

FROM: Special Olympics Inc. – Headquarters

TO: Special Olympics Programs – Global

DATE: March 2023

RE: 2023 General Rules Revision Summary

I. Background

This memorandum summarizes amendments to the Special Olympics General Rules as voted on and approved by the Board of Directors in June 2022. The revisions to the General Rules will strengthen our commitment to delivering quality programming to all athletes and will have a lasting impact on the organization. The connection between health, sport, and fitness activities is clarified, as are new guidelines for creating a sustainable organization for the next generation of the movement's leaders. Other changes create a foundation to expand connectivity through new digital tools and policies that address our athletes' and the movement's current and future needs.

II. Article 1

Article 1 addresses the mission, goal, and founding principles of SOI. The changes to this Article ensure the organization's structure includes steps SOI has taken to extend more significant opportunities to those with intellectual disabilities. Section 1.03(d)(1) is an addition to this Article that explicitly allows persons without intellectual disabilities to join the movement as Unified Partners or volunteers.

Section 1.04(b)(2) outlines SOI's role as the utmost decision-making authority of Special Olympics. The revision strengthens SOI's right to take appropriate measures to revoke accreditation, if necessary, where there has been a violation of the terms of accreditation, the General Rules, or when the mission and objectives of Special Olympics are endangered. Specific actions that may result in revocation of accreditation include any initiatives that would adversely impact athletes' health and/or safety, seriously damage a Program's financial standing, or the more general failure to conduct and organize programming consistent with SOI's stated mission and objectives.

All references to the Games Organizing Committee have been corrected to reflect new terminology--Local Organizing Committees, or LOC. This revision is displayed throughout the amended Rules.



III. Article 2

The minimum age requirement of Section 2.01(b) distinguishes the age and participation requirements between Young Athletes, which may include children from birth to age seven (7) years, and athletes in general, which may consist of participants ages eight (8) years and above. The intent behind the rule change is to indicate that SOI wants to encourage parents or guardians to engage with their children with ID and provide access to educational resources. Programs are not expected to provide inperson activities for children under two (2) years.

This Article also includes revisions to SOI's required athlete documentation, including intuitive name changes to existing forms and adding the Likeness Release as a required registration document.

IV. Article 3

The Executive Committee approved revisions to Sports Rules Article 1 in 2020. The new Sports Rules replace the official summer, winter, local, and recognized Sports list with a Sports Level Criteria chart that shifts the focus to a four-level description of sport participation and event classification. Due to these significant changes, Article 3.04 of the General Rules has been amended, and Programs should cross-reference this Article with Sports Rules Article 1. A list of summer and winter sports that Special Olympics Programs have traditionally offered is provided for illustrative purposes only. The revised Sports Rules Article 1 is attached as Exhibit A.

The description of Special Olympics Motor Activities Training Programs (MATP) in Article 3.12 is slightly modified to shift the emphasis from the MATP's design for individuals with "severe intellectual disabilities that cannot benefit from standard Special Olympics training and competition programs" to more general language that shares the Program's purpose as simply being "designed for athletes who are not able to participate in Special Olympics sports competitions due to functional abilities." The revision displays SOI's sensitivity to the functional differences of all athletes and safeguards against categorizing or judging the "severity" of an athlete's intellectual disability who may participate in the MATP program. In addition, the Young Athletes program is defined as the new Article 3.13. This revision correlates with the Range of Programs referenced in Article 3.03(c).

V. Article 4

Three (3) additional advisory councils have been added to Article 4. These include the Program Athlete Leadership Council (Section 4.13[a]), Regional Athlete Leadership Council, and the Global Athlete Leadership Council (Section 4.13[b]). The revision to this Article also confirms the existence of the Founder's Council (Section



4.14), which was approved as an amendment to the Special Olympics bylaws on 12 November 2018. Due to these additional Sections, the numerical formatting of Article 4 has been adjusted.

In addition, new Program Quality Standards (PQS) are included in Section 4.01(c). Designed to align with the 2021-2030 Strategic Plan, the PQS includes an interactive Program assessment tool and guidance for incremental objectives Program leaders can achieve to provide the best possible programming for athletes. A draft of the proposed new PQS can be found here:

https://resources.specialolympics.org/governance/program-quality-standards. These standards will continue to evolve in response to the ever-changing contexts in which

standards will continue to evolve in response to the ever-changing contexts in which Special Olympics Programs operate. In addition, the Program Quality Standards will be incorporated into future Accreditation Requirements.

VI. Article 5

Section 5.08 now allows commercial messages on athlete bibs, and Programs will be required to follow the Official Competition Bib Guidelines. The Competition Bib Guidelines are attached as Exhibit B and may be found on the General Rules webpage provided below. Programs are encouraged to follow these Guidelines and submit questions or concerns to their Regional Office for more information. This change applies only to athlete bibs and does not affect existing rules for other elements of training or competition uniforms, merchandise, or other items used by athletes during Special Olympics-sanctioned competition.

Section 5.09 adds the prohibition of public affiliation or use of cannabis and vaping products in the same context that alcohol and tobacco are currently prohibited.

Athlete safeguarding has been added to Section 5.16. The Legal Department and the Risk Management and Insurance Task Force worked diligently to obtain funding and support to develop *Operation Safeguard*, an extensive training that all Program staff, volunteers, athletes, and coaches will be required to complete to enforce SOI policies and procedures that protect Special Olympics athletes from sexual abuse, bullying, and other harmful, offensive, or unwanted contacts. The Operation Safeguard training was developed in 2020, and materials were distributed to Programs in 2021. A soft launch of Operation Safeguard occurred in 2022. The expectation is that Programs will continue to utilize the resources and training during 2023 and be in position to implement (or have a plan to implement) Operation Safeguard materially by January 1, 2024.

SOI will be authorized to demand the immediate suspension of any volunteer, staff member, athlete, or stakeholder who engages in the aforementioned prohibited behavior.



VII. Article 6

Section 6.15 includes language that expands SOI's grounds for imposing sanctions on Special Olympics Programs and revoking or denying Program accreditation. The revision provides that sanctions may be enforced if a Program's Board of Directors fails to meet its obligations or commits any violation that requires emergency revocation of accreditation specified under Section 6.18.

VIII. Article 7

Concurrent with SOI's strategic goals, digitizing the movement is added to Article 7 immediately following Digital Fundraising. The new Section displays SOI's commitment to expanding its digital platforms, content, data management, secure online environments, and digital modernization. Investing in digital infrastructure will provide Programs with digital resources that will enable global connection on and off the field while broadening SOI fundraising, health, and sports opportunities.

IX. United States (U.S.) Specific Rules

Due to the importance and priority of diversity and inclusion for the movement and U.S. Programs, several requirements were approved by the Executive Committee on 21 September 2020, which took effect for U.S. Programs beginning in 2021, as Article Nine (9) of the U.S. Specific Rules. The new Article requires U.S. Programs to:

- (1) Employ a Special Olympics athlete as a full or part-time staff member;
- (2) Adopt a diversity and inclusion policy and mission statement;
- (3) Engage underrepresented individuals across ranks of volunteers, vendors, staff, and athletes; and
- (4) Submit a yearly status report of diversity statistics within the ranks of its respective Program and jurisdiction with its annual accreditation filing.

Programs that fail to comply with these requirements may face sanctions for noncompliance.

X. Conclusion

After many discussions and significant input, we are pleased to offer these amendments to the General Rules. The translated rules are on SOI's website at https://resources.specialolympics.org/governance/special-olympics-general-rules.

We want to thank all the individuals, Programs, staff members, and others who contributed to this dialogue. Please submit all questions regarding these amendments using the FAQ link provided at the link above.



<u>Exhibit A</u> 2020 Rule Change Summary of Sports Rules Article I

Change From	Change To
Old Formatting	New cover photos & date change at footer to reflect June 2020
2.6 Statement of Participation	ADD: Each team is required to play all eligible team members in every game unless a player is injured or
2.6.1 Each team is required to play all eligible team members in every game unless a player is injured or has been removed due to disciplinary reasons. Coaches must notify the competition management prior to each game if players on the approved tournament roster will not be playing due to injury or disciplinary reasons.	has been removed due to disciplinary reasons. Coaches must notify the competition management prior to each game if players on the approved tournament roster will not be playing due to injury or disciplinary reasons. Failure to play all eligible team members in each game will result in penalties, up to and including forfeit and disqualification.
5.0 Classifications of Special Olympics	CLASSIFICATION OF SPECIAL OLYMPICS SPORTS
Sports 5.1 Three classifications of sports in Special Olympics: 5.1.1 Official Sports	5.1 The sports in which Special Olympics athletes are given the opportunity to train and compete are divided into four levels. Sports are recognized by the criteria listed below for each level. Three classifications of Sports
5.1.2 Recognized Sports 5.1.3 Locally Popular Sports	5.1.1 Official Sports
5. 2 The following criteria will be used to classify Official Sports, Recognized Sports and Locally Popular Sports:	5.1.2 Recognized Sports 5.1.3 Locally Popular Sports
(Old Chart)	5.2 Sport Level Criteria The following criteria will be used to classify Official Sports, Recognized Sports
*According to Special Olympics Annual Census	and Localy Popular Sports: Sport Level Dritieria (New Chart Inserted)
5.3 Official Sports	
5.3.1 Summer Sports 5.3.1.1 Athletics	*According to Special Olympics Annual Census
5.3.1.2 Badminton	5.3 Official Sport:
5.3.1.3 Basketball	5.3.1 Summer Sports
5.3.1.4 Bocce	5.3.1.1 Athletics
5.3.1.5 Bowling	5.3.1.2 Badminton
5.3.1.6 Cycling	5.3.1.3 Basketball
5.3.1.7 Equestrian	5.3.1.4 Bocce
5.3.1.8 Football	5.3.1.5 Bowling
5.3.1.9 Golf	5.3.1.6 Cycling

Special Olympics

5.3.1.10 Handball

5.3.1.11 Judo

5.3.1.12 Gymnastics Artistic

5.3.1.13 Gymnastics Rhythmic

5.3.1.14 Open Water Swimming

5.3.1. 15 Powerlifting

5.3.1.16 Roller Skating

5.3.1.17 Sailing

5.3.1.18 Softball

5.3.1.19 Swimming

5.3.1.20 Table Tennis

5.3.1.21 Tennis

5.3.1.22 Volleyball

5.3.2 Winter Sports

5.3.2.1 Alpine Skiing

5.3.2.2 Cross Country Skiing

5.3.2.3 Figure Skating

5.3.2.4 Floorball

5.3.2.5 Floor Hockey

5.3.2.6 Short Track Speed Skating

5.3.2.7 Snowboarding

5.3.2.8 Snowshoeing

5.4 Recognized Sports

5.4.1.1 Cricket

5.4.1.2 Kayaking

5.5 Locally Popular Sports

5.5.1 Accredited Programs may offer sports that are locally popular and are not currently considered Official or Recognized Sports.

5.6 Locally Popular Sports that Require Pre-Approval from Special Olympics, Inc. (SOI)

5.6.1 These are sports that SOI has determined might expose Special Olympics athletes to unreasonable risks to their health or safety.

5.6.2 No Accredited Program may offer any training or competition activities in any sport that SOI has listed here, without approval from SOI Sports Department.

5.6.3 Requests for permission to offer one of these sports must be accompanied by proposed rules and safety standards.
5.6.4 SOI has presently classified combative sports, martial arts (other than

5.3.1.7 Equestrian

5.3.1.8 Football

5.3.1.9 Golf

5.3.1.10 Handball

5.3.1.11 Judo

5.3.1.12 Gymnastics Artistic

5.3.1.13 Gymnastics Rhythmic

5.3.1.14 Open Water Swimming

5.3.1. 15 Powerlifting

5.3.1.16 Roller Skating

5.3.1.17 Sailing

5.3.1.18 Softball

5.3.1.19 Swimming

5.3.1.20 Table Tennis

5.3.1.21 Tennis

5.3.1.22 Volleyball

5.3.2 Winter Sports

5.3.2.1 Alpine Skiing

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5.4.1.1 Cricket

5.4.1.2 Kayaking

5.5 Locally Popular Sports

5.5.1 Accredited Programs may offer sports that are locally popular and are not currently considered Official or Recognized Sports.

5.3 5.6 Locally Popular Sports that Require Pre-Approval from Special Olympics, Inc. (SOI)

5.3.1 SOI has presently classified combative sports, martial arts (other than Judo), sledding sports, motor sports, aerial sports, shooting and archery as Locally Popular Sports that require Pre-Approval from SOI.

5.3.2 5.6.1 These are sports that SOI has determined might expose Special Olympics athletes to unreasonable risks to their health or safety.

5.3.3 5.6.2 No Accredited Program may offer any training or competition activities in any sport that



Judo), sledding sports, motor sports, aerial sports, shooting and archery as Locally Popular Sports that Require Pre-Approval from SOI.

5.7 Maintenance of Sport Recognition Levels

5.7.1 Each sport will be re-evaluated every four years and classified based on the criteria above. Summer Sports will be recertified after each World Summer Games. Winter Sports will be recertified after each World Winter Games.

5.7.2 The SOI Sports Department shall be responsible for submitting evidence for the level of recognition of all sports.
5.7.3 The recertification notification will

5.7.3 The recertification notification will be made to the Sports Rules Advisory Committee. SOI has listed here, without approval from SOI Sports Department.

5.3.4 5.6.3 Requests for permission to offer one of these sports must be accompanied by proposed rules and safety standards.

5.6.4 SOI has presently classified combative sports, martial arts (other than Judo), sledding sports, motor sports, aerial sports, shooting and archery as Locally Popular Sports that Require Pre-Approval from SOI.

Maintenance of Sport Recognition Levels

5.4.1 5.7.1-Each sport level will be re-evaluated based on Special Olympics' census data on an annual basis. every four years and classified based on the criteria above. Summer Sports will be recertified after each World Summer Games. Winter Sports will be recertified after each World Winter Games.

5.7.2 The SOI Sports Department shall be responsible for submitting evidence for the level of recognition of all sports.

5.4.2 5.7.3 The recertification notification will be made to the Sports Rules Advisory Committee will be notified of any change in level by sport.

8.4 Jury

8.4.7 Jury decisions should be based on the rules and the specific circumstances for each protest.

ADD/DELETE: Jury decisions should must be based on the rules and the specific circumstances for each protest.

10.5 Resolving Divisioning Issues

10.5.1.3.2 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.

DELETE

10.5.1.3.2 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.

12.2 Ties

12.2.1 In the case of a tie, each athlete or team that has achieved the same result shall receive the same award for the highest place earned. For example, two athletes who tie for third place shall each receive the bronze medal. Athletes or teams that follow shall receive the appropriate award for their order of finish. For example, an athlete who crossed the finish line fourth shall receive the fourth place ribbon, regardless of whether the athletes who

DELETE/ADD: Each sport will follow sport-specific criteria related to ties. If this is not defined and athletes or teams tie for any place, they each receive the highest award for that place. As a result, a tie for one place will result in no award being given for the following place. In the case of a tie, each athlete or team that has achieved the same result shall receive the same award for the highest place earned. For example, two athletes who tie for third place shall each receive the bronze medal. Athletes or teams that follow shall receive the appropriate award for their order of finish. For example, an athlete who crossed



preceded him or her tied. As a result, a tie for one place will result in no award being given for the next place – a tie for first place means there is no second place recipient. the finish line fourth shall receive the fourth place ribbon, regardless of whether the athletes who preceded him or her tied. As a result, a tie for one place will result in no award being given for the next place — a tie for first place means there is no second place recipient

14.1.2 Unified Sports Competitive

14.1.2.1 The Unified Sports Competitive model combines approximately equal numbers of Special Olympics athletes (individuals with intellectual disabilities) and partners (individuals without intellectual disabilities) as teammates on sport teams for training and competition. All athletes and partners on a Unified Sports Competitive team must have attained the necessary sport-specific skills and tactics to compete without modification of the current Special Olympics Official Sports Rules. A Unified Sport team is an inclusive sports program with approximately equal numbers of athletes and partners. Athletes and partners must be of similar age and ability for all team sports. Please see 14.3 Special Olympics Competitive Sport-Specific Parameters at the end of this Section. For individual sports, athletes and partners must be of similar age and ability in Badminton, Kayaking, Table Tennis, Tennis, Figure Skating and Short Track Speed Skating. For all other individual sports, the requirements for age and ability matching vary as defined on a sport-by-sport basis in section 14.3.

DELETE/ADD: The Unified Sports Competitive model combines approximately equal numbers of Special Olympics athletes (individuals with intellectual disabilities) and partners (individuals without intellectual disabilities) as teammates on sport teams for training and competition. Meaningful involvement of all teammates in training and competition is a fundamental requirement of this model. All teammates athletes and partners on a Unified Sports Competitive team must have attained the necessary sport-specific skills and knowledge of tactics to compete without modification of the current Special Olympics Official Sports Rules.-A Unified Sport team is an inclusive sports program with approximately equal numbers of athletes and partners. Teammates Athletes and partners must be of similar age and ability for all team sports. Similar means a comparable range of ages and ability levels. Please see 14.3 Special Olympics Competitive Sport-Specific Parameters at the end of this Section. For individual sports, athletes and partners must be of similar age and ability in Badminton, Kayaking, Table Tennis, Tennis, Figure Skating and Short Track Speed Skating. For all other individual sports, the requirements for age and ability matching vary as defined on a sport-by-sport basis in section 14.3.

14.1.2.2 Unified Sports Competitive model teams are eligible to compete at Regional and World Games.

ADD/CHANGE:

14.1.2.2 Similar Age Requirements for Competitive Models

14.1.2.2.1 If any member of a team is between the ages of 8-13, the variance between the youngest and oldest member of the team <u>must</u> be no more than 3 years.

14.1.2.2.2. If any member of a team is between the ages of 14-17 the variance between the youngest and oldest member of the team <u>must</u> be no more than 5 year.

14.1.2.2.3 If all the members of a team are 18 and older the variance between the youngest and



	oldest member of the team should be no more than 20 years. 14.1.2.3 14.1.2.2 Unified Sports Competitive model teams are eligible to compete at Regional and World Games.
14.1.3.2 Unified Sports Player Development model teams are eligible to compete at Regional and World Games.	ADD/CHANGE: 14.1.3. 2 Similar Age Requirements for Player Development Models 14.1.3.2.1 If any member of a team is between the ages of 8 -13, the variance between the youngest and oldest member of the team must be no more than 3 years. 14.1.3.2.2. If any member of a team is between the ages of 14-17 the variance between the youngest and oldest member of the team must be no more than 5 year. 14.1.3.2.3 If all the members of a team are 18 and older the variance between the youngest and oldest member of the team should be no more than 20 years. 14.1.3.3 14.1.2.2 Unified Sports Player Development model teams are eligible to compete at Regional and
A.5 – Official Form: For Proposing Special Olympics Sports Rules, Amendments and Modifications	World Games. CHANGE: Official Form: Special Olympics Proposed Rule Change Form For Proposing Special Olympics Sports Rules, Amendments and Modifications



Exhibit B

Competition Bib Sponsorship Guideline

Definitions

Competition Bib The identification card (which identifies the Athletes by

country, name or number) worn by an Athlete during

competition in certain sports.

LOC Local Organizing Committee is the separate non-profit

organizations or associations licensed from time to time by SOI to organize, finance, and conduct World Games, Regional Games, or multi-jurisdictional, single sports

events.

SOI Special Olympics International

Sponsor/ Partner The 3rd party entity that provides funding or other

means to support the event in exchange for visibility

and marketing rights from the LOC.

Asset Competition Bib

Purpose & Scope

The purpose of this policy is to set forth provisional guidelines for how Competition Bibs may be leveraged to generate revenue as a corporate sponsorship benefit and showcase to a global audience that Special Olympics competitions have inherent commercial value like other sporting events due to the quality of competition, athleticism and competitiveness of our athletes. If applicable, these guidelines shall be followed by any SOI, Regional, Program, or LOC Partner awarded this sponsorship right.

World, Regional, and Multi-Program level Games may offer this corporate sponsorship benefit. All branding for Competition Bibs must conform to these guidelines.

Effective January 2023, SOI's General Rules shall no longer prohibit the appearance of corporate partner logos on Competition Bibs at all Special Olympics competitions, including, but not limited to, World Games, Regional Games, USA Games, and the Unified Cup. As the asset owner, SOI shall collaborate with the LOC to use



Competition Bibs to generate revenue for SOI and the LOC using a revenue-share model that SOI shall provide.

The following descending order of precedence shall resolve any inconsistency between this policy and any of the following documents: (1) General Rules, (2) Games Agreement, (3) Technical Manual(s), (4) Competition Bib Sponsorship Guidelines.

Section 1: General Guidelines

1.1. Creation of the bibs

The LOC shall bear all costs associated with supplying Competition Bibs to athletes and ensuring Competition Bibs are worn during the Games.

The LOC shall customize the Competition Bibs with numbers and designs that align with the Games' logo, SOI Brand Guidelines, and SOI's Competition Bib Sponsorship Guidelines. Competition Bibs must be designed to maximize sponsor visibility for spectators, competition officials, broadcast imaging, and still photography at any time during the event.

Advertising content for Commercial Bibs is the partner's name and logo. Slogans are not recommended but, if desired, shall require prior written approvals by SOI.

1.2. Partner Selection and Rights Distribution

Given the potential for visibility during the competition and in media renditions, Commercial Bibs shall be considered a higher benefit for corporate Partners. Therefore, Commercial Bibs benefits shall be reserved for top-level Games sponsors only, as outlined in Exhibit A of the Games Agreement.

Aligned with this policy's Exhibit A, Section 2, the maximum number of Sponsor logos allowed on a single Commercial Bib is three (3). If SOI, Programs, or the LOC desire to extend the sponsor benefit beyond the maximum number of logos allowed, SOI, Programs, or the LOC reserve the right to create a Commercial Bib that accommodates more than three (3) sponsor logos. Such Commercial Bibs require prior written approval from SOI's Senior Creative Director, VP of Global Corporate Partnerships, and other stakeholders as determined by SOI.

Based on the number of logos in alignment with the Branding Guidelines below, priority should be given to the highest-level donor(s). If necessary, priority may also be given to Sponsors on a first-come-first-serve selection basis. The Sponsor shall have the option to select a sport for which the respective Commercial Bibs shall display the Sponsor's logo. For certain events, e.g., during Opening Ceremony, lower tier sports, or non-competition events, Commercial Bibs could display all top-level partner logos, should the LOC choose.



Commercial Bibs may be leveraged as a separate offering to the Partner benefits enumerated in the LOC's approved sponsorship framework at an incremental cost to the Sponsor or integrated into the top-level partner benefits. The LOC sales strategy must be coordinated and approved by SOI, the asset owner.

1.3. Valuation

For each major international event, such as the World Games or the Unified Cup, the LOC must help determine the valuation (i.e., the estimated or determined market value) of this asset for the Games by providing SOI with verified media valuation numbers by Sponsor and cumulatively after the completion of the Games. For regional events, the SO regional management shall determine whether they seek such a valuation from the LOC.

1.4. Steps for the Approval of Bibs

The LOC shall design all bibs and provide them to SOI for review and approval. Upon receipt by SOI, the SOI branding team shall determine compliance with all applicable branding guidelines, while the corporate development team reviews the marketing information internally and with Partners where applicable. Both the LOC and SOI should achieve reasonable turnaround times during the design and approval process to ensure the timely production of bibs.

1.5. Branding Guidelines

The LOC and Programs shall follow SOI's Competition Bib Sponsorship Guidelines attached as Exhibits A.