

Lifesaving-Competitive Dives

Background

Lifesaving athletes and their competency to dive from starting blocks has been the subject of debate following on a “near-miss” accident in 2008 in the run up to the RLSS UK Speed Championships.

The accident highlighted the fact that currently there are no controls and standards for RLSS UK athletes related to diving from raised platforms.

Regarding guidance "MHSSP-HSG 179" page 74 para 233 states "Starting platforms must only be used under controlled conditions and under the supervision of correctly qualified staff".

Competitive Starts

Having suffered similar criticism in the past the Amateur Swimming Association now has a strategy to cover education in competitive starts.

Whilst the swimming guidelines are not entirely appropriate for lifesaving the guidelines can be adapted to suit our needs. The following controls are deemed essential:

1. Blocks must comply with FINA regulations and be a minimum of 0.50m and a maximum of 0.75m above the water. Where this is the case competitive starts can be allowed where the water is a minimum of 0.90m.
2. **Lifesavers must have achieved the competitors starts qualification or be at that level of competence "in the opinion of the coach".**
3. The announcer for all competitions should declare the depth of the pool into which lifesavers are entering.
4. Where there is doubt a lane should be set up to "test" the competence of lifesavers prior to acceptance into individual heats.

RLSS UK Competitive Starts

RLSS UK believe that lifesavers should demonstrate shallow racing dive competencies before being permitted to dive into shallow water (i.e. water depth range 0.9 up to 1.5 metres) from the side and in any depth of water from a FINA standard starting platform.

RLSS UK guidance is that such competence should be demonstrated by achieving the standard of the RLSS UK Competitive Start Award, which should be assessed by a level two coach.

As with the ASA if a Lifesaver suffers an injury while performing racing dives our insurers may request written confirmation of the competence of the Lifesaver and any training undertaken. It is therefore essential that both the club and the coach (who is the signatory and therefore personally responsible) keep records up to date regarding the competence and training of the Lifesavers.

The RLSS UK Competitive Start Award is designed to assess:

- ❖ The Lifesaver's ability to perform a safe racing dive into deep water from the side of the pool
- ❖ The Lifesaver's ability to perform a safe racing dive into deep water from a starting block
- ❖ The Lifesaver's ability to perform a safe racing dive into shallow water from the side of the pool
- ❖ The Lifesaver's ability to perform a safe racing dive into shallow water from a starting block

- ❖ The Lifesaver's ability to perform safe entries in all the above whilst wearing a rescue tube
- ❖ The Lifesaver's ability to perform safe entries in all the above whilst fins
- ❖ The Lifesaver's ability to perform safe entries in all the above whilst wearing fins and wearing a rescue tube

Competitive Start Award

From the Poolside at the Deep End of the Pool

(Minimum water depth 1.5m, maximum freeboard 0.38m)

Under normal starting conditions:-

1. perform a shallow dive followed by a glide of at least 5m
2. perform a shallow dive followed by a Frontcrawl leg kick to the surface
3. perform a shallow dive followed by a Dolphin leg kick to the surface

From a Starting Block at the deep End of the Pool

(Minimum water depth 1.5m, recommended height of starting block from the water 0.5m, maximum height of the starting block from the water 0.75m)

4. perform a shallow dive followed by a glide of 5m
5. perform a grab start followed by a Frontcrawl leg kick to the surface
6. perform a grab start followed by a Dolphin leg kick to the surface
7. perform a wind up start

WARNING: The swimmer must not be permitted to undertake the remaining sections of this award until the preceding skills have been successfully accomplished.

From the Poolside at the Shallow End of the Pool

(minimum water depth 0.9m, maximum water depth 1.0m, maximum freeboard 0.38m)

Under normal starting conditions:-

8. perform a shallow water dive followed by a glide of at least 5m
9. perform a track start followed by a glide of at least 5m
10. perform a grab start followed by a Frontcrawl leg kick to the surface
11. perform a grab start followed by a Dolphin leg kick to the surface
12. perform a wind up start

From a starting block at the Shallow End of the Pool

(minimum depth 0.9m, maximum depth 1.0m, recommended height of the starting block from the water 0.5m, maximum height of the starting block from the water 0.75m)

13. perform a shallow dive followed by a glide of at least 5m
14. perform a wind up start with a glide of at least 5m
15. perform a grab start with a glide of at least 5m
16. perform a track start with a glide of at least 5m

WARNING: The swimmer must not be permitted to undertake the remaining sections of this award until the preceding skills have been successfully accomplished.

From the Poolside at the Deep End of the Pool

(Minimum water depth 1.5m, maximum freeboard 0.38m)

17. perform a shallow dive followed by Frontcrawl kick to surface wearing a rescue tube
18. perform a shallow dive followed by Dolphin kick to surface wearing a rescue tube

From a Starting Block at the deep End of the Pool

(Minimum water depth 1.5m, recommended height of starting block from the water 0.5m, maximum height of the starting block from the water 0.75m)

19. perform a grab start followed by a Frontcrawl leg kick to the surface wearing a rescue tube

20. perform a grab start followed by a Dolphin leg kick to the surface wearing a rescue tube
22. perform a grab start followed by a Frontcrawl leg kick to the surface wearing fins
23. perform a grab start followed by a Dolphin leg kick to the surface wearing fins
24. perform a grab start followed by a Dolphin leg kick to the surface wearing a rescue tube and fins

From a starting block at the Shallow End of the Pool

(minimum depth 0.9m, maximum depth 1.0m, recommended height of the starting block from the water 0.5m, maximum height of the starting block from the water 0.75m)

25. perform a grab start followed by a Frontcrawl leg kick to the surface wearing a rescue tube
26. perform a grab start followed by a Dolphin leg kick to the surface wearing a rescue tube
27. perform a grab start followed by a Frontcrawl leg kick to the surface wearing fins
28. perform a grab start followed by a Dolphin leg kick to the surface wearing fins
29. perform a grab start followed by a Dolphin leg kick to the surface wearing a rescue tube and fins
30. perform a minimum of 3 successful starts, wearing a rescue tube and fins

IMPORTANT NOTES

- Teachers and coaches must stress the inherent dangers of diving to all lifesavers
- The RLSS UK Laws relating to starting procedures must be fully explained to all Lifesavers
- These Awards may be taken over a number of sessions, but must follow the order as outlined
- All lifesavers should have achieved the standard set out in the Rookie Diving Bolt On before attempting the Competitive Start Award
- It is strongly recommended that a level two coach lead this award, where a level two coach (ASA is acceptable) is not available a TA who is fully conversant with the teaching notes provided and has a high level of experience and understanding of Lifesaving Sport may substitute.

Technical guidance notes

Diving from the Side of the Pool (Plunge Dive)

- Developing basic/introductory dive skills from the side of the pool.

Prior to teaching any dive, participants should have developed the core aquatic skills, confidence and competency in the following areas before progressing towards a plunge dive:

- **In the water practices**
- **From the poolside – feet first**
- **From the poolside – head first**

The depth of the dive will be affected by:

- The height from which the dive is made – higher will be deeper;
- The angle of the entry – a steeper entry leads to a deeper dive;
- Flight distance – a short flight leads to a deeper dive;
- The strength and 'drive' from the participant's legs.

Before teaching any head first entry from the side of the pool the Teacher should always be aware of the depth of water the participant is to dive into and inform the participant of this depth.

Teaching Tips

- Check that the water depth is appropriate.
- Remember that the height of the dive affects the depth of the dive.
- Progressively increase the height of the dive.
- The angle of the dive affects the depth of the dive – aim for a long flight to decrease angle of entry.
- 'Drive' should be from the legs.
- Awareness of resurfacing technique.
- The hands and arms should be kept above the head throughout the dive during streamlining until the stroking is started ('Lock hands, lock head, steer up').
- Progression and adjustments to teaching points depend on body size, body shape and ability.

Components of the Dive

- Stance
- Entry
- Recovery

Stance

A lifesaver should strive for a stance that maintains balance and a comfortable position. Keeping their centre of gravity just behind the front of the block will allow for a quick start.

Fault	Correction
Body falls forwards; off-balance.	Place feet shoulder-width apart. Grasp edge firmly with toes to prevent foot slippage while maintaining balance with arms; hips serve as centre of gravity.
Head above arm level.	'Lock hands and lock head' – extend arms beyond head, and stretch and straighten arms. Upper arms should push in on sides of head (above ears) to protect the head.
Poor push-off on drive from wall.	Make sure the knees are bent and straighten on the push to achieve a long flight – practice torpedoes off the wall and sit dives with a strong push-off

Entry

This comprises of two sections; take off and rotation. Take off is directly related to the speed off the blocks and is affected by the reaction time on hearing the starting signal and the amount of force applied by the lifesavers legs.

The rotation allows the body to enter the water head first; the most common of these is the piked position (bending at the hips while the rest of the body remain straight).

Fault	Correction
Belly flop – head and chest enter the water first.	Head must remain down – ears squeezed between arms. Protect head and, for a streamline body, enter hands first. Make sure legs push off firmly, not just fall forward.
Body 'crumples' on entry.	Keep arms extended overhead until past maximum depth of the dive. Keep body in a stretched position.
Water enters the nose and/or mouth.	Begin exhaling or 'humming' a moment before the head enters the water.
Dive is too deep.	Lessen angle of entry by aiming for a point further from the diving surface. Obtain more forward drive from the legs. Arching of the back and use of hands and arms to 'steer up' immediately following entry.

Recovery

Fault	Correction
Water enters nose and/or mouth.	Continue to exhale or 'hum' to counteract water pressure.
Hands separate, leaving head exposed whilst still heading downwards.	Keep hands locked together, with arms extended beyond the head, until well into the upward phase of the underwater pathway. Steer up.

Specific Starts

Grab Start

The Ready Position

- Stand on the block.

Take Your Marks

- Place feet about shoulder width apart, with toes curled over the edge.
- Swimmer bends forward, back curved and grabs the edge (inboard or outboard of the feet).
- Head tucked down near knees, looking at water just beyond the starting block / pool side.
- Legs remain relatively straight and the hips high.

Go

- The Swimmer tips their body quickly forward and pulls their hands against the block, causing the elbows and knees to flex.
- The Swimmer is now ready to explode into the lunge of the dive.
- The feet and legs drive outwards and upwards
- The arms extend upwards and forwards
- Finger tips point at point of entry

The Flight

- The Swimmer launches from the blocks in an outwards and upwards flight path.

Entry and Follow Through

- The Swimmer needs to try to enter the water as cleanly as possible and maintain a good streamlined position.

Initiating the Stroke

- As the Swimmer feels their body slowing down, the kick is initiated. The arm action starts just prior to their head reaching the surface of the water.

Track Start

The Ready Position

- Stand on the block.

Take Your Marks

- Place one foot at the front edge of the block, with toes curled over the edge and the other foot about 25cms behind.
- Knees should be flexed and the hips high.
- The weight should be over the front foot, the centre of gravity needs to be slightly further back than with the grab start.
- Swimmer bends forward, back curved and grabs the front edge of the block, about shoulder width apart.
- Head tucked down near knees, looking at water just beyond the starting block / pool side.

Go

- The Swimmer pulls upwards bring their centre of gravity forward.
- The elbows and knees flex, allowing for more force to be applied to the block.
- Using the front foot the swimmer drives upwards and outward.
- The arms extend upwards and forwards
- Finger tips point at point of entry

The Flight

- The Swimmer launches from the blocks in an outwards and upwards flight path.
- The trailing leg should be lifted toward the leading leg.

Entry and Follow Through

- The Swimmer needs to try to enter the water as cleanly as possible and maintain a good streamlined position.

Initiating the Stroke

- As the Swimmer feels their body slowing down, the kick is initiated. The arm action starts just prior to their head reaching the surface of the water.

Wind Up Start

The Ready Position

- Stand on the block.

Take Your Marks

- Place feet about shoulder width apart, with toes curled over the edge.
- Swimmer bends forward, head tuck between arms.
- Finger tips pointing at water just in front of block / pool side.
- Eyes looking at water just beyond the starting block / pool side.
- Legs remain relatively straight and the hips high.

Go

- Arms circle in a long arc from their starting point upwards then backwards.
- Arms remain straight throughout.
- The head should be lifted
- As arms move knees should flex.
- Arms move round passed the hips, finishing with hand pointed at the water.
- As arms complete their movement, feet and legs drive outwards and upwards
- Head drops and legs extent
- Finger tips point at point of entry

The Flight

- The Swimmer launches from the blocks in an outwards and upwards flight path.

Entry and Follow Through

- The Swimmer needs to try to enter the water as cleanly as possible and maintain a good streamlined position.
- Hands should enter water first.

Initiating the Stroke

- As the Swimmer feels their body slowing down, the kick is initiated. The arm action starts just prior to their head reaching the surface of the water.

Track Start with Rescue Tube

The Ready Position

- Stand on the block.

Rescue Tube Position

- Rescue Tube can either:
 - be held in one hand (with rope coiled in hand) to be released just before entry into the water

Or

- be held in position on the back by the rope

- At no point should the rope hang down

Take Your Marks

- Place one foot at the front edge of the block, with toes curled over the edge and the other foot about 25cms behind.
- Knees should be flexed and the hips high.
- The weight should be over the front foot, the centre of gravity needs to be slightly further back than with the grab start.
- Swimmer bends forward, back curved and grabs the front edge of the block, about shoulder width apart.
- Head tucked down near knees, looking at water just beyond the starting block / pool side.

Go

- The Swimmer pulls upwards bring their centre of gravity forward.
- The elbows and knees flex, allowing for more force to be applied to the block.
- Using the front foot the swimmer drives upwards and outward.
- The arms extend upwards and forwards
- Finger tips point at point of entry

The Flight

- The Swimmer launches from the blocks in an outwards and upwards flight path.
- The trailing leg should be lifted toward the leading leg.

Entry and Follow Through

- The Swimmer needs to try to enter the water as cleanly as possible and maintain a good streamlined position.

Initiating the Stroke

- As the Swimmer feels their body slowing down, the kick is initiated. The arm action starts just prior to their head reaching the surface of the water.

Grab Start with Rescue Tube

The Ready Position

- Stand on the block.

Rescue Tube Position

- Rescue Tube can either:
 - be held in one hand (with rope coiled in hand) to be released just before entry into the water

Or

- be held in position on the back by the rope
- At no point should the rope hang down**

Take Your Marks

- Place feet about shoulder width apart, with toes curled over the edge.
- Swimmer bends forward, back curved and grabs the edge (inboard or outboard of the feet).
- Head tucked down near knees, looking at water just beyond the starting block / pool side.
- Legs remain relatively straight and the hips high.

Go

- The Swimmer tips their body quickly forward and pulls their hands against the block, causing the elbows and knees to flex.
- The Swimmer is now ready to explode into the lunge of the dive.
- The feet and legs drive outwards and upwards
- The arms extend upwards and forwards
- Finger tips point at point of entry

The Flight

- The Swimmer launches from the blocks in an outwards and upwards flight path.

Entry and Follow Through

- The Swimmer needs to try to enter the water as cleanly as possible and maintain a good streamlined position.

Initiating the Stroke

- As the Swimmer feels their body slowing down, the kick is initiated. The arm action starts just prior to their head reaching the surface of the water.

Grab Start with Fins

The Ready Position

- Stand on the block.

Take Your Marks

- Place feet so the fins meet, with toes as far over the edge while still remaining balanced.
- Swimmer bends forward back curved and grabs the edge outboard of the feet.
- Head tucked down near knees, looking at water just beyond the starting block / pool side.
- Legs remain relatively straight and the hips high.

Go

- The Swimmer tips their body quickly forward and pulls their hands against the block, causing the elbows and knees to flex.
- The Swimmer is now ready to explode into the lunge of the dive.
- The legs drive outwards (on upwards)
- The arms extend upwards and forwards
- Finger tips point at point of entry

The Flight

- The Swimmer launches from the blocks in an outwards flight path.

Entry and Follow Through

- The Swimmer needs to try to enter the water as cleanly as possible and maintain a good streamlined position.

Initiating the Stroke

- As the Swimmer feels their body slowing down, the kick is initiated. The arm action starts just prior to their head reaching the surface of the water.
- Leg action should be smooth with a straight leg.

Grab Start with Fins and Rescue Tube

The Ready Position

- Stand on the block.

Rescue Tube Position

- Rescue Tube can either:
 - be held in one hand (with rope coiled in hand) to be released just before entry into the water

Or

- be held in position on the back by the rope

- At no point should the rope hang down

Take Your Marks

- Place feet so the fins meet, with toes as far over the edge while still remaining balanced.
- Swimmer bends forward back curved and grabs the edge outboard of the feet.
- Head tucked down near knees, looking at water just beyond the starting block / pool side.
- Legs remain relatively straight and the hips high.

Go

- The Swimmer tips their body quickly forward and pulls their hands against the block, causing the elbows and knees to flex.
- The Swimmer is now ready to explode into the lunge of the dive.
- The legs drive outwards (on upwards)
- The arms extend upwards and forwards
- Finger tips point at point of entry

The Flight

- The Swimmer launches from the blocks in an outwards flight path.

Entry and Follow Through

- The Swimmer needs to try to enter the water as cleanly as possible and maintain a good streamlined position.

Initiating the Stroke

- As the Swimmer feels their body slowing down, the kick is initiated. The arm action starts just prior to their head reaching the surface of the water.
- Leg action should be smooth with a straight leg.