



About Handball: Handball is a physical and fast sport of intense physical contact, with shots being thrown at speeds approaching 100km per hour. It is played indoors on a 40m X 20m court with seven players (one goalkeeper + six court), which speeds up the game even more. The object is to score more goals than the opponents by throwing the ball into a D-shaped net. Handball athletes are known for their speed, agility, physical strength and stamina.

Established at Special Olympics: 1991

Differences of Special Olympics Handball: Special Olympics offers a series of optional modifications to team competitions of Handball. It is the responsibility of each individual program to determine whether they will be employed. First, the length of the Handball court may be modified to no less than the length of a regulation basketball court. Second, beginner and lower ability players have to option to use a foam, air-filled ball for competitions. For beginning players, youth and lower ability players, referees have to option to limit player contact to what is allowed in a basketball game. There are no individual foul limits, but warnings, suspensions, and disqualifications are applied to athletes behaving in misconduct.

By The Numbers:

- In 2011, 31,773 Special Olympics Athletes participated in Handball competitions
- In 2011, 40 Special Olympics Programs hosted Handball competitions
- In the past seven years, Handball participation by Special Olympics Athletes has grown by 400%!
- Handball first appeared at the Summer Olympic Games in 1936

Events for Competition:

- Individual Skills Competition
- Team Competition
- 5-a-side Handball
- Unified Sports Team Competition

Associations/Federations/Supporters: International Handball Federation (IDF)

Divisioning at Special Olympics: Athletes in every sport and event are grouped by age, gender, and ability – giving everyone a reasonable chance to win. At Special Olympics there are no World Records because each athlete, whether in the fastest or the slowest division is valued and recognized equally. In every division, all athletes receive an award, from gold, silver, and bronze medals, to fourth through eighth place ribbons. This idea of equal ability groupings is the foundation for competition in Special Olympics and can be witnessed at all events, whether it's athletics, aquatics, table tennis, football, skiing, or gymnastics. All athletes are given an equal chance to participate, perform, and be recognized for doing their best by their teammates, family, friends, and fans."