

NFHS STARTERS' PROTOCOLS

Use of Whistles as Preparatory Commands

FORWARD STARTS

1. Starter/referee signals the swimmers with a series of short whistles (no fewer than 4) to approach the blocks and prepare to swim, followed by the announcer or starter/referee announcing the event/distance/heat
2. When all swimmers have approached the blocks, starter/referee blows a long whistle for the heat to step onto the block and take their preparatory position.
3. Once all swimmers are on the blocks, the referee immediately turns the heat over to the starter
4. When the swimmers are prepared, the starter says "take your mark".
5. When swimmers have assumed the correct starting position and are motionless, starter activates the starting signal

BACKSTROKE STARTS

1. The starter/referee signals the swimmers with a series of short whistles (no fewer than 4) to approach the side of the blocks and prepare to swim.
2. When all swimmers are at the side of the blocks, starter/referee blows a long whistle for the heat to immediately step into the water. When all swimmers have surfaced, starter/referee blows a second long whistle 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.

Optional: If a swimmer (or swimmers) has not responded to the whistles, referee/starter may say "step up" or "step in"