



Special Olympics

AQUATICS COACHING GUIDE

Aquatics Rules, Protocol & Etiquette



Table of Contents

Teaching the Rules of Aquatics

 Divisioning Examples for Aquatics

 Unified Sports® Rules

 Protest Procedures

Sportsmanship

Aquatics Glossary



Divisioning Examples for Aquatics

The divisioning process in Aquatics has many factors involved for a process to be fair and successful. One limiting factor is the size of the event. If the meet is local with many athletes about the same age and ability the divisions will fall into place. If, however, there are many athletes with different abilities and ages there will need to be more divisions thus resulting in smaller events or heats of the particular race. The ultimate goal is to have a competition with 6-8 athletes in one race all competing within the same time frame. This is only likely to happen at extremely large or age limited meets, such as school meets.

It is important that the coach enters the current best time (PB) for each of their swimmers to ensure correct divisioning and limit the chance of a disqualification for breaking the 10 percent rule. Where time trials are run there will be an opportunity to re-squad swimmers based on their adjusted time.

In aquatics is if there are many different divisions to swim, and time is a factor races may be run that include swimmers from more than one division. The division will be swum together and awarded separately.

Unified Sports® Rules

There are few differences in the rules for Unified Sports® competition as the rules as stipulated in the official Special Olympics Sports Rules and modifications outlined in the rules book. The additions are highlighted below.

1. A roster consists of a proportionate numbers of athletes and partners. Although the exact distribution of roster spots is not specified, a basketball roster containing eight athletes and two partners does not meet the goals of Special Olympics Unified Sports® Program.
2. For Aquatics a unified team consists of two athletes and two partners of equal ability competing in 25M and 50M Freestyle Relay or Medley Relay events.
3. Team sports must have an adult, non-playing coach. Player-coaches are not allowed in team sports.
4. For Aquatics a unified team consists of two athletes and two partners of equal ability competing in 25m and 50m Freestyle Relay or Medley Relay events.

Protest Procedures

Protest procedures are governed by the rules of competition. The role of the competition management team is to enforce the rules. As coach, your duty to your athletes and team is to protest any action or events while your athlete is competing that you think violated Official Aquatics Rules. It is extremely important that you do not make protests because you and your athlete did not get your desired outcome of an event. Making protest are serious matters that impact a competition's schedule.

Check with the competition team prior to competition to learn the protest procedures for that competition.



Sportsmanship

Good sportsmanship is both the coach and athletes commitment to fair play, ethical behavior and integrity. In perception and practice, sportsmanship is defined as those qualities which are characterized by generosity and genuine concern for others. Below we highlight a few focus points and ideas on how to teach and coach sportsmanship to your athletes. Lead by example.

Competitive Effort

- Put forth maximum effort during each event.
- Practice the skills with the same intensity, as you would perform them in competition.
- Always finish a race or event - Never quit.

Fair Play at All Times

- Always comply with the rules.
- Demonstrate sportsmanship and fair play at all times.
- Respect the decision of the officials at all times.

Expectations of Coaches

1. Always set a good example for participants and fans to follow.
2. Instruct participants in proper sportsmanship responsibilities and demand that they make sportsmanship and ethics the top priorities.
3. Respect judgment of contest officials, abide by rules of the event and display no behavior that could incite fans.
4. Treat opposing coaches, directors, participants and fans with respect.
5. Shake hands with officials and the opposing coach in public.
6. Develop and enforce penalties for participants who do not abide by sportsmanship standards.

Expectations of Athletes & Partners in Unified Sports®

1. Treat teammates with respect.
2. Encourage teammates when they make a mistake.
3. Treat opponents with respect: shake hands prior to and after contests.
4. Respect judgment of contest officials, abide by rules of the contest and display no behavior that could incite fans.
5. Cooperate with officials, coaches or directors and fellow participants to conduct a fair contest.
6. Do not retaliate (verbally or physically) if the other team demonstrates poor behavior.
7. Accept seriously the responsibility and privilege of representing Special Olympics.
8. Define winning as doing your personal best.
9. Live up to the high standard of sportsmanship established by your coach.

Coaching Tips

- Discuss swimming competition, such as congratulating opponent after all events, win or lose; controlling temper and behaviour at all times.
- Discuss correct competition rules such as not leaving the water until whistled by referee.
- Give sportsmanship awards or recognition after each meet or practice.
- Always commend the athletes when they demonstrate sportsmanship.



Remember

- ◆ Sportsmanship is an attitude that is shown is how you and your athletes behave at the pool.
- ◆ Be positive about competing
- ◆ Respect your opponents and yourself
- ◆ Always stay under control even if you are feeling mad or angry



Aquatics Glossary

Term	Definition
Aerobic	Pertaining to or presence of oxygen.
Anaerobic	Pertaining to or lack of oxygen
Backstroke	Where the swimmer remains on their back from the start or push off from the wall to the turn through to the completion of the race.
Backstroke Start	Swimmer starts in water, both hands hold onto block, both feet under waterline.
Bilateral Breathing	Breathing both sides. In freestyle breathing every third stroke.
Body	The torso, including shoulders and hips.
Breaststroke	Stroke done completely on the horizontal plane with the swimmer's chest horizontal to the bottom of the pool. From the beginning of the first arm stroke after the start and after each turn, the body shall be kept on the breast. The arm and leg action is simultaneous. The kick takes place below the water line.
Buoyancy	This is the upward supportive force of water counteracting the downward force of gravity. The force of buoyancy is determined by the density of the water, the greater the density the greater the buoyancy. Factors which affect a swimmer's buoyancy and floating position are: age, body build, and bone size, muscular development, and weight distribution, amount of fatty tissue, lung capacity and water density.
Butterfly	Stroke performed completely on the horizontal plane. After the start and after each turn the swimmer must remain on the breast and is permitted no more than two (2) leg kicks per stroke cycle. Arm action is forward and simultaneous. Leg kick is simultaneous.
Catch	Occurs with hand entry into water. The hand "catches" or "grabs" water.
Centerline of Body	Imaginary line drawn down along the long axis of the body.
Check List	List of skills coach should be looking at within program.
Cool down	Performed at end of training session. Helps remove waste products from body.
Coordination	Consistent movement in water. Example even leg kick in butterfly.
Course	Designated distance over which the competition is conducted. Long Course: 50M (55 yards to be recorded as 50M) Short Course: 25M or 25 yards
Divisions/Divisioning	Where athletes compete with other athletes of similar ability in equitable divisions. Variance between fastest and slowest time is no more than 10 percent.
Drill	Skill used to develop and maintain stroke technique.
Dual Competition	Competition between two clubs.



Term	Definition
Efficient Stroke Technique	Where the best results are obtained using the least amount of effort.
Event	Any race or series of races in a given stroke or distance. For competition limits, one event equals one preliminary or one preliminary plus its related final or one timed final.
Fatigue	Short term sensation of tiredness and reduced performances
Final	Any single race which determines the final places and times in an event.
Finalist	Athletes who swim in a final race.
Finals	Where the final race of each event is competed.
Flutter Kick	Fast freestyle or backstroke kicks.
Freestyle	Stroke other than backstroke breaststroke, or butterfly.
Freestyle Relay	All swimmers swim freestyle stroke.
Frontal Resistance	This is the resistance to forward progress made by the water immediately in front of the swimmer or any part of the body. This resistance is caused by the swimmer's shape in the water.
Grab Start	The swimmer stands on the block/edge, toes curled over edge hands holding onto block.
Heats	Division of an event in which there are too many swimmers to compete at one times.
Horizontal	Parallel with the surface of the water.
Hypothermia	Occurs when the body's core temperature drops too low.
In Water Start	Swimmer starts in water, holds onto block with one hand, points the other in the direction of swim, and pushes off wall with two feet.
Individual Medley (IM)	Event where the swimmer shall swim the prescribed distance and strokes in the following order: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, freestyle.
Invitational Competition	Competition in which all competitions and/or teams are invited by the host.
Lane Markings	Guidelines on the bottom of the pool and in the center of the lanes running from the starting end to the finishing/turning end of the pool.
Lateral	Swimmer is on their side.
Length	Extent of the course from one end to the other.
Log Book	Record of swimmers progress and activity.
Main Set	Main training part of a program. New skills may be introduced, skills revised along with timed set work.
Medley Relay	Four (4) swimmers swim an equal distance in order of backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, and freestyle
Meet	Series of events held in one program.



Term	Definition
Pace Clock	Used by swimmers to check the time taken for each set distance and counts off rest time before starting again.
Pool	Physical facility in which the competition is conducted.
Pool Deck	Area immediately around pool.
Preliminary	Session of the meet in which heats are held; also called divisioning.
Prone Position	Swimmer lies on front.
Propulsion	This is the force that drives the swimmer forward and is created by the swimmer's arms and legs.
Qualifying Heats	Competition in which a number of heats are swum to qualify the fastest swimmers for the finals where final placing for the event will be determined. Can also be called divisioning.
Race	Any single swimming competition, i.e., preliminary, final, timed final.
Relay Leg	Order/position of a swimmer in a relay team event.
Relays	Four (4) swimmers on each team, each to swim ¼ of the prescribed distance using any desired stroke.
Rotate/Rotation	Moving in one line of the body's axis.
Scissor Kick	Kick performed on the lateral.
Seconds Rest (SR)	Rest time given between sets.
Simultaneous	Moving at the same time.
Streamline - Streamlining	Body shape in the water which offers the least possible resistance.
Supine	Swimmer lies on back.
Total Distance	Total amount of meters covered in program
Track Start	Swimmer stands on block/edge, one foot in front toes over edge, other foot behind, hands holding on to block.
Unified Team	Refers to a proportionate number of athletes and partners.
Warm Up	Series of exercises/drills used to prepare the body. On land warm up can consist of jogging and stretching. In water warm ups include slow easy swims.
Whip Kick	Description of leg action in breaststroke.