



Sport Impact Standards Overview

The Sport Impact Standards are enhanced processes of both written and implemented protocols that produce high quality sports competition. At Special Olympics World Games and International Single Sport Invitational events, the optimum athlete experience is driven by unprecedented standards of quality across four essential pillars:

1. Optimum Performance Environment
2. Presentation of Competition
3. Quota Allocation Refinement, and
4. General Sport Operations.

As Special Olympics reflected on over 50 years of competition, athletes are demanding a higher quality of sport training and competition opportunities. They want to exceed expectations on the playing field and achieve higher levels of personal physical, social, and emotional well-being. These athletes want their stories to be told through statistical performance milestones and be recognized as inspirational athletes because of their dedication and personal bests.

The new Sport Impact Standards will set protocols for training, optimum environment for performance, and provide in-depth recognition of achievements allowing sport heroes to emerge. The development of the Sport Impact Standards has moved the conversation past acceptance, enabling Special Olympic athletes to earn respect and inclusion which they so deserve.

It is critical that athletes are afforded a protocol that not only keeps health and safety as priority, but also enhances their preparation and recovery so they can perform at their best throughout the competition. A main component of Sport Impact Standards is embedding elements of health and fitness during training and competition. This will reduce injuries and support performance.

The Sport Impact Standards will allow Special Olympics International to develop and define the parameters for each sport competition at the World Games and International Single Sport Invitational events. These protocols will ultimately improve the athlete experience, guarantee fair competition, and give each athlete the opportunity to train and compete at the highest level of competition.

Special Olympics World Games Berlin 2023

At the Special Olympics World Games Berlin in 2023, six sports will be operating according to the Sport Impact Standards. Those sports will be athletics, badminton, basketball, football, swimming, and tennis. The remaining twenty sports offered for the Berlin 2023 program will be operating under the previous World Games competition model.

Format of Competition | Swimming

There are three formats of competition that will be utilized during the competition: Quarter Finals, Semi-Finals, and Finals. The below events will be conducted based on their respective format.

Format 1 | Quarter Finals 25m Freestyle, 25m Backstroke, 25m Breaststroke, 50m Butterfly, 50m Breaststroke, 50m Freestyle, 50m Backstroke, 100m Freestyle, 200m Freestyle

Format 2 | Semi Finals 100m Backstroke, 100m Butterfly, 100m Breaststroke, 100m Individual Medley, 200m Breaststroke, 400m Freestyle, 4x25 FS, 4x50 FS, 4x50 Medley



Format 3 | Direct Finals

800m Freestyle, 1500m Freestyle, 1500m
Open Water Swim, 1500m Unified Sports Open Water Swim

An Athlete's Journey During World Games

To summarize how the divisoning process is conducted at the World Games according to the Sport Impact Standards, below is the step-by-step process outlining the protocol from the registration process to the final race and concluding with the awards ceremony.

Step 1 | The Registration Process

Coaches register their athletes by checking the box of the corresponding Level in the Berlin 2023 Registration Portal. Athletes of the same gender and level will compete with one another.

Step 2 | Arrival to the Competition & Quarter Final Race

All Athletes will have a training day at the competition venue prior to the official competition.

During the first day of the official competition, all athletes registered in the same level and gender will run in divisions of 8 (remaining athletes will be randomly placed in a division with no less than 3).

Step 3 | Semi Final Race

After the Quarter Final Race is conducted, all athletes are re-organized into divisions of a maximum of 8 with a minimum of 3, according to the times produced during the Quarter Final race (ranked fastest to slowest).

Step 4 | Final Race & Award Ceremony

After the Semi-Final Race is conducted, all athletes are re-organized into divisions of a maximum of 8 with a minimum of 3, according to the times produced during the Semi Final race (ranked fastest to slowest). The final position of this race will determine the final standing of each division by level & gender. Athletes will be awarded accordingly for each level and final division.

Additional Considerations

- Following Special Olympics' philosophy and to guarantee athletes will have a fair competition, an athlete will be disqualified by getting a time over the maximum time of the next upper level.
- If a coach has an Athlete that has a performance time that is close to the time of the next upper level, it is advised that they register the athlete in the next upper Level to avoid disqualification. Since the athlete will have multiple competition opportunities, they will be divided into the best possible position during the competition. Levels will not be changed on-site during competition.
- An Athlete can be disqualified during any of the three races conducted in the event (Quarter Finals, Semi Finals, or Finals). All athletes disqualified will be recognized with a participation during the respective event awards ceremony.
- Athletes will move between different divisions in the same level during the Quarter Final, Semi Final, and Final race.
- Athletes will not be disqualified by competing slower than the outlined Performance Standards by event.
- For each level, there will be an award ceremony for each corresponding division.