



At Special Olympics competitions, all athletes are given an equal chance to participate, perform and be recognized for doing their best by their teammates, family, and fans. This happens through a unique process called divisioning.

Athletes are grouped by age, gender and ability – giving everyone a reasonable chance to win. You can see divisioning in action in all sports, including athletics, football (soccer), table tennis, skiing, or gymnastics.

Special Olympics divisioning is a two-stage process:

STAGE 1.

For individual sports, coaches submit a time or distance for each athlete.

For team or judged spots (like basketball or gymnastics), coaches submit athlete or team ratings and/or skills assessments.

STAGE 2.

Divisioning races, judged events or short team matches are held to assess the athletes' or teams' ability levels in competition.

Athletes or teams are then grouped into competitive divisions according to three criteria: age, gender and ability level.

HOW MANY ATHLETES OR TEAMS ARE IN A DIVISION?

Each division should include a minimum of 3 athletes or teams and a maximum of 8 athletes or teams.

HOW ARE DIVISIONS SET?

There should be no more than a 15 percent difference between the most highly skilled athlete or team – and the lowest skilled athlete or team in each division.