



SPECIAL OLYMPICS AQUATICS

Competition Management Team Guide

Part of the Special Olympics Sports Management System

Second Edition
January 2009



Team Approach to Sports Management

The phrase "Together We Win!" was chosen as the rallying slogan for the Special Olympics 25th Anniversary celebrations. It is this focus on teamwork that has enabled Special Olympics to become a highly visible and recognized worldwide sports movement. Applying a team approach to the development of new sports resources is the key to enhancing the opportunities offered to our athletes and coaches.

Sport Directors and Sport Management Teams

Chapter sports staff are responsible for developing training and competition opportunities in all the sports available. An incredible task! To help them, they have traditionally recruited a "Sport Director" in each sport to provide resource support and technical expertise. Although Sport Directors play a valuable role in many Chapter programs, this type of support structure is no longer sufficient to drive a Special Olympics sport program that is becoming more complex and challenging every year.

In the future, the most successful Chapters will be those which expand their sport-specific support structure to include functional Sport Management Teams. These Sport Management Teams will include specially trained volunteers possessing diverse expertise in sport and in Special Olympics.

Objectives

Under the direction of the Chapter staff and the Sport Director, a Sport Management Team (SMT) for each sport would work year-round to accomplish the following.

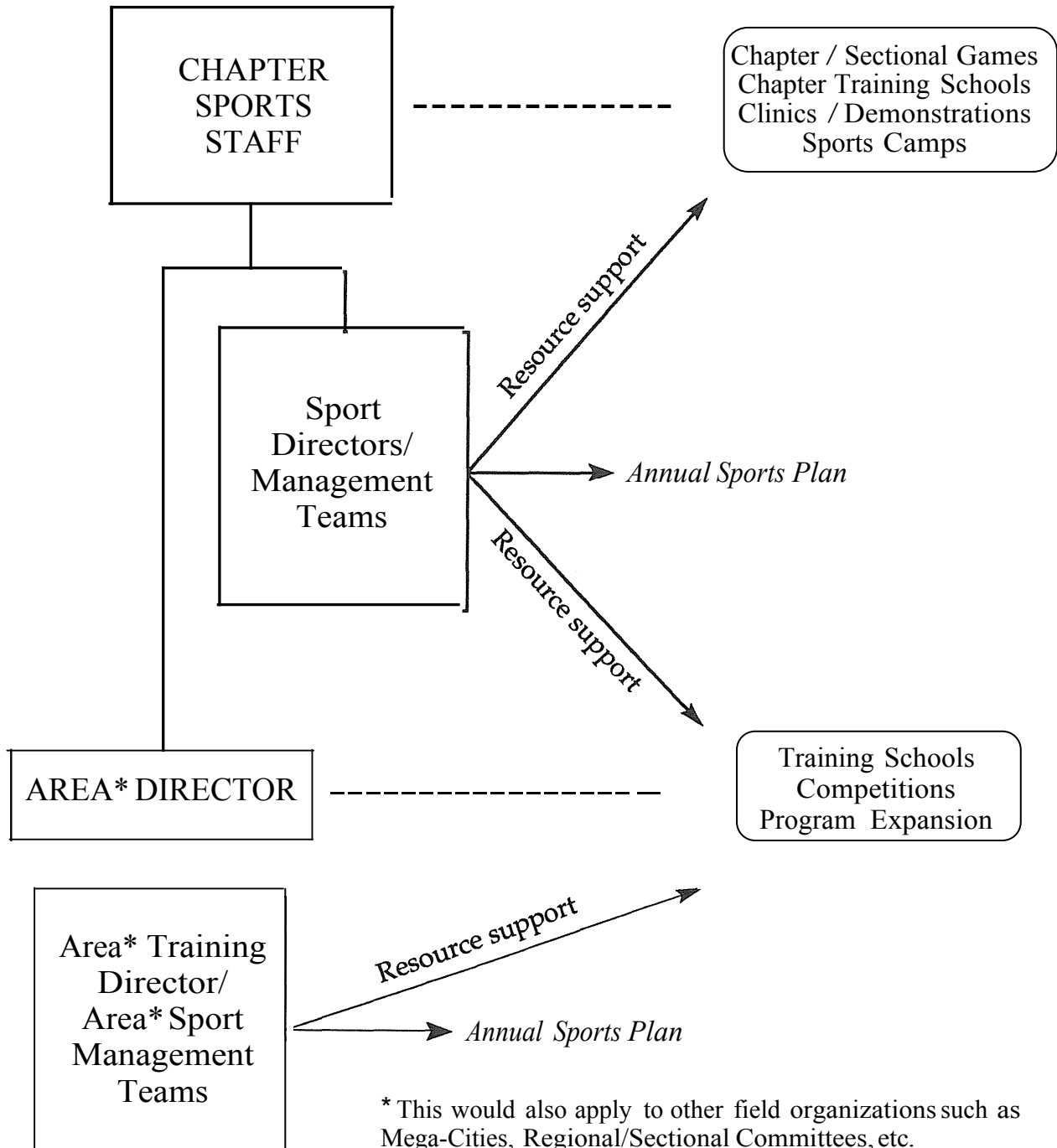
- Assess program needs and develop an annual sport plan.
- Provide technical support for Chapter-level competitions and, whenever possible, for competitions at the Area and Local levels.
- Provide the technical instructors for coaches' and athletes' training schools and other coach or athlete training programs.
- Support Area and Local programs in their efforts to identify, recruit, and train sport-specific resources.
- Develop strong relationships between Special Olympics and other NGB-recognized organizations.





Program Support

A Chapter Sport Management Team provides sport-specific technical expertise and resource support for Chapter-level training and competition and, whenever possible, for Area or Local competition and training programs.



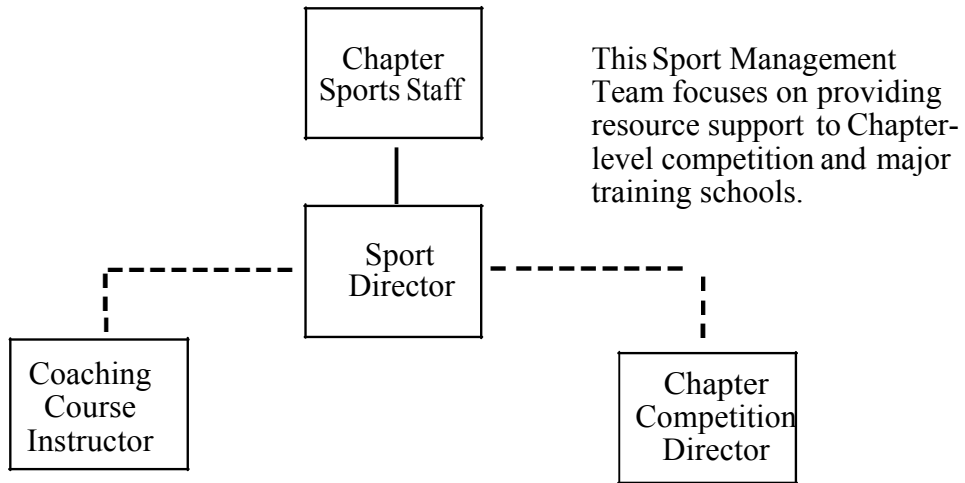
* This would also apply to other field organizations such as Mega-Cities, Regional/Sectional Committees, etc.



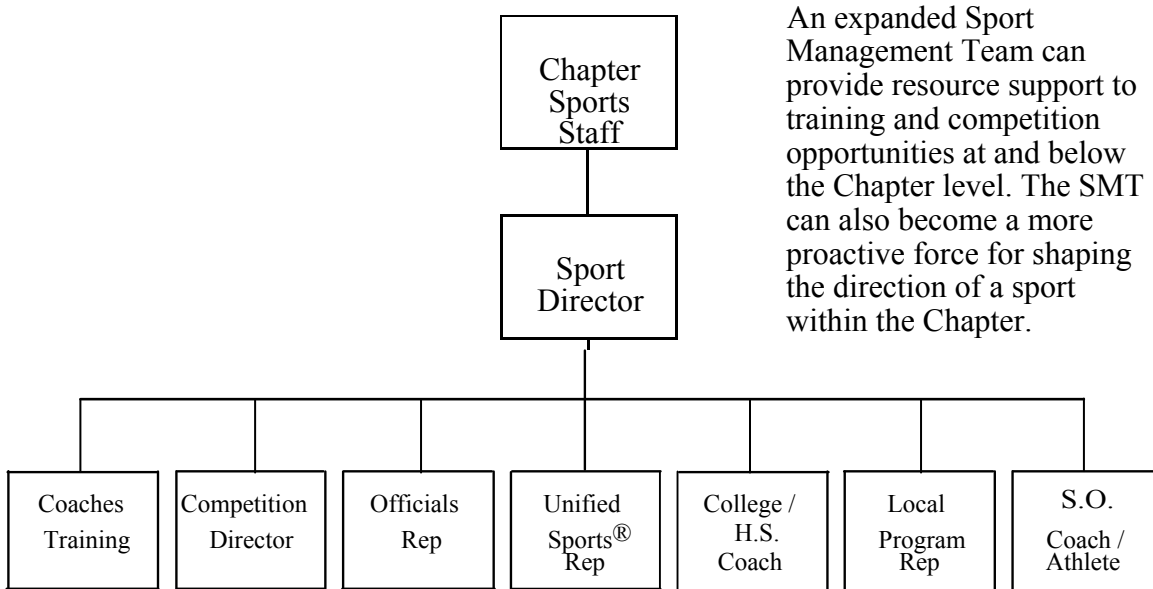
Structuring a Sport Management Team

Below are examples of two levels of a sport-specific Sport Management Team.

Level 1



Level 2





The Sport Management Team

Sample Job Descriptions

Besides including people with the following expertise, it is equally important to have geographic representation across the state.

Coaches Training Coordinator

- Conducts at least one Coaches Training School each season.
- Advises and trains other instructors.

Competition Director

- Serves as the Technical Director for the Chapter competition.
- Assists in the recruitment and training of Area and Sectional Competition Directors.

Officials Representative

- Recruits and trains officials for Area, Sectional, and Chapter competitions.
- Reviews and proposes ideas for rules changes.

Unified Sports® Representative

- Assists in developing Unified Sports® culminating competitions.
- Assists in conducting Unified Sports® training for coaches.

College, High School, or Club Representative

- Conducts a college, high school, or club partnership program.
- Develops statewide involvement with colleges, high schools, and/or clubs.

Local Program Families Representative

- Provides information from the Local Special Olympics program's perspective in designing appropriate training and competition opportunities. This information would include budget, logistics, parental support, etc.
- Provides an excellent opportunity for family involvement.

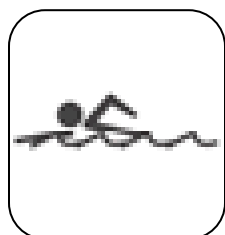
Special Olympics Coach

- Provides input from a coach's perspective in the training and competition needs of athletes.

Special Olympics Athlete

- Provides input from an athlete's perspective.
- Serves as an Athlete for Outreach at sports functions.





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Managing a Special Olympics Aquatics Competition

Thank you for volunteering to be a member of the Aquatics Competition Management Team. Your time and energy are greatly appreciated. Conducting a successful Special Olympics competition is truly a challenge that takes dedication and a lot of hard work. The results can be one of the most satisfying experiences in sports.

As a member of the Aquatics Competition Management Team, you are responsible for conducting an event that will meet a number of challenging goals. These goals include:

- Providing a safe competition environment for all participants.
- Providing a competition in which all teams and individuals have an opportunity to compete against others of similar abilities
- Providing a competition that is officiated according to the official rules and to the highest standards of fairness
- Creating an “Olympic” atmosphere around the event
- Providing a positive and inspiring experience for family members, volunteers, and spectators
- Increasing public awareness and education about the abilities of individuals with intellectual disabilities

The Competition Management Team Guide provides the fundamental technical information needed to achieve these goals. Committees involved with large, Chapter-level competitions may need to expand some of this information. The basic principals, however, should remain the same for any level of competition.

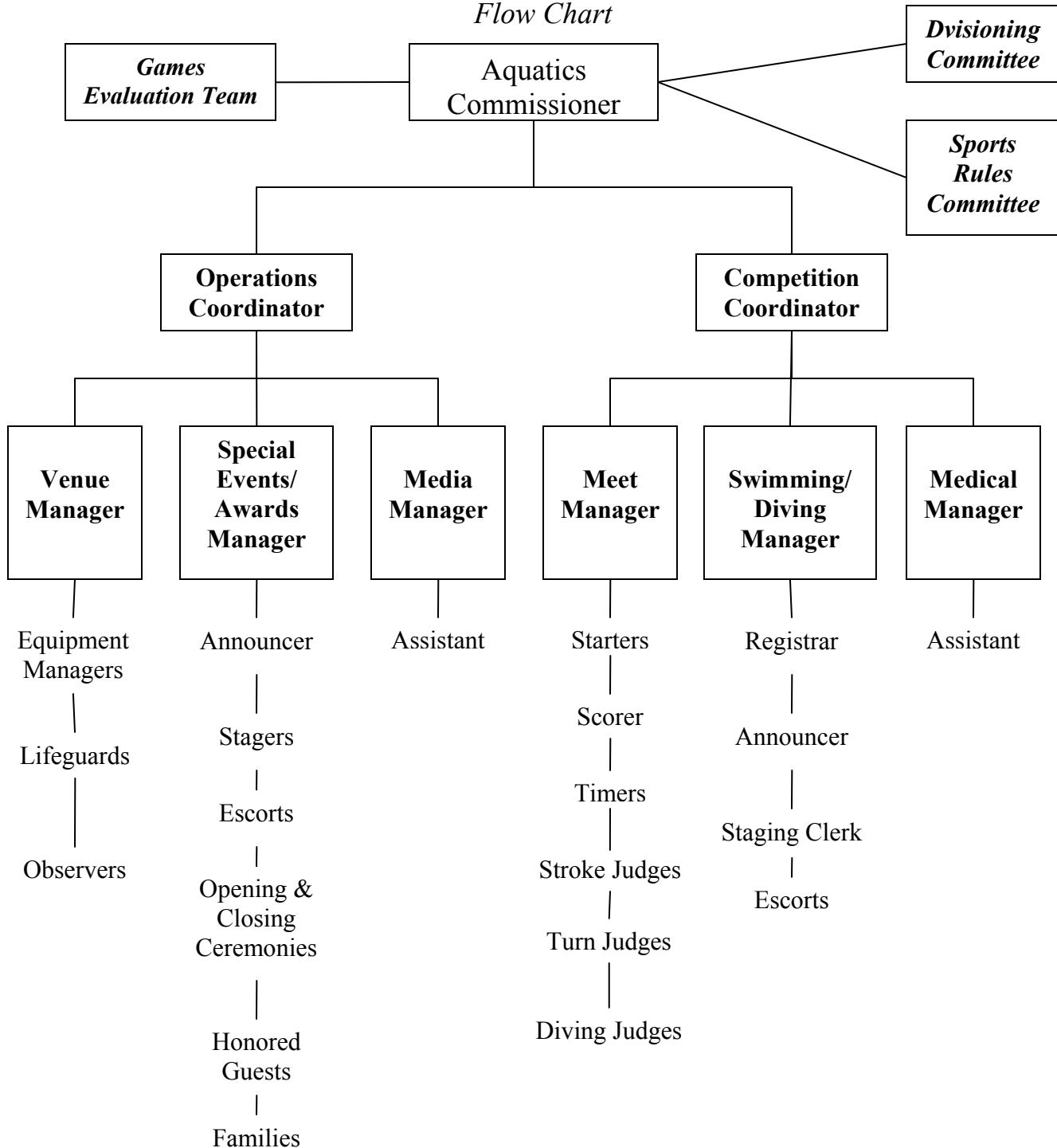
Special Olympics International welcomes your ideas for future revisions of these materials. You are invited to send your comments and ideas to:

SOI Aquatics Director
Special Olympics International
1133 19th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036



Aquatics Competition Management Team

Flow Chart



The composition of a Aquatics Competition Management Team will depend on the size and level of the competition and the personnel available. In Local or Area competitions a number of the above positions could be consolidated. If the competition is a part of multi-sport games, the Aquatics Competition Management Team will focus on the operations and competition of Aquatics. The Games Management Team may oversee Awards, Ceremonies, Special Events, and Media.



Competition Management Team (continued)

Job Descriptions

Aquatics Commissioner

Ultimately responsible for the quality of the overall Aquatics competition. Organizes, recruits, trains, and manages the aquatics competition personnel. Supervises the Aquatics Competition Management Team. Chairs the Divisioning Committee and the Sports Rules Committee. Responsible for handling all protests. *The Sports Rules Committee (Protest Committee) includes the Commissioner, Meet Referee, and a coach.*

Operations Coordinator

Responsible for the overall management of the facility. Secures necessary supplies and equipment for the competition.

Venue Manager

Responsible for signage to events as well as to medical, etc. Ensures that all lanes are correctly marked and that overall venue is safely and properly set up. Organizes all equipment needs. Trains, assigns, and supervises the Lifeguards and Observers. Responsible for set-up of public address system. Ensures the water and proper medical facilities area and proper medical facilities area are provided.

Special Events/Awards Manager

Responsible for all aspects of the awards ceremony, including the ordering of medals and ribbons, coordination of final results, training Announcer, hospitality for Honored Guests and families, and training the awards personnel. Also includes Opening and Closing Ceremonies.

Media Manager

Responsible for developing interest in the local media. Provides information, stories and photographs to assist in generating pre- and post-event coverage.

Competition Coordinator

Responsible for the overall management of the competition. Trains Stagers and Athlete Escorts.

Swimming/Diving Manager

Responsible for processing and checking in all competition registrations for athletes. Provides roster forms for divisioning and competition. Recruits, trains, and supervises the Meet Announcer, Staging Clerk, Stagers, and Escorts

Medical Manager

Responsible for medical emergencies and assistance during the competition. A **Physician** will preferably be on site during the competition, or, at the very least, on call at a local hospital. **Qualified first-aid personnel** should be available for athletes and spectators. **Emergency procedures and services** should be arranged beforehand, that is ambulance services, emergency rooms, etc.

Every aquatics meet will require a number of officials and judges to assist in the smooth running of the competition. The exact number of personnel involved will vary depending on the size of the meet. Listed on the next page are some of the more common, necessary positions.





Competition Management Team (continued)

Meet Referee

Responsible for assigning and instructing all competition officials on their individual responsibilities. The Meet Referee will have full control and authority over all officials and may intervene in the competition at any time to ensure that the regulations are observed.

Meet Announcer

Largely responsible for the smooth running of the competition. He/she is responsible for calling events, announcing competitors and awards, and making any other necessary announcements. The Meet Announcer should have prior public speaking experience and should be chosen well before the competition, not simply picked from the spectators. He/she should also have at least some knowledge of Special Olympics aquatics competition.

Lifeguard

Must be on duty for every 25 swimmers in the water. **There must be no competition without adequate lifeguard coverage.**

Observer

Required for every two athletes prone to seizures.

Starter

Has full control of the competitors from the time the Meet Referee turns the competitors over to him/her until the race has commenced.

Timers

Responsible for timing the swimmers in the competition.

Stroke Judges

Responsible for watching each competitor's stroke throughout the race while walking along the pool deck. He or she must know the rules for all strokes and must be able to give an interpretation of the proper rules.

Turn Judges

Responsible for judging the technical correctness of swimming turns. He or she must notify the Meet Referee of any disqualifications for turn infractions.

Diving Referee

Manages the diving competition and is responsible for assigning and instructing all diving competition officials and personnel.

Diving Judges

Responsible for judging the competitors' dives and noting the score on the athlete's scorecard.

Scorer

Responsible for recording the athlete's scores and placements on the results sheet.

Athlete Escorts

Control the placement of each swimmer in the proper heat and proper lane. They may be asked to escort the athletes from the deck to the awards area following the swim.





Aquatics Competition Management Team

Title

Name

Aquatics Commissioner

Operations Coordinator

Equipment Manager

Lifeguards

Observers

Awards/Special Events Manager

Announcer

Stagers

Media Manager

Competition Coordinator

Meet Referee

Starter

Scorer

Timers

Stroke Judges

Turn Judges

Diving Judges

Swimming/Diving Manager

Registrar

Announcer

Staging Clerk

Stagers

Athlete Escorts

Medical Manager

Staff





Official Events

Special Olympics offers competitive swimming and diving for athletes of **all** ability levels. In addition, Special Olympics aquatics competition includes divisions for females, males, and Unified Sports[®]. Any relay team with one or more male athletes must be entered in a male division. All events are conducted based upon Federation International de Natacion Amateur (FINA) and National Governing Body (NGB) rules. Special Olympics modifications to these rules, as written in the Special Olympics Summer Sports Rules, take precedence over FINA or NGB rules.

Swimming Events

The official distances for all Special Olympics events will be conducted in a metric pool. Local competitions may be conducted over any distance, but official times from metric pools will be seeded in first priority for international competition.

Olympic-Type Events

1. 50 Meter Freestyle
2. 100 Meter Freestyle
3. 200 Meter Freestyle
4. 400 Meter Freestyle
5. 800 Meter Freestyle
6. 1500 Meter Freestyle
7. 50 Meter Backstroke
8. 100 Meter Backstroke
9. 200 Meter Backstroke
10. 50 Meter Breaststroke
11. 100 Meter Breaststroke
12. 200 Meter Breaststroke
13. 50 Meter Butterfly
14. 100 Meter Butterfly
15. 200 Meter Butterfly
16. 100 Meter Individual Medley
17. 200 Meter Individual Medley
18. 400 Meter Individual Medley
19. 4x25 Meter Freestyle Relay
20. 4x50 Meter Freestyle Relay
21. 4x100 Meter Freestyle Relay
22. 4x200 Meter Freestyle Relay
23. 4x25 Meter Medley Relay
24. 4x50 Meter Medley Relay
25. 4x100 Meter Medley Relay

The following events provide appropriate competition for athletes with lower ability.

26. 25 Meter Freestyle
27. 25 Meter Backstroke
28. 25 Meter Breaststroke
29. 25 Meter Butterfly
30. 15 Meter Walk
31. 15 Meter Floatation Race
32. 25 Meter Floatation Race
33. 10 Meter Assisted Swim
34. 15 Meter Unassisted Swim

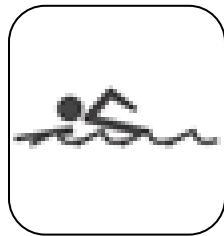
Diving Event

1. 1 Meter Springboard

Note: It is not necessary to offer all 35 official events at every competition. Program leaders can play a valuable role in offering the widest array of competition events. As a result, coaches and athletes can select the most appropriate events.



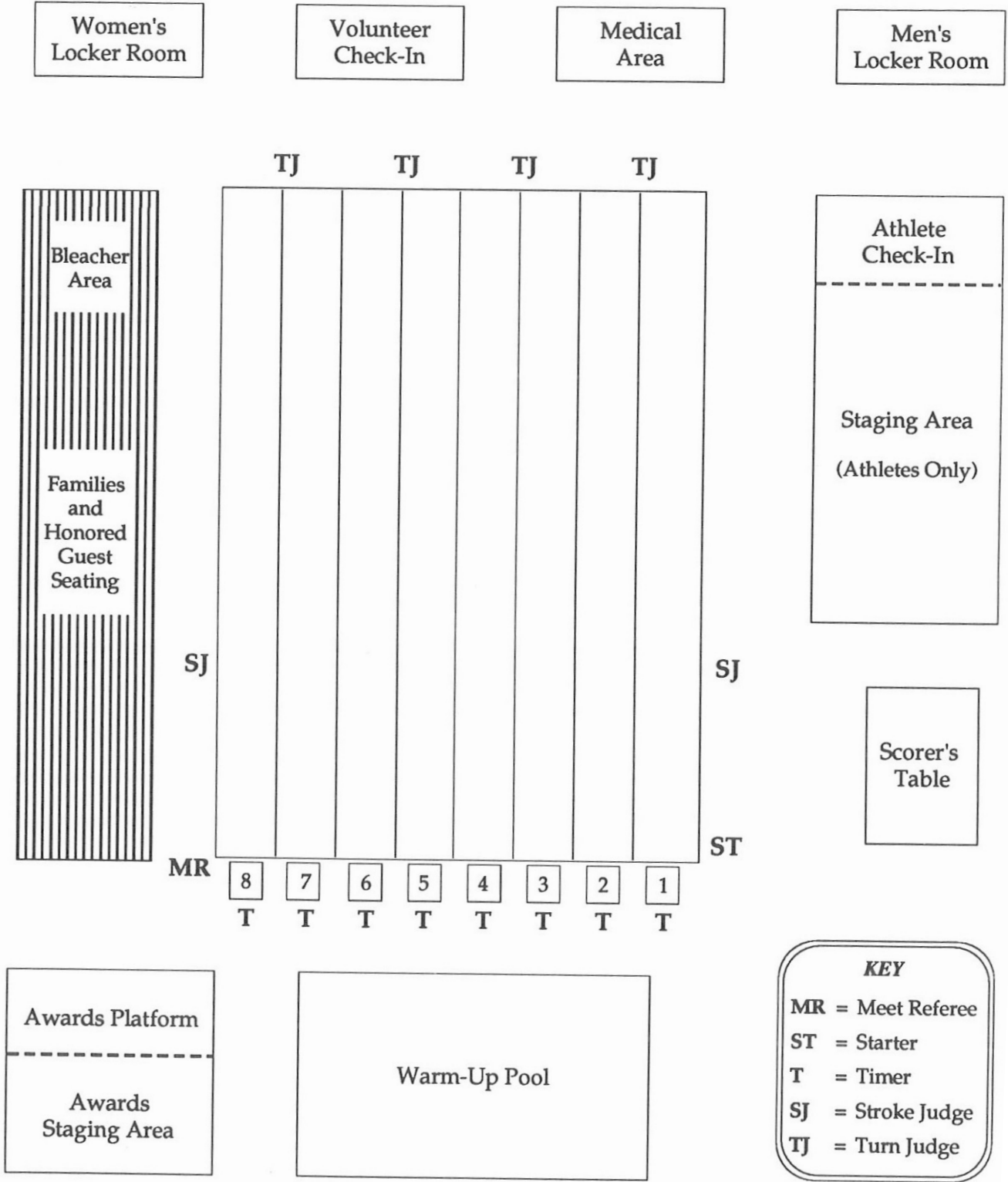
AQUATICS COMPETITION



Competition Management



Team Competition Venue





Competition Venue Checklist

Equipment	Number Required	Checked
Electronic starting device	_____	_____
Starting gun/extra shells (if necessary)	_____	_____
Stopwatches	_____	_____
Benches for athletes	_____	_____
Seating for families, spectators, and Honored Guests	_____	_____
Judges seating	_____	_____
Administrative table	_____	_____
Official forms	_____	_____
Special Olympics and FINA rules	_____	_____
Clipboards and pencils	_____	_____
P.A. system	_____	_____
Water jugs with cups	_____	_____
First-aid kit	_____	_____
Lane lines	_____	_____
Backstroke flags	_____	_____
Awards stands	_____	_____
Chairs	_____	_____
Starting blocks	_____	_____
False-start rope	_____	_____
Floatation devices	_____	_____

Venue Personnel	Number Required	Checked
Meet Referee	_____	_____
Announcer	_____	_____
Lifeguard(s) and Observer(s)	_____	_____
Starter	_____	_____
Timers	_____	_____
Stroke/Turn/Dive Judges	_____	_____
Scorer	_____	_____
Escorts	_____	_____





Competition Safety Considerations

All Special Olympics aquatics training, recreational sessions, and competition events shall be conducted in accordance in the Official Special Olympics Summer Sports Rules. The following is a list of a basic considerations that should apply to any competition.

Venue Safety Checklist

To ensure that all safety requirements are met, a facility checklist must be completed before the start of any Special Olympics aquatics training event or competition. (See pages 19-20.) In addition, it is recommended that a general competition safety checklist be completed.

Pool Depth

The minimum depth of the pool shall be 1.52 meters (5 feet) for racing starts from starting blocks. A swimmer may dive from the side of the pool without a starting block if the depth is at least 1.22 meters (4 feet). No springboard diving is allowed unless there is a minimum of 2.74 meters (9 feet) of water depth.

Lifeguards

One certified lifeguard **must** be on duty for every 25 swimmers in the water and for every 10 divers. There **must** also be one observer for every two swimmers prone to seizures. **No competition should take place without adequate coverage.**

Electrical Safety

Electrical shock is a very real hazard in the operation of swimming pools. Only authorized personnel should be allowed in rooms or boxes containing electrical connections or equipment. Electrical wires should be strung overhead or securely taped in place and covered with a mat.

Fire Safety

Some alarms, fire extinguishers, and emergency telephones should all be tested. Their locations should be identified prior to the competition.

First Aid

An area should be designated for first-aid care for all victims of accidents or illnesses. The area should be as private as possible with easy access for rescue personnel. The location should be known to all staff and well marked for spectators, volunteers, coaches, and athletes.

Exits

All exits should be clearly marked and unobstructed.





Competition Safety Considerations (continued)

Emergency Action Plan

An Emergency Action Plan should be in place prior to any Special Olympics participant entering the water. The plan should define:

- Procedure for obtaining emergency medical support
- Assignments and responsibilities for each lifeguard
- Procedure for obtaining weather information, particularly if the event is outside
- Procedure for evacuation
- Procedure for informing attendees and public of postponements
- Procedure for reporting accidents
- Chain of command in case of a serious accident, including who is assigned to talk to the media
- Any other items which may be required by local jurisdictions

Risk Management Orientation

A Special Olympics aquatics risk management orientation should be given to all supervisory personnel prior to any aquatics competition. This orientation should identify:

- Safety issues (emphasizing problem areas and solutions)
- Lifeguarding and spotting techniques
 - Consultant scanning
 - Visual attention and fatigue factors
 - Signals and identifying an emergency
- Emergency procedures
 - Procedures for assistants and rescues; first-aid and medical needs
 - Discussion and awareness of the Emergency Action Plan
 - Evacuation procedures
- Assignment of specific responsibilities





Venue Safety Checklist

Chapter/Area name _____ Date of site examination _____

Person in charge _____ Name of facility _____

Reason for using pool _____ Length of event (time) _____

IMPORTANT: This checklist must be fully completed whenever a pool facility is being considered for use. If the same facility should be used again, it should be documented that this checklist was again reviewed. And, if there is no change, the site selector must document this by signing and dating this sheet. If there is a change, please notify the SOI Aquatics Director.

1. Pool facility description
Size: length____; width____; maximum depth____; minimum depth____
Location of ladders _____
Slides____; location_____
Diving board____; location _____
Other _____

2. Most recent inspection date____; inspection complies with regulations____

3. Number of certified lifeguards who will be lifeguarding at the competition____

4. Number of volunteers/officials who will be managing the competition____

5. Distance to the nearest ambulance service_____

6. Location of the closest working telephone at the pool site_____

7. Fire alarms: in good condition____; date last tested_____

8. Smoke alarms: in good condition____; date last tested _____

9. Fire extinguishers: in good condition____; date last tested _____

10. Date the water quality was last tested_____ ; identification of the results_____

11. Location of first-aid kit with appropriate supplies _____

12. Electrical outlets and appliances properly protected_____





Venue Safety Checklist (continued)

- 13. Accurate directions posted for exiting the building in case of fire (indoor only) _____
- 14. Exit lights lit and checked for proper lighting _____
- 15. Exit doors working and clear of obstructions _____
- 16. Floors in good condition _____
- 17. SLIPPERY WHEN WET signs posted _____
- 18. Non-slip material leading to pool area and at locker room entrances _____
- 19. Fence surrounding the pool area (outdoor only) _____
- 20. Description of the area adjacent to the pool _____

Safety-Check Results

Signature of person completing examination _____

Title _____ Date _____

For insurance purposes, a copy of this completed checklist must be kept on file at SOI. Please sent to:

SOI Aquatic Director
Special Olympics International
1133 19th Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20036



Athlete Roster and Skills Assessment

Team Name _____

Head Coach _____

Phone _____

Address _____

Assistant Coach _____

Phone _____

Athlete's Name	Age	Sex M/F

Event	TIMES / SCORES			
	1	2	3	4

Information submitted by:

Head Coach _____

Date _____

Signature _____



Divisioning

In official competitions, Special Olympics Aquatics teams are placed in divisions in which they can compete against teams of similar skills and, whenever possible, against teams of similar age. The divisioning process is one of the most **critical** elements of a successful Special Olympics competition and needs to be carefully planned.

1. Obtain as much information as possible about each team prior to the competition.

This can include:

- Competition record from league play and/or other competitions
- Observations during the season by member of the Sport Management Team
- Additional information from the Head Coach

2. Place teams into preliminary divisions according to ability (based on the above information), age, and sex.

Divisions must consist of a minimum of three athletes/relay teams and a maximum of eight. The official age groups for Special Olympics team competitions are:

Ages 15 and under	Ages 22-29
Ages 16-21	Ages 30 and over
Ages 22 and over	

Special Olympics suggests all divisions be created where the variance between highest and lowest scores within that division not differ by more than **10%**. This is not a rule, but should be used as a guideline in establishing equitable divisions.

An additional age group may be established if there are a sufficient number of competitors in the 30 years-and-over age group. Age groups may also be combined if there are less than three similarly skilled athletes within a particular age group.

3. Conduct on-site classification rounds of games to finalize divisions for competition.

Preliminary events are strongly recommended in order to ensure proper divisioning. However, in smaller local meets where preliminary events are not held, times and scores from previous competitions become even more important.

All division placements are **FINAL**. Coaches may not protest these placements.

Responsibilities of the Competitor

In order to ensure fairness and equal opportunity for all athletes, athletes (and coaches) must abide by the letter and spirit of the rules. Athletes who do not participate *honestly and with maximum effort* in all preliminary trials and/or finals shall be disqualified from all remaining events by the Sports Rules Committee at the competition.





Heat Sheet – Swimming Events

Event _____

Male/Female _____

Division _____

Age Group: 8-11 ___ 12-15 ___ 16-21 ___ 22-29 ___ 30 and over ___

Lane	Name	Local Program	Time	Place
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				

Official Scorer _____





Heat Sheet – Diving Events

Event _____

Male/Female _____

Division _____

Age Group: 8-11 ___ 12-15 ___ 16-21 ___ 22-29 ___ 30 and over ___

Order	Name	Local Program	Score	Place
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				

Official Scorer _____





Individual Lane Timer / Diving Place Cards

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Lane Timer Card

Name _____ Lane _____

Heat _____ Event _____

Time 1 _____

Time 2 _____

Time 3 _____

Alternate _____

OFFICIAL TIME

SPECIAL OLYMPICS AQUATICS



Lane Timer Card

Name _____ Lane _____

Heat _____ Event _____

Time 1 _____

Time 2 _____

Time 3 _____

Alternate _____

OFFICIAL TIME

SPECIAL OLYMPICS AQUATICS



Diving Place Card

Name _____

Heat _____

Place _____

(Judge)

SPECIAL OLYMPICS AQUATICS



Diving Place Card

Name _____

Heat _____

Place _____

(Judge)






Disqualification Forms

These disqualification cards and the lane timer/place cards on the previous page can be used by officials when timing or judging swimmers. The cards should be copied onto heavy duty stock paper, cut, and given to the appropriate personnel.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS AQUATICS



Disqualification Card

Name _____ Lane _____

Heat _____ Event _____

Freestyle
 _____ Stop/walk/push off
 _____ No wall touch

Backstroke
 _____ Using rope to pull on or push
 off
 _____ Other

Breaststroke
 _____ Second arm pull/kick
 _____ Shoulder drop
 _____ Touch: not simultaneous/one
 hand/uneven
 _____ Kick:
 scissor/flutter/dolphin/sidestroke
 _____ Feet turned inward in
 backward movement
 _____ Not on breast
 _____ Other

Butterfly
 _____ Arms not over water
 _____ Double pull
 _____ Touch: not simultaneous/one
 hand/even
 _____ Shoulder drop
 _____ Other

SPECIAL OLYMPICS AQUATICS

Disqualification Card

Name _____ Lane _____

Heat _____ Event _____

Freestyle
 _____ Stop/walk/push off
 _____ No wall touch

Backstroke
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 backward movement
 _____ Not on breast
 _____ Other

Butterfly
 _____ Arms not over water
 _____ Double pull
 _____ Touch: not simultaneous/one
 hand/even
 _____ Shoulder drop
 _____ Other





Guidelines for Officials

It is the responsibility of the Meet Referee to provide a complete rules orientation to all officials in advance of the competition. Below are some general points of emphasis that should be made. (*Refer to the Official Special Olympics Aquatics Rules.*)

General

1. When assisting a swimmer from the pool, coaches or officials should grip the swimmer under the arm pit and forearm, rather than grabbing the hand and pulling up.
2. A coach or official may only guide the swimmer by voice. The aid is not allowed to touch the swimmer from the time of the starting signal until all swimmer have completed the race. *The exception to this occurs with the assisted races. In these races, the coach may assist the athlete in any form necessary.*
3. No athlete is permitted to use or wear any device that may aid speed, buoyancy, or endurance during competition, *except races involving floatation devices.*

Specific Technical Considerations

Meet Referee

The Meet Referee has the discretion to implement certain modifications and interpretations of the current rules for athletes with physical disabilities. Such interpretations shall not give an advantage over another swimmer. Standing on the bottom in the racing is allowed only for the purpose of resting. Walking on or jumping from the bottom must disqualify the offender.

Starter

1. It is preferable to use a horn associated with electronic timing systems to start a race. If possible, avoid using a whistle for starts since the whistle is normally use to call the athletes to the blocks. A whistle may be used for starts in lower functioning events only. These events include walk or float-assisted swims. A small caliber starting pistol (.22) is also acceptable.
2. Athletes with Down syndrome who have atlantoaxial instability must start in the water. Occasionally, these swimmers will inadvertently start with the whistle that calls the other swimmers to the blocks. Starters should work with timers at the end of the pool and make the athletes aware of the appropriate starting signal.

Stroke and Turn Judges

Stroke and Turn Judges should adhere to official stroke rules. Officials should not waive stroke rules simply because they feel sorry for athletes. Waiving the rules penalizes those athletes who train and adhere to the rules.





Staging, Protocol, and Announcer's Script

Staging

1. **Check-In:** The first staging call for an event should be approximately 30 minutes prior to start of the competition. As each coach brings their athlete(s) to the staging area, the athlete should be checked in and seated. The Staging Clerk should verify with the coach that the athlete is scheduled to swim.
2. **Staging Area:** Once the athlete is checked in, he/she should be escorted to a seating area made up of four heats with eight chairs per heat. It is helpful if the seating is arranged with the chairs numbered and placed in a row, corresponding to the number of lanes in the pool. When the athletes are called to be staged, they should be placed in the appropriate seat and monitored by a Staging Escort.
3. **Athlete Escorts:** Each event heat should be assigned one or more escorts that will:
 - Lead the athletes to the starting blocks, preferably in single file
 - Wait for the athletes to complete their event
 - Lead the athletes to the awards area
 - Lead the athletes to the spectator's area following the awards presentation

Competition Protocol

1. Once the previous race has been completed, escorts are responsible for leading swimmers to their assigned starting blocks.
2. When all competitors have arrived at the starting blocks, the Starter assumes control of the race and may give a brief explanation of the event to the swimmers. For example, "This is the 100m freestyle, four lengths of the pool."
3. The Starter may then instruct athletes who have not yet mounted their starting blocks to do so.
4. Once athletes are ready on their blocks, the Starter commands, "Take your marks."
5. When athletes have all taken their marks, the Starter shall sound the horn or gun to commence the race.

Public Address Announcer's Script

During the meet, the announcer should provide the following commentary.

1. **Events currently being staged**
"First call (second call, last call) for event #3, 100-meter Freestyle."
2. **Name of each swimmer once the race has begun**
"In lane number 1, from (local program), (name of swimmer)."
3. **General competition announcements**
4. **Awards**





Awards Presentations

The Special Olympics awards ceremony should recognize the accomplishments of the players in dignified and enthusiastic atmosphere which reflects the Olympic tradition. Consequently, it should honor the athletes with dignity, be energized with fanfare and excitement, and involve spectators.

Awards Protocol

1. Athletes in each division should receive recognition for their efforts in the form of medals or ribbons. First through third places receive gold, silver, and bronze medals. Fourth through eighth places receive ribbons. *(Medals are optional at local competitions.)*
2. An athlete who is disqualified or does not finish an event should be given a **participant ribbon**.
3. The awards presentations should occur immediately following competition in each event.
4. Awards escort(s)/stager(s) should receive the athletes when the event has been completed. The escort(s) should then assist the athletes to the awards staging area and seat them in correct order of placement.
5. Athletes on the awards stand should be positioned at different heights in accordance with their final event placement. As in the Olympic Games, the first place finisher should stand on a higher platform than the second place finisher. This placement should continue in descending order. Bleachers, risers, or sturdy wooden boxes can be used to accommodate this arrangement.
6. The Special Olympics banner should hang behind the awards stand.
7. The Olympics fanfare music should be played to begin the ceremony. After the music begins to play, the awards announcer should convey the results.
“Ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure to announce the results of the (division) of the (age and gender group) (event). In eighth place, with a time/score of (time/score), is (name)”...Pause for the awards presentation.

The presentations will continue in sequential ascending order through first place.

8. For each athlete, the awards presenter (Honored Guest) should present the award and offer personal congratulations. Sufficient time should be provided at the end of each division's presentations, allowing family and friends to take photos and enjoy the moment.
9. The awards escort(s) should then assist each athlete from the awards stands to the appropriate area where they will be met by the athletes' coaches or representatives.
10. Any protests should be handled by the Meet Referee, NOT the awards personnel.





Awards Sheet

Event _____ Group (Male/Female) ____ Classification (Age) ____ Division # ____

Position / Award	Athlete's Name	Local Program	Time or Score
1. GOLD			
2. SILVER			
3. BRONZE			
4. RIBBON			
5. RIBBON			
6. RIBBON			
7. RIBBON			
8. RIBBON			

Registrar's Signature _____





Team Competition Evaluation Checklist

	YES	NO
1. Venue Preparation		
Well-marked and clearly visible staging area	—	—
Families, Honored Guests, and spectator seating	—	—
Controlled access to competition area	—	—
Rest rooms available and clean	—	—
Locker rooms provided	—	—
2. Equipment		
Fully equipped administrative table	—	—
Adequate number of stopwatches, starting guns, and shells	—	—
Adequate number of lane lines	—	—
Adequate number of backstroke flags	—	—
Adequate number of starting blocks	—	—
Adequate number of false-tart rope	—	—
Adequate number of floatation devices	—	—
3. Officials		
Meet Referee and Starter clearly identified	—	—
Appropriate announcer	—	—
One certified lifeguard per 25 swimmers	—	—
Sufficient number of timers and stroke turn judges	—	—
4. Signage/Competition Information/Banners		
Clear signage for Athletes and spectators	—	—
Visible scoreboard	—	—
Special Olympics and sponsors' banners	—	—
5. Public Address System		
Information clearly announced	—	—
6. First-Aid		
Qualified medical personnel on site	—	—
Medical area clearly marked and accessible	—	—
7. Awards		
Awards stand attractively decorated	—	—
Special Olympics banners clearly visible	—	—
Athletes announced and highlighted	—	—
Appropriate Honored Guest presenters	—	—
Well-placed spectator area	—	—
8. Competition		
Equal competition within each division	—	—
Adherence to official rules	—	—
Lane timer and place cards plus forms correctly marked	—	—



Team Competition Evaluation (continued)

Additional Comments

Venue Preparation

Equipment

Officials

Signage/Competition Information/Banners

Public Address System

First Aid

Awards

Divisioning and Competition

Other (Coaches' Meeting, etc.)





Introduction

On behalf of Special Olympics International, THANK YOU for contributing your time and expertise. The knowledge you share with the course participants will make a significant impact on the lives of athletes with intellectual disabilities.

The Volunteer Coach Course offers a basic introduction to coaching Special Olympics aquatics. The course should be relevant to coaches involved with average to lower ability Special Olympics athletes. Higher-level skills and tactics are introduced in the Advanced Coach Course and in NGB and other accreditation coaching programs. Because this course will focus on the sport of swimming, instructors should strongly urge coaches to adhere to the Special Olympics Aquatics Coaching Guide when teaching diving. The recruitment of a diving specialist is strongly recommended.

Coaches should leave the training with a clear understanding of the following:

- Official Special Olympics aquatics events, including the rules
- How to use the Special Olympics Aquatics Coaching Guide
- How to organize a training session
- Techniques for warm-up and stretching
- Basic knowledge of the fundamentals of all competitive strokes
- Ideas for appropriate drills and activities to teach each stroke
- How to teach Special Olympics athletes the basic strategies of each event

Review the Quick Quiz at the end of this guide to identify major points and ensure that they are covered within the course.

Suggestions for Instructors

- **Review the Special Olympics Aquatics Coaching Guide.** It provides the necessary background to our coaching program.
- **Stay on schedule.** There is a lot of material to be covered, and it is easy to fall behind. Remember, this course is an overview. Encourage coaches to take additional coaching courses outside of Special Olympics to continue their coaching education.
- **Use team teaching.** Two instructors can bring different expertise to the course and also make the course more enjoyable for the participants. It is suggested that one instructor be a specialist in Aquatics and the other in Special Olympics.

Your ideas on the course are welcomed. Please send any ideas for future improvement to the SOI Aquatics Director, 1133 19th Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036.



Aquatics Volunteer Coach Training School Agenda

PART 1 Classroom Session (90 minutes)

- 1.0 Introduction and Using the Special Olympics Aquatics Coaching Guide
- 1.1 Special Olympics Coaching Philosophy
- 1.2 Coaching Resources
- 1.3 Athlete Assessment
- 1.4 Special Olympics Aquatics Events and Rules
- 1.5 Preparing for Your Aquatics Program
- 1.6 Eight-Week Training and Competition Plan
- 1.7 Organizing a Training Session
- 1.8 Safety and Prevention of Injuries
- 1.9 Coaching Athletes with Intellectual Disabilities

PART 2 Activity Session (120 minutes)

- 2.1 Warm-up and Adjusting to the Water
- 2.2 Getting in the Water
- 2.3 Becoming Water Safe - Floating
- 2.4 Technique

PART 3 Special Olympics Athletes Training Session (90 minutes)

- 3.1 Model Training Session

PART 4 Classroom Wrap-Up (30 minutes)

- 4.1 Review (Questions)
- 4.2 Quick Quiz
- 4.3 Certification Process and Application

Materials

- Course Agendas (one per participant)
- Special Olympics Aquatics Coaching Guide
- Samples of recommended resource books/videos

Equipment

- Kickboard
- Wall clock
- Safety equipment
- Lane lines
- First-aid kit
- Drinking water





PART 1
Classroom Session
(90 minutes)

1.0 Introduction and the Using the Special Olympics Aquatics Coaching Guide [5 minutes]

- Introduce yourself and your coaching background.
- Ask participants to briefly introduce themselves.
- Review the training school agenda.
- Walk through the Coaching Guide, highlighting the different information.
- Refer to this text as you go through the course.

1.1 Special Olympics Coaching Philosophy [10 minutes]

- The use of the word “**Olympics**” means a commitment to high standards of coaching.
- **Training and safety** are critical for athlete development.
- Coaches must continually **challenge** athletes to push on to new levels of achievement.
- In Special Olympics, athletes train to **compete**, not just recreate.
- Refer to oath: “Let Me Win, But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt.”

1.2 Coaching Resources [5 minutes]

- Provide examples of coaching **books and videos**.
- Encourage coaches to join **U.S. Swimming, U.S. Diving, FINA**, or other applicable organizations.
- Provide information on other **National Governing Body coaching courses**.
- Stress the importance of **assistant coaches and Partners Clubs®** with high schools and colleges. (Many Special Olympics athletes need individualized attention in order to progress.)

1.3 Athlete Assessment [10 minutes]

- All athletes must be **medically certified** to participate in Special Olympics (review the **Special Olympics medical form**)
- All athletes with **Down syndrome** must have an **atlantoaxial X-ray**. Refer to the **Official Special Olympics Summer Sports Rules** for complete eligibility requirements.
- Coaches will encounter athletes of all levels of abilities. Try to **individualize** training and competition placement to benefit each athlete.



PART 1 (Continued)

1.4 Special Olympics Aquatics Events and Rules [10 minutes]

(Refer to the Official Special Olympics Aquatics Rule. If the course attendees are unfamiliar with the rules, spend more time on this section.)

- **There are Aquatics events appropriate for all ability levels.**
- Special Olympics Aquatics **rules** include some modifications to FINA rules and NGB rules.
- **Divisioning** allows athletes to compete against those of similar abilities, ages, and gender.
- It is vital that **accurate times and scores** from prior competitions are provided by coaches to ensure proper divisioning.

1.5 Preparing for Your Aquatics Program [10 minutes]

- List the minimum **equipment** needed for a training session.
- Emphasize the importance of **good equipment** and **quality swimwear** for athletes.
- Provide the names of **dealers** who will supply low-cost, quality equipment.

1.6 Training and Competition Plan [10 minutes]

- Athletes should **practice three days a week**.
- A **season training plan** helps coaches effectively allocate time to different events and strokes.
- Athletes need **regular competition**. Review the competition opportunities offered at the Chapter or Area level. Coaches may need to take the initiative organize their own meets.
- An athlete's progress through the season can be charted using the **Assessment Record** in the Coaching Guide.

1.7 Organizing a Training Session [10 minutes]

- Emphasize the importance of a **written training plan**.
- Outline a simple **training plan**:
 - Warm-up and Stretching
 - Review of Strokes (previously covered)
 - New Strokes
 - Conditioning and Competition Experience
 - Cool-Down and Discussion





PART 1 (Continued)

1.8 Safety and Prevention of Injuries [10 minutes]

- **Safety** is a coach's number one priority and should be a primary concern at all times.
- **There must be a certified lifeguard on duty** at all times during training sessions and competitions.
- **Check the pool area** for safety hazards before each practice.
- Establish **training rules** to minimize accidents.
- Have an **emergency action plan**, and practice it.
- Coaches should be **well-informed and trained in emergency procedures**, accident reports, and follow-up procedures to incidents.
- **Never leave athletes alone** in pool area.

1.9 Coaching Athletes with Intellectual Disabilities [10 minutes]

- Establish clear **rules** to help athletes understand exactly what is expected of them and to reduce behavior problems.
- **Break down skills** and concepts into simple parts.
- Use **one-part instructions** and "**Key Words**" to explain and reinforce technical stroke components.
- Instruct and demonstrate, but also coach through asking appropriate *questions*.
Challenge athletes to think for themselves.
- Be aware of **physical impairments** that affect the way players hear, see, move, and/or pay attention.
- Establish a consistent **pre-meet** and **post-meet routine** at competitions.
- Ask coaches to suggest any of their own **coaching tips**.





PART 2
Activity Session
(120 minutes)

The **goals** of this session are two fold. One is to help coaches understand the importance of a consistent warm-up and stretching routine and the technical components of all strokes. The other is to provide simple activities, drills, or progression to teach Special Olympics athletes these strokes. All the activities should be taken from the Coaching Guide.

Note: Try not to spend too much time on any one stroke. Give an overview of each of the four competitive strokes. Provide a progression to help effectively teach Special Olympics athletes each stroke.

Teaching Suggestions

- Involve as many participants as possible. Make this an **active** session with an emphasis on participation.
- Know exactly what you are going to do and stick to the schedule. Time goes by very quickly.

2.1 Warm-Up, Stretching, and Acceleration Runs [15 minutes]

Activities

• **Stretching exercises (on pool deck)**

Examples are trunk rotation, calf stretch, and groin stretch.

• **Strengthening exercises (one pool deck)**

Concentrate on developing overall body strength. Examples are sit-ups, push-ups, and controlled jumping jacks.

• **Water adjustment activities**

Some athletes may be unfamiliar or uncomfortable with the water. Coaches can encourage athletes to sit on the edge of the pool, kick the water with his/her feet, and slowly enter the water via the ladder.

Teaching Suggestions

- Instruct the proper stretching techniques, for example slow stretching, no bouncing.
- Show the effectiveness of having an athlete demonstrate a stretch while the coaches focus on assisting athletes with low ability.
- Use “**Key Words**” rather than technical explanations. Keep it simple!





PART 2 (Continued)

2.2 Getting in the Water [15 minutes]

Activities and Suggestions

- **Moving from the deck to the water** – for athletes already comfortable with the water
 - Demonstrate and discuss water-entry methods (shoulder method, hand-to-hand, twist, and ladder).
 - Demonstrate and discuss racing form and technique.
- **Water adjustment drills**
 - Walking Race (Athletes are lined up at the wall in the shallow end. On the “start” signal, they race walk to the other side.)
 - Obstacle Course (athletes must move through an obstacle course which utilizes various toys or pieces of equipment.)

2.3 Becoming Water Safe – Floating [30 minutes]

Activities and Suggestions

- **Water holding positions**
 - Discuss and demonstrate the Waist Hold, and other holding positions.
 - Practice putting the face in the water and blowing bubbles.
- **Floating positions**
 - Demonstrate the prone float.
 - Demonstrate the prone float recovery.
 - Demonstrate the prone glide.
- **Water exit**
 - Demonstrate the proper side-of-the-pool exit.
 - Demonstrate the proper ladder exit.





PART 3
Special Olympics Athletes Training Session
(90 minutes)

Guidelines

This part of the training school provides an opportunity for coaches to work directly with Special Olympics athletes and to observe expert instructors demonstrating some of the ideas introduced earlier.

Coaches will benefit from seeing how a complete training session is run. Therefore, we recommend that the instructors run a **model training session** rather than use only stroke work. Stroke work is only one component of a training session. Coaches should **observe** and assist the instructors as necessary.

A minimum of six Special Olympics Aquatics athletes are needed.

The instructors should lead this session and involve as many coaches as possible as active training partners. Take 5 minutes before the session to review the activities and rotation, identify responsibilities, and assign participants specific groups.

3.1 Warm-up and Entering the Water [10 minutes]

- Trunk rotation, calf stretching, groin stretching exercises
- Sit-ups, push-ups, and jumping jacks
- Water Adjustment drill, such as Walking Race or Obstacle Course

3.2 Stroke Work [40 minutes]

- Briefly demonstrate and practice all four competitive strokes.
- Allow 10 minutes per stroke.

3.3 Conditioning and Competition Training [15 minutes]

- 4x50 meter freestyle at medium effort (*provide a 45-second rest period between each*)
- 4x25 meter breaststroke at medium effort (*provide a 45-second rest period between each*)

3.4 Cool-Down and Stretching (all participants) [5 minutes]

- Swim 50 meters at low effort.
- Play a fun game or provide a free swim.





PART 4

Classroom Wrap-up Session

(30 minutes)

4.1 Review (Questions) [5 minutes]

4.2 Quick Quiz (see following page) [15 minutes]

- Ask coaches to complete the Quick Quiz.
- Provide the answers to each question.
- Coaches grade their own quiz.

4.3 Certification Process and Application [5 minutes]

- Ask coaches to fill out the first part of the certification form.
- In addition to taking this course on teaching and coaching a specific sport, a Special Olympics coach must do the following in order to achieve certification:
 - Attend a General Orientation as a basic introduction to Special Olympics
 - Complete a course on the basics of teaching and coaching Special Olympics athletes.
 - Complete 10 hours of working with Special Olympics athletes under an experienced coach
 - Complete the training programs for Protective Behaviors and Concussion Training and submit confirmation of completion to the Local Special Olympics Program (U.S. only).
 - Receive endorsement from his/her Program as having fulfilled the above criteria, as well as general screening approval as a suitable individual to work with Special Olympics athletes.

4.4 Training School Evaluation [5 minutes]

- Coaches complete the course evaluation and return it before leaving the training school. (See attached form.)





Quick Quiz

1. The 10% Performance Guideline is

2. The more supervision and coaching you can provide the better. For safety and effectiveness, there should be at least ___ coaches at every practice.
3. You should check _____ of your athletes prior to your first training session.
4. Coaches are helping Special Olympics athletes when they do not enforce the proper rules of the sport. True False
5. Name three national organizations that will help with resource materials for aquatics.

6. List eight ways to a better workout.

7. Before you begin practice, you should review the overall _____ at your facility.
8. In case of a swimmer hitting the bottom or side of the pool with possible serious injuries, err on the side of caution. Do not move any part of the swimmer’s body. Seek medical assistance by calling 911. Keep the swimmer _____ until help arrives.
9. There must be one lifeguard for every ___ swimmers at all Special Olympics practices and competitions.
10. Two medical concerns that coaches should address for competitive swimmers are _____ and _____.
11. When teaching side breathing in the freestyle, you should tell swimmers to leave their _____ in the water and to look _____.
12. The freestyle flutter kick should be done with _____ and _____.
13. When doing the backstroke, swimmers should keep their heads _____ and _____.
14. When doing the breaststroke arm pull, keep arms _____ to begin the pull.
15. Butterfly dolphin kick is done by moving the hips with a _____.
16. Breaststroke and butterfly turns are initiated by touching the wall with _____ simultaneously.





**Quick Quiz
Answers**

1. The 10% Performance Guideline is **the difference in performance scores between the best performing athlete and the worst shall not differ by more than 10%**.
2. The more supervision and coaching you can provide the better. For safety and effectiveness, there should be at least **two** coaches at every practice.
3. You should check **ability levels** of your athletes prior to your first training session.
4. Coaches are helping Special Olympics athletes when they do not enforce the proper rules of the sport. True False
5. Name three national organizations that will help with resource materials for aquatics.
The American Swimming Coaches Association, United States Swimming, and U.S. Diving.
6. List eight ways to a better workout.

Be organized.	Be safe.
Develop an “Agreement for Behavior at Practice.”	Make activities short and intense.
Be positive.	Be patient.
Be dynamic and have fun.	Be prepared.
7. Before you begin practice, you should review the overall **Emergency Action Plan** at your facility.
8. In case of a swimmer hitting the bottom or side of the pool with possible serious injuries, err on the side of caution. Do not move any part of the swimmer’s body. Seek medical assistance by calling 911. Keep the swimmer **stabilized in the water** until help arrives.
9. There must be one lifeguard for every **25** swimmers at all Special Olympics practices and competitions.
10. Two medical concerns that coaches should address for competitive swimmers are **atlantoaxial instability** and **seizure disorders**.
11. When teaching side breathing in the freestyle, you should tell swimmers to leave their **ear** in the water and to look **back**.
12. The freestyle flutter kick should be done with **legs straight** and **toes pointed**.
13. When doing the backstroke, swimmers should keep their heads **back** and **still**.
14. When doing the breaststroke arm pull, keep arms **straight** to begin the pull.
15. Butterfly dolphin kick is done by moving the hips with a **slight knee bend**.
16. Breaststroke and butterfly turns are initiated by touching the wall with **both hands** simultaneously.