

POLICY: STARTS AND STARTING PROCEDURES

Policy No	11	Issue			7
Board Approval	June 2022	Review cycle	Three yearly	Next review	June 2025

The purpose

The purpose of this policy is to govern the starts and starting procedures for dragon boat racing at different locations in South Australia.

Policy

1. The type of starts and starting procedures are determined by the type of race, race venue and weather conditions. At the Captains' and Sweeps' meeting everyone is made aware of the starting procedure to be used for the competition event. Start procedure changes will be made by the Starter in consultation with the Chief Official. Sweeps and Captains will be informed of the changes (refer to Enclosure A).
2. The Starter will ensure that the finish line and timing system are operational prior to calling crews to the start line. The Starter's responsibility is to ensure crews are familiar with the starting procedures.
3. Crews should assemble at the start area at least three (3) minutes before the scheduled start time. The start area is advised by the Starter at the Captains' and Sweeps' meeting.
4. In the marshalling area, if a crew draws to the Chief Marshal's attention that there is damage to the boat or its equipment [i.e., sweep oar] the Chief Official may delay the race for a maximum of five (5) minutes.
5. In the start area, if a crew indicates (use of Radio suggested) to the Starter/Aligner that there is damage to the boat or its equipment [i.e., sweep oar] the Starter may delay the race for a maximum of five (5) minutes to allow the crew some time to undertake repairs.
6. The Starter/Aligner/Flag Dropper shall confirm with all Sweeps that their 2-way radios are working and confirm their assigned lane number for the race. Sweeps & Drummers should have a tested, on channel, turned on, working radio.
7. The Starter may warn a crew arriving late in the start area (without a valid reason):
 - First warning – issue a warning
 - Second warning – issue a time penalty up to 5 seconds
 - Third and final warning – crew will be disqualified from the competition class
8. A race may be started without reference to withdrawn/disqualified crews.
9. When boats are called up to the Start line. There is to be no talking by crews on the start line whilst under Starter's orders. The Starter may award a time penalty of up to 5 seconds to any crew failing to come up to the Start line or failing to follow directions given by the Starter.
10. If a toggle start is used, the Sweep will hold the Sweeps' toggle and align their boats as directed by the Starter / Aligner. Sweeps can assist by looking left and right to align themselves with other crews.
11. If a toggle start is used, the Drummer will hold the Drummer's toggle and take instructions from their Sweep as directed by the Starter and shall release the toggle after the starting signal is used.
12. When using a pontoon start, the handrail must be held by the Sweep whilst under Starter's orders. If released before 'jumping the start' time penalties may apply.
13. If a rafting start is used the crews for that race are gathered together behind the start line and the Sweeps are called up individually to the start line by the Starter at set time intervals.
14. When using a rolling start or rafting start the Sweeps MUST immediately follow the Starter's instructions.



15. The dragon boat heads shall be aligned on the Start Line.
16. When the Starter / Aligner is satisfied that all boats are correctly aligned the Starter shall alert the crews by saying 'ARE YOU READY?'
17. The Drummer may then raise their arm vertically **above** head height and wave to indicate their crew is not ready. The Drummer is forbidden from taking this action until the Starter calls 'ARE YOU READY'.
18. When the Starter is satisfied that all crews are ready, the command is 'ATTENTION' followed by the starting signal (the word command 'GO' or other starting signal i.e., airhorn). The Starter is the ONLY person permitted on the Start line to use the word command 'GO'. (Never to be repeated by any crew.)
19. The interval between the words 'ATTENTION' and the starting signal will vary but shall not exceed five (5) seconds.
20. The Sweep shall release the toggle or handrail on hearing the start signal – not before and the handrail shall not be used to 'push off'.
21. Jumping the Start - is where a crew anticipate the Starter's word command 'GO' and that they gain material advantage over other crews. That crew may be awarded a time penalty from two (2) to five (5) seconds by the Starter.
22. False start – If a crew starts after the command 'ATTENTION' and before the starting signal, a false start will be declared – a red flag will be raised at the Start Line. The Starter shall immediately recall the crews by shouting 'STOP, STOP, STOP' over the 2-way radios and by sounding a second starting signal. The Drummer will instruct their crews to stop if a false start is called. The course umpire / observer will intercept the boats if required in the Course Umpires boat across the 50-metre line.
23. The Starter will inform the Finish Line of the false start so the timing system can be reset.
24. The Starter will identify the offending crew when all boats are back at the Start Line and warn them of the offense. If the same crew causes two (2) false starts the Starter may exclude them from the race or award a time penalty of five (5) seconds to that offending crew.
25. Any crew that fails to return to the Start line immediately after a false start may also be excluded from the race or alternatively awarded a five (5) second time penalty at the Starter's discretion.
26. In the event of a crew experiencing equipment failure (if it concerns the boat only, like a broken Drummer's seat, steering arm or sweep oar but not a paddle) between leaving the start and up to 50-metres after it, the race will be restarted providing the affected crew stop paddling immediately and the Drummer raises their arms fully into the air. In that event the Starter will carry out the same procedure as for a false start with the assistance of the Course Umpire / Observer boat.

ENCLOSURE A: Types of Starts

Type of Starts	Location	Distance
Toggle start – sweep and drummer toggle used	Aquatic Reserve	500m & 200m
Toggle start – sweep, toggle suspended above from bridge	Torrens Lake	200m
Pontoon, handrail	Scullers Reserve Oarsman Reserve	
Rolling Start	Oarsman Reserve Aquatic Reserve	200m if pontoon or toggles are not available Dependent on conditions
Rafting start	Aquatic Reserve Oarsman Reserve	2000m turn race 7000m long course race 2000m turn race
Various	Regional	Dependent on conditions and available facilities

Reference –AusDBF Competition Regulations and Racing Rules current version and IDBF Rules of Racing.