

# (More) Efficient Starts

How many times have you seen false starts in under-age sprint races?  
Special reference: Schools -- House & Inter-School carnivals.

Under current standing start procedure, too often, competitors assume a "Set" position when the command is "On Your Marks" .. consequence: when the starter says "Set", the competitor goes .... at best unsettling and often a disadvantage to athletes who have been taught and learnt correct procedures.

"Ready-Set-Go" has little place in the learning/empowerment process at any competitive level; teach the kids correctly from their very first experience .. all are empowered, not just the winners; re-teaching and re-learning is not necessary .. who would teach a child to spell incorrectly only to reveal and demand the true answer, later?

A solution (to the false start issue):

1. Up to and incl. U11 competitions (400m and less): a 3 pt. start.
2. U12 and above .. a four point crouch start to be **compulsory**.

## Preparations and Procedure:

- A yellow (or white) line drawn across the track, 10 cm. behind and parallel to the start line.
- Starter's Whistle .. gain the attention of competitors.
- "On Your Marks" .. athlete steps forward, preferred front foot behind, to, or across the 10cm. (yellow) line; other foot back; bend slightly forward, eyes focused just in front of white (official) line; both hands on preferred lead knee.
- "Set" .. assume 3 pt. start position (fingers of lead hand behind the **white**, official start line).
- "GUN" ..

Don't think of why the idea would not work, think of the benefit outcome(s) that could accrue.

Sure, starters have to adjust their strategies - students have to be taught to assume the "Set" position quickly .. and, wouldn't it be nice if all starters at **all levels** used the **same terminology**:

Whistle .. On Your Marks .. Set .. GUN.

- **Teach all:** 3 pt. Start - a simple skill. All can learn and practice together .. All will appreciate.

- Encourage students (and staff) to progress in their learning and application of skills; appreciation of the start process (and perhaps the sport) is enhanced and the potential to explore a whole range of starts is introduced .. standing, rolling, reaction, resisted, assisted, acceleration ladder ..... self-esteem is achieved through improved personal performance. (For groups interested, a simple series of group activities is available .. just ask: **don't claim help not sought is unavailable**).

- the skills are easily learnt, and more significantly, easily taught .. competitors and teachers are empowered with a new skill(s).

But, **If we keep doing what we've always done, we'll get what we've always got.**



## 3 Pt. Start

- Starter's Whistle .. athlete steps forward to the 10cm. (yellow) line (upright/relaxed).
- "On Your Marks" .. slight bend forward, both hands on preferred lead knee; lead foot just behind/on/across yellow line .. other foot back. (Stay relaxed.)
- "Set" .. hand (opposite to lead foot) to the track behind white (official) line .. other arm/hand can be raised or kept at the hip.
- **GUN !!!**

## North West Athletics .. 3 Pt. Start

1. Starter's Whistle .. athlete steps forward to the 10cm. (yellow) line (upright/relaxed).
2. "On Your Marks" .. slight bend forward, both hands on preferred lead knee; lead foot just behind/on/across yellow line .. other foot back. (Stay relaxed.)



3. "Set" .. hand (opposite to lead foot) to the track behind white (official) line .. other arm/hand can be raised or kept at the hip.

4. **GUN !!!**

Check Out Photos (below)

**An eyeeful is better than a mouthful**

**Knowledge accumulates quickly  
in an open mind**