



**About Kayaking:** Every athlete aims to travel through a specific water distance paddling either on his/ her own or in pairs of two (2), achieving the best possible time. Special Olympics Kayaking is a flat-water racing event where athletes compete either on their own or as a pair with another athlete. Kayaking is one of the newest Special Olympics sports. It requires fundamental abilities in order to be safe and successful.

### Established at Special Olympics:

**Differences of Special Olympics Kayaking:** Special Olympics Kayaking uses touristic-type boats, while in International Canoe Federation races, athletes use professional boats. The touristic boats are more stable than professional flat-water racing kayaks. Additionally, Special Olympics requires all athletes to pass a swimming test before races and requires that all Special Olympics athletes wear a lifejacket during race. Competitions at Special Olympics have preliminary and final round races, while the International Canoe Federation has heats, semifinals, and final rounds.

### By The Numbers:

- In 2011, 6,534 Special Olympics Athletes competed in Kayaking events
- In 2011, 4 programs held Kayaking competitions
- Kayaking first made an appearance at Special Olympics World Games in 2003 as a demonstration sport in Dublin, Ireland
- At the 2003 Special Olympics World Games in Shanghai, China, athletes from 6 countries competed in Kayaking events

### Events for Competition:

- Singles Tourist Kayak
- Doubles Tourist Kayak
- Unified Sports Doubles Tourist Kayak
- Singles Professional Kayak
- Doubles Professional Kayak
- Unified Sports Doubles Professional Kayak

**Associations/Federations/Supporters:** International Canoe Federation

**Divisioning at Special Olympics:** Athletes in every sport and event are grouped by age, gender, and ability – giving everyone a reasonable chance to win. At Special Olympics there are no World Records because each athlete, whether in the fastest or the slowest division is valued and recognized equally. In every division, all athletes receive an award, from gold, silver, and bronze medals, to fourth through eighth place ribbons. This idea of equal ability groupings is the foundation for competition in Special Olympics and can be witnessed at all events, whether it's athletics, aquatics, table tennis, football, skiing, or gymnastics. All athletes are given an equal chance to participate, perform, and be recognized for doing their best by their teammates, family, friends, and fans."