



Special Olympics
South Dakota



ATHLETE HANDBOOK

Swimming

2021

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Special Olympics South Dakota



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Dear Special Olympics Athlete,

Congratulations on becoming a part of Special Olympics South Dakota (SOSD)!

Through your commitment to Special Olympics and its programs, we challenge you to train and compete in all sports you desire. We also challenge you to find your voice and to help us shape and grow SOSD. There are many exciting ways to be an athlete and a leader, so be sure to ask your coach or the Special Olympics office for more resources.

By participating in sports, physical fitness, and health education programs, you will increase self-confidence and social skills, improve physical and motor skills, and have more opportunities to grow as a person. This handbook is designed to introduce SOSD to you and to provide general information needed as an athlete.

We wish you luck, and can't wait to see you out on the field and in the community!



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1. Competition

The state is divided into four Areas. The city in which you live will determine which Area competitions you attend.

Northeast (NE) - Aberdeen, Huron, Watertown, and the surrounding communities

Southeast (SE) - Brookings, Mitchell, Sioux Falls, Yankton, and the surrounding communities

Black Hills (BH) - Custer, Rapid City, Spearfish, and the surrounding communities

Central (C) - Pierre, Mission, Winner, and the surrounding communities. These delegations do not have dedicated Area competitions to attend. In other words, you can choose where you wish to go.

For those who qualify, there are also State competitions held in the following sports:

State Basketball Tournament - Team (Traditional & Unified), Cheerleading (Traditional & Unified), and Skills (Individual & Team)

State Summer Games - Swimming (Traditional & Unified), Powerlifting, Volleyball, Soccer (Traditional & Unified), Soccer Skills, Racewalking, and Track & Field (Traditional & Unified)

State Equestrian

Fall Classic - Bocce (Traditional & Unified), Softball (Traditional & Unified), and Softball Skills

State Traditional Bowling

State Unified Bowling

Eligibility to participate in these events will depend on you meeting all of the training requirements and rules developed by your Delegation or Team.

Please Note: Delegations and Teams may choose to NOT participate in events. There could be many reasons for this, including the availability of coaches, finances, and roster numbers.

2. Practices / Training Requirements

The time, place, duration, and content of your practices will be established by your program leadership and can vary rather significantly from program to program. However, rest assured your coaches have completed the required certification course work and have demonstrated competence in coaching their sport. The following are general training expectations set forth by the State Office:

- Bowling: A minimum of five 3-game series or a total of 15 games over a minimum of 8 weeks.
- Winter Games: A minimum of 15 hours over a minimum of 8 weeks.
- Basketball: A minimum of 15 hours over a minimum of 8 weeks.
- Summer Games: A minimum of 15 hours over a minimum of 8 weeks. The number of hours required would be divided among the number of sports in which you are participating; for example 3 sports - 5 hrs persport / 2 sports - 7.5 hrs per sport / 1 sport - 15 hours.
- Equestrian: A minimum of 15 hours over a minimum of 8 weeks.

- Fall Classic: A minimum of 15 hours over a minimum of 8 weeks. The number of hours required would be divided among the number of sports in which you are participating; for example 2 sports - 7.5 hrs per sport / 1 sport - 15 hours.

3. Unified Sports

There are two kinds of teams in Special Olympics, Traditional and Unified. Everyone on a Traditional Team is a Special Olympics Athlete. On a Unified Team, some of the players have a disability and some do not.

4. Athletes Code of Conduct

Special Olympics is committed to the highest ideals of sport and expects all athletes to honor sports and Special Olympics. All Special Olympics athletes and Unified Sports Partners are expected to observe the following code:

Sportsmanship

I will practice good sportsmanship.

I will act in ways that bring respect to me, my coaches, my team, and Special Olympics.

I will not use bad language.

I will not swear or insult other persons.

I will not fight with other athletes, coaches, volunteers, or staff.

Training and Competition

I will train regularly.

I will learn and follow the rules of my sport.

I will listen to my coaches and the officials and ask questions when I do not understand.

I will always try my best during training, divisioning, and competitions.

I will not “hold back” in preliminary competition just to get into an easier finals division.

Responsibility for My Actions

I will not make inappropriate or unwanted physical, verbal, or sexual advances on others.

I will not smoke or vape in non-smoking areas.

I will not drink alcohol or use illegal drugs at Special Olympics events.

I will not take drugs for the purpose of improving my performance.

I will obey all laws and Special Olympics rules.

I understand that if I do not obey this Code of Conduct, I will be subject to a range of consequences by my Program or a Games Organizing Committee for a World Games, up to and including not being allowed to participate.

5. You Know What I mean?

People often use short-cuts when speaking and writing about Special Olympics.

DQ = Disqualification. An athlete will receive only a participation ribbon when, during competition, a judge determines a rules infraction has occurred.

GOC = Games Organizing Committee. For every State event we host, there is a group of people from the host city who help organize the event.

HA = Healthy Athletes. At our State Summer Games, we provide health screenings to athletes.

HOD = Head of Delegation. This is the person in charge of your delegation/team.

ID = Intellectual Disability. All athletes participating in Special Olympics have an ID.

LETR = Law Enforcement Torch Run. These are people who help raise money for SOSD.

SO or SOI = Special Olympics and Special Olympics, Inc. The preferred name is Special Olympics.

SOSD = Special Olympics South Dakota. SOSD is a state program of Special Olympics. The State Office is located in Sioux Falls.

UP = Unified Partners. These are players on teams who do not have an ID.

YA = Young Athletes. These are future Special Olympics athletes who are ages 2 - 7.

6. Application for Participation in Special Olympics South Dakota

To participate in Special Olympics, you must complete Form A: Application for Participation in Special Olympics South Dakota. This form contains the following components:

- ⇒ Your contact information
- ⇒ Contact information for a parent/guardian
- ⇒ Health insurance information
- ⇒ Physical exam that must be completed by a medical professional every three years
- ⇒ A release signed by either you or a parent/guardian
- ⇒ Once this form is completed, you should give it to your HOD. They will give a copy to the State Office.
- ⇒ If you should get injured or become ill at a Special Olympics event and should require the care of a medical professional, your HOD should bring this document with you.

7. Concussions

Defining a Concussion

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury caused when you get hit on the head or from a bunch of smaller blows to the head. Concussions can also occur from a blow to the body that causes the head and brain to move quickly back and forth—causing the brain to bounce around or twist within the skull. Although concussions are usually not life-threatening, their effects can be serious, therefore, proper attention must be paid to individuals suspected of sustaining a concussion.

Suspected or Confirmed Concussion

If a coach or official thinks you have sustained a concussion in a practice, game, or competition, you will be removed

from practice, play, or competition at that time. If a qualified medical professional is available on-site to render an evaluation, that person shall have final authority as to whether or not a concussion is suspected. If applicable, your parent or guardian should be made aware that the participant is suspected of sustaining a concussion.

Return to Play

If you have been removed from practice, play or competition due to a suspected concussion, you may not participate in Special Olympics sports activities until either of the following occurs A) at least seven consecutive days have passed since you were removed from play and a currently licensed, qualified medical professional* provides written clearance for the participant to return to practice, play and competition or B) a currently licensed, qualified medical professional determines you did not suffer a concussion and provides written clearance for you to return to activities immediately. Written clearance in either of the scenarios above shall become a permanent record.

*A qualified medical professional is defined as a person who is registered, certified, licensed, or otherwise recognized in law, by the State of South Dakota, to provide medical treatment and is trained and experienced in the evaluation, management, and care of concussions.

8. Abuse

Your health, safety, and well-being are of the highest concern to those in your Special Olympics family (Coaches, chaperones, staff, and volunteers). If you should ever feel unsafe or mistreated, we urge you to seek the assistance of a family member or a trusted member of your Special Olympics family.

9. Competition Readiness

To compete at your best you need to be prepared!

1. Proper sports equipment: For example, you will need a softball glove that fits your hand.
2. Uniform or sports clothing: Blue jeans are not appropriate for competition. Your shoelaces should be tied and you should be wearing sports socks.
3. Proper sports shoes: If you wear cowboy boots while competing in basketball, for example, the possibility of injuring an ankle is quite high. Plus, you won't look like a serious athlete.
4. Minimal or no jewelry.
5. Hair is out of your face.
6. Sunscreen on exposed skin.
7. Eat a healthy snack or meal within 2-3 hours of the event.
8. Drink one bottle of water within an hour of the event.
9. Warm-up before the event.

10. Year-round Fitness

Staying fit and healthy should not end when your latest State event is over. It is very important for you to set fitness goals and strive to fulfill them. Here are some ideas:

1. Work out or go for a walk at least 5 times per week.

2. Eat fast food no more than 3 times per week.
3. Get 8 hours of sleep per night.
4. Drink 5 large glasses of water per day.
5. Do not drink soda... even diet soda.
6. Eat 5 fruits and/or vegetables every day.

11. Athlete Leadership

Inclusion starts with Athlete Leadership! What does the word “inclusion” mean? Many things, but as it applies to Special Olympics it means:

- A. You should have the opportunity to enjoy the same experiences as people without an ID, and;
- B. You should have the same opportunities to contribute to SO through the sharing of your talents and gifts outside of competition.

The following are roles athletes can and should be filling:

1. Athlete Leadership Council
2. Coaches
3. Committee Members
4. Fund-raisers
5. Games Organizing Committee Members
6. Global Messengers (Giving Speeches)
7. Health Promoters
8. Officials
9. Photographers
10. Reporters
11. SOSD Board of Directors
12. Volunteers

For more information regarding any of these roles, contact the state office at 605.331.4117.

12. Fundraising

It takes a lot of money to put on Special Olympics events. You can help your local program as well as the State with this. We strongly encourage you to attend fundraising events in your community and actively help out when applicable.

For you to perform at your best, you need to know the rules of the game. Look for Athlete Handbooks for all of your sports.

Special Olympics South Dakota Sports Rules - Swimming

General Rules

1. Athletes can hang on a rope or stand on the floor to rest. Athletes can not use the rope or the floor to propel themselves forward. Doing so will result in a DQ.
2. Athletes must start and finish in their lane. Failure to do so will result in a DQ.
3. Any swimmer making 2 false starts will receive a DQ.
4. No athlete will be permitted to use or wear any device that may aid your speed. For example flippers.
5. Athletes can participate in up to 3 individual events and 1 relay.
6. All starts will consist of two commands ... "Take your marks," and then upon all swimmers being stationary, the start signal.
7. Coaches will only be allowed in the staging and competition area when an athlete needs special attention.
8. Only registered members of delegations with credentials will be allowed on the pool deck during the competition.
9. To maximize pool time, some divisions will be run simultaneously in the pool.
10. Recommended swim attire includes board shorts, swim trunks, swim briefs, or jammers for males, and a one-piece swimsuit for females.
11. Goggles, nose clip, swim caps, and aqua shoes for walking events is acceptable equipment.
12. Athletes are encouraged to wear a team shirt, shorts, or have a towel wrapped around the midsection during awards.

Swimming Events

Freestyle

- The freestyle is defined as a stroke other than the backstroke, breaststroke, or butterfly.
- Athletes must have an alternating forward arm action with a flutter kick. The most common DQ is flipping over to the back or using incorrect arm action and/or incorrect kick for more than 1 ½ strokes.
- Starts: Athletes must have two feet and one hand touching the wall. Diving starts are allowed.
- Turns: Athletes, at each turn, shall touch the wall with one hand if using open turns at, above, or below the water. Flip turns are acceptable.
- Finish: Athletes shall touch the wall with at least one hand.
- Distances Offered: 100, 50 and 25, 15

Backstroke

- Athletes must have an alternating arm motion with a flutter kick. The most common DQ is flipping to the stomach for more than 1 ½ strokes.
- Starts: Athletes must start with two feet and two hands touching the wall or holding on to starting blocks.
- Turns: Athletes, at each turn, shall touch the wall with one hand at, above, or below the water.

- Finish: Athletes shall touch the wall with at least one hand. Flip turns are acceptable.
- Distances Offered: 100, 50 and 25

Breaststroke

- When swimming the breaststroke the swimmer is face down in the water, and the arm and leg actions are the same. The swimmer breathes in at the beginning of each arm stroke.
- Starts: Athletes must start with two feet and one hand touching the wall. Diving starts are allowed.
- Turns and Finish: At each turn and the finish of the race, the touch shall be made with both hands simultaneously at, above, or below the water level. The most common DQs are for one-handed touches and using a flutter kick or scissor kick. Flip turns are not acceptable.
- Distances Offered: 50 and 25

Butterfly

- The butterfly stroke relies on good timing and simultaneous arm and leg actions. The stroke is best taught by breaking it down into three phases: kick, arm action, and breathing.
- Starts: Athletes must start with two feet and one hand touching the wall. Diving starts are allowed.
- Turns: Athletes, at each turn, shall touch the wall with one hand if using open turns at, above, or below the water. Flip turns are acceptable.
- Finish: Athletes shall touch the wall with at least one hand.
- Distances Offered: 50 and 25

Individual Medley

- The swimmer must change strokes throughout the race using the correct turns and tempo for each of the strokes.
- Regardless of the distance of the individual medley event, the swimmer must swim the race using the four competitive strokes in the correct order (butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, freestyle).
- The athlete swims each stroke for one-fourth of the race.
- Distance Offered: 100

Flotation Race

- Athletes in these events are allowed to swim on front or back with any stroke and kick.
- Athletes are not allowed to have assistant for the race.
- The flotation device must be of the body wrap-around type such that if the athlete were to not be able to hold on to the device, the device would still support the athlete with the face out of the water (flotation devices such as aqua joggers or other waist belts, kickboards, inner tubes or floats that wrap around the arms are not acceptable).
- Athletes with an unapproved flotation device will not be allowed to participate.
- Distances Offered: 25 and 15

Assisted Swim

- A coach may touch, guide, or direct the athlete but may not support or assist the athlete's forward movement.
- The swimmer is allowed to use a flotation device.
- Athletes may swim on front or back and use any stroke and kick desired.
- The assistant may be in the pool or on the deck.
- Distances Offered: 25 and 15

Walking Events

- Athletes must have at least one foot touching the bottom of the pool at all times.
- This event is non-assisted. No water assistance is allowed.
- Distances Offered: 15

Relays

- Athletes who participate in the 25m flotation race are allowed to compete in the 4x25 relay without a flotation device.
- Swimmers in positions 1, 2, and 3 must touch the wall before the next swimmer leaves the wall.
- It is recommended you practice in the same order that you will compete.
- Any stroke is allowed in the 4 x 25 and 4 x 50 Relays.
- Distances Offered: 4 x 25 and 4 x 50

Unified Relay (Freestyle Only)

- Unified Relay teams must have two athletes and two Unified Partners.
- Teams must have competed as a relay team at an area competition.
- Substitutions for Unified Partners will not be allowed.
- No Flotation devices are allowed in the Unified Relay.
- Athletes and Unified Partners will alternate swimming order. (Ex: Unified partners 1st/3rd and athletes 2nd/4th)
- Distance Offered: 4 x 25

Motor Activity Training Program (MATP)

- Our two MATP events are intended for those athletes who are unable to complete an official event within the established rules because of skill and/or functional abilities.
- Coaches can provide any assistance needed to ensure event completion.
- Athletes in MATP events cannot compete in any other events.
- Distances Offered: 25 and 15

Sportsmanship

1. Put forth maximum effort during each event.

2. Practice the skills with the same intensity as you would perform them in competition.
3. Always finish a game/event. Never quit.
4. Always comply with the rules.
5. Demonstrate sportsmanship and fair play at all times.
6. Respect the decision of the officials at all times.