<u>Overview:</u> Divisioning in Special Olympics is explain in Article 1 of the General Rules, below are some of the highlights on divisioning. The Technical Delegate or Competition Manager has final authority concerning divisions and any variation from these criteria.

SECTION H — AGE REQUIREMENTS AND GROUPINGS FOR COMPETITION

- 1. Athletes must be at least eight years of age to participate in Special Olympics competition. Certain sports and events may further restrict athlete participation based on age. If pertinent, additional age requirements are indicated in the specific rules for each sport.
- 2. The following age groups shall normally be used for all Special Olympics competitions:
- a. Individual Sports:

Ages 8-11

Ages 12-15

Ages 16-21

Ages 22-29

Ages 30 and over

Additional age groups may be established if there are a sufficient number of competitors in the —30 and overll age group.

b. Team Sports:

Ages 15 and under

Ages 16-21

Ages 22 and over

Additional age groups may be established if there is a sufficient number of teams in the —22 and over group. The age group of a team is determined by the age of the oldest athlete on that team on the opening date of the competition.

- 3. Age Groups may be combined under the following circumstances:
- a. In individual sports, if there are less than three competitors within an age group, the athletes shall compete in the next oldest age group. That age group shall then be renamed to accurately reflect the entire range of competitors within that age group. Age groups may also be combined to reduce the variance between the highest and lowest scores within a division.
- b. In team sports: within each ability group, an age group may be competing against a team of a different age group. If there is only one team within an age or ability group, that team must compete against teams of other age and ability groups.
- 4. An athlete's age group shall be determined by the athlete's age on the date of the opening of the competition.

SECTION I — SPECIAL OLYMPICS DIVISIONING

Insuring fair divisioning of athletes for competition is one of the primary duties of the Competition Manager. The following criteria shall determine how Special Olympics athletes are assigned to competition divisions at Special Olympics competitions. Where exceptions to these criteria are necessary, the Competition Manager will review proposed modifications to these criteria and make a final decision based on the goal of

providing the most dignified and challenging competition experience for each athlete. The Competition Manager has final authority concerning divisions and any variation from these criteria. Protests based on Divisioning are not allowed.

1. Introduction to Divisioning

Special Olympics suggest a guideline of no more than 15% variance between the highest and lowest scores within any division. This 15% statement is not a rule.

- 2. Ability and Determining Criteria for Divisioning.
- a. An athlete's ability is the primary factor in divisioning Special Olympics competition. The ability of an athlete or team is determined by an entry score from a prior competition or is the result of a seeding round or preliminary event at the competition itself. The team Head Coach is responsible for ensuring that the athlete score utilized for divisioning most accurately reflects the true ability of the athlete. Forms should be provided to allow coaches to amend qualifying or preliminary scores that will be utilized in the divisioning process. Other factors that are significant in establishing competitive divisions are age and gender.
- b. Within each division the minimum number of competitors or teams is three and the maximum number is eight. In some cases, however, the number of athletes or teams within a competition will be insufficient to achieve this goal. The following procedures describe the sequential process for creating equitable divisions and also provide guidance for managing athlete participation when factors preclude ideal divisioning.
- 3. Divisioning Individual Sports: Timed and measured events
- a. Step One: Divide Athletes By Gender.
- 1) Divide athletes into two groups based upon gender: female and male.
- 2) Athletes shall normally compete against other athletes of the same gender, unless the IF/NGB rules specifically allow mixed-gender events (e.g., Equestrian, pairs figure skating, bowling, table tennis, ice dancing, tennis, etc.).
- b. Step Two: Divide Athletes by Age.
- 1) Divide male and female athletes into the following age groups: ages 8-11; 12-15; 16-21; 22-29; and ages 30 years and over. An additional age group may be established if there are a sufficient number of competitors in the 30 years and over age group.
- 2) An athlete's age group shall be determined by the athlete's age on the date of the opening of the competition.
- c. Step Three: Divide Athletes By Ability.
- 1) To complete the divisioning process, the following guidelines shall be applied according to the event being divisioned.
- a) In events that are measured in time, distance, or points:
- i. For both genders and all age groups, rank athletes in descending order based upon submitted entry scores or divisioning events.
- ii. Group these ranked athletes so that the highest and lowest scores are as close as possible to the 10% guideline and the number of competitors is not less than three (3) or more than eight (8).
- b) In events that are judged and when divisioning events will be conducted during the competition:

- i. For both genders and all age groups within a performance level, rank athletes in descending order based upon divisioning scores.
- ii. Group these ranked athletes so that the highest and lowest scores are as close as possible to the 15% guideline and the number of competitors is not less than three (3) or more than eight (8).
- c) In events that are judged and where divisioning events will not be conducted during the competition:
- i. The nature of judging precludes the use of scores from prior competitions(s) in divisioning. Without scores from preliminary competition, performance level remains as the only criterion of athlete ability.
- ii. For both genders and all age groups, identify athletes within each performance level.
- iii. If more than eight athletes are in the same gender and age group of a performance level, group athletes into divisions of no less than three and no more than eight competitors.

4. Divisioning Team Sports.

a. Step One: Divide Teams By Gender.

Divide teams into two groups based upon gender. Female teams shall compete against other female teams and male teams shall compete against other male teams. Mixed gender teams shall be divisioned with male teams unless there are sufficient mixed gender teams of similar ability to make a separate division.

- b. Step Two: Divide Teams By Age.
- 1) Divide male and female teams into the following age groups: ages 15 and under; 16-21; and 22 and over. An additional group may be established if there are a sufficient number of teams in the —22 and overll age group.
- 2) Teams should compete against other teams within the same age group.
- 3) The age group of a team is determined by the age of the oldest athlete on that team on the date of the opening of the competition.
- c. Step Three: Divide Teams By Ability.
- 1) All Special Olympics team sport competitions shall utilize sport specific skills assessment tools and a divisioning round to assess the level of ability of the participating teams.

Refer to the Special Olympics Sports Rules for each team sport for a description of the skills assessment tool. Additional information regarding the assessment of team sports for divisioning purposes can be found in the Special Olympics Sports Management Team Guide.

- 2) Group teams according to ability based upon the skills assessment tool and results from the divisioning round.
- 3) Create divisions of no less than three and no more than eight teams by applying age groups to the teams within each ability group.
- 5. Resolving Divisioning Issues

- a. When the above process has been completed there will be instances where there will still be less than three competitors or teams in each division. In such cases the following method should be used:
- 1) Modify Age Groups: Age groups may be broadened to achieve an equitable division of no less than three athletes or teams. The age group should then be re-named to accurately reflect the age range of the competitors. However any IF/NGB rules that preclude competition between athletes of different ages (e.g. between children and adults) must be adhered to.

If there are still divisions of less than three competitors or teams:

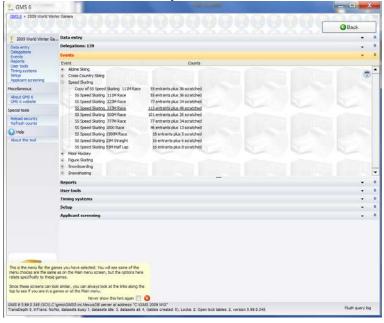
2) Modify Ability Range: The ability range may be broadened beyond the 15% guideline.

If there are still divisions of less than three competitors or teams:

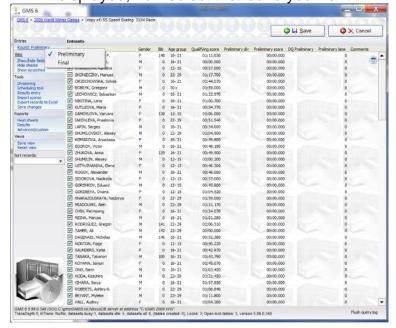
- 3) Combine athletes of different genders provided that it will not pose a risk to the health and safety of athletes to do so.
- b. Final divisions of less than three athletes or teams are only permissible once age groups and ability range have been broadened as far as possible within the above guidelines.
- c. Where exceptions to these criteria are necessary, the Competition Manager will review proposed modifications to these criteria and make a final decision based on the goal of providing the most dignified and challenging competition experience for each athlete. The Competition Manager has final authority concerning divisions and any variation from these criteria. Protests based on Divisioning are not allowed.
- 6. If an athlete is disqualified in a preliminary event, they may be advanced to the final competition provided that they can safely compete in that event and that a score that accurately measures their ability can be provided to the competition manager in charge of divisioning. Athletes disqualified due to sportsmanship issues will not be allowed to advance.
- 7. If a Competition Manager determines that an athlete or team has not competed with maximum effort in preliminary and/or divisioning rounds with the clear intent to gain an unfair advantage in the divisioning process, he/she has the right to sanction that athlete or team. Sanctions may include: Verbal Warning to the player and/or coach, adjusted division placement, final placement or disqualification

Divisioning

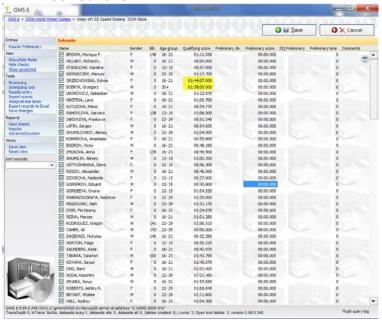
1. Select the event you want to division from the events list within the Games



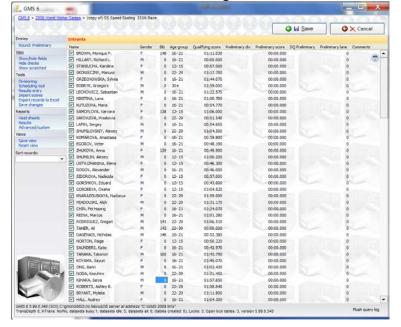
2. If multiple rounds are enabled in the event, make sure you select the correct round to work with, to change the round, under Entries, just left click on the round displayed, now select the round you want.



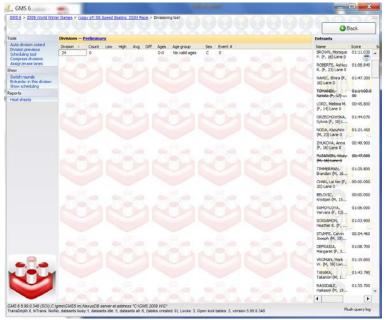
3. Take a quick look at the Qualifying score for any obvious error, in the example below, you see a qualifying score of 1hr 44min and 07 sec, the time should be 1min 44 sec 07 1/100. The correct the score, just left click on it and make the corrections.



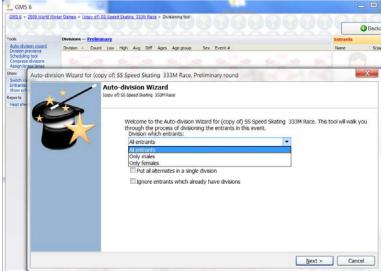
4. Now click on Divisioning under the Tools menu on the left side of the screen



5. Now click on the Auto-division wizard under the Tools menu



You are now using the Auto Division Wizard; you need to select which entrants you want to division, your choices are; All Entrants, Only male or only females.

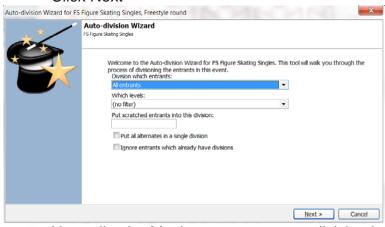


6. If the Event uses Levels, you will see an additional option to select which levels to division. Normally, GMS will not division people that are scratched, but if you want to place these people into a certain division, you can tell the Wizard to do this. If this is left blank (recommended) the scratched participants will not be placed in a division.

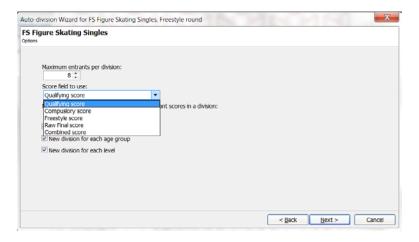
You also have the option to place alternates in a single division, if you register alternates it is recommended you either scratch them on place them in a single division.

You also have the option to ignore participants that are already divisioned.

Click Next



7. Normally, the Maximum entrants per division is 8, however if you are using a 6 lane track, then the maximum per division would be 6.



GMS 6 Divisioning

8. Under Score field to use, you can tell GMS what round or score to use to division this round of competition. (with multiple rounds enabled, GMS will default to the previous round, in final round compeitions only the Qualifying score will be available)

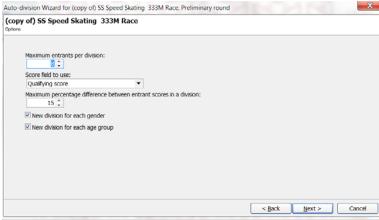


9. Select the Maximum percentage difference between entrant scores in a division. By checking the following boxes

> New division for each gender- un-checking this box will create combined female and male divisions.

New Division for each age group – un-checking age group will create open divisions. Age Groups are set in the event definition.

Click Next



10. You can select the division number you want to start at.

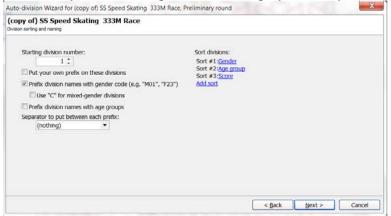
If you want to place an M or an F before the division number, check the second box Prefix division with names with gender code.

If you want to use any of the other options, use caution, this will limit the amount of space on your reports.

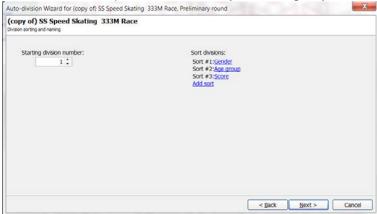
You can also change the sort order of the divisioning from the Special Olympics defaults.

Click Next

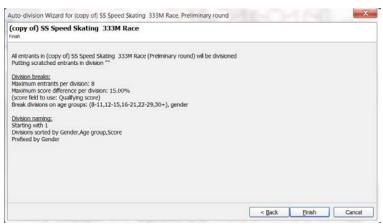
NOTE: If you are using certain timing systems, you may not see all of the options below.



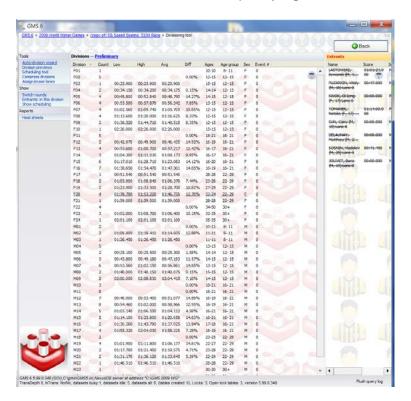
This is an example with Finish Lynx timings system



11. This screen gives an overview of what GMS will do when you click on Finish, if you missed something, just click on Back.



12. You're not finished yet. GMS has taken the rules and strictly applied them to the entrants/teams, now take some time to evaluate and modify those divisions if necessary. For example, look at the screen below, you will see several 1 and 2 person division. You will also see several divisions with no score range; this is because there wasn't a qualifying score entered.



13. A little information about this screen, the column headers and what they mean:

Division – This is the division number

Count – The number of people/teams in this division

Low – This is the lowest score in this division

High – This is the highest score in this division

Avg – This is the average score

Diff – This is the percent differential between the lowest and highest score in this division

Ages – This is the actual Age Range for this division

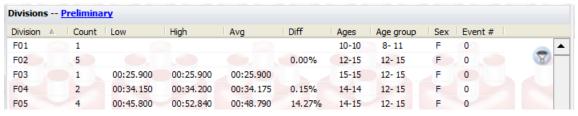
Age group – The age group of this division, if you combine age groups, this will display all of the age groups

Sex – The Gender of the division, a C in this column means the genders are combined

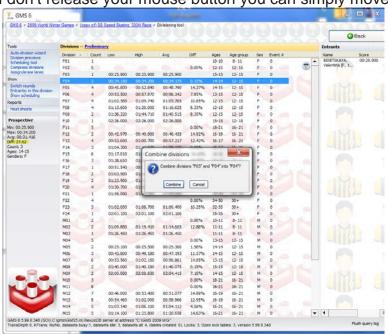
Event # - Displays the event number if used

This is a search button, which can be used to search for a peculiar division or any value on screen (age group, gender, event #, etc)

You can sort the items displayed on the screen by clicking on the column header. If you want to do a multiple sort, such as sex and count, click on sex first, then click on count.

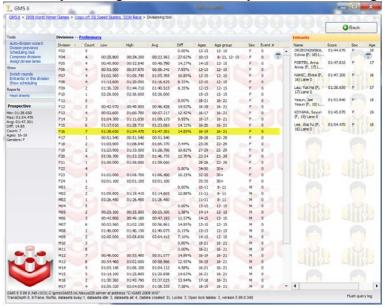


14. You have several ways to make adjustments to division, you can click on one division and drag it to another division, when you do this, you will see the Percent differential displayed under Prospective on the left side of the screen. If you release the mouse button, you can tell GMS to combine the divisions. If you don't release your mouse button you can simply move it back, or off

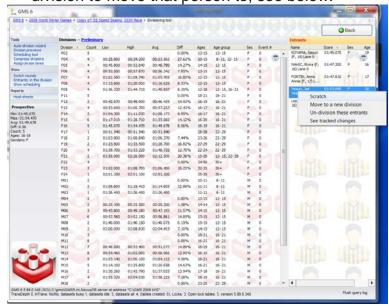


screen.

15. You can also select a single division; you will see the athletes in that division listed in the Entrants box on the right side of the screen, now you have the option of selecting an athlete in the entrant's box and dragging that athlete to another division. (Hint: if you want to sort the athletes in the Entrants box, just click on the column heading you want to sort by.) You can move multiple athletes at one time by holding down the Ctrl Key and then clicking on the individual athletes.



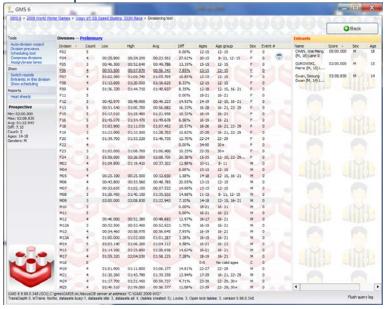
17. You can also Right click on an athlete in the Entrants box and select a new division to move that person to, see below.



Just enter the new division number



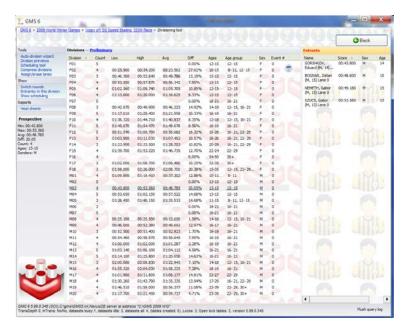
16. You're not quite finished; you will notice that your division numbers are no longer sequential.



17. This is easy to fix, just go to Tools and click on "Compress divisions". need to Verify these options are the same you used during the Auto Division Wizard, make any necessary changes, Click Save.



Now your division numbers are back in sequence.



18. Depending if the event uses Lane, you will need to assign Lanes. Under Tools click on Assign/erase lanes. You have several options that may need to be set:

Use: You can assign lanes to all Divisions or select which divisions you want to assign lanes.

Action: Used to Assign or erase lanes

Starting Lane: This is the lanes Games will start with Highest lane available: How many lanes will you use?

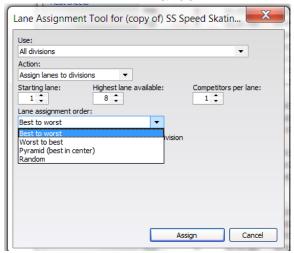
Competitors per lane: normally 1

Lane Assignment order: Your options are;

Best to Worst Worst to Best

Pyramid (best in center) (normally used for timed events)

Random



GMS 6 Divisioning

19. There are some other ways to make or adjust division. From the main events entry screen, you can select an athlete's division and manually enter a new division number. Also note, when you place the cursor over the division, a popup will appear giving you a summary for that division.

