



Spring Sports – Swimming Highlighted Rules & Addendums

The Official Special Olympics Sports Rules shall govern all Special Olympics swimming competitions. As an international sports program, Special Olympics has created these rules based upon World Aquatics (formally FINA) and National Governing Body (NGB) rules of United States swimming. WA or NGB rules shall be employed except when they are in conflict with the Official Special Olympics sports rules. For more information, visit www.fina.org.

OFFICIAL EVENTS OFFERED

Category A 10 meter Assisted Swim, 15 meter Aquatics Walk, 15 meter Flotation Race, 25 meter Flotation Race

Category B 15 meter Unassisted Swim, 15 meter Unassisted Backstroke, 25 meter Flotation Race, 25 meter Freestyle, 25 meter Backstroke

Category C 25 meter Freestyle, 25 meter Backstroke, 25 meter Breaststroke, 25 meter Butterfly, 50 meter Freestyle, 50 meter Backstroke, 50 meter Breaststroke, 50 meter Butterfly

Category D 50 meter Freestyle, 50 meter Backstroke, 50 meter Breaststroke, 50 meter Butterfly, 100 meter Freestyle, 100 meter Backstroke, 100 meter Breaststroke, 100 meter Butterfly, 100 meter Individual Medley

Category E 100 meter Freestyle, 100 meter Backstroke, 100 meter Breaststroke, 100 meter Butterfly, 100 meter Individual Medley, 200 meter Individual Medley, 200 meter Freestyle, 200 meter Backstroke, 200 meter Breaststroke, 400 meter Freestyle, 800 meter Freestyle, 1500 meter Freestyle

Relays 4 x 25 meter Freestyle Relay, 4 x 25 meter UNIFIED Medley, 4 x 50 meter Freestyle Relay, 4 x 100 meter Freestyle Relay, 4 x 25 meter Medley Relay, 4 x 50 meter Medley Relay, 4 x 100 meter Medley Relay, 4 x 50 meter Unified Free Relay, 4 x 100 meter Unified Medley Relay, 4 x 100 meter Unified Free Relay, 4 x 200 meter Unified Free

EVENT REGISTRATION GUIDELINES

- 1) Athletes can participate in a total of four events. The maximum number of non-relay events an athlete can participate in is three.
- 2) Athletes may participate in a maximum of two relays. An athlete, who is registered in two relays, can only register for two events within one category.
- 3) Unified Partners can participate in a maximum of two Unified Relays.
- 4) A qualifying time in meters must be submitted for all athletes entered in swimming events. If the qualifying times are timed in yards, multiply the times by 1.11 to get times for meters. For example, a time of 31 seconds for 25 yards would be changed to $31 \times 1.11 = 34.41$. The time of 34.41 would be submitted as the time for 25 meters.
- 5) All relay teams (4 members) must be identified by number R1, R2, etc.
- 6) All unified relay teams (4 members) must be identified by number U1, U2, etc.
- 7) Relay teams will have a maximum of four and two alternates identified. Alternates may not be changed after Friday prior to Spring Games competition.
- 8) Unified relay teams shall consist of two Special Olympic Athletes and two Unified Partners. The order of swimming in the relay is left to the coaches' decision.
- 9) Athletes must register and compete within one category. For example, if an athlete registers for the 10 meter Assisted Swim and 15 meter Aquatics Walk (Category A events) they can't register for the 25 meter Freestyle (a Category B event). All two or three events must be in the same category.
- 10) A Relay team which combines genders to include both male and female swimmers shall compete as a male relay

ROLE OF OFFICIALS

- a. The meet referee, in cooperation with the Games Director and aquatic rules subcommittee, shall have the authority to adjust these rules on a case-by-case basis for the safety and well-being of an athlete. The referee may intervene in the competition at any stage to ensure that the appropriate regulations are observed, and shall adjudicate all protests related to the competition in progress.
- b. The meet referee shall have the discretion to allow for certain modifications/interpretations of the current technical rules based upon a physical disability characteristic. Such interpretation shall not give an advantage over another swimmer. Stroke interpretations will be concerned with the action a limb(s) is performing. The stroke judge shall be concerned with what action the arm or leg action constitutes.
- c. The referee shall have full control and authority over all officials, approve their assignments, and instruct them regarding all Special Olympics features or

regulations related to the competitions. He shall enforce all rules and decisions of the Official Special Olympics Rule book and FINA rules and shall decide all questions relating to the actual conduct of the meet, the final settlement of which is not otherwise covered by these rules.

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

1. Event Equipment
 - a. Starting device (whistle, tone, air horn, electronic buzzer or gun): The starting system shall be capable of providing a visual start for the hearing impaired. Athletes with hearing impairments may receive hand signals or touch/tap starts from the starter or designated official. A strobe light in accordance with FINA rules is recommended.
 - b. Flags should be located 5 meters from each end of the pool to indicate distance to the finish, especially in respect to backstroke events. Flags should not be removed during competition or training sessions.
 - c. Watches (timing system): At least one watch per lane required, but two to three are preferred.
2. Participant Equipment
 - a. Design:
 - Decency: the wearing of the swimsuit shall not offend morality and good taste (in particular, but not exclusively, because of the cut of the suit and body parts exposure whether covered or not).
 - Surface covered (shape);
 - For swimsuits used in pool swimming competitions: Men's swimsuits shall not extend above the navel or below the knee. Women's swimsuits shall not cover the neck or extend past the shoulders, or below the knee.
 - b. For competition all applications for an exception to FINA rule on swimwear must be submitted with the swimmers competition registration. It is recommended that lane lines marked at bottom of pool in accordance with FINA regulations.
 - c. Flotation Devices: For Flotation Events, each athlete is responsible for his/her own flotation device. The Device must be of the body wraparound type such that if the athlete were to not be able to hold onto the device, the device would still support the athlete with his/her face out of the water. (Flotation devices such as innertubes or floats that wrap around the arms are not acceptable for use at any time)

GENERAL RULES OF COMPETITION

1. General Requirements
 - a. Unassisted Swims - Athletes must swim the full distance with no assistance. Coaches, lifeguards, officials and spectators are allowed to offer encouragement and direction to the swimmer, but only from outside the

swimmers lane.

- b. An assistant may be requested through a Special Needs Form to assist athletes in maintaining their positions at the starting line.
- c. No competitor shall be permitted to use or wear any device that may aid his/her speed, buoyancy or endurance during a competition (such as webbed gloves, flippers, fins, etc.). Goggles may be worn. Only those athletes in assisted events may utilize flotation devices.
- d. Swimmers may be assisted from the water upon request.

2. Special Olympics Stroke Standards

a. Freestyle

- 1) Freestyle means that in an event so designated, the competitor may swim any style except in a medley relay or individual medley event where freestyle means any style other than butterfly, breaststroke or backstroke.
- 2) In freestyle turning and finishing, the swimmer can touch the wall with any part of his/her body. A hand touch is not obligatory.

b. Breaststroke

- 1) From the beginning of the first arm stroke after the start and after each turn, the body shall be kept on the breast.
- 2) Both shoulders shall be in line with the water surface.
- 3) All movements of the arms shall be simultaneous.
- 4) The legs will remain in the same horizontal plane without alternating movement.
- 5) Before the beginning of the first stroke, after the start and after each turn, up and down movements of the legs or feet are not permitted.
- 6) Hands shall be pushed forward together from the breast.
- 7) Hands shall be brought back on or under the surface of the water, but may not extend below the hipline.
- 8) In the leg kick, the feet must be turned outward in the backward movement.
- 9) Movements in the form of a "flutter kick" or a "dolphin kick" are not permitted.
- 10) Breaking the surface of the water with the feet is allowed unless followed by a downward movement in the form of a "dolphin kick."
- 11) At the finish, the touch shall be made with both hands simultaneously at, above, or below the water surface. The head must break the surface of the water at some point during any part of the last complete or incomplete cycle of the stroke.
- 12) The shoulders shall be in the horizontal position.

- 13) At each turn, the touch shall be made with both hands simultaneously at, above, or below the water surface. The head must break the surface of the water at some point during any part of the last complete or incomplete cycle of the stroke. Once a touch has been made the swimmer may turn in any manner desired. Shoulders shall be in the horizontal position when the swimmer leaves the wall.
- 14) Part of the swimmers head shall break the surface of the water at least once during each complete cycle of the one-arm stroke and one-leg kick, except during the first cycle after the start and each turn. During this first cycle, the swimmer may take the one-arm stroke completely back to the legs and one-leg kick while wholly submerged.

c. Backstroke

- 1) The competitors shall line up in the water, facing the starting end of the pool with the hands placed on the starting grips.
- 2) The feet, including the toes, shall be under the surface of the water.
- 3) Standing in or on the gutter, or bending the toes over the lip of the gutter is prohibited.
- 4) The swimmer is not allowed to make any movement with any part of his/her body before the starting signal has been given.
- 5) At the signal for starting and when turning, the swimmer must push off and swim upon his/her back throughout the race. Some part of the swimmer must break the surface of the water throughout the race except during the turn for a distance of not more than 15 meters.
- 6) The hands must not be released before the starting signal has been given.
- 7) Turns - Upon completion of each length, some part of the swimmer must touch the wall. During the turn, the shoulders may turn past the vertical toward the breast. If the swimmer turns past the vertical, such motion must be part of a continuous turning action and the swimmer must return to a position on the back before the feet leave the wall.
- 8) The swimmer may turn his/her body beyond the vertical, after the foremost part of the body has touched the wall during a turn, but the swimmer must have returned to a position on his/her back before the feet leave the wall.

d. Butterfly

- 1) Both arms must be brought forward together over the water and brought backward simultaneously.
- 2) The body must be kept on the breast and both shoulders kept in line with the surface of the water from the beginning of the first arm stroke after the start and on the turn.
- 3) All movements of the feet must be executed in a simultaneous manner.
- 4) Simultaneous up and down movements of the legs and feet in the vertical plane are permitted.

- 5) The legs or feet need not be at the same level, but no alternating movement is permitted.
- 6) At each turn the shoulders must be in the horizontal position. The touch shall be made with both hands simultaneously at, above, or below the water surface. Once a touch has been made, the swimmer may turn in any manner desired. Shoulders shall be in the horizontal position when the swimmer leaves the wall.
- 7) At the finish, the touch shall be made with both hands simultaneously at, above, or below the water surface. Shoulders shall be in the horizontal position.

3. Relay Events

- a. There shall be four swimmers on each relay team.
- b. Each swimmer shall swim one-fourth the distance of the total relay. No swimmer shall swim more than one leg of any one relay.
- c. A relay team which combines genders to include both male and female swimmers shall compete as a male relay.
- d. Relay swimmers should exit the pool as soon as possible following the completion of their relay leg. Relay swimmers who cannot exit the water immediately may be allowed to remain in the lane until all relays have finished so long as they do not interfere with the other swimmers or the timing equipment.
- e. A swimmer remaining in the water should move a short distance away from the end of the pool, close to the lane rope but shall not obstruct a swimmer in another lane. Obstruction of a swimmer in another lane shall cause the team to be disqualified.

4. Walking & Flotation Events

- a. Set-up
 - 1) There should be at least one observer for every two swimmers during competition.
 - 2) The starting line should be marked the appropriate distance from the finish.
 - 3) The depth of the pool should be no more than 1 meter (3.5 feet) deep for walking events. It is allowable that swimmers who have epilepsy should wear a piece of equipment to discreetly alert the lifeguard in the event of a seizure.
 - 4) It is preferable that certified swimming officials (including the referee, timers and judges) be used in all events. Rules For walking events, the swimmer must have at least one foot touching the bottom of the pool at all times.
 - 5) A flotation device is will be permitted in walking events, should an athlete need such a device as a safety measure. The athlete shall

maintain at least one foot touching the bottom of the pool at all times.

b. Assisted Events

- 1) Each athlete is responsible for having his/her own coach/assistant with them in the water. The assistant may touch, guide or direct the athlete, but may not support or assist with the athlete's forward movement.
- 2) The assistant may be in the pool or on the deck.
- 3) The athlete is allowed to use a flotation device

