



Kayaking

Sport Rules

Special Olympics





TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. GOVERNING RULES 3

2. OFFICIAL EVENTS 3

3. SPECIAL OLYMPICS SPORT-SPECIFIC RULES FOR COMPETITIVE MODEL **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

4. EQUIPMENT 3

 4.1 Boats and Paddles 3

 4.2 Personal Floatation Devices (PFD) 4

 4.3 Helmets 4

 4.4 Uniform..... 4

 4.5 Personal Numbers 4

 4.6 Personal equipment is subjected to control by the Officials. 4

5. RULES OF COMPETITION 5

 5.1 Management 5

 5.2 Competition Course Specifications 5

 5.3 Divisioning..... 6

 5.4 Maximum Effort Rule 6

 5.5 Practice and Training 7

 5.6 Swimming Test..... 7

 5.7 Competition Rules..... 7

 5.8 Disqualification 9

 5.9 Protests and Appeals 9

6. SAFETY..... 9

 6.1 Officials/Safety Boats 9

 6.2 Crew Safety..... 10



1. GOVERNING RULES

The Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Kayaking shall govern all Special Olympics competitions. As an international sports program, Special Olympics has created these rules based upon International Canoe Federation (ICF) Spring Rules for kayaking found at <http://www.canoeicf.com/>. ICF or National Governing Body (NGB) rules shall be employed except when they are in conflict with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Kayaking or Article I. In such cases, the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Kayaking shall apply.

Refer to [Sport Rules Article 1](#), for more information pertaining to Codes of Conduct, Training Standards, Medical and Safety Requirements, Divisioning, Awards, Criteria for Advancement to Higher Levels of Competition, and Unified Sports.

2. OFFICIAL EVENTS

The range of events is intended to offer competition opportunities for athletes of all abilities. Programs may determine the events offered and, if required, guidelines for the management of those events. Coaches are responsible for providing training and event selection appropriate to each crew member's skill and interest.

Categories and Distances

The official categories and distances in Special Olympics events are:

2.1 Men's and Women's events

2.1.1 Singles Tourist kayak (KT): KT1 – 200m, 500m, 1000m

2.1.2 Doubles Tourist kayak (KT): KT2 – 200m, 500m

2.1.3 Unified Sports® Doubles Tourist kayak (KT): KT2 – 200m, 500m

2.1.4 Singles Professional kayak (K): K1 – 200m, 500m, 1000m

2.1.5 Doubles Professional kayak (K): K2 – 200m, 500m

2.1.6 Unified Sports Doubles Professional kayak (K):K2 – 200m, 500m

2.2 Mixed Events

2.2.1 Doubles Tourist kayak (KT-MX): KTmx2 – 200m, 500m

2.2.2 Unified Sports® Doubles Tourist kayak (KT-MX): KTmx2 – 200m, 500m

2.2.3 Doubles Professional kayak (K-MX): Kmx2 – 200m, 500m

2.2.4 Unified Sports Doubles Professional kayak (K-MX): Kmx2 – 200m, 500m

3. UNIFIED SPORTS®

3.1 The athlete to Unified partner ratio must be 1 athlete to 1 Unified partner in Unified K-2 Doubles.

3.2 It is required that athletes and Unified partners are of similar age and similar ability. For more information on similar age and ability please see Sport Rules Article 1 Section 14.1.2

4. EQUIPMENT

4.1 Boats and Paddles

4.1.1 Standardized *Touring Kayaks* and paddles are to be provided by games organizing committees for each crew member.

4.1.1.1 These boats are to be designed as a sit-in and not as a sit-on type and to offer high stability level to the crew members.



- 4.1.1.2 Kayaks shall be propelled solely by means of double-bladed paddles.
 - 4.1.1.3 There is no other specific rule for boats construction (material, length, weight etc.) but they must be safe and environmentally sound.
 - 4.1.1.4 For the equality of participants the Organizers must offer the same type of boats for all events.
 - 4.1.2 Professional Kayaks and paddles must meet ICF specifications
 - 4.1.3 If crew members choose to bring their personal kayaks and/or paddles, they must meet ICF specifications. Professional paddles may also be used in tourist events on touring boats.
 - 4.1.4 The paddles must not be fixed on the boats in any way.
- 4.2 Personal Floatation Devices (PFD)
 - 4.2.1 Personal Floatation Devices (PFD) are required and must meet local standards set by National Governing Bodies (NGB) for water safety. Buoyancy life jackets (PFD) must be worn during all practice and competition sessions.
- 4.3 Helmets
 - 4.3.1 Helmets, if deemed necessary by the event director due to the course being in moving water, where there are obstructions or shallow water where a capsizing athlete might strike his/her head.
 - 4.3.1.1 In that case helmets are compulsory and should be provided by the organizer.
 - 4.3.2 Helmets may also be worn to non-moving water events when athletes feel more comfortable competing with a helmet.
 - 4.3.2.1 In that case, athletes should bring their personal helmet.
- 4.4 Uniform
 - 4.4.1 Crew members shall wear appropriate Kayaking sport attire or at least a t-shirt and shorts during competition and training sessions.
 - 4.4.1.1 Crew members in a double boat shall wear uniforms of the same color and style.
 - 4.4.2 Coaches should ensure that all crew members bring a change of clothes when attending kayaking practice and competition.
 - 4.4.3 For the swimming test, crew members are required to wear a swimsuit (females should wear a one-piece tank suit) and optionally swim caps and swimming goggles. PFD may also be worn during swimming test. Aqua shoes or flip flops and towel will be required for the water test
 - 4.4.4 As kayaking is an outdoor event, it is suggested that crew members bring a set of warm clothing and rainwear.
 - 4.4.5 It is also recommended to wear hat and sunglasses at all times. The crew members who wear eyeglasses must ensure that they will be steadily attached to their head with a proper band. Ideally, special water glasses may be used.
- 4.5 Personal Numbers
 - 4.5.1 All kayaks shall carry a vertical plate, made of non-transparent material, marked with black numbers on a white background, indicating the lane. The numbers plate must measure 15cm in height and 25mm in thickness.
 - 4.5.2 The plates shall be placed on the centerline on the afterdeck or thwart.
 - 4.5.3 The size of the number plate shall be 18 x 20 cm.
 - 4.5.4 The personal numbers provided by the organizer shall be placed on the back and, if necessary, on the front of the competitor as required by the organizers.
- 4.6 Personal equipment is subjected to control by the Officials.



5. RULES OF COMPETITION

5.1 Management

- 5.1.1 Special Olympics competitions in Kayaking are managed by the sport-specific Jury which consists of:
 - 5.1.1.1 Chair: Technical Delegate
 - 5.1.1.2 Members: Competition Manager, Chief Official
- 5.1.2 Special Olympics competitions in kayaking are to be supervised by:
 - 5.1.2.1 Chief Official.
 - 5.1.2.1.1 In World, Continental or Regional Games must be officiated by at least one Official who has proven International experience in S.O. Kayaking Officiating
 - 5.1.2.2 Chief Judge
 - 5.1.2.3 Deputy Chief Judge
 - 5.1.2.4 Competition Manager (Technical Official)
 - 5.1.2.5 Starter/s
 - 5.1.2.5.1 In World, Continental or Regional Games must be officiated by at least one Official who has proven International experience in S.O. Kayaking Officiating.
 - 5.1.2.6 Aligner/s
 - 5.1.2.7 Course Umpire/s
 - 5.1.2.8 Identification Judge/s
 - 5.1.2.8.1 Must be officiated by at least one National or International Technical Official with experience in SO Kayaking officiating.
 - 5.1.2.9 Board and Equipment Control
 - 5.1.2.9.1 Must be officiated by at least one National or International Technical Official with experience in SO Kayaking officiating.
 - 5.1.2.10 Finishing Line Judge/s
 - 5.1.2.10.1 In World, Continental or Regional Games must be officiated by at least one Official who has proven International experience in S.O. Kayaking Officiating
 - 5.1.2.11 If circumstances permit, one person may function in two of the above positions.
 - 5.1.2.12 Specific duties of officials meet ICF Rules.

5.2 Competition Course Specifications

- 5.2.1 The standard S.O.I. course for International, Continental, World Games shall provide fair and equal racing conditions for all crews racing in separate, parallel lanes over the distances of both 500m and 200m.
- 5.2.2 Both the start and finishing lines shall be marked with red flags at the points where lines intersect the outer limits of the course. The starting and the finishing lines shall be at right angles to the course.
- 5.2.3 The course consists of up to nine lanes and not less than eight. The designated number for each competition is an issue of approval by the S.O.I. and depends on venue's water conditions, number of participants and S.O.I. rules.
- 5.2.4 Each lane must be at least 9 m wide, straight and without any obstacle.
- 5.2.5 The depth of water in the entire course shall be at least two (2) meters.



- 5.2.6 The lanes shall be marked with buoys or floats. The distance between the buoys cannot be more than 25 m.
 - 5.2.7 The last buoys must be marked from No 1 to 9. The numbering goes from the left to the right with the number placed on the buoy in such a way as to be clearly visible from the finish tower. The numbered buoy is to be on the 9 corresponding competitor's right hand side as he/she passes it and also clearly visible to the competitor/s. The buoys should be fixed no closer than 1 meter and no further than 2 meters behind the finish line.
 - 5.2.8 On the one side of the competition course, there should be enough water area for boats escorting to the start and for rescue boats.
 - 5.2.9 When there is television coverage of an event, the lane numbering may be in the opposite direction - from right to left, so that the list of competitors and their lanes shown on the television screen match the appearance of the races to be televised.
 - 5.2.10 Any courses which are non-standard may have different parameters as well, for example: course width, water depth, number of buoys. The course can also be river-water or not necessarily straight.
 - 5.2.11 The 1 kilometer race will be conducted on an open course marked by buoys. The course shall involve a minimum number of turns, dependent on the space available at the competition venue. The finish line will be marked by two large buoys of the same color. Kayakers must pass between the two finish line buoys or shall be disqualified.
 - 5.2.12 Competition course must be approved by the Technical Delegate or any authorized by SOI person at least two days prior to the first day of the training session.
 - 5.2.13 Divisioning and Finals should be run on the same stretch of water.
 - 5.2.14 **Warm Up Areas**
 - 5.2.14.1 A designated water area close to the embarkation may be used before the escort procedure starts. Additionally a dedicated lane beside to the competition course may also be used as a warm up area but only during the escort procedure to the start.
 - 5.2.14.2 A designated warm up area on the land may be set up as well.
 - 5.2.15 Swimming Test
 - 5.2.16 A swimming pool or an open water area of 25m can be used for facilitating the swimming test.
- 5.3 Divisioning
- 5.3.1 Divisioning will be conducted in accordance with the Special Olympics Summer Sports Rules, Article 1—Section I.
 - 5.3.2 The maximum number of athletes per division in kayaking is eight.
 - 5.3.3 Athletes should complete a preliminary and final race for each distance entered. Initial classifications for the divisioning events will be based on qualifying times submitted with the athlete's registration.
 - 5.3.4 Divisions for the divisioning events will be based on the qualifying times submitted on the athletes' registration form. Divisions for finals will be based on the times athletes receive in their divisioning events.
- 5.4 Maximum Effort Rule
- 5.4.1 Crew members must participate honestly and with maximum effort in all divisioning and/or final competition.
 - 5.4.2 Athletes that are identified as not participating to their full potential with the intent of being placed in a lower division will be disqualified from competition.



5.5 Practice and Training

- 5.5.1 Practice sessions by groups must be organized at the competition course the day(s) prior to the competition. Groups will be set up according to boat availability. For each group one boat may be available for one coach per region. For safety reasons a significant number of rescue boats as well as the appropriate rescue team members must be on duty.
- 5.5.2 During the practice session in order for the crew members to be familiarized with the starting procedure, it is recommended a series of starts to be given during each training session.

5.6 Swimming Test

- 5.6.1 The swimming test must be conducted prior to the training. No crew member can participate in any training or competition race unless s/he has successfully passed the swimming test. Crew members are allowed to wear a PFD (lifejacket).
- 5.6.2 All crew members shall be able to swim a minimum of 25 meters while wearing a PFD. The coach shall attach a statement to the registration form attesting to the crew member's competence in this skill.

5.7 Competition Rules

- 5.7.1 Embarkation procedure starts at the Competition Staging. Upon request and for specific reasons approved by the sport-specific Jury coaches are allowed to assist athletes in/out of the kayak, once the athlete is in the kayak and called to the start, the coach must report to the shoreline. No coaching is permitted from the shoreline. Encouragement to athletes is always allowed.
- 5.7.2 Coaches will not be allowed to have a kayak in the water while competition is being conducted.
- 5.7.3 Crew members on the water at the starting area, not less than five minutes prior to the specified time of their race. Two minutes before the defined starting time, the competing boats have to take the lane determined in the program.
- 5.7.4 Crew members shall be at the starting area in time to allow satisfactory preparation for the start. The escorting procedure will be organized in such a way to allow competitors to be on time at the start line.
- 5.7.5 The start shall commence without reference to any absentees.
- 5.7.6 If the competitor does not start, and has no valid reason approved by the Jury, s/he shall be disqualified for the whole regatta. A competitor, who arrives too late at the start, shall be considered to have voluntarily withdrawn and shall be disqualified under this rule.
- 5.7.7 When signaled by the Starter, the competitor will take the start position designated to that the bow of the boat is on the start line.
- 5.7.8 At the start line, kayakers must be stabilized by personnel holding their stern on pontoon. However, athletes should be able to control the kayak point to the proper direction towards finish line and keep the kayak stationary until the start of the race. (Adaptations will be utilized for difficult weather conditions).
- 5.7.9 When all boats are properly aligned, the aligner will then raise a white flag.
- 5.7.10 If the Starter is not satisfied with the line-up s/he will call "STOP", and hand over to the aligner for repositioning
- 5.7.11 The start of all races should begin with the starting signal by a shot or a short, powerful sound. The starting command will be "Ready - Set - Go" ("Go" can be a shot or strong sound signal). At the "Ready" command the competitors begin their preparation to paddle. At the "Set" command the competitors place their paddle in the catch position. The competitor must not paddle forward or this action will be deemed to be a false start. The boat must not move forward at this point in the starting procedure. The starter when satisfied with the



competitors positioning and attention will say "Go" (or shot or powerful sound). The competitors must only react to the start command/signal "Go" and are not permitted to anticipate it. The competitors can paddle only upon hearing the starting signal/command "Go". Also a drop with a White Flag (60 cm x 40 cm) from the shore line will indicate the start of the race along with the starting signal. For athletes with hearing problems alternatively a soft knock on their boat may be used additionally as a "Go" command. Automated starting systems may also be used.

- 5.7.12 In the event of a false start, the Starter must immediately give a powerful sound signal. On hearing this signal all crew members must stop paddling and follow the Starter's instructions for a new start. Before the new start, the Starter must identify the offending crew/s making the false start and give them a warning. In the event of a second false start by the same crew the boat will be disqualified from the race and must leave the starting area and the course immediately.
- 5.7.13 The Starter may also recall crew members for a new start in the event of any unforeseen circumstance. He/she must safeguard that all competitors are informed.
- 5.7.14 The starter will start the race when he/she is satisfied that everything meets with his/her approval. He/she will make a written report on any disqualification and forward it to the Chief Official.
- 5.7.15 No boat must come nearer than five meters in any direction to the boat of another competitor - that is, gunwale to gunwale or bow to stern.
- 5.7.16 Crew members must remain inside their assigned lane otherwise they may be disqualified. If a boat leaves the centre of the lane and does not return to it, the boat may be disqualified from the event.
- 5.7.17 If a competitor crosses the lane barrier and impedes the other competitor, this will be justification for a disqualification through the protest procedure and the competitor that was impeded has the option of starting the race at a later time for a proper score.
- 5.7.18 If a race is declared null and void, no change of the composition of a crew is permitted at the new start.
- 5.7.19 If there is a capsize the competitor or crew is eliminated from the race.
- 5.7.20 The Chief Official has the right to interrupt a correctly started race if unforeseen hindrances arise. The course umpires with a red flag and sound signal may affect such an interruption. Competitors must immediately stop paddling and await further instructions.
- 5.7.21 If a paddle is broken a competitor may not be provided with a new one by a supporter.
- 5.7.22 Taking pace or receiving assistance from boats not in the race or by any other means is not permitted.
- 5.7.23 The boat has finished the race when its bow crosses the finish line with all crew members in it. The Finish line judges will determine the result of the competition based on the order of the boats arriving according to the rules.
- 5.7.24 If two or more boats reach the finishing line at the same time they are awarded the same classification in the final.
- 5.7.25 The competitor must leave the course after the finish of the race and cannot disturb the next race.
- 5.7.26 When there is a boat control this the crews selected by the Sport Specific Jury must immediately contact the place allocated for the post race boat control. Boat control may only be contacted for professional kayak events.
- 5.7.27 In international events the official language for all commands is English.
- 5.7.28 Competition Rules 1 Kilometer Race



- 5.7.28.1 Starts will be a group or single starts, with each kayaker or doubles team timed individually. Place will be determined based on time. When single starts will be used, the starts shall be in order from the fastest kayaker to the slowest kayaker to minimize passing on the course.
- 5.7.28.2 When navigating the course, kayakers will pass each buoy to the right of the buoy (i.e., buoy is on the kayaker's left). Kayakers should be provided an opportunity to inspect the course during a designated time prior to the competition.
- 5.7.28.3 The kayak that is in the lead has the right-of-way at all times. The kayak that is behind must yield to the leading kayak when attempting to pass. Failure to adhere to this rule will result in disqualification for impeding the progress of another racer.

5.8 Disqualification

- 5.8.1 Any competitor who attempts to win a race by any other than honorable means, or who breaks the racing regulations, or who disregards the honorable nature of the racing regulations shall be disqualified for the duration of the race concerned.
- 5.8.2 Should a competitor have completed a race in a kayak which is shown upon inspection not to conform with the SOI or/and ICF specifications he/she shall be disqualified from the race in question.
- 5.8.3 It is prohibited to receive external assistance during a race.
- 5.8.4 No crew may be accompanied along and adjacent to the race course by other boats while the race is in progress.
- 5.8.5 No crew may receive assistance by using objects thrown into the course.
- 5.8.6 Any of the above infractions will result in the disqualification of the competitor(s) concerned.
- 5.8.7 All disqualifications by the Sport Specific Jury have to be confirmed in writing immediately with the reasons. The team leader has to acknowledge the receipt of a copy with the exact time, which is the start of the protest time.
- 5.8.8 Failure to deliver the copy confirmation of the disqualification to the team leader does not invalidate the disqualification.
- 5.8.9 The Jury may discipline any competitor or Official whose behavior is detrimental to the good order and conduct of the competition. The Jury may after repeated action by the offender disqualify him/her for that competition.

5.9 Protests and Appeals

- 5.9.1 Any protest involving the judgment of the referee or judge will not be given consideration.
- 5.9.2 The Protest must be in written form, using the Protest Form available from the Sport Information Desk (SID).
- 5.9.3 Only the Head of Delegation or designated Head Coach may protest and must do so no later than 30 minutes after the conclusion of the event.
- 5.9.4 Once the Jury/Sports Specific Rules Committee has made its decision, the Head of Delegation can either accept or appeal to the Jury of Appeals/ Games Rules Committee (GRC).
- 5.9.5 All decisions made by the Games Rules Committee will be final.

6. SAFETY

6.1 Officials/Safety Boats

- 6.1.1 There will be officials/safety boat on the water during practice and competition.
- 6.1.2 The number of officials/safety boats will depend upon weather and the ability levels of the athletes.



6.2 Crew Safety

- 6.2.1 Crew Members must remain in the kayak at all times while on the water. Legs must be in the kayak at all times.
- 6.2.2 Horseplay on the water may lead to the athlete being removed from competition or a similar penalty.
- 6.2.3 Athletes must be seizure-free for 1 year prior to competing.