



## **Swimming Rules**

### Eligibility

Special Olympics Swimming is available to all persons age 8 and above, having been identified by an agency or professional as having an Intellectual disability, or a closely related disability which means having functional limitations in both general learning and in adaptive skills (such as recreation, work, independent living, self-direction, or self-care), and having registered to participate in Special Olympics.

### Divisioning

Special Olympics divisions Athletes based upon their age, gender, and ability, with ability being the primary indicator. This aspect of Special Olympics is what separates Special Olympics from all other sports organizations. Every Athlete will receive an award. Athletes disqualified will receive a participation award.

## GENERAL AQUATICS INFORMATION

1. An athlete must practice a minimum of 8 weeks/hours prior to competition.
2. Athletes must swim the full distance with no physical assistance.
3. An athlete who exceeds a time of 25 percent better than the time recorded for divisioning or a reported time shall be disqualified. An athlete who is disqualified for a violation of the Maximum Effort rule shall be presented with a participation ribbon. The coach is responsible for ensuring that all times submitted are the fastest time recorded for the swimmer at the time of submission.
4. SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS:
  - a. All Special Olympics swimming training, recreational sessions and competition 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:
  - b. Basic Rules - There shall be at least one certified lifeguard on duty for every 25 swimmers in the water. The sole function of the lifeguard shall be to guard. If no relief lifeguard is available, the pool must be cleared, even for a short duration, when a lifeguard must leave the pool side.
  - c. Athlete medical history forms shall be on site and relevant.
  - d. Every coach should have an emergency action plan.
  - e. Pool depths must be marked and easily visible.
  - f. Safety lines must be in place to divide shallow and deep water areas during recreational aquatic activities.
  - g. A pool facility shall not be used unless a satisfactory inspection rating is received prior to any Special Olympics participant entering the water.
5. An athlete with Down syndrome who has been diagnosed with Atlanto-Axial Instability may not participate in Butterfly events, Individual Medley events, diving starts or diving.
6. All starts are from the water starts. For in-water starts the athlete shall place one hand on the end of the pool or hold the starting block with one hand. Two hands shall be used for backstroke starts.

7. 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 inner tubes or floats that wrap around the arms are not acceptable for use at any time).
8. No flotation device is allowed for any event other than the specified flotation events.
9. Proper swim attire is required- one piece swimsuits for the girls. Goggles and swim caps are encouraged.

OFFICIAL EVENTS: The range of events, including- individual events, and relay events, is intended to offer competition opportunities for athletes of all abilities. Coaches are responsible for providing training and event selection appropriate to each athlete's skill and interest. The following is a list of official events available in Special Olympics Oklahoma:

#### AQUATICS EVENT CODES

25FLF	25 Meter Front Flotation
25FLB	25 Meter Back Flotation
25F	25 Meter Freestyle
25BK	25 Meter Backstroke
25BS	25 Meter Breaststroke
25BF	25 Meter Butterfly
25MED	25 Meter Individual Medley
50F	50 Meter Freestyle
50BK	50 Meter Backstroke
50BS	50 Meter Breaststroke
50BF	50 Meter Butterfly
50MED	50 Meter Individual Medley
100F	100 Meter Freestyle
100BK	100 Meter Backstroke
100BS	100 Meter Breaststroke
100BF	100 Meter Butterfly
200F	200 Meter Freestyle
4x25F	4x25 M Free Relay
4x25MED	4x25 Medley Relay
4x50F	4x50 M Free relay
4x50MED	4x50 M Medley Relay
4x25 FLR	25 meter unassisted Flotation Relay

## FREESTYLE

1. Freestyle means that in an event so designated the swimmer may swim any style, except that in individual medley or medley relay events, freestyle means any style other than backstroke, breaststroke or butterfly.
2. Some part of the swimmer must touch the wall upon completion of each length and at the finish.
3. Standing on the bottom during freestyle events or during the freestyle portion of medley events shall not disqualify a swimmer, but he shall not walk.
- 4.

## BACKSTROKE

1. Prior to the starting signal, the swimmers shall line up in the water facing the starting end, with both hands holding the wall. Standing in or on the gutter or bending the toes over the lip of the gutter is prohibited. When using a backstroke ledge at the start, the toes of both feet must be in contact with the end wall or face of the touchpad. Bending the toes over the top of the touchpad is prohibited.
2. Upon the finish of the race the swimmer must touch the wall while on the back in his/her respective lane.

## BREASTSTROKE

1. From the start and throughout the race the stroke cycle must be one arm stroke and one leg kick in that order. All movements of the arms shall be simultaneous and on the same horizontal plane without alternating movement.
2. The hands shall be pushed forward together from the breast on, under, or over the water. The elbows shall be under water except for the final stroke before the turn, during the turn and for the final stroke at the finish. The hands shall be brought back on or under the surface of the water. The hands shall not be brought back beyond the hip line, except during the first stroke after the start and each turn.
3. The feet must be turned outwards during the propulsive part of the kick. Alternating movements or downward butterfly kicks are not permitted. Breaking the surface of the water with the feet is allowed unless followed by a downward butterfly kick.
4. At each turn and at the finish of the race, the touch shall be made with both hands separated and simultaneously at, above, or below the water level. At the last stroke before the turn and at the finish an arm stroke not followed by a leg kick is permitted.
5. "Separated" means that the hands cannot be stacked one on top of the other. It is not necessary to see space between the hands. Incidental contact at the fingers is not a concern.

## BUTTERFLY

1. Both arms shall be brought forward simultaneously over the water and brought backward simultaneously under the water through-out the race.
2. All up and down movements of the legs must be simultaneous. The legs or the feet need not be on the same level, but they shall not alternate in relation to each other. A breaststroke kicking movement is not permitted.
3. At each turn and at the finish of the race, the touch shall be made with both hands separated and simultaneously, at, above or below the water surface.
4. "Separated" means that the hands cannot be stacked one on top of the other. It is not necessary to see space between the hands. Incidental contact at the fingers is not a concern.

## INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY

In individual medley events, the swimmer covers the four swimming strokes in the following order: Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke and Freestyle. Each of the strokes must cover one quarter (1/4) of the distance.

## RELAY EVENTS

1. There shall be four swimmers on each relay team.
2. Each swimmer shall swim one-fourth the distance of the total relay. No swimmer shall swim more than one leg of any one relay.
3. A relay team which combines genders to include both male and female swimmers shall compete as a male relay.
4. In medley relay events, swimmers will cover the four swimming strokes in the following order: Backstroke, Breaststroke, Butterfly and Freestyle.
5. In relay events, the team of a swimmer who leaves the wall, before the preceding team-mate touches the wall shall be disqualified.

## THE RACE

1. In all events, a swimmer when turning shall make physical contact with the end of the pool or course. The turn must be made from the wall, and it is not permitted to take a stride or step from the bottom of the pool.
2. Pulling on the lane rope is not allowed.
3. Obstructing another swimmer by swimming across another lane or otherwise interfering shall disqualify the offender. Should the foul be intentional, the referee shall report the matter to the Member promoting the race, and to the Member of the swimmer so offending.
4. No swimmer shall be permitted to use or wear any device or swimsuit that may aid his/her speed, buoyancy or endurance during a competition (such as webbed gloves, flippers, fins, power bands, or adhesive substances, etc.). Goggles may be worn.