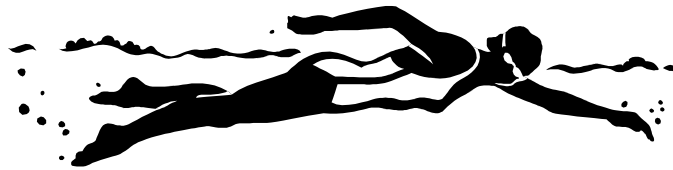


Special Olympics Northern California and Nevada

Aquatics



2010 Guidelines and Rules



Special Olympics
Northern California & Nevada

March 2010

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SPECIAL OLYMPICS MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Special Olympics is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with developmental disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics Athletes and the community.

Training For Life

SONC / SONV PLAYS BY THE RULES.....

All Special Olympics competitions will be conducted in accordance with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules and the National Governing Body of Rules for each sport offered in our program. These rules are designed to protect the athletes, provide equitable conditions of competition and promote uniformity so that no competitor shall obtain an unfair advantage over another.

The International Olympics Committee (IOC) has granted its official recognition to Special Olympics International, Inc., and its accredited programs.

Special Olympics Northern California and Nevada

COACHES' CODE OF CONDUCT

Special Olympics Northern California and Nevada (SONC/SONV) volunteer coaches are models whose behavior should serve as a positive example for their athletes. Their behavior should reflect a concern that the fairest and most positive competitive experience is equally available to every Special Olympics athlete in each training or competition. The coach has the unique opportunity to influence the development and personal growth of many individuals. For this reason, it is important that the coach adhere to the standards of ethical decision making and teaching.

In addition, it is the position of SONC/SONV that each volunteer coach shall agree to:

HAVE RESPECT FOR OTHERS

- I will respect the rights, dignity and worth of athletes, other coaches and volunteers, SONC/SONV staff members, and friends and spectators in Special Olympics.
- I will treat everyone equally regardless of sex, ethnic origin, religion or ability.
- I will be a positive role model for the athletes I coach.

ENSURE A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE

- I will ensure that for each athlete I coach, the time spent with Special Olympics is a positive experience.
- I will respect the talent, developmental stage and goals of each athlete.
- I will ensure each athlete competes in events that challenge that athlete's potential and are appropriate to that athlete's ability.
- I will be fair, considerate and honest with athletes and communicate with athletes using simple, clear language.
- I will ensure that accurate scores are provided for entry of an athlete into any event.
- I will instruct each athlete to perform to the best of the athlete's ability at all preliminaries/heats and finals in accordance with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules.

ACT PROFESSIONALLY AND TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIS/HER ACTIONS

- My language, manner, punctuality, preparation and presentation will demonstrate high standards.
- I will display control, respect, dignity and professionalism to all involved in Special Olympics, including to the athletes, other coaches and volunteers, opponents, officials, administrators, SONC/SONV staff members, parents, spectators and the media.
- I will encourage athletes to demonstrate the same qualities.
- I will not drink alcohol, smoke or take illegal drugs while representing Special Olympics at training sessions or during competitions.
- I will not engage in any form of personal abuse towards athletes, other coaches and volunteers, SONC/SONV staff members, or friends and spectators in Special Olympics, including verbal, physical or emotional abuse.
- I will be alert to any form of abuse from other sources directed toward athletes or others in my care.

PROVIDE QUALITY SERVICE TO THE ATHLETES

- I will seek continued improvement through performance evaluation and ongoing coach education.
- I will be knowledgeable about the Sports Rules and skills of the sport(s) I coach.
- I will provide a planned training program.
- I will keep copies of the registration, training, and competition records for each athlete I coach.
- I will follow the Special Olympics and National Governing Body rules for my sport(s) coached, as well as all SONC/SONV policies and procedures as amended.

ENSURE THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF THE ATHLETES

- I will ensure that the equipment and facilities for my sport(s) coached are safe to use.
- I will ensure that the equipment, rules, training and the environment are appropriate for the age and ability of the athletes.
- I will review each athlete's registration form and be aware of any limitations on that athlete's participation noted on that form.
- I will encourage athletes to seek medical advice when needed.
- I will maintain the same interest and support towards sick and injured athletes.
- I will allow further participation in training and competition only when appropriate.

Should the behaviors and/or abilities of any volunteer coach or other faction of a school/organization violate either the principles stated above (including the SONC/SONV policies and procedures as amended) or the philosophy of the Special Olympics movement, then any of the following actions may be taken by SONC/SONV in its sole discretion:

1. The coach may be notified by official warning of the undesirable behavior and be requested to remedy the situation immediately in order to continue his or her participation in Special Olympics;
2. The coach may be requested to withdraw personally or with his/her team from the remainder of any Special Olympics event or tournament;
3. The coach or sponsoring school/organization may be suspended from participating in any or all Special Olympics activities or events for a specified period of time; and/or
4. The coach or sponsoring school/organization may be permanently prohibited from participating in any or all Special Olympics activities or events.

I have read and understand the foregoing SONC/SONV Coaches' Code of Conduct, and agree to abide by its terms.

By: _____
(Signature of Volunteer/Volunteer Coach)

Print Full Name: _____

Date: _____

Special Olympics

Northern California and Nevada

ATHLETE'S CODE OF CONDUCT

Special Olympics Northern California and Nevada (SONC / SONV) is committed to the highest ideals of sport and expects all athletes to honor sports and Special Olympics. All SONC / SONV Athletes and Unified Partners agree to the following code:

SPORTSMANSHIP

- I will practice good sportsmanship.
- I will act in ways that bring respect to me, my coaches, my team, and Special Olympics.
- I will not use bad language.
- I will not swear or insult other persons.
- I will not fight with other athletes, coaches, volunteers, or staff.

TRAINING AND COMPETITION

- I will train regularly.
- I will learn and follow the rules of my sport.
- I will listen to my coaches and the official and ask questions when I do not understand
- I will always try my best during training, divisioning, and competitions.
- I will not “hold back” in preliminary competition just to get into an easier finals competition division.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR MY ACTIONS

- I will not make inappropriate or unwanted physical, verbal, or sexual advances on others.
- I will not smoke in non-smoking areas.
- I will not drink alcohol or use illegal drugs at Special Olympics venues
- I will not take drugs for the purpose of improving my performance.
- I will obey all laws and Special Olympics rules, the International Federation and the National Federation/Governing Body rules for my sport(s).

I agree to obey this code and I understand that if I do not obey this Code of Conduct, I will be subject to a range of consequences by SONC / SONV program up to and including not being allowed to participate.

SONC / SONV AQUATICS RULES AND REGULATIONS

The Official Special Olympics Sports Rules shall govern all Special Olympics Aquatics competitions. As an international Sports Program, Special Olympics has created these rules based upon Federation Internationale de Natation Amateur (FINA) and national governing body (NGB) rules for aquatics. FINA or national governing body rules shall be employed except when they are in conflict with the Special Olympics Sports Rules. In such cases, the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules shall apply.

SECTION A - GENERAL RULES

1. Each Special Olympics athlete is required to have an application for participation and a release form filled out and signed by a certified physician in order to participate. Also, each unified partner must fill out a unified partner release form in order to participate. This is in accordance with Special Olympics General Rules.
2. Each athlete is required to participate in a qualifying meet prior to participation in the state tournament.

SECTION B - OFFICIAL EVENTS

1. Athletes may only register to compete in one level. Athletes may register for two (2) Individual events and one (1) relay event, OR three (3) individual events.
2. Developmental events provide meaningful competition for athletes with lower ability levels. Athletes may enter in any 3 events from this level. If you wish an athlete to compete in a combination of developmental and regular events, you must send an explanation of your appeal with your registration packet to the Games Director.
3. All scoring for all events must be measured in (Minutes:Seconds.Tenths).

Level 1 Developmental Events

1. 15 Yard Walk
2. 15 Yard Flotation Race
3. 25 Yard Flotation Race
4. 10 Yard Assisted Swim
5. 15 Yard Unassisted Swim

Level 2 Traditional Individual Events

1. 25 Yard Freestyle
2. 50 Yard Freestyle
3. 25 Yard Backstroke
4. 50 Yard Backstroke
5. 25 Yard Breaststroke
6. 50 Yard Breaststroke
7. 25 Yard Butterfly
8. 50 Yard Butterfly

Level 2 Relay Events

1. 4x25 Yard Freestyle Relay
2. 4x25 Yard Medley Relay
3. 4x50 Yard Freestyle Relay
4. 4x50 Yard Medley Relay

Level 3 Traditional Individual Events

1. 50 Yard Freestyle
2. 100 Yard Freestyle
3. 200 Yard Freestyle
4. 500 Yard Freestyle
5. 1000 Yard Freestyle
6. 1650 Yard Freestyle
7. 50 Yard Backstroke
8. 100 Yard Backstroke
9. 200 Yard Backstroke
10. 50 Yard Breaststroke
11. 100 Yard Breaststroke
12. 200 Yard Breaststroke
13. 50 Yard Butterfly
14. 100 Yard Butterfly
15. 200 Yard Butterfly
16. 100 Yard Individual Medley (IM)
17. 200 Yard Individual Medley (IM)
18. 400 Yard Individual Medley (IM)

Level 3 Relay Events

1. 4x25 Yard Freestyle Relay
2. 4x25 Yard Medley Relay
3. 4x50 Yard Freestyle Relay
4. 4x50 Yard Medley Relay
5. 4x100 Yard Freestyle Relay
6. 4x100 Yard Medley Relay
7. 4x200 Yard Freestyle Relay

SECTION C – FACILITY & SUPERVISORY GUIDELINES

All Special Olympics Aquatics training and competitive events shall be conducted in accordance with the following practices, rules and procedures in order to ensure the safety and well being of all Special Olympics athletes, coaches, and volunteers:

1. Facility Guidelines
 - a. There shall be at least one certified lifeguard on duty for every 25 swimmers in the water.
 - b. The sole function of the lifeguard shall be to guard. If no relief lifeguard is available, the pool must be emptied, even for a short duration, when a lifeguard must leave the pool side.
 - c. The head coach or event director will review the Emergency Action Plan prior to each occasion.
 - d. Athlete medical history forms shall be on site and shall be discussed with the lifeguard or medical personnel on duty in advance of the aquatic activity.
 - e. Pool depth must be marked and easily visible.
 - f. The minimum depth of the pool shall be 1.52 meters (5 feet) for racing starts from a starting block. A swimmer may dive from the side of the pool without starting block if the depth is at least 1.22 meters (4 feet). Pool depth for Level 1 athletes must be shallow enough for the athletes to walk on the bottom.
 - g. A pool facility shall not be used unless a satisfactory inspection rating is received prior to any Special Olympics participant entering the water.
2. Supervisory Personnel Guidelines: An adequate number of supervisory personnel shall be present at all aquatics sessions or events. The type of personnel will vary in accordance with the following requirements:
 - a. Training Programs
 - i. Enough certified lifeguards to provide a ratio of guards to swimmers of 1 per 25.
 - ii. Enough coaches (preferably Special Olympics certified) to provide for adequate supervision and training of each athlete.
 - b. Competitions
 - i. Enough certified lifeguards to provide a ratio of guards to swimmers of 1 per 25.
 - ii. Enough supervision to provide for a ratio of observer to swimmers of 1 per 2 for those swimmers who are prone to seizures.

SECTION D – RULES OF COMPETITION

The technical rules of competition are noted in the FINA Rule book. National/U.S. programs may substitute their local national governing body (NGB) rules. The FINA rule book will be used for all multi-Program events. Exceptions to these rules are listed below.

1. Competition Equipment
 - a. Starting device (horn, gun or beeper). The starting system shall be capable of providing a visual start for the hearing impaired. A strobe light in accordance with FINA rules is recommended. If a strobe light is not available, then international hand signal will be used.
 - b. Lane lines.
 - c. Stop watches/timing system. At least one stop watch per lane required.
 - d. For flotation races, each athlete is responsible for his/her own flotation device. The Personal Flotation Device (PFD) must be the body wrap around type such that if the athletes were not able to hold on to the device, the device would still support the athlete with the face out of water. The PFD must be worn at all times. Flotation devices such as kickboards, inner tubes, or floats that wrap around the arms are unacceptable for use at any time.
2. Traditional Events
 - a. The Meet Referee, in cooperation with the 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 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. Coaches must notify Meet Referee of any athlete requiring an exception.

- c. The Meet 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.
- d. Standing on the bottom during any event shall not disqualify a competitor, but he/she shall not walk or use the bottom to propel themselves forward. Athlete may also use the lane line for rest, but not to propel themselves forward. Walking/jumping from the bottom to propel forward will result in a disqualification.
- e. A coach or official may guide the swimmer by voice only. The aid is not allowed to touch the swimmer from the time of the starting signal until all swimmers have completed the race. (The exception to this is for assisted races. In these races, the coach may assist the athlete in any form necessary.)
- f. Assistant starters (coaches) may be used to assist athletes to maintain their positions at the starting line (block or in the water) or during relays.
- g. No competitor shall be permitted to use or wear any device that may aid his/her speed, buoyancy or endurance during a competition (except flotation races) such as webbed gloves, flippers, fins, etc.). Goggles may be worn.
- h. Swimmers may be assisted from the water upon request.
- i. In individual events of 500 yards, 1000 yards, and 1650 yards, each inspector of turns at the turning end of the pool shall record the number of laps completed by the swimmer in his lane. The inspector or a coach can keep the swimmer informed of the remaining number of laps to be completed by displaying "lap cards". Semi-electronic equipment may be used, including under water display.

3. Developmental Events

- a. Walking & Flotation Events
 - i. 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. It is recommended the depth of the pool should be no more than 1 meter (3.5 feet) deep for walking events.
 4. It is preferable that certified swimming officials (including referees, timers and judges) be used in walking events.
 - ii. Guidelines
 1. For walking events, athletes must have at least one foot touching the bottom of the pool at all times.
 2. No flotation device is allowed for any other race than the specified flotation races.
- b. Assisted Swims
 - i. Each athlete is responsible for having his/her own coach/assistant. The assistant may touch, guide or direct the athletes, but may not support or assist with the athlete's forward movement. The swimmer is allowed to use a flotation device (see specifications listed in section D, 1d). The assistant may be in the pool or on the deck.
- c. Unassisted Swims
 - i. 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 swimmer's lane.

4. Unified Sports Events

- a. None offered.

5. 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. Relay team members must come from within the same delegation.
- d. A relay team which combines genders to include both male and female athletes, shall compete as a mixed relay.
- e. Relay swimmers should exit the pool as soon as possible following the completion of their relay leg. If they require assistance or a ladder to exit the pool, they should move to the corner of their lane at the completion of their relay leg, **but shall not obstruct a swimmer in another lane. Obstruction of a swimmer in another lane can result in a team disqualification.**
- f. For Regional Events
 - i. Relay teams can be comprised of any four aquatics athletes and two alternates who have qualified by swimming an event equivalent to or further than the minimum distance of the relay leg.
 - ii. The Regional relay form will consist of four athletes and two alternates. All athletes must be entered in an event that is the minimum distance required for the relay. All eligible athletes must be listed on the form.
 - iii. All athletes must abide by the event maximum number of events rule. (see registration form)
- g. For Program Championship (Summer Games)
 - i. The Program Championship relay form will consist of the four athletes and two alternates.
 - ii. All athletes selected for Program Championship from a delegation are a potential athlete for a relay team if they are entered in an aquatics event that meets the minimum event requirement. Coaches then put together their relay teams from those athletes selected for Summer Games. This does not necessarily mean these are the same four athletes who swam on the relay team at a Regional Event.
 - iii. At Summer Games because there will not be qualifying times for this new combination of athletes, we will be running preliminary races (to determine relay divisions) and final races.
 - iv. Relay teams can be comprised of any four aquatics athletes who have qualified by swimming an event equivalent to or further than the minimum distance of their relay leg. Individuals must have been selected based on the advancement criteria.

SECTION E – 2010 RULE CHANGES

- 1. Actual rules changes listed below are underlined and in bold print (within rule book).
- 2. General formatting and wording changes.
- 3. Section D – Rules of Competition
 - a. e, Page 10
 - **but shall not obstruct a swimmer in another lane. Obstruction of a swimmer in another lane can result in a team disqualification.**