

Whistle Protocol for Starts

Prior to the start of each race the deck referee will **blow multiple short (usually four), distinct staccato whistle blasts** to notify swimmers to get ready to swim.

1. When the athletes are ready, the deck referee will then blow **one long whistle blast** to signal the swimmers to step onto the blocks, stand on the side of the deck (if they are doing a start from the pool deck), or enter the water for backstroke.
2. When the athletes have stepped up on the blocks, they should get ready. Then the starter will say “**Take your Marks**” indicating that the swimmers should be ready to start.
3. The horn from the starter will sound and the light on the starter should flash indicating the start of the race.

Check out the video below for an example of what to expect.

- At 06 you will hear the **short whistle bursts**.
- At 0:12 you will hear the **long whistle** indicating the athletes should step on the blocks, stand on the side of the deck, or enter the water to get ready to start.
- At 0:18 you will hear **take your marks** indicating the athletes should be prepared to start the race.
- At 0:21 you will hear the horn indicating the race has started.