



2024 Rule Change Summary

Swimming

Change From	Change To
Old Formatting	See date change at footer to reflect September 2024
Entire Document	<p>CHANGE:</p> <p>References from FINA to World Aquatics</p>
<p>Governing Rules</p> <p>The Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Swimming shall govern all Special Olympics competitions. As an international sports program, Special Olympics has created these rules based upon International Swimming Federation (FINA) rules for swimming found at . FINA or National Governing Body (NGB) rules shall be employed except when they are in conflict with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Swimming or Article I. In such cases, the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Swimming shall apply.</p> <p>An athlete with Down syndrome who has been diagnosed with Atlanto-Axial Instability may not participate in Butterfly events, Individual Medley events, diving starts or diving.</p> <p>Section 3 – Rules of Competition</p> <p>The technical rules of competition are noted in the FINA rules found at http://www.fina.org/. Special Olympics Programs may substitute their local NGB rules. FINA rules will be used for all</p>	<p>CHANGE:</p> <p>The Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Swimming shall govern all Special Olympics competitions. As an international sports program, Special Olympics has created these rules based upon World Aquatics rules for swimming found at https://www.worldaquatics.com/. World Aquatics or National Governing Body (NGB) rules shall be employed except when they are in conflict with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Swimming or Article I. In such cases, the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Swimming shall apply.</p> <p>An athlete with Down syndrome who has been diagnosed with Atlanto-Axial Instability may not participate in Butterfly events, Individual Medley events, diving starts or diving.</p> <p>The technical rules of competition are noted in the World Aquatics rules found at https://www.worldaquatics.com/. Special Olympics Programs may substitute their local NGB rules. World</p>



<p>multi-Program events. Exceptions to these rules are listed below.</p>	<p>Aquatics rules will be used for all multi-Program events. Exceptions to these rules are listed below.</p>
<p>3.1.3 It is preferable that certified swimming officials (including the referee, timers and judges) be used in all events.</p>	<p>CHANGE:</p> <p>3.1.3 For all events, sufficient numbers of certified swimming officials shall be appointed (including the referee, timers and judges).</p>
<p>3.1.5 No competitor shall be permitted to use or wear any device that may aid his/her speed, buoyancy or endurance during a competition (except flotation events) such as webbed gloves, flippers, fins, etc.). Goggles may be worn by the swimmer.</p> <p>3.1.6 Swimmers may be assisted from the water upon request.</p> <p>3.1.7 Starts may be from the starting block, beside the starting block or from in-water. For in-water starts the athlete shall place one hand on the end of the pool or hold the starting block with one hand. Two hands shall be used for backstroke starts.</p>	<p>CHANGE:</p> <p>3.1.5 No competitor shall be permitted to use or wear any device or swimsuit that may aid his/her speed, buoyancy (except flotation events) or endurance during a competition such as webbed gloves, flippers, fins, power bands, or adhesive substances, etc.). The use of technology and automated data collection devices is permissible for the sole purpose of collecting data. Automated devices shall not be utilized to transmit data, sounds, or signals to the swimmer and may not be used to aid their speed. Goggles may be worn.</p> <p>3.1.5.1 As a consequence of injury, it is permissible to tape no more than one or two fingers or toes. Any other kind of tape on the body is not permitted unless approved by the Referee or other designated person.</p> <p>3.1.6 Swimmers may be assisted from the water upon request.</p> <p>3.1.7 Starts may be from the starting block, beside the starting block or from in-water. For in-water starts the athlete shall place one hand on the end of the pool or hold the starting block with one hand. Two hands shall be used for backstroke starts.</p> <p>3.1.8 It is allowable that swimmers who have epilepsy should wear a piece of equipment to discreetly alert the lifeguard in the event of a seizure.</p>



	<p>ADD:</p> <p>3.2.5 It is recommended that lane lines be marked on the bottom of the pool in accordance with World Aquatics regulations.</p>
	<p>DELETE:</p> <p>3.4.1.4 It is allowable that swimmers who have epilepsy should wear a piece of equipment to discreetly alert lifeguards in the event of a seizure.</p>
	<p>ADD:</p> <p>3.4.1.2.4 Flotation devices are only allowed in Fundamental Events where specified.</p>
<p>3.5.3 Competition Managers may allow coaches to provide verbal encouragement and/or direction from the pool deck for these events.</p>	<p>CHANGE:</p> <p>3.4.2.2 The competition manager, in collaboration with the Meet Referee, may allow coaches to provide verbal encouragement and/or direction from the pool deck for these events.</p>
<p>3.5 Unified Sports Relay Events</p> <p>3.5.1 Each Unified Sports relay team shall consist of two athletes and two partners.</p>	<p>ADD/CHANGE:</p> <p>3.5.1 The athlete to Unified partner ratio must be 2 athletes to 2 Unified partners in Unified Relays.</p> <p>3.5.2 It is required that athletes and Unified partners are of similar age, and it is preferred that athletes and Unified partners are of similar ability. For more information on similar age and ability please see Sport Rules Article 1 Section 14.1.2</p>
<p>3.9 Markings</p> <p>3.9.1 During competition all swimmers shall be identified by the use of individual bib numbers. The numbers will be written vertically on the upper part of both arms where it is visible at all times. All bib numbers shall be</p>	<p>CHANGE:</p> <p>3.7 Markings</p> <p>3.7.1 During competition all swimmers shall be identified by the use of individual bib numbers. The numbers will be written vertically on the upper part of both arms where it is visible at all times. All bib numbers</p>



<p>40mm in height and can be written with a permanent marker.</p> <p>During competition exception codes shall be identified on the swimmers arms. The code will be written vertically below the bib number on the upper part of both arms, where it is visible at all times. The exception codes shall be 40mm in height and can be written with a permanent marker. Exception codes are used where a swimmer cannot comply with the correct swimming rules for race starts, cultural, health or safety reasons.</p>	<p>shall be 40mm in height and shall be written with a permanent marker.</p> <p>3.7.2 During competition exception codes shall be identified on the swimmers arms. The code will be written vertically below the bib number on the upper part of both arms, where it is visible at all times. The exception codes shall be 40mm in height and shall be written with a permanent marker. Exception codes are used where a swimmer cannot comply with the correct swimming rules for race starts, cultural, health or safety reasons.</p> <p>3.7.3 The list of Exception Codes is:</p> <p>A = Assistant required poolside, which could be for hearing impaired, visual impaired, support and guidance.</p> <p>B = Sitting on starting block for start</p> <p>C = Sitting on concourse for start</p> <p>E = Unable to grip handle/s with hand/s in Backstroke</p> <p>H = Hearing impaired swimmer who will require a Strobe Light</p> <p>L = Swimmer needs to be in a side lane for medical, confidence reasons</p> <p>S = Standing start on concourse</p> <p>T = Assistant required for a visual impaired swimmer who uses a Tapper</p> <p>U = Swimwear exception for medical, cultural, religious, modesty reason/s</p> <p>W = Water start</p> <p>Z = Medical alert</p>
<p>4.1.1 Responsibilities of Event Director</p>	<p>CHANGE:</p>



<p>4.1.1.1 The Event Director shall have the overall responsibility for the Special Olympics swimming practice sessions or events.</p> <p>4.1.1.2 Providing an orientation to all swimming personnel before the Special Olympics session or event.</p> <p>4.1.1.3 Coordinating the facility with host agency prior to arrival.</p> <p>4.1.1.4 Ensuring that necessary supervisory personnel are available.</p> <p>4.1.1.5 Preparing or assuring that an emergency action plan is in place as described in Section 5: Safety Considerations.</p>	<p>4.1 Event Director/Meet Director/Games Director</p> <p>4.1.1 Responsibilities of Event Director</p> <p>4.1.1.1 They shall have the overall responsibility for the Special Olympics swimming practice sessions, warming up, cool down, and the administration of events.</p> <p>4.1.1.2 Providing an orientation to all swimming personnel before the Special Olympics session or event.</p> <p>4.1.1.3 Coordinating the facility with host agency prior to arrival.</p> <p>4.1.1.4 Ensuring that necessary supervisory personnel are available.</p> <p>4.1.1.5 Preparing or assuring that an emergency action plan is in place.</p>
<p>5.1.3 The Event Director will review the Emergency Action Plan prior to each occasion. There shall be enough coaches in accordance with FINA or program NGB guidelines.</p>	<p>MOVE:</p> <p>5.1.12 The Event Director will review the Emergency Action Plan prior to each occasion.</p>
	<p>DELETE:</p> <p>5.2.5 ... The procedure for obtaining weather information particularly for Open Water Swimming.</p>