



## Swimming – Sport Rules Modifications, Interpretations, and Points of Emphasis

The Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Swimming dated June 2016 will be in effect for the 2017-2018 SONC program year. This document is intended to be used in conjunction with USA Swimming rules and SOI Rules; therefore, those rules are not repeated here but they will be enforced unless in direct conflict to SONC modifications.

### Events Offered

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
*15m Walk	25/50y Backstroke	50y/100y/200y Backstroke
*15m Assisted Swim	25/50y Breaststroke	50y/100y/200y Breaststroke
*25y Floatation Race	25/50y Butterfly	50y/100y Butterfly
*25y Freestyle Assisted Swim	25/50y Freestyle	50y/100y/200y/500y/1000y/1650y Freestyle
15m Unassisted Swim	100y Individual Medley	100y/200y Individual Medley
25y Kickboard	4x25 Free Relay	4x25 Free Relay
25y Freestyle	4x50 Free and Medley	4x50 Free and Medley Relay
25y Backstroke	Relay	
4x25 Relay (demonstration)		

\*Athletes in the 15m walk, 15m assisted swim, 25y freestyle assisted or 25y floatation race may not register for the 25y freestyle or 25y backstroke.

### Whistle Starts, Bell Laps and Counters.

Adopting the National Standard, whistle starts will be used. Prior to the start of each race the referee will blow short whistles to notify swimmers to get ready to swim. The initial whistles will be at least four distinct, staccato bursts. Then when the athletes are ready, the referee will blow one long whistle to signal the swimmers to get onto the blocks, stand on the side of the deck, or enter the water. For the backstroke, a second long whistle will be blown (when swimmers have surfaced and can hear it) to “place feet” and get ready for the backstroke to start.

For distances greater than 500 yards (with the exception of relays), the referee or designee will ring a bell 55-yards prior to the completion of the race.

Lap counters may only be used for individual races of **500y or more**.<sup>1</sup> Programs must make arrangements for their own lap counters, and lap count cards. Counters must be stationed opposite the starting end.<sup>2</sup>

### Maximum Effort – Performance Discrepancy<sup>3</sup>

- In events 25 yards and shorter, the maximum effort threshold will be set to 25%. In events 50 yards or longer (including all relays), the maximum effort threshold will be set to 20%. Any athlete or team that exceeds the percentage may be subject to disqualification.
- It is the responsibility of the coach to submit an improved performance time, if the time recorded with Summer Games registration is not a true reflection of the athlete’s abilities. Timeline for submitting this information will be disclosed in the spring season.

<sup>1</sup> Per USA Swimming rule 102.6.A

<sup>2</sup> SONC modification of USA Swimming rule 102.6.C

<sup>3</sup> SONC modification of SOI Section 3.8

## Appropriate Attire and Equipment

- Males should wear a “Speedo-style” brief swimsuit or “Jammers,” made of a smooth, quick-drying fabric like lycra, or any swim trunks with a snug fitting waistband and drawstring (please note that longer-length swimsuits like board shorts and jams will create additional drag in the water).
- Females must wear a one-piece suit. The suit should be close fitting and cut so as not to hinder movement.
- Body length suits (including but not limited to wetsuits) are not allowed.<sup>4</sup> Suits that provide a competitive advantage (including but not limited to neoprene shirts and wetsuits) are not allowed and will result in a disqualification.<sup>5</sup>
- Athletes competing in the walk events are permitted to wear socks without rubber soles. No shoes are allowed.
- No jewelry permitted except for medical alert bracelets.
- Swim cap, goggles, & nose clips are acceptable to wear

## Competition Modifications and Interpretations

- Athletes may compete in one of three levels depending on their ability, but must remain within the chosen level.
- Athletes competing in Level 2 or Level 3 may compete in one relay.<sup>6</sup>
- Level 1 athletes will have the option at Summer Games to participate in a 4x25y freestyle relay. This exhibition relay will occur during the Level 1 events on Saturday afternoon, and will be done for practice only (they will not be awarded placement awards). Athletes must be able to complete the 25y on their own or with the assistance of a floatation device, without a coach in the pool.
- All swimming competition will take place in a yard pool. Please be advised if practicing in a meter pool.<sup>7</sup>
- Due to the number of entrants, the 1650y and 1000y race will occur **at the same time** in the competition pool. The 1650y race will be a continuation of the 1000y event.

## Walking Event

- The 15m walk competition at Summer Games will require all athletes to participate in a **preliminary round** for divisioning, followed by a **final round** of competition.
- Walkers that make contact with the pool floor may be used during the 15m walk to provide upright support. Coaches are allowed to trail behind an athlete in case of emergency, but may not touch or assist the athlete. If a coach touches an athlete, it will result in a DQ. If a coach will be in the water with an athlete, please notify the competition manager at the coaches meeting.

## Assisted, Floatation and Unassisted

- Standing on the bottom in the racing course is allowed for floatation events, assisted events and the 15m unassisted event for the purpose of resting. Coaches are allowed to be in the pool during the 10m assisted swim. The coach may touch, guide, or direct the athlete, but may not support or assist with the athlete’s forward movement.<sup>8</sup> Athletes are allowed to use an approved floatation device. An athlete will be disqualified if an official determines that a coach is facilitating forward motion. Coaches are only allowed to be behind or beside the athlete.
- During the 25y floatation race, coaches are allowed to be in the pool. The coach may touch, guide, or direct the athlete, but may not support or assist with the athlete’s forward movement.<sup>9</sup> Athletes must use an approved floatation device. An athlete will be disqualified if an official determines that a coach is facilitating forward motion. Coaches are only allowed to be behind or beside the athlete.

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<sup>4</sup> Per USA Swimming rules 102.8.B.

<sup>5</sup> If exceptions must be made for medical or religious reasons, please contact the sports department at [sports@sonc.net](mailto:sports@sonc.net).

<sup>6</sup> Participation in a Unified Sports relay counts toward the number of relays allowed per athlete.

<sup>7</sup> The three exceptions are for Level 1 events 15 meter walk, 10 meter assisted swim, and 15 meter unassisted swim which will remain in meters.

<sup>8</sup> SOI Section 3.6.1.

<sup>9</sup> SOI Section 3.6.1.

- During the 15m unassisted swim, coaches may be in the water to assist with the start only. Coaches may trail behind the athlete and are only in the pool in case of a medical emergency.

#### **Kick board Event (25 yards)<sup>10</sup>**

- Participant is responsible to bring their own kick board to the event.
- The size of the kick board shall be maximum length 470mm, maximum width 330mm, and maximum thickness 45mm. It must also be made of a material that provides appropriate flotation<sup>11</sup>
- In-water Starts are required. The swimmer must be in the water with one hand placed touching the pool deck, edge or with both hands holding the kick board with the swimmers back against the pool or edge<sup>12</sup>.
- Both hands should remain on the kick board at all times. The swimmer may swim in a prone or supine position. Arm stroking is not permissible. Standing on the bottom of the pool for the purpose of resting is permissible but no walking or jumping is permitted<sup>13</sup>.
- The finish will take place when the kick board touches the pool edge at the finish line, or when some part of the swimmers body touches the pool edge at the finish line. The swimmer must have one hand on the board at the finish<sup>14</sup>.
- The coach may touch, guide, or direct the athlete, but may not support or assist with the athlete's forward movement. An athlete will be disqualified if an official determines that a coach is facilitating forward motion. Coaches are only allowed to be behind or beside the athlete.
- No additional floatation devices are allowed.

#### **Relay Teams**

- Each individual swimmer will be allowed to enter into one relay.
- Freestyle relay swimmers may change order, but coaches must notify the Staging Manager before the team leaves the staging area. Medley relay members must swim in the same order and the same stroke from prelims to finals.
- Relay format for state-level competition:
  - A **preliminary round** of competition in relay events will take place on **Saturday** for divisioning purposes in order to record qualifying times. Teams must successfully complete their event on Saturday in order to compete in the **final round on Sunday**. Teams that are disqualified for any reason will not compete on Sunday.
  - The final round of competition will take place on Sunday to determine awards.
  - **Relay teams must remain the same from the preliminary round on Saturday to the final round of competition on Sunday at Summer Games. Alternates may not be used for any relay on Sunday.**
  - Coaches must carefully select swimmers for relays in order to eliminate over-subscription to the events. Preliminary **and** finals count as **one** relay event even though the team will be swimming twice.
- 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. 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.<sup>15</sup>
- Should the number of Unified Sports relay teams not be sufficient to establish competitive Unified Sports divisions, the Unified Sports relay teams will swim against traditional teams in those events, but will be awarded separately.
- Unified Sports relay teams shall always consist of two athletes and two Unified Partners.

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<sup>10</sup> Modification of 15 m kick board in SOI Section 2.1.

<sup>11</sup> SOI Section 3.5.3.1.4.

<sup>12</sup> SOI Section 3.5.3.1.1.

<sup>13</sup> SOI Section 3.5.3.1.2.

<sup>14</sup> SOI Section 3.5.3.1.3.

<sup>15</sup> SOI Section 3.3.5.

- Coaches are strongly encouraged to choose unique relay team names by event. If more than one relay team from the same program is in the same event with the same team name, a unique name will be assigned to them by the sport director.
- Relay Names: Each relay first letter in the name must be different. For example a team cannot have Mermaids and Merryman as both begin with the letter M. But a team could have the Barracudas and Catfish. This is to keep teams separate in the Hytek meet software.

### **Special Notices**

- Please note that the order of events may change for 2018 state-level competition.
- Please indicate athletes with hearing or visual impairments, as well as athletes who use a wheelchair or require an outside lane on the registration forms. If an athlete requires specific assistance in and out of the pool, please indicate such a request on the registration form.
- For the safety of athletes and volunteers, Coach Deck passes will be utilized for state-level competition. Coaches and other personnel are to adhere to deck policies set forth by the competition staff at all events.
- Additional competition opportunities are being researched for Unified Sports. This is being done in anticipation of potentially removing all Unified competition from state-level events starting in the 2018-2019 program year.