

## **4. Starting Panel**

### **4.1 The Starter**

- i. The Starter has entire control of the competitors on their marks, and is the sole judge of any event connected with the start (IAAF 128.1).
- ii. There is no one to appeal to when difficult decisions have to be made. The Starter's decision is final and not even the Track Referee can overrule it.
- iii. Before the start signal is given, the Starter shall ascertain that the timekeepers and place judges are ready.
- iv. The Starter, who is of the opinion that the start was not a fair one, shall recall the competitors with a shot. If the unfair start is not due to any competitor, no warning shall be given (IAAF 162.8).

### **4.2 The Recall Starter**

- i. One or more Recall Starters shall be assigned to assist the Starter.
- ii. Recall Starters shall be placed so that they can see each competitor assigned to them.
- iii. When the Starter has ordered the competitors to their marks the Recall Starter must see that no competitor has placed fingers, hands or feet on the starting line or in front of it. If any difficulty arises they must signal the Starter immediately (IAAF 129.4) by displaying a red card or flag.
- iv. If the Recall Starter is of the opinion that the start was not a fair one they shall recall the competitors with a shot.
- v. If there is a recalled start the Recall Starter shall advise the Starter of the reason for the recall. The Starter shall decide the action taken.
- vi. The starter may only apply any warning or disqualification.

### **4.3 The Starter's Assistant**

The Starter's Assistants shall:

- i. Check that the competitors are competing in the correct heat or race.
- ii. Check that they are correctly wearing numbers (IAAF 129.1 & 143.7) and footwear and that shirts are tucked in.
- iii. Place each competitor in their correct lane, as listed in the programme, in line approximately 3m behind the starting line.
- iv. A competitor shall not be allowed to compete in a heat other than the one in which their name appears, except by consent of the referee (IAAF 166.5).
- v. Signal the Starter that all is ready.
- vi. Assemble the competitors again when a fresh start is ordered (IAAF 129.2).
- vii. Be responsible for the readiness of batons for the first runners in relay races (IAAF 129.3).

### **4.4 The Start**

- i. In any event where there are more competitors than can be placed in the front row, there shall be a second or more rows as needed. Competitors shall be placed according to draw.
- ii. All races will be started by the report of a gun, but not before all competitors are quite still on their marks (IAAF 162.2).
- iii. In races up to and including 400m the words of the Starter will be, "On your Marks", "Set", and when all the competitors are "Set" the gun will be fired.

- iv. Once the command "On your Marks" has been given, late competitors are not permitted to join the event.
- v. On the command "Set" all competitors shall immediately assume their final "Set" position.
- vi. In all races over 400m the words shall be, "On your Marks", and when all competitors are steady the gun shall be fired (IAAF 162.3).
- vii. If for any reason the Starter has to speak to any competitor after the competitors are on their marks, the Starter shall order all competitors to stand up and the Starter's Assistant shall place them on the assembly line again.
- viii. A competitor must not touch either the start line or the ground in front of it with their hands or feet when on their mark (IAAF 162.4).
- ix. After approximately 2 seconds the athlete's concentration fades, and if it has not been possible to effect the start the competitors should be told to "Stand up". This order should be used whenever something has gone wrong, ie an athlete has indicated they are not set (by raising their hand), or when either the competitor's or the Starter's concentration has been broken. The order will also be used when breaks occur, especially in staggered starts when some athletes may be unaware of what has happened.

#### 4.5 False Starts

- i. If a competitor after the command "On your marks" disturbs the other competitors in the race through sound or otherwise, it may be considered a false start (IAAF 162.5).
- ii. If a competitor leaves their mark with hand or foot after the words, "Set" (laned events excluding 800m) or "On your Mark" (all other events) and before the gun is fired, it shall be considered a false start (IAAF 162.6). **Where a standing start is used an athlete who immediately after the Set command moves either of their feet to take up their final starting position shall be deemed to have complied with the rules of starting.**
- iii. If a competitor fails to comply with the "Set" command after a reasonable time this will constitute a false start.
- iv. Any competitor making a false start must be warned. The Starter's Assistant affects this by raising a yellow flag above the competitor and then placing it on the track behind the competitor.
- v. If a competitor is responsible for 2 false starts, or 3 in the case of multi events, that competitor shall be disqualified.
- vi. When the Starter has not fired, after having said, "Set" and a competitor breaks, the Starter must warn them by indicating the competitor number.
- vii. In practice, when one or more competitors make a false start, others are inclined to follow and strictly speaking any competitor who does so has also made a false start. The Starter should warn only such competitors who in their opinion were responsible for the false start.

#### **4.6 Positioning**

When selecting a position for starting, 3 main points must be kept in mind:

- a. Stand well away from the athletes.
- b. See all the athletes in the narrowest possible angle of vision.
- c. Be visible to the timekeepers.
- d. A loudhailer or portable amplifier is an advantage in starting 200m and 400m races.

Further Reading - IAAF 128, 129, 162 & 166