

**REGULATIONS GOVERNING
SPECIAL OLYMPICS IRELAND SPORT
2021 - 2025**



***Special
Olympics
Ireland***

www.specialolympics.ie

INTRODUCTION

Special Olympics Ireland provides year-round sports training and competition for people with intellectual disabilities.

Each sport is governed by the Official Special Olympics Summer/Winter Sports Rules, which provide the standards for Special Olympics competitions. In addition to the Sports Rules, Article 1 of the Special Olympics Official General Rules includes a number of provisions that apply to sports training and competitions.

This document outlines the regulations that govern all of our sports. It should be used as a reference tool and be read in conjunction with the Official Special Olympics Summer/Winter Sports Rules, the National Governing Body sport specific rules and Article 1, Special Olympics Official General Rules, where it applies.

In the event of there being a conflict between National Governing Body and Special Olympics rules, the Special Olympics rules prevail.

As a number of versions of the Official Special Olympics Summer/Winter Sports Rules and Special Olympics Official General Rules may exist, it is those available on the Special Olympics Ireland website that are used to govern our competitions. www.specialolympics.ie

When reading a particular regulation in this document, it is advisable to read any additional regulation or policy referred to in the section.



Special Olympics
Ireland

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1. Eligibility to participate in Special Olympics Ireland

1.1. Participation in Special Olympics Ireland as an Athlete

- a. Participation in Special Olympics Ireland is open to every person with an intellectual disability, who is registered with Special Olympics Ireland from the age of 4. The Young Athletes™ programme is for children aged 4 to 12. It introduces children to a wide range of play activities in a familiar, supportive and fun environment and introduces the fundamental movement skills such as throwing, catching, jumping and balancing. Progressing from this, athletes can compete from 8 years of age and there is no upper age limit.
- b. To participate as an athlete within Special Olympics Ireland programme, an individual must become a member of a club affiliated to Special Olympics Ireland. To do this an Athlete Registration Form must be completed and submitted to the club to process the registration.

1.2. Participation in Unified Competition

Where an athlete is participating in Level 2 Golf, the Unified Partner (individual without an intellectual disability) must be a registered volunteer with Special Olympics Ireland and must be registered as a Unified Partner.

2. Supervision ratio guidelines

Special Olympics Ireland recommends a ratio of support at any training session and Area/ Regional Competitions/ Development Days of one volunteer/coach for every four athletes (1:4). This ratio applies to training/ competition activities and also to the activities that facilitate participation such as access to locker or changing rooms before or after these sessions.

It is recognised that the club may be required to increase or decrease this ratio taking the following considerations into account:

- A minimum of two (2) volunteers must be present at all times regardless of the athlete numbers
- The club should seek to ensure that the gender of the athletes is considered when allocating volunteers, i.e. male volunteers with male athletes and female volunteers with female athletes, as is practical
- The level of risk associated with the sport and or the additional needs/ability of the athlete/s may bring the ratio of volunteers to athletes lower, e.g. 1:2 or higher e.g. 1:6

- Some National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs) have sports specific guidelines in place for coach: athlete ratio, e.g. swimming, kayaking. Where there is conflict between the NGB and Special Olympics on the coach: athlete ratio guidelines, the higher supervision ratio should apply.

It is the responsibility of the Head Coach of the sport together with the Club Safeguarding Officer to ensure training is conducted in a safe environment and adequate support is in place. Coaches should seek additional advice from parents/guardians where applicable but remembering that safety is the number one priority. The objective of any session is for it to be both positive and enjoyable for all athletes and volunteers.

Where adequate individual support is not possible due to the resources and expertise of the coaches and volunteers, it may not be possible for individual athletes to partake in club training or competitions.

2.1. Coaching Qualifications & Head Coach role

- a. Each Club must have a coach with the required level of qualifications present and leading each training session. Clubs that offer team sports i.e. floorball, football and basketball, the same requirements must be in place for each team. Please refer to Special Olympics Ireland Coaching Standards (Appendix 18.9).
- b. Assistant coaches must hold the required coaching qualification in line with Special Olympics Ireland Coaching Standards Document (Appendix 18.9).
- c. A club attending a sports competition, development day or other similar sports activity must appoint an individual to act as Head Coach per sport/team to act as a single point of contact with the event organisers in order for the club to take part in competition.
- d. It is ideal to have the Head Coach role independent of the supervision ratio.
- e. All athletes should be offered a minimum of 1 hour training per week per sport.

3. Categorisation of sports in Special Olympics Ireland

3.1. Categories of sports

The sports in which Special Olympics athletes are given the opportunity to train and compete are divided into four levels. Sports are recognised by the criteria listed below for each level. See the Full Chart in the appendix.

The Sport Rules Advisory Committee (SRAC) implement the new sport classifications due to the reasons outlined below.

- To develop a meaningful sport development pathway resulting in automatic World Games inclusion for those sports at the highest level.
- Enhancing criteria for achieving top level that is globally relevant based on data driven from census including additional info on numbers athletes/partners participating in a sport in addition to programs and regions.
- Using Global Association of International Federations (GAISF) as vetting agency to ensure sport has supporting infrastructure for quality growth.
- Establishing an incentive/reward for increased participation levels.
- Flexibility for inclusion of sports at World Games, which are strategically important to SOI or an LOC.
- This replaces the current classifications, which was purely a recognition of program participation levels but does not guarantee inclusion in World Games as participation levels increase.

Each sport level will be re-evaluated based on Special Olympics' census data on an annual basis.

4. Minimum training standards for clubs

Entering athletes/teams into competition up to Regional Level

Prerequisite to entering competition

- a. A newly established club should be operating for at least six months before any competitive opportunities are considered.
- b. A new athlete to a sport should be in training for at least eight weeks before entry to competition is considered and their readiness for

competition assessed. Entering an athlete into competition before they are ready can mean they are unprepared and have unrealistic expectations. This can result in them feeling a very real sense of failure. Competition then becomes associated with negative emotions, the last thing that any coach or parent wants to see happening. There is a guide to readiness for competition available from the regional offices and on the website www.specialolympics.ie

- c. An athlete's readiness for competition/suitability criteria must be taken into account.
- d. Where athletes require additional support for an event, requests should be submitted at the time of competition entry and will be assessed.

5. Readiness for Competition

Coaches should always make every effort to ensure that athletes are prepared in every possible way for competition. Competition can and should be one of the most enjoyable, exciting and rewarding elements of participation in any sport. Achieving this means making sure our athletes are well trained physically, have the appropriate technical and tactical skills and also that they are mentally and emotionally prepared for the rigours of competition. In doing this, we can ensure that all of our athletes enjoy the wonderfully exciting and challenging experience that competition can be and a long and happy sporting career. There is a guide to readiness for competition available from the regional offices and on the website www.specialolympics.ie

5.1 Sports Programme

Across the 5 regions in Special Olympics Ireland, competition is offered within a 4 year advancement cycle. As some regions are further broken down in to areas the first level of advancement competition is Area level. Athletes who participate in this level are eligible for selection to advance to Regional competition. Not all sports are offered at area level due to insufficient numbers, which means for those sports, the first level of advancement competition will be Regional level.

6. Definition of official competition

- a. Only the official events listed within each sport in the current official Special Olympics Summer or Winter Sports Rules, or official events within other sports supported by Special Olympics Ireland, may be offered at Special Olympics Ireland Games.
- b. Each region can decide what events to offer within each sport at area and regional competition based on knowledge of their programme.
- c. Up to and including regional level, at the discretion of the region, unofficial events may be offered. These events may not be considered at regional level as an advancement event to Ireland Games.

6.1 Event notification

Initial notification of competition event dates will be communicated at the start of the sporting calendar year.

6.2 Timelines for competition entries

Prior to each competition the timelines for competition entries are standard across all regions.

Please refer to appendix 18.2

6.3 Event Entries

- a. Entries will only be accepted in the format outlined by the Regional Office/ Special Olympics Ireland.
- b. Event Day - No new entries or changes to existing entries are accepted on the day of an event.

6.4 Appealing a late entry

- a. Late entries create a number of difficulties for an Event team in managing the competition format, divisioning and schedule.
- b. Late entries will only be considered in extreme circumstances and must be in writing from the club 4 weeks prior to the event.

- c. If for whatever reason, a club does not receive invitations to an event, or fail to disseminate the information within the club this will not be considered a viable reason for late entries.
- d. Late entries will be referred to the Entries Appeal Panel for consideration.
- e. The Entry Appeals Panel will consist of Regional Development Officer Sport, the relevant Competition Manager and either the Sports or Events Officer on the regional committee. In the absence of any of the three members, the Regional Director will substitute. The Regional Director will also substitute if there is a conflict of interest for any of the members.
- f. The decision of the panel will be communicated to the club.

6.5 Athlete Improved Performance Time/Score/Distance

- a. Following submission of times/scores/distance for entry to an event, a Head Coach may complete and submit an Improved Performance Request Form within 1½ weeks prior to the event to the Regional Development Officer, Sport. See Appendix 18.3 for Improved Performance Request Form.
- b. In Athletics and Swimming, where divisioning is held at an event and an athlete's entry score/time/distance was faster or better than that of the divisioning round, the better score will be used to division the athlete.

7. Protests and Appeals

If a Head Coach at an event is of the opinion that there has been a rule violation or that a rule has been misapplied to their athlete they are entitled to lodge a protest to have that decision overturned at the Sports Information Desk. Rulings of referees or umpires cannot be protested

7.1 Jury of Sport

- a. Each competition must have a Jury of Sport in place.
- b. A jury is established based on the protocol set out by the National Governing Body for that sport.
- c. Where no such protocol is published, the jury shall consist of three members: The Regional Development Officer for Sport, the Competition Manager and the Head Official for that sport.

7.2 The Jury of Appeals

- a. A Jury of Appeals is established based on the protocol set out by the National Governing Body for that sport.
- b. Where no such protocol is published, a Jury of Appeals shall consist of three members: the Regional/Programme Coordinator for the sport, Regional Development Officer for Sport and a representative from the Sports Department of Special Olympics Ireland.

7.3 Eligibility to Protest and Appeal

Only a Head Coach or a designated registered coach (in the absence of a Head Coach) may submit a protest or an appeal at the competition event. Please see appendix 18.11 for the relevant policy.

7.4 Making a protest for official/advancement competition

- a. A protest must be made in writing, on a completed Official Protest Form, at the Sports Information Desk within the specified time as announced at the Head Coaches Meeting. See Appendix 18.4 Protest Form.
- b. A Jury of Sport, as per the National Governing Body for the sport, meets and approves or denies the protest (See 7.1 Jury of Sport).
- c. Any protest involving the judgement of a referee/judge will not be given consideration.
- d. The divisioning of athletes cannot be protested unless the process of divisioning was misapplied.
- e. All protests must cite the actual rule from either the Federation Rules or those of Special Olympics to be given consideration.
- f. The decision will be relayed within the agreed timeframe directly to the Head Coach.

7.5 Lodging an appeal for official/advancement competition

- a. In the case of a Head Coach not accepting the ruling from the Jury of Sport (see 7.1 Jury of Sport) there is the opportunity to appeal the ruling to the Jury of Appeals (see 7.2 Jury of Appeals) within an agreed timeframe.

- b. Appeals must be lodged at the Sports Information Desk on the original Protest Form and must be marked clearly with a notation that it is an appeal and the grounds on which they are making the appeal within 20 minutes after the receipt of the decision on the protest.
- c. The Jury of Appeals meets to approve or deny the appeal and the result is conveyed directly to the Head Coach as soon as is practical after the submission of the appeal.

7.6. Athlete eligibility to participate in final rounds

- a. If a divisioning round is being held for an event/competition, an athlete must participate in the divisioning round/s in order to compete in the final rounds of competition.
- b. If an athlete is disqualified in a divisioning event (round), they may still advance to the final round of competition provided they can safely compete in that event and were not disqualified due to unsportsmanlike behaviour.
- c. The entry score/time/distance or improved score/time/distance submitted on an Improved Performance Request Form* will be used to place the athlete in the appropriate division for the final round, if the athlete did not finish the divisioning round.

**Please refer to the relevant policy in appendix 18.11*

8. Athlete Discipline at Competition

8.1 Disqualification of athletes

- a. On becoming a member of Special Olympics Ireland an athlete must agree to abide by the Athlete's Code of Conduct appendix 18.7. Failure to abide by the code may result in the athlete being disqualified from Special Olympics competition.
- b. See 10.1 Outline of awards at official competition.
- c. See 7.6 Athlete eligibility to participate in final rounds.

8.2 League Competition

Regions run various sports leagues. Each region will have local rules to suit the format of the league and the sport.

9. Rules Changes

9.1 Rule Changes

- a. All registered members of the Special Olympics Ireland programme have an opportunity to submit any suggested changes to the Official Special Olympics Summer/Winter Sports Rules and to Special Olympics Official General Rules on an Official Proposed Rule Change form. See Appendix 18.6 Proposed Rule Change Form.
- b. The Special Olympics International sports rules change process is a two year process.
- c. Completed Proposed Rule Changes forms should be submitted to Special Olympics Ireland by August 30th each year.
- d. New rules will be announced biannually by Special Olympics International by July the following year commencing in July 2020, following which they are published on the Special Olympics Ireland website. Depending on the particular change/s together with the year in the advancement cycle, agreement is reached within the programme as to when they come into effect.
- e. The rules displayed on the Special Olympics Ireland website at the time of the event are considered current.

9.2 Sports Regulations Changes

- a. The Regulations Governing Special Olympics Ireland Sports handbook will be updated every four years, if required, in line with the advancement cycle.
- b. The version of the handbook available on the Special Olympics Ireland website will be used to govern competitions/sports.

10. Awards

10.1 Outline of awards at official competitions

- a. Medals will be presented for 1st through to 3rd place and placement ribbons will be presented for 4th through 8th place.
- b. All awards are presented in reverse order.

- c. Athletes disqualified for technical rules infringements or who 'Did not Finish' will be awarded a participation ribbon on the next available position on the podium.
- d. Athletes who are disqualified for unsportsmanlike behaviour will not receive an award.
- e. All athletes participating in the Motor Activities Training Programme will receive a challenge award. A challenge ribbon is presented at area level and a challenge medal is presented at Regional and Special Olympics Ireland level.

10.2 Timeframe for presentation of awards

- a. It is the intention that the awards ceremony will take place within 30 minutes, or as soon as possible, following completion of the event.
- b. Awards will not wait for a protest or a ruling of a protest before presenting awards.
- c. The Competition Manager should ensure coaches are aware of the agreed time for presentation of awards at the Head Coaches meeting.

10.3 Replacement of lost award

- a. Head Coach/athlete reports a lost award to the Sports Information Desk by completing an official form. See Appendix 18.5 for Replacement/Collection of Award Form.
- b. Once the information is verified a duplicate award will be forwarded to the Head Coach/athlete as soon as possible.

10.4 Presentation of awards for athletes participating in another event

- a. In some sports e.g. athletics or swimming where an athlete may participate in a number of events, it may be necessary to escort an athlete from awards staging to the Field of Play for competition, thereby causing the athlete to miss their first presentation.
- b. If the above takes place, the second event will always take precedence over the presentation of an award. The athlete will receive their first award at a scheduled time following completion of their additional event.

10.5 Rescheduling an award ceremony for athletes participating in another event

- a. On completion of the athlete's second event, the athlete will go as scheduled to award staging for the presentation, which will go ahead as scheduled.
- b. The athlete will receive the outstanding award at the first available opportunity.
- c. Should the athlete not present for their outstanding award, the Head Coach may collect the award from the Sport Information Desk.
- d. The desire would be to present the award to the athlete on the podium, but this will be left to the discretion of the Head Coach and athlete.

10.6 Incorrect award presented to athlete

- a. If it is deemed that an incorrect award was presented to an athlete/s, the athlete will receive the correct award, and may keep the award already presented.
- b. Head Coaches have an allocated time in which to lodge a protest (see also 7.4 making a protest for official/advancement competition).
- c. The initial award stands for all athletes in that event, but an additional award may be made to any athlete who received the incorrect award.
- d. As soon as it is confirmed that an incorrect award has been presented, the Head Coach will be informed of a time for the presentation of the correct award.
- e. The athlete will report to the awards area where the presentation will occur.
- f. On the official results and on the Games Management System (GMS), all of the athletes' finishing places will be adjusted to reflect the amended placing. This is important as it will affect the advancement placing for athletes.

11. Delay, postponement or cancellation of an Event or Competition

11.1 Delay, postponement or cancellation of an official/advancement event

There are four possible reasons for delaying, postponing or cancelling an event - sports technical related issues, weather related issues, event related issues or major incident/safety issues:

- **Sport technical** A decision to delay, postpone or cancel a competition may be made at the venue if the problem is of a sports technical nature e.g. water on track, faulty bowling lane.
- **Weather related** Due to the existing weather or possible conditions related to the weather, the competition cannot start or continue while still providing a fair and safe event for athletes and volunteers.
- **Event related issue** If there has been a problem with an event service (e.g. technology, catering,) that has impacted on either most volunteers or most clubs going to or already at a competition venue, the Event Manager should be advised and a decision made to delay, postpone or cancel.
- **Major incident or safety issue** It may be necessary to delay, postpone or cancel an event if a major safety issue has not been addressed (e.g. too few volunteers at the venue, no show from first aid agency), or a major incident has occurred.

11.2 The difference between a delay and a postponement.

- a. A competition should be considered delayed when it has not started for any of the reasons mentioned above within 15 minutes of its scheduled time but the Event Team are certain that it will happen within 2 hours.
- b. A competition should be postponed if after 30 minutes of its initial delay it becomes obvious to the Event Team that it will take longer than the 2 hour time frame. A postponement is usually enforced due to weather related issues i.e. very heavy rain due to clear in a number of hours or a technical issue in the venue which will take longer than 2 hours to repair. On-going monitoring of the situation in increments of 15 minutes is also enforced. The event will still happen within the event day.
- c. A decision to cancel an event may be made if after monitoring the situation the event cannot be re-scheduled into the event programme.

11.3 The implications of delaying, postponing or cancelling an event

- a. If it is a divisioning round, the decision may be made to hold a final round only. Coaches will have the opportunity to submit an improved performance score/time/distance for the final round. See also 6.5 Athlete Improved Performance Time/Score/Distance.
- b. If it is the final rounds, the Competition Manager will endeavour to fit the athlete/s into the schedule in the most appropriate division. This may include a one-person division.
- c. At all times, communication between the Event Manager, Competition Manager, other members of the Event Team and the coaches should be maintained to avoid confusion.

12. Athlete/Team No-Show at events – full day or specific sports events

12.1 Athlete/team “deliberate” no show at an event

- a. Athletes/teams who are not in attendance at the check in times for their event and cannot be contacted will forfeit the game/event.
- b. Head Coaches will receive a schedule in advance, which will outline their athletes’ events and times of competition (See appendix 18.2 Timelines for competition entries).
- c. Each sport will have their own protocol in regard to check in time prior to an event/competition, and this will be outlined clearly at the Head Coaches meeting.
- d. Any athlete who is deemed a deliberate “no show” for an event will be disqualified.
- e. Any team who is deemed a deliberate “no-show” will forfeit the match.
- f. Where it is apparent that there is a pattern of no shows from a particular club, the matter will be addressed by the RDO for Sport and Clubs.

12.2 Process for managing athlete/team no show at an event

- a. An announcement requesting the athlete/team to check into staging will be made.

- b. Where there is a no show, the staging team will check with the registration team to establish the athlete/team presence/absence at the event.
- c. Staging team complete their check in time and call to event procedure.
- d. Final call to staging for the athlete/s/team will be made by the announcer.
- e. Once the athlete/s/team has missed the final call, and has not reported to Staging, and every effort has been made to contact the club via public announcements in the venue an athlete/s/team will be declared a No Show for that event and will forfeit the game/event/match.

13. Suitability of an athlete to participate in the next level of competition

13.1 Advancing to an Ireland / International Games

Prior to accepting a place on a team there are some criteria that is required to comply with.

Criteria	Please Initial
Athlete is capable of attending all squad activities as well as travel and stay at the Games with coaches who may not be familiar to them.	
Athlete is physically and emotionally prepared to participate in all squad activities prior to and during the Games.	
It will be sufficient for their medical and personal care needs to be cared for in a 4 athletes to 1 coach ratio.	
Athlete has a moderate level of independence with regards to their personal care needs.	
A willingness to share all information regarding medical, personal care and behavioural needs. If there are any changes to this during the preparations for the Games the Medical Coordinator will be updated immediately.	
If support is required to transport the athlete to official squad training as requested by the squad management team as the parents/guardians we will support and incur all costs re-lated to this transportation.	
Athlete will attend, arrive on time and fully participate in all training sessions	

Athlete has the ability to share a room in housing with another athlete previously un-known to them during Games and any residential training.	
I accept that if the selected athlete or a family/guardian are unable to comply with the above at any stage then a review of their participation will occur.	

13.2 Review of continued participation of an athlete on a team

If a concern (sport/safeguarding) is raised regarding the continued participation of an athlete on a regional or Ireland team, there are a number of steps that will be implemented before a decision is made to remove an athlete from the team.

It is important to note that when a concern is raised regarding an athlete’s continued participation on a team, confidentiality is paramount and only a key group of individuals are involved. From the athlete’s perspective, it is the athlete and their family member/carer and club coach and from the teams perspective it is the Head Coach, Head of Delegation, Medical Coordinator and the Sport Department as appropriate. Please refer to appendix 18.11 for the relevant policy.

13.3 Withdrawal of an athlete from a team by an athlete, family/carer or club

From time to time an athlete, a family/carer, club or an athlete may decide to withdraw from a team after initially accepting the place.

As careful consideration is given to accepting a place on a team, it is important that equal time and thought should be given to any decision to withdraw from the team.

Step 1	The regional office or Special Olympics Ireland, as appropriate, is advised of the withdrawal of an athlete.
Step 2	Follow up will take place with the athlete, family/carer and club in an effort to identify if there are any outstanding issues which may be possible to address to support and retain the athlete on the team.
Step 3	If after follow up, it is clear that the decision is to withdraw the athlete from the team, the withdrawal must be made in writing and signed off by the athlete and/or family/carer, and the club as appropriate, similar to the process of accepting a place on the team. The withdrawal is sent to the appropriate office, regional or Special Olympics Ireland.

13.4 Athletes suspended from Participation

Any athlete who is suspended or has their membership paused from participation in Special Olympics Ireland will not be permitted to enter any competition for the duration of that suspension/ pause and therefore not eligible for selection.

*Any athlete who does not participate in an advancement event for any reason will not be eligible for selection.

14 Selection and advancement

	Area Advancement Year 1	Regional Advancement Year 2	Ireland Games Year 3	European or World Games Year 4
Who sets Quota	No quota	Region	SO Ireland	Special Olympics Europe Eurasia/ International
Who selects	Club	Region	Region	SO Ireland

14.1 Quotas

- A quota is the maximum number of athletes which can participate in any competition. There are some factors that affect the quota; the size and space of the venue and the time available to run the competition. The competing numbers in the previous level of competition will also have an effect on the quota offered.
- Quotas for competition are determined by the relevant Event/Games Organising Committee (i.e. Region/Special Olympics Ireland/Local Organising Committee for an International Games).
- At all levels of competition, the aim is to fill the quota offered.

14.2 Selecting athletes for advancement competition (area to regional level)

- Area level is the first level of competition offered in the advancement cycle. At this level any athlete/s who wishes to participate will have the opportunity to do so, which means that quotas are not applied.

- b. To advance athletes to the next level of competition i.e. regional level, a quota is established per sport and broken down further to event/category. (See 14.1 Quotas). It is then divided proportionally between all areas within the region based on their athlete participation at area level.
- c. In order for athletes to advance to Regional Events, they must have participated in the area event the previous year, where one was offered. Where an event is offered for team sports, all athletes must play in the event (i.e. all players must have game time in both divisioning and final rounds).
- d. As per Article 1, Special Olympics Official General Rules, the process of selecting athletes for advancement is through random selection from all eligible athletes.
- e. See 14.5 Individual sports advancement process.

14.3 Selecting athletes for advancement competition (regional to Ireland level)

In order for athletes to advance to Ireland Games, they must have participated in the prior regional advancement event. For team sports, all athletes must play in the event (i.e. all players must have game time in both divisioning and final rounds).

- a. A quota is established by Special Olympics Ireland per sport, and per region. This quota is based on the number of athletes who participated in the first level of competition in each region and distributed on a proportional basis per participation level. (See 14.1 Quotas).
- b. As per Article 1, Special Olympics Official General Rules, the process of selecting athletes for advancement is through random selection from all eligible athletes.
- c. See 14.5 Individual sports advancement process and 14.6. Team advancement process.

14.4 Selecting athletes for advancement competition (Ireland to World Games level)

- a. As per the Guidelines Article 1, Special Olympics Official General Rules the process of selecting athletes for advancement from Ireland to World Games is through random selection from all eligible athletes.
- b. Athletes aged 15 and over are eligible to compete at World Games.

- c. See 14.5 Individual sports advancement process, 14.6. Team advancement process
- d. To be eligible to advance for team sports, all athletes must play in the prior advancement event (i.e. all players must have game time in both divisioning and final rounds).
- e. To ensure that all regions are represented on Team Ireland the following will apply:
 - If a quota of 5 places is available and all regions are eligible, each region will receive an allocation of 1 place each.
 - If the quota is a multiple of 5 and if all 5 regions are eligible, then all regions will receive an equal number of places in rotation, i.e. 10 places. Each region will receive 1 place in rotation, and then each region will receive a second place keeping the same sequence of rotation.
 - Where the quota is greater than the number of regions, but not a multiple of 5, e.g. 8 places and all 5 regions are eligible, each region will receive one place and the remaining places will be randomly drawn (fulfilling all other criteria) from all remaining eligible athletes, from all regions combined.
 - Where the quota is less than the number of eligible regions (e.g. 5 eligible regions and 4 places), 4 regions will be drawn in sequence. The number of regions equal to the quota (4) will receive a place (in the order in which they were drawn) and the remaining region (the fifth region) will form the first substitute. This region will be given priority for the next sport where this situation applies and therefore will not be “the fifth region” again.
 - If the situation above occurs in additional sports, the same process will apply, with the region or regions who did not receive a place, included in the first instance in those sports.

14.5 Individual Sports Advancement Process

- a. Working with the given quota; if the number of eligible athletes does not exceed the quota, all athletes advance.
- b. If the number of eligible gold medalist athletes exceeds the quota, athletes are randomly selected to fill the quota from the gold medal winners.

- c. If there are insufficient gold medalists to fill a quota, all gold medalists advance and then random selection from all silver medalists will take place until the quota is filled.
- d. If there are insufficient silver medalists to fill a quota, all gold and silver medalists advance and then random selection from all bronze medalists will take place until the quota is filled. This process will continue down through place winners until the quota is complete.

14.6 Team Advancement Process - Football, Floorball and Basketball

- a. Composite teams will be formed after regional advancement events for participation in the Special Olympics Ireland Games and after Ireland Games for participation in the Special Olympics World Games. Composite teams is where a team is formed with athletes of similar abilities; athletes may be from different clubs or regions.
- b. Athletes are graded using set criteria to determine their ability level. Prior to Ireland Games athletes will be graded on 3 occasions – 1st by club coaches, 2nd at regional grading day and finally at the regional advancement event. Athletes will also be graded at Ireland Games.
- c. A sign off process will exist between RDOs and club coaches after regional events and between Special Olympics Ireland and regional Head Coaches through the regions after Special Olympics Ireland Games in relation to grades and positions assigned to players.
- d. If the grade of competition/team is not determined by the Event/Games Organising Committee (See 14.7 Combining grades for Team Advancement), a random selection will be made to determine the grade.
- e. Athletes at Grade 4 will not be eligible for election to European or World Games as this is deemed a development level in team sports.
- f. See 14.8 Team sports positions for composite teams.

14.7 Combining grades for team advancement

Where insufficient numbers in a particular grade exist, grades may be combined and offered by the Event/Games organisers. When combining grades, only grades adjacent to one another can be combined e.g. in football grade 1 cannot be combined with grade 3 or grade 4, similarly in basketball grade 3 cannot be combined with grade 1.

14.8 Team sports positions for composite teams

The list below details the numbers of each position to be selected for composite teams:

- a. Basketball: Grade 1: 2 Point Guards, 4 Guards, 4 Forwards.
- b. Basketball Grade 2, 3 & 4: 6 Guards, 4 Forwards.
- c. 7-a-side Football: 2 Goalkeepers, 4 Defensive players, 4 Midfield Players and 2 Forwards
- d. Floorball: 2 Goalkeepers, 6 Outfield players.

14.9 Athlete changing level/event for competition

- a. No changes to event entries can be made on the day of an event.
- b. All applications for an athlete to advance to a level/event different from their qualifying level/event in the next competition must be submitted in writing to the Regional Office for the event with relevant records of improved times, distances or scores.
- c. A change in level/event can only be accommodated where possible up to and including Special Olympics Ireland Games by the Event or Games organisers.
- d. The Head Coach who has submitted the request must ensure that the athlete is capable of fully completing and competing in this level/event in a safe manner.
- e. Written confirmation is sent to the relevant coach of the athlete indicating if the application for changing level/event has been successful and highlighting the athlete's new level or event where applicable.
- f. A deadline for this procedure will be established and communicated by the regional office or Special Olympics Ireland to ensure that all programmes/schedules can be distributed in a timely fashion to all stakeholders.
- g. Quota restrictions may inhibit the change or movement of athletes between levels/events e.g. if a Level 1 athlete in golf (skills) wished to move to Level 2 alternate shot (additional place for partner would be required).

15. Participation in Invitational Events

15.1 Accepting and managing invitations on behalf of Special Olympics Ireland

- a. An Invitational Event is one sent from the National Director of a Special Olympics programme to the CEO/Director of Sport, Special Olympics Ireland and is first reviewed for suitability prior to being offered to all regions.
- b. Invitational Events or Games will be offered to regions on condition that the region offered competition opportunities in that particular sport/s in the previous 12 months.
- c. When the Expression of Interest is returned by the region/s, a random draw will take place to select the region who will participate in the event.
- d. On receipt of further invitations, the same process will continue, but excluding the region/s who have already accepted a previous invitation. The fact that a region has already accepted an invitation to participate in a given year will not preclude them from accepting another invitation in that year if no other region wishes to take up the offer.
- e. The participating team, although from one region or club within a region, is a representative team of the Special Olympics Ireland programme.

15.2 Accepting invitations on behalf of a region

- a. On receipt of information regarding the event, the regional office will determine if there is an interest from clubs in the region in attending the event. (See 15.4 Managing invitations on behalf of a Club team).
- b. Expression of Interest is submitted to the Special Olympics Ireland Sports Department.
- c. Once an offer from Special Olympics Ireland is issued the offer may be accepted either by the region itself (see 15.3 Managing invitations on behalf of a regional composite team) or on behalf of a club within the region, (see 15.4 Managing invitations on behalf of a club team).
- d. In order to ensure that all insurance requirements are up to date, the following information should be submitted to the finance department by the regional office 1 month prior to travelling:
 - A briefing note describing the event in question.

- Number and date of birth of athletes, management team and coaches travelling.
 - Dates and airports of departure and return.
 - Any special travel requirements any person travelling may have.
- e. The participating team, although from one region or club within a region, is a representative team of the Special Olympics Ireland programme.

15.3. Managing invitations on behalf of a regional composite team

- a. The selected region will put in place a management team responsible for the preparation, training and management of the team. (See 16. Management Team for Irish delegations).
- b. Athletes are selected based on current regulations for suitability and athlete's participation (See 13.1 Suitability Considerations for an athlete accepting a place on a team).
- c. Selection of athletes should not take place until the Management Team has been appointed.
- d. See 15.5 Managing the finances for Invitational Events/Games.

15.4. Managing invitations on behalf of a club team

- When expressing an interest for Invitational Event/Games to the regional office, the club will supply information on how they intend to manage the invitation.
- The club will be required to cover the full costs of the event and must show their ability to do so to the Regional Office. See 15.5 Managing the finances for Invitational Events/Games by a club.
- If a club is accepting the invitation the Management Team will be selected by the club from volunteers in that club. The Management Team must be approved by the Regional Office.
- Selection of athletes should not take place until the Management Team has been appointed.
- If a club is accepting an invitation, athletes must have competed in a competition in the previous 12 months.

- When selecting athletes see 13.1 Suitability Considerations for an athlete accepting a place on a team.
- All communication will be between the team and the Event organisers and cc'd to the Regional Development Officer for Sport.

15.5. Managing the finances for Invitational Events/Games by a club

- a. The budget should be completed to include all expected costs, plus a contingency relative to the size of the team. The club are fully responsible for all expenses related to the event.
- b. No athlete should be prevented from participation due to lack of the required financial resources.
- c. Unexpected and unforeseen costs should be flagged immediately and reported to the Regional Development Officer responsible for Sport.
- d. In the case of a shortfall exceeding the contingency, it is the responsibility of the region to ensure any outstanding debts are paid by the club.
- e. Any surplus funds for the Event/Games within the region or club should be put back into the club /region sport programme.
- f. All team members should assist with fundraising for the team where possible.
- g. The Head of Delegation must ensure that the team works within the budget, with support from the Regional Development Officer Sport where required.

15.6 Family involvement at Invitational Events/Games

- a. Generally, a Family Support programme, as we are familiar with at Ireland/ World Games, is not offered for Invitational events.
- b. The event will be assessed by the relevant region in association with the appointed Management Team to ascertain if there is a need to appoint a Families Coordinator for the team travelling to the event.
- c. Irrespective of whether a Family Support Programme is being offered or not, the families of all selected athletes should be contacted by letter and given information regarding the event including location, dates, sport/s offered etc.

- d. Family members wishing to travel must be made aware that they are responsible for their own travel and accommodation arrangements and that it is not normally possible for families to be accommodated in the same venue as athletes.
- e. Family members must co-operate and comply with any guidelines, policies and procedures put in place by either the Local Organising Committee or Special Olympics Ireland including visiting/or access to athlete/s during the Event/Games.

16. Management teams for Irish delegations

A Management Team must be appointed for any Special Olympics Ireland team travelling to Invitational, European or World Games. The desire of Special Olympics Ireland would be to have a Management Team that would consist of a number of roles, which must include a Head of Delegation and Medical Coordinator. Depending on the size of the team it may be necessary to duplicate roles.

The relevant policies for selecting the Management Teams are listed in the appendix 18.11

17. Logo use and look of Special Olympics Ireland

17.1. Use of Special Olympics Ireland logo

- a) In order to avoid commercial exploitation of people with an intellectual disability no uniforms or apparel that are worn by Special Olympics Ireland athletes during any competition or during Opening or Closing ceremonies of any Games may be emblazoned with commercial names or commercial messages.
- b) The only commercial markings that may be displayed on athletes' uniforms during Games competitions or Opening or Closing ceremonies are the normal commercial markings of the manufacturer.
- c) For a more detailed explanation of the logo use, please refer to the Club Handbook available on the Special Olympics Ireland website. www.specialolympics.ie

Appendices - 18.1 Categorisation of Sports

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
World Games	Automatic inclusion in World Games	Eligible for inclusion in World Games as determined by SOI Sports Department or if proposed by an LOC and approved by SOI	Eligible for inclusion in World Games as determined by SOI Sports Department or approved by SOI	Eligible for inclusion in World Games as determined by SOI Sports Department or approved by SOI
Program Participation Summer Sports	At least 110 accredited programs conduct this summer sport at program level Games and those programs represent 7 regions	At least 55 accredited programs conduct this summer sport at program level Games and those programs represent 4 regions	At least 12 accredited programs conduct this summer sport at program level Games and those programs represent 2 regions	At least 1 accredited program conducts this summer sport at program level Games
Program Participation Winter Sports	At least 35 accredited programs conduct the winter sport at program level Games and those programs represent 4 regions	At least 20 accredited programs conduct the winter sport at program level Games and those programs represent 3 regions	Same as summer sports above	Same as summer sports above
Athlete Partner Participation	Minimum number of athlete/partners 100k for summer and 10k for winter	Minimum number of athlete/partners 20k for summer and 5k for winter	Minimum number of athlete/partners 1k	Minimum number of athlete/partners 100
Federation Recognition	As International Federation is recognised by Global Association of International Federations (GAISF)	An International Federation is recognised by GAISF	An International Federation is recognised by GAISF	A National Governing Body is in place
Rules	Standardised Special Olympics rules are published and uniformly enforced at Program, Regional and World Games competitions	Standardised Special Olympics rules are published and uniformly enforced at Program, Regional and World Games competitions	Standardised Special Olympics rules are published and uniformly enforced at National Program competitions	Special Olympics rules are enforced at Program level competitions
Coaching	SOI approved coaching resources	SOI approved coaching resources	SOI approved coaching resources	Accredited Program coaching resources
Medical	SOI Medical Advisory Committee has conducted a Health and Safety Risk Assessment	SOI Medical Advisory Committee has conducted a Health and Safety Risk Assessment	SOI Medical Advisory Committee has conducted a Health and Safety Risk Assessment	Accredited SO program has conducted a Health and Safety Risk Assessment

18.2 Event Entry Timelines

No.	Action	Who	Timeline prior to event
1	Entry Forms issued to clubs	Regional Office	10 weeks prior
2	Reminder of deadline issued to clubs	Regional Office	7 weeks prior
3	Submission of entries deadline	Club	6 weeks prior
4	Confirmation of event entries, known as the Delegation report issued to clubs	Regional Office	5 weeks prior
5	Any information deemed missing on the delegation report submitted to regional office	Club	4 weeks prior
6	Cut off for late entry appeals	Club	4 weeks prior
7	Improved performance deadline	Club	1½ weeks prior
8	Competition schedule issued to all clubs	Regional Office	1 week prior

18.3 Improved Performance Form



Improved Performance Request Form

This form should be submitted by the sport specific Head Coach for any request to improve an athlete's score/time following divisioning. To be considered, it should be submitted within the agreed time frame of the sport following the divisioning event.

Sport:	Event:
Athlete Name:	
Delegation Name:	
Athletes previous score/time:	
Divisioning score/time:	
Reason for request:	
Signature of Head Coach:	
Time of Request:	
<i>Official Use Only</i>	
Request Agreed:	
Request Denied:	
Signed:	
Title:	

18.4 Protest Form



Protest Form

A Jury of Sport is in place in each sport and functions as prescribed by the Sports Rules as they apply to the rules of the International Sports Federation and National Governing Bodies. Only a Head Coach can lodge a protest or appeal a protest.

This form must be submitted to the Sports Information Desk no later than the agreed time within the event/sport after the conclusion of the event being protested.

Date:			
Time Submitted:			
Sport:		Event:	
Age Group:		Division:	
Athlete's or Team's Name:			
Delegation Name:			
Reason for Protest:			
Signature of Sport Head Coach:			
<i>Official Use Only</i>			
Decision of Jury/Referee:			
Protest Approved:			
Protest Denied:			
Signed:			
Time:			

18.5 Replacement Award



Replacement/Collection Award Form

Delegation Name:		
Athlete Name:		
Sport:		
Event:		
Date of Competition:		
Award Type:	<input type="checkbox"/> Gold	<input type="checkbox"/> Silver
	<input type="checkbox"/> Bronze	<input type="checkbox"/> 4th
	<input type="checkbox"/> 5th	<input type="checkbox"/> 6th
	<input type="checkbox"/> 7th	<input type="checkbox"/> 8th
Head Coach Name:		
Replacement Ordered:		
Signature Athlete/Head Coach:		
Date:		

Please note replacement awards will only be issued by verification of accreditation pass.

18.6 Rules Change Submission

Mail form to: Special Olympics Ireland
Sport Ireland Campus
Snugborough Rd
Blanchardstown
D15 PC63



Or, e-mail to: elaine.twomey@specialolympics.ie

PROPOSED RULE CHANGE FORM

Name of Sport:		Date of Submission:	
Person Submitting Rule Change:		Address:	
Daytime Telephone Number:		Email Address:	
Rule Change Submitted on behalf of Special Olympics Program: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	If YES, give the name of the Special Olympics Program and the form must be endorsed by authorized program representative (Sports Director, National Director or Board Chair)	Name of Program:	
Proposal Endorsed by (Name and Position):			
Official Special Olympics Sports Rules Version you are reading from: (Date in Bottom Corner)			
Rule Reference (e.g. Cycling - Section E-Rules of Competition, 1.b.)			
Page Number:			
Rule as it Reads:			
Recommendation: (Check the Box of the action proposed) <input type="checkbox"/> Delete Rule <input type="checkbox"/> Add New Rule <input type="checkbox"/> Change to read as follows:			
New Text:			
Reason for Proposed Rule Change ¹ :			
Has this Rule Change been Field Tested? ² :			

¹ You should show how your proposal will have a positive impact on the Special Olympics program or addresses a health and safety concern. This is particularly important if your proposal is of a significant nature – e.g. the addition of a new event within a sport. Some examples are bringing SO rules into line with those of the sports Federation, providing an additional meaningful competition opportunity or bringing new athletes into the sport

² Give as much detail as you can about the field test – who was responsible for conducting the test, the length of the test, how many athletes were involved, whether the test was at the local or program level and how the results of the test were evaluated and support the case for the proposed change.

18.7 Athlete Code of Conduct Version 1



Athlete Code of Conduct

Athlete Name _____

I agree to uphold the following code of conduct

Spirit of Sport

- practice sporting spirit and acknowledge the success of others eg congratulate my team mates and others when they perform well in training or competition
- play with control and in a manner that brings respect to myself and my coaches
- refrain from using bad or offensive language or from physically hurting another athlete

Training and competition

- train regularly and follow the rules of my sport
- listen to the coach/es and the official/s and at the end of competition, thank them and congratulate other athletes or teams.
- always try my best and participate fully during training and competition
- shake hands with other athletes and coaches at the end of training and competition – or if health and safety prohibits this your coach will advise of an alternative

Responsibility for actions

- not make inappropriate or unwanted physical, verbal, or sexual advances on others
- not to bully or verbally abuse others online, by phone or in person
- abide by the policies and procedures set out by my club, Special Olympics Ireland and the National Governing body rules of my sport

Athlete's Rights

As an athlete you have the right to

- receive quality coaching from appropriately qualified coaches
- participate in fair and equitable competition
- train and compete in a safe environment
- have access to communication links throughout Special Olympics
- be safe in any aspect of the programme
- appeal an action taken in relation to keeping to the Code of Conduct, if required
- report any concern you might have

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT BY ATHLETE

I have read the Athlete Code of Conduct and I agree to abide by and support it

Athlete Signature _____ Date _____

Parent /Guardian _____ Date _____

If athlete is under 18 years of age or unable to sign on their own behalf

----- Cut and Keep -----

The Club Safeguarding Officer/Chairperson can be contacted if you have a concern regarding poor practice, health and safety or an allegation of abuse.

Safeguarding Officer _____

Phone: _____

Chairperson: _____

Phone: _____








Photograph
of
Club
Safeguarding
Officer

18.8 Athlete Code of Conduct Version 2

Athlete Code of Conduct



I _____ agree to:

 <p>1. Congratulate my team mates and others when they perform well at training or in competition</p>	 <p>2. Shake hands with other athletes and coaches at the end of training and competition</p>														
<p>3. Train regularly</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td>MON</td><td>TUE</td><td>WED</td><td>THUR</td><td>FRI</td><td>SAT</td><td>SUN</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> </table>		MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN							
MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN									
 <p>4. Try my best in training and in competition</p>	 <p>5. Keep to the Policies and Procedures of Special Olympics Ireland <i>Anti-Bullying, Social Media, Substance Abuse</i></p>														
 <p>6. Listen to and respect my coach and Sport Officials</p>	 <p>7. Learn the rules of my sport</p>	 <p>8. Do not hit, hurt or use bad or offensive language <i>by phone, online, or in person</i></p>													


I have read the above, or it has been explained to me, and I agree to abide by it

Athlete's Signature _____ **Date** _____

Parent /Guardian Signature _____ **Date** _____

(If athlete is under 18 years of age or unable to sign on their own behalf)

----- Cut and Keep -----

<p>The Club Safeguarding Officer/Chairperson can be contacted if you have a concern regarding poor practice, health and safety or an allegation of abuse.</p>		
<p>Safeguarding Officer _____</p>	<p>Phone: _____</p>	
<p>Chairperson: _____</p>	<p>Phone: _____</p>	

18.9 Coach Education Requirements for Special Olympics Ireland Clubs

This document outlines the qualifications for Assistant Coaches, Coaches and Head Coaches for clubs affiliated to Special Olympics Ireland. These updated standards will bring Special Olympics clubs in closer alignment to Sport Ireland Coaching recommendations for all National Governing Bodies. Each Special Olympics club must have an assigned Head Coach with the appropriate qualification.

It is obviously desirable that Special Olympics coaches are as well trained as possible. This means that all coaches should regularly up skill and strive to increase their qualification levels.

In Addition:

- No General Volunteer will be assigned as an Assistant Coach, Coach or Head Coach, without the relevant qualification.
- Every Assistant Coach, Coach and Head Coach is required to have a minimum Sport Ireland - Safeguarding 1 - Child Welfare & Protection Basic Awareness Course or Sports Northern Ireland - Safeguarding Children & Young People in Sport (basic awareness raising) prior to attending a Special Olympics Ireland coaching course or being assigned to these positions.
- Assistant Coaches are any volunteer/s assisting with the delivery of the sports programme in the club, in any manner. They may be required to assist the Coach or Head Coach.
- All Assistant Coaches and Coaches should only be coaching under the guidance of a Head Coach who is qualified to the appropriate level.
- All Assistant Coaches, Coaches and Head Coaches should only be coaching within the parameters that their qualifications allow.
- In Special Olympics clubs with team sports, it is recommended that a suitably qualified Head Coach is assigned per team.
- With the exception of Swimming and Kayaking, a relevant qualification of Level 1 or above from another recognised National Governing Body will suffice as a Head Coach qualification. This qualification may be from a sport other than the official sports offered by SOI.

All Clubs will require these standards for all Assistant Coaches, Coaches and Head Coaches to deliver a sports session. Special Olympics Ireland Regional Development Officers for Sport will guide you on where to obtain the relevant qualifications.

Sport	Assistant Coach (Minimum)	Coach (Minimum)	Head Coach (Minimum)	Ideal Head Coach in line with Sport Ireland Coaching (if different from recommended)
Alpine Skiing *	Introduction to Coaching Practices	Irish Association of Snowsports Instructors Level 1	Irish Association of Snowsports Instructors Level 1	Irish Association of Snowsports Instructors Level 2
Swimming	<p>Swim Ireland Helpers Certificate (Certified only when working under an ASA Level 1/2 qualified teacher/coach)</p> <p>IWS Level 1 – Aquatics Assistant for People with Disabilities (Certified only when working under a qualified ASA Level 1/2 qualified teacher/coach)</p>	<p>ASA Level 1 Teacher of Disabilities*</p> <p>ASA Level 1 Swim Teacher*</p> <p>ASA Level 1 Coaching*</p> <p>*Certified only when working under an ASA Level 2 qualified teacher/coach (same qualification)</p> <p>IWS Assistant Swim Teachers* Certified only when coaching under a fully qualified Swim Teacher</p> <p>IWS Level 2 – Aquatics Teacher for People with Disabilities (one to one coaching only)</p> <p>ASA Level 2 Teacher of Disabilities</p>	<p>ASA Level 2 Swim Teacher</p> <p>ASA Level 2 Coaching</p> <p>IWS Swim Teachers</p> <p>IWS Level 3 - Aquatics Leader for People with Disabilities</p>	

Sport	Assistant Coach (Minimum)	Coach (Minimum)	Head Coach (Minimum)	Ideal Head Coach in line with Sport Ireland Coaching (if different from recommended)
Athletics	Introduction to Coaching Practices	Athletics Leader or Assistant Coach Athletics Ireland (AI) Leading Athletics or Assisting Coaching, (UKA)	Athletics Coach Level 1(AI) Athletics Coach (UKA)	Athletics Ireland Level 2, 3 Athletics NI Athletics Coach
Floorball*	Introduction to Coaching Practices	International Floorball Federation (IFF) Floorball Seminar Introductory to Floorball Course Special Olympics Ireland Workshop	International Floorball Federation (IFF) Floorball Seminar Introductory to Floorball Course Special Olympics Ireland Workshop	Introductory to Floorball Course
Football	Introduction to Coaching Practices Irish Football Association (IFA) Grassroots Introductory / IFA Level 1 Coaching Disabled Footballers	Football Association Ireland (FAI) – Kick Start 1 & 2 Adult Intro CPD Workshop (e.g. 7v7 Workshop)	FAI PDP 2 CPD Workshop (e.g. 7v7 Workshop) IFA Level 1 Award	FAI UEFA D license
Golf	Introduction to Coaching Practices	Special Olympics Golf Leader Course	Special Olympics Golf Leader Course	PGA Level 1

Sport	Assistant Coach (Minimum)	Coach (Minimum)	Head Coach (Minimum)	Ideal Head Coach in line with Sport Ireland Coaching (if different from recommended)
Gymnastics	Introduction to Coaching Practices	Gym Start Level 1, Gym Edge, Introductory/Introductory Women's/Men's Artistic Gymnastics British Gymnastics – Awards Scheme Coach	Gymnastics Ireland - Level 1 Coaching Award in relevant Gymnastics discipline Gym Start Level 2 British Gymnastics – Level 1 Coach in relevant Gymnastics discipline	Gymnastics Ireland - Level 2 + Coaching Award in relevant Gymnastics discipline British Gymnastics – Level 2 in relevant Gymnastics discipline
Kayaking	"Learn to Paddle" Level 1 Coaching Award	Level 1 Kayak Instructor Award	Level 2 Kayak Instructor Award	Level 3 Kayak Instructor Award
Table Tennis	Introduction to Coaching Practices	Irish Table Tennis Association (ITTA) Introduction to coaching Table Tennis	ITTA Level 1 Coaching Award	ITTA Level 2 Coaching Award
Pitch and Putt	Introduction to Coaching Practices	Introductory Pitch and Putt Coaching Award	Level 1 Pitch and Putt Coaching Award	
Motor Activities Training Programme (MATP)	Introduction to Coaching Practices	MATP Workshop (delivered on a regional basis)	MATP Workshop (delivered on a regional basis)	

18.10 Review of Participation on an Ireland Team

Step 1	In the first instance, the Head Coach should discuss the concern with the athlete/ family/carer/club. Key action items, which should be in writing, should be agreed to support the continued participation of the athlete.
Step 2	At the next training session, feedback should be obtained to confirm the agreed action items were implemented and the athlete's participation in the training session monitored and reviewed.
Step 3	Should the concerns not be resolved at the training session, then a review of continued participation will be carried out in a timely and efficient manner to ensure that the process is fair to the athlete involved and to any substitutes that may be selected to be part of the team. This will involve athlete, key people concerning the athlete and the agreed members of the team.
Step 4	A revised action plan will be agreed by all and put in place. This will again be monitored between sessions and at the next training session.
Step 5	Should the athletes continued participation on the squad not meet the agreed expectation, it may be decided, in the best interest of the athletes/team, that he/she is withdrawn from the team.
Step 6	Confirmation of withdrawal of athlete will be communicated in writing to the club and relevant family member/carer, and where applicable the athlete.
Step 7	Where possible, every attempt should be made to reassess the athlete's involvement as early as possible so that if a withdrawal is necessary, a substitute may be given the opportunity to avail of the vacant place in the team.

18.11 Policies & Procedures



POLICY

Title: ATHLETE ELIGIBILITY

Policy Statement

All persons with an intellectual disability who are at least four years of age are eligible to participate in Special Olympics Ireland training and competition programmes [Special Olympics Official General Rules Book (2004) Article 6 Section 6.01].

Children who are 6 years of age are permitted to participate in age-appropriate Special Olympics training programmes during the course of a Special Olympics programme offered by a registered Special Olympics Club. However, no child may participate in a Special Olympics competition or be awarded medals or ribbons associated with competition before his or her 8th birthday.

There is no maximum age limitation for participation in Special Olympics

Definitions/ Additional Details

Special Olympics Official General Rules Article 6 Section 6.01 defines the eligibility criteria for participation in Special Olympics, including detailed criteria for identifying a person with a learning disability.

POLICY

Title: ELIGIBILITY TO LODGE A PROTEST OR MAKE AN APPEAL

Policy Statement

Only a Head Coach or designated registered coach (in the absence of a Head Coach) may lodge a protest in writing on an official Protest Form. This expressly prohibits any other individual from protesting

Rationale for Policy

Additional Information

The Head Coach can either accept or appeal the ruling to the Games Rules Committee.

Only a Head Coach may file an appeal to the Games Rules Committee for a denied protest.

Any protest involving the judgement of a referee/judge will not be given consideration

Exception

In regard to the 30 minute time of protest, depending on a particular Event and the rules of a specific NGB, different timeframes may be laid down for protest.

POLICY

Title: ELIGIBILITY TO PARTICIPATE IN FINAL ROUNDS OF COMPETITION

Policy Statement

An athlete must participate in the divisioning rounds in order to be able to compete in the final rounds of competition.

Rationale for Policy

With regard to this policy:

1. A Head Coach does have the right to protest the decision if an athlete was unable to participate in the divisioning rounds due to illness. The regional Medical Coordinator must provide written verification from the Games Medical Services that the athlete was precluded from competing in his/her divisioning rounds due to medical reasons and that he/she is now fit for competition.
2. An athlete who is disqualified in the divisioning round will be permitted to participate in the final round.
3. In divisioning, if an athlete is disqualified due to unsportsmanlike behaviour, they may participate in the final round, only at the discretion of Competition Management.

POLICY

Title: SELECTION OF MANAGEMENT TEAMS - EUROPEAN OR WORLD GAME

Policy Statement

A Management Team must be appointed for any Special Olympics Ireland team travelling to European or World Games. A Management Team will consist of a Head of Delegation and a Medical Coordinator as a minimum standard. Depending on the size of the team and the nature of the competition, others may be appointed. Where no further appointments are made, those appointed will need to fulfil the responsibilities required to support the team.

- a) The Head of Delegation will be a staff member appointed by Special Olympics Ireland.
- b) All other available roles will be advertised on the Special Olympics Ireland website and on social media channels.
- c) Any individual applying for a role must be a registered volunteer with Special Olympics Ireland.
- d) All applicants will be reviewed by a panel consisting of the Director of Sport, Sport Development Manager and a key volunteer. This volunteer will have prior experience of travelling with a Regional or Team Ireland delegation. Consultation with Regional Offices will be undertaken during the review process where required.
- e) All applicants will be reviewed based on their qualifications, experience and relevant skills appropriate to the role.
- f) Roles will be filled ensuring the needs of the athletes are met both from a sports specific perspective i.e. coaching qualification as well as a caring and supportive perspective. Additionally, Special Olympics Ireland reserves the right to select and appoint suitably qualified individuals to further the development and experience of particular individuals.

- g) Medical coordinators will be selected based on experience and qualification again appropriate to the needs of the team and will also take on the role of the Safeguarding Officer.
- h) Applicants may be held on a substitute list, if in agreement to do so and appointed to the team if a vacancy arises.
- i) Appointed personnel must attend and take an active role in all training sessions prior to departure and are members of the official delegation for the duration of the Games.
- j) A Management Team is required to share the workload, to act as a point of contact and to direct activities of the participants during training and preparation for the Games. As part of the official delegation, the Management Team will ensure that best practice standards are adhered to while representing Special Olympics Ireland.
- k) Any volunteer who is dissatisfied with not being selected may appeal the decision to a sports panel approved by the sports advisory group (appointed by the Board) within 7 days of them receiving their communication.

POLICY

Title: ELIGIBILITY OF ATHLETES TO ATTEND ADVANCEMENT COMPETITION

Policy Statement

Note: This policy has been updated as of the 7th of November 2020 and needs to be read in conjunction with the policy: **Suitability Criteria for advancement of an athlete to an Event or Games**

Athletes of all ability levels have an opportunity to advance to the next higher level of competition up to World Games, providing they have met Special Olympics Ireland's advancement, suitability and eligibility criteria.

Additional Information

1. Advancement Criteria

An athlete may only advance to higher levels of competition if:

- a) He/she is a registered athlete with the Special Olympics Ireland
- b) He/she has participated in an eight week (minimum) organised training programme and has prepared for competition in the specific sport(s) and event(s) consistent with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules.
- c) He/she has participated in the previous highest level of that competition, e.g. where a program offers Area, Regional and All-island competition in athletics, an athlete may only participate at the Regional athletics competition if he/she has participated in the particular Area athletics competition that was deemed to be an Advancement competition for that cycle.
- d) He/she is selected as per the random selection process.

The same process applies for advancement from Regional to Special Olympics Ireland level and from Special Olympics Ireland level to International level competition.

2. Suitability Criteria

In the selection of athletes for an advancement competition, particularly at Special Olympics Ireland and at international level, consideration must also be given to the specific suitability criteria defined in Special Olympics Ireland's policy on Suitability for Selection for a Special Olympics Ireland or International Competition. This policy outlines certain criteria that should be achievable and agreed prior to an athlete and his/her coach, family/carer and affiliated groups accepting a place on the team.

3. Ineligibility Criteria

If an athlete is suspended from all activities with Special Olympics Ireland and does not take part in the advancement event, they are not eligible for selection to any subsequent levels of competition in the prevailing cycle.

If an athlete selected for advancement is subject to an ongoing investigation with a third party for which the outcome is still pending by the substitution date in place for the Event or Games, that athlete's selection will be rescinded and offered to a substitute.

POLICY

Title: SUITABILITY CRITERIA FOR ADVANCEMENT OF AN ATHLETE TO AN EVENT OR GAMES

Policy Statement

Note: This policy is to be read in conjunction with the policy: **Eligibility of Athletes for Selection to an Advancement Competition**

Prior to accepting a place in an advancement competition, consideration must be given as to whether an athlete is suitable. The following criteria should be achievable and agreed upon by the relevant athlete, and by his/her coach, his/her family/carer and by his/her club:-

Criteria
The athlete is capable of attending all squad activities as well as travel and stay at the Games with coaches who may not be familiar to them.
The athlete is physically and emotionally prepared to participate in all squad activities prior to and during the Games.
It will be sufficient for the athlete's medical and personal care needs to be cared for in a 4 athletes to 1 coach ratio.
The athlete has a moderate level of independence with regards to their personal care needs.
The athlete and or family is willing to share all information regarding their medical, personal care and behavioural needs. If there are any changes to this during the preparations for the Games the Medical Coordinator will be updated immediately.
The family/guardian agree to transport the selected athlete to any official squad activities as requested by the squad management team and incur all costs related to this transportation.
The athlete will attend, arrive on time and fully participate in all training sessions
The athlete has the ability to share a room in housing with another athlete previously unknown to them during Games and any residential training.
Accept that if the athlete or a family/guardian are unable to comply with the above at any stage then a review of their participation will occur under Regulations Governing Special Olympics Sport

Additional Information

Additional Suitability Criteria for advancement of an athlete to a Special Olympics Ireland and/or International Games Competition

- a) **The athlete must agree to abide by the Athlete's Code of Conduct and must submit a signed copy of the Athlete's Code of Conduct contract when accepting his/her place.**
- b) **The athlete and/or his/her coach/family member or carer must submit a written acceptance of his/her desire to accept a place on the team and submit all registration materials and/or other documents as required by the competition organisers within the required timeframe.**

POLICY

Title: SELECTION OF COMPOSITE TEAMS FOR ADVANCEMENT

Policy Statement

Note: This policy is to be read in conjunction with the procedure for selecting composite teams.

Only athletes graded at levels 1, 2 or 3 will be eligible for selection to World or European Games. Athletes assigned to grade 4 can only advance to Ireland Games.

Rationale for Policy

Additional Information

1. Advancement Criteria

An athlete may only advance to higher levels of competition if:

- a) He/she is a registered athlete with the Special Olympics Ireland
- b) He/she has participated in an eight week (minimum) organised training programme and has prepared for competition in the specific sport(s) and event(s) consistent with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules.
- c) He/she has participated in the previous highest level of that competition, e.g. where a program offers Area, Regional and All-island competition in athletics, an athlete may only participate at the Regional athletics competition if he/she has participated in the particular Area athletics competition that was deemed to be an Advancement competition for that cycle.
- d) He/she is selected as per the random selection process.

The same process applies for advancement from Regional to Special Olympics Ireland level and from Special Olympics Ireland level to International level competition.

2. Composite Teams

Team selection differs from individual selections and the grade is the first selection criteria to be considered. Once a grade has been selected, athletes are then randomly drawn by position and medal to advance.

Related Documents

Procedure: Selecting a composite team to advance

PROCEDURE

Title: SELECTION OF COMPOSITE TEAMS FOR ADVANCEMENT

Introduction

Where sufficient numbers in a particular grade does not exist, grades can be combined to create a team.

When combining grades, only grades adjacent to one another can be combined e.g. in football grade 1 cannot be combined with grade 3 or grade 4, similarly in basketball grade 3 cannot be combined with grade 1.

Steps

No.	Description	Responsibility																				
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Basketball: Level 1: 2 Point Guards, 4 Guards, 4 Forwards. b. Basketball Level 2, 3 & 4: 6 Guards, 4 Forwards. c. 7-a-side Football: 2 Goalkeepers, 4 Defensive players, 4 Midfield Players and 2 Forwards d. Floorball: 2 Goalkeepers, 6 Outfield players. 																					
2.	<p>This table shows the scores assigned for each level in team sports</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Level</th> <th>Basketball</th> <th>Football</th> <th>Floorball</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Level 1</td> <td>6 – 9</td> <td>4 – 5</td> <td>7 – 9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Level 2</td> <td>10 – 13</td> <td>6 – 9</td> <td>10 – 16</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Level 3</td> <td>14 – 18</td> <td>10 – 13</td> <td>17 – 25</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Level 4</td> <td>19 - 24</td> <td>14 - 16</td> <td>26 - 28</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Level	Basketball	Football	Floorball	Level 1	6 – 9	4 – 5	7 – 9	Level 2	10 – 13	6 – 9	10 – 16	Level 3	14 – 18	10 – 13	17 – 25	Level 4	19 - 24	14 - 16	26 - 28	
Level	Basketball	Football	Floorball																			
Level 1	6 – 9	4 – 5	7 – 9																			
Level 2	10 – 13	6 – 9	10 – 16																			
Level 3	14 – 18	10 – 13	17 – 25																			
Level 4	19 - 24	14 - 16	26 - 28																			
3.	<p>As the variance in scores differs across the 3 sports, the combining of teams in adjacent levels is done in increments of single score units i.e. if combining level 3 with level 2 in basketball you would first look to athletes who scored 13 points before those scoring 12. This process of bringing in athletes from another level using single unit increments will ensure that the composition of the team will be as close as possible in ability.</p>																					

PROCEDURE

Title: SELECTING ATHLETES FOR AN ADVANCEMENT COMPETITION

Introduction

As per the Guidelines Article 1, Special Olympics Official General Rules, the process of selecting athletes for advancement from one level of competition to the next is through random selection from all eligible athletes. Eligibility in this instance means that the athlete must have participated in the previous highest level of competition and not been disqualified in their event.

For team sports the selection process is based on composite teams which are when a team is formed with athletes of similar abilities and may not be from the same club/region. Selections in this instance are based on Grade, Position and Medal. Athletes in Grade 4 are not eligible for selection for World Games as this level is for developing teams only.

This process is undertaken in an open forum and invitations to attend are circulated via the Special Olympics Ireland website and the Regional Offices. All athletes remain anonymous throughout the process and once checked for accuracy names are announced at the end of the session.

A number of substitutes are also selected anonymously and are not announced but held in reserve until such time as they are called in to the team.

Steps

No.	Description	Responsibility
1.	Working with the given quota; if the number of eligible athletes does not exceed the quota, all athletes advance.	SO Ireland - Sports Dept Regional Events - RDO - Sport
2.	If the number of eligible athletes exceeds the quota, athletes are randomly selected to fill the quota from the gold medal winners.	
3.	If there are insufficient gold medallists to fill a quota, all gold medallists advance and then random selection from all silver medallists will take place until the quota is filled.	
4.	If there are insufficient silver medallists to fill a quota, all gold and silver medallists advance and then random selection from all bronze medallists will take place until the quota is filled. This process will continue down through place winners until the quota is complete.	
5.	Athletes who are not successful in this process may appeal the selections within 7 days of the selection process to the Director of Sport.	

Definitions/ Additional Details

For Review

Scenario:		
Group:	What the steps are:	Who does them:

POLICY

Title: SELECTION OF MANAGEMENT TEAMS - INTERNATIONAL INVITATIONAL EVENTS

Policy Statement

A Management Team must be appointed for any Special Olympics Club team travelling as a Special Olympics Ireland Delegation to an Invitational Event. Invitational Events are managed by the club in conjunction with the Regional Office. A Management Team will consist of a Head of Delegation and a Medical Coordinator as a minimum standard. Depending on the size of the team and the nature of the competition, others may be appointed. Where no further appointments are made, those appointed will need to fulfil the responsibilities required to support the team.

Rationale for Policy

With regard to this policy:

- a. When a club is accepting an Invitation, the Management Team will be selected by the club from registered volunteers in that club.
- b. Any individual applying for a role must be a registered volunteer with Special Olympics Ireland.
- c. All management team members must be approved by the Regional Office.
- d. All appointed members must abide by the policies and procedures of Special Olympics Ireland.
- e. Any unsuccessful applicant may appeal the decision to the Director of Sport within 7 days of their notification letter/e-mail and a response will be provided within 7 days of receipt of appeal.

Related Documents

Regulations Governing Special Olympics Ireland Sport 2020 - 2023

NOTES





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