blown for the heat to immediately step into the water. Once all swimmers have surfaced, a second long whistle is blown to have the swimmers return to the wall and immediately assume their starting positions.
3. The procedure is then the same as in steps 3, 4, and 5 in the FORWARD START section.

Suggested optional commands are as follows:

1. If a swimmer, or swimmers, has not responded to the whistles, you may say "step up" or "step in".
2. If the starter is not satisfied with what is occurring after the starting command, then say "stand" or "relax".

The following is an example using one official:

When the last swimmer in a heat is finished, the short whistles are to be blown allowing the next heat to complete their preparation. The short whistles can also be a signal to the completed heat to clear the pool. The short whistles need only to be blown loud enough for the next heat to hear them. The referee/starter announces the next event/heat and then blows the long whistle (which should be heard by all) followed by the "Take Your Mark" command once all swimmers appear ready to be started. When all are stationary, the starting signal is given.

As always, common sense should prevail in using this procedure. If staffing is limited, the Referee must decide how to adapt the whistle preparatory commands to allow for an efficiently run competition. The main goal is to establish a rhythm swimmers can become accustomed to and to keep from continually announcing the event before each heat as stated in the rule book.

There are a number of officials with experience in this procedure. Don't hesitate to contact them with questions. When the regular season is completed, and before the championship series begins, officials will be asked to evaluate the procedure. A summary of evaluations will be presented to the OHSAA and NFHS.