

Level 2 Swimming

The Level 2 Swimming training is designed for Special Olympics Minnesota coaches who would like to become a Level 2 Swimming coach and/or for volunteers who would like information about Special Olympics Minnesota Swimming . This training counts as Level 2 certification and/or recertification for three years from the date this training is completed.

This training will cover Special Olympics Minnesota's Swimming events, rules, competitions, the divisioning process, registration and swimming resources.

This training will also include the Coaching Special Olympics Athletes training.

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Coaching Special Olympics Athletes

Coaching Special Olympics Athletes prepares Special Olympics coaches to use their sport-specific knowledge in coaching athletes with intellectual disabilities. This course meets the Special Olympics standards and competencies for coach certification. For veteran Special Olympics coaches, this course serves as a reminder of the essentials sometimes forgotten after years of coaching. For new Special Olympics coaches, this course will help prepare you for your first role in coaching Special Olympics athletes.

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Coaching Special Olympics Athletes

*The better the **coach** ...
the better the **experiences** ...
the better the **athlete**!*



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Course Overview

This course will cover specific topics related to:

1 - The Athlete

**3 - Preparing for
& Coaching During
Competition**



**2 - Teaching &
Training**

4 - Managing the Program



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Unit 1 - The Athlete

Important Considerations concerning Special Olympics Athletes

Psychological Issues
(*Learning*)

Medical
Issues



Social
Issues

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Unit 1 - Psychological Considerations

Motivation – helping athletes maintain interest

- May have shorter attention span; harder to keep independently “on task”.
- May be motivated more by short-term rather than long-term goals.
- May learn better with more frequent positive reinforcement.

Perception – helping athletes understand the sport in which they are participating

- May have impairments in sight or hearing.
- May have difficulty focusing attention on the appropriate object or task.



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Unit 1 - Psychological Considerations

Comprehension – helping athletes remember and perform the skill they have learned (*Understanding*)

- May find it difficult to understand purely verbal explanations of new skills. Often find it easier to learn through visual demonstrations and physical prompts.
- May have difficulty in understanding complex, multi-part actions or explanations.
- Often take a longer time between learning one piece of information and the next (learning plateau)
- Less able to generalize skills learned in one situation to a different situation.

Memory

- May need frequent repetition and reminders in order to remember concept or skill

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Unit 1 - Psychological Challenges

Each psychological item has it's challenge and action:

Psychological Item	Challenge	Action
Perception	Easily distracted by noise	Control surroundings
Motivation	History of neglect & negative reinforcement, feeling of failure	Focus on positive, appropriate reinforcement, catch the athlete doing well
Memory	Difficulty applying skills in different environments	Practice in different settings
Comprehension	Difficulty learning through verbal explanation only	Add demonstrations and/or physical manipulation

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Unit 1 - Medical Considerations

Down Syndrome

- Approximately 10% of individuals with Down Syndrome have a condition called atlanto-axial instability, which is a mal-alignment of the cervical vertebrae C-1 and C-2 in the neck. This condition may cause possible injury if they participate in activities that hyper-extend or radically flex the neck or upper spine.
- Prohibited sports – equestrian, gymnastics, diving, pentathlon, butterfly and dive starts in swimming, high jump, alpine/snowboarding, squat lift and soccer.

Medications

- Understand the physical side effects of an athlete's medication
- Very important to know the medications athletes are taking



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Unit 1 - Medical Considerations

Seizures

- Incidence tends to be higher with Special Olympics athletes
- Athlete safety to minimize the adverse effects of a seizure



Physical Disabilities

- Some athletes also have physical disabilities which may affect the sports they can participate in or the methods of teaching a coach must use. Special Olympics has events for individuals who use wheelchairs, walkers or other assistance.
- Muscle strength may be needed for particular sports and some athletes may not have the strength for those sports. This is often due to lack of use rather than a permanent disability.

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Unit 1 - Medical Considerations

Autism

- 20% of athletes exhibit one or more of the autism spectrum disorders
- Over arousal



Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

- These athletes consistently function better on performance tasks compared with verbal tasks. The more concrete the task, the better the performance.
- Tend to have poor verbal comprehension skills, despite being comfortable and chatty around people. These athletes will also tend to have attention and memory deficits and often display poor judgment in distinguishing right from wrong.

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Unit 1 – Medical Consideration for each Action

Action	See the challenge that correlates with the appropriate action.
1 Down Syndrome	Ensure the athlete is screened for atlanto-axial instability
2 Seizures	Be prepared to protect the athlete and minimize adverse affects
3 Autism spectrum disorders	Control and/or block self-stimulatory behavior and set up a behavior support plan
4 Attention deficit/hyperactivity	Shorten drills and provide one-to-one assistance when needed
5 Fetal alcohol syndrome	Provide concrete performance tasks

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Unit 1 - Social Considerations

Social Skills

- May lack basic social/adaptive skills due to a lack of opportunity or training
- Lacking communication and positive interaction with others

Recreation at Home

- Lack of physical activity
- Lack of encouragement

Economic Status

- May lack financial means
- May not have access to independent transportation



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Unit 1 - Social considerations

All of the following social consideration(s) may impact an athlete's participation in Special Olympics:

- Inappropriate responses to social situations
- Physical inactivity being modeled
- Lack of endurance
- Lack of access to transportation

Our challenge as coaches is to develop a full understanding of our athletes and the strengths and weaknesses they bring with them to a Special Olympics program. By doing so we can begin to develop a training and competition program that they will benefit from and enjoy.

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Unit 2 – Teaching & Training the Athlete



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Unit 2 - Teaching & Training the Athlete

There are many ways to organize a training session for Special Olympics athletes. Because of some of the things previously identified concerning comprehension and memory, there is considerable value in developing a consistent training routine that provides familiarity, stability, and comfort.

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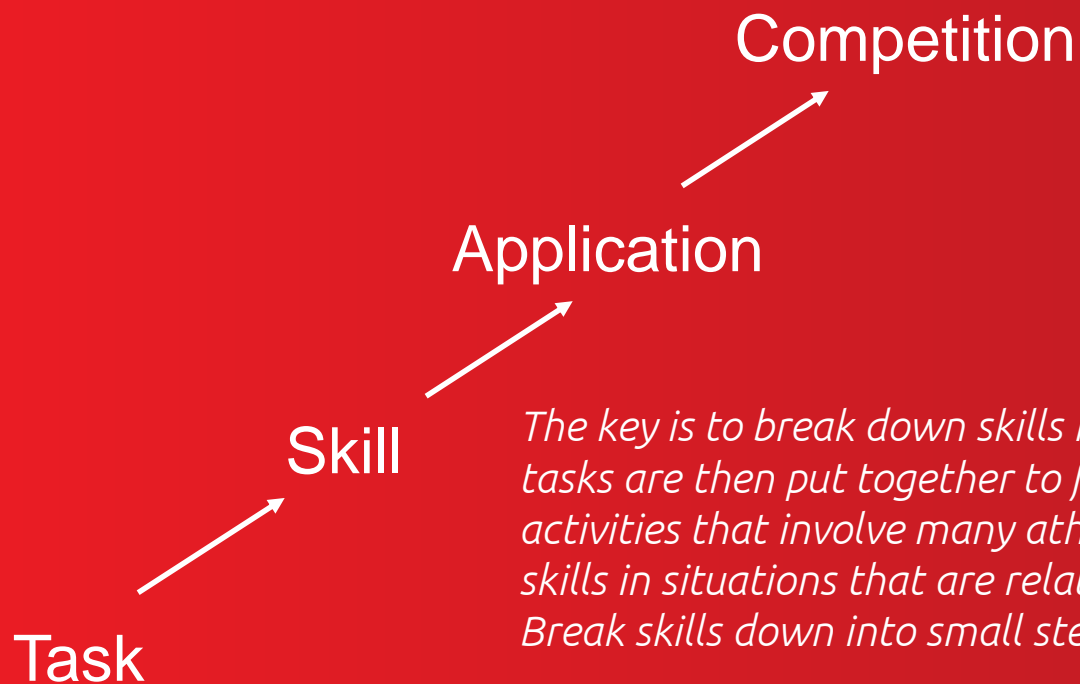
Unit 2 - Organizing a Training Session

Component and Details	Layout of Drill or Activity
Warm-Up & Stretching	Specific to the sport, repetitive and involve athletes in leading activity
Skills Instruction	Break skills into smaller tasks, involve many athletes at a time and practice skills related to event situations
Competition Experience	Scrimmage, simulate event/game situations and work towards what the competition will look like
Cool-Down, Stretch, & Reward	Playing a game related to that sport and ending each training with a cool down activity and stretch

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Unit 2 - Training Sequence



The key is to break down skills into small tasks or steps; tasks are then put together to form skills. Use drills and activities that involve many athletes at all times. Practice skills in situations that are related to the game or event. Break skills down into small steps.

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Unit 2 - Training Sequence

What's the challenge and how to fix it?

Training Sequence Element	Challenge	Action
Application	Acquire ability to repeatedly demonstrate sport competencies in different situations & environments	Provide gamelike drills or situations
Skills	Acquire ability to perform series of sport competencies effectively and necessary to perform a sport	Work on essential sport competencies to perform the sport
Competition	Acquire ability to put essential sport competencies into practice	Provide scrimmage opportunities in practice
Tasks	Acquire ability to perform essential sport competencies	Break essential sport competencies down into individual parts

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Unit 2 - Communication

Communication is key to immediately reinforcing desired behavior; there are several key words that begin with a “C”, which address what a coach should say.

- Clear
- Concrete
- Concise
- Consistent
- Command-oriented



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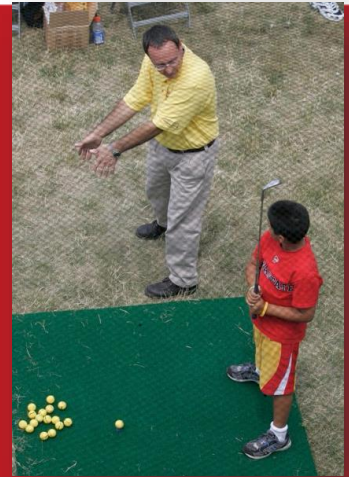
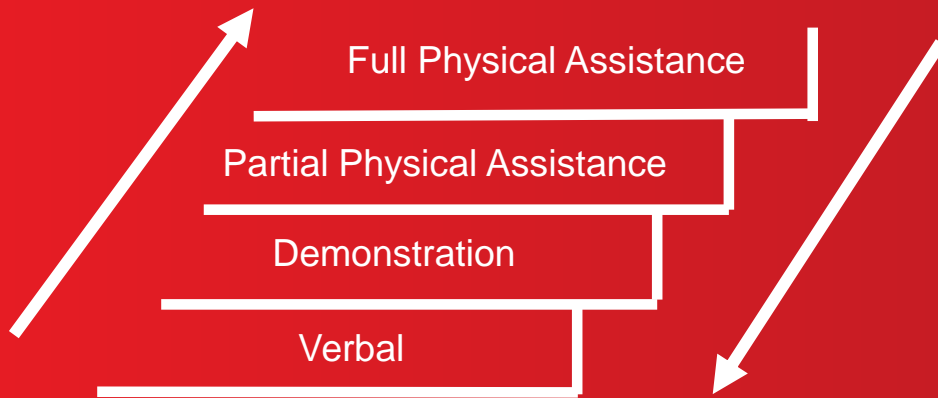
Unit 2 - Communication

Communication Criteria	Description	Sport Example
Concise	Use a few key words that cue a desired action	"Go to the free throw line" Showing an athlete where to stand on defense
Consistent	Use the same word or phrase for the same action	Coach constantly say "Breathe" – teaching an athlete when to take a breath in swimming
Clear	Use easy to understand words that have one meaning	"Swing the bat" teaching how/when to swing.
Command-Oriented	Use words that elicit or reinforce a desired action	"On your mark. Set. Go." Using this phrase for starts in athletics.
Concrete	Connect words to something defined or tangible	"Jump forward" when coaching an athlete in the long jump.

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Unit 2 - Levels of Assistance



Each athlete needs to be met where he or she is and with what each individual is ready to do. It is important to use the appropriate level of instruction and assistance.

- The lower the ability athlete, the more assistance may be required
- Verbal should always be accompanied by demonstration
- Partial physical assistance may be needed to help the athlete get positioned properly
- When all else fails, take the athlete through the complete motion

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Unit 2 - Level of Instruction or Assistance

Level of Instruction or Assistance	Description	Sport Example
Full Physical Assistance	Help the athlete through the entire motion of the skill	Volleyball: coach makes an adjustment to the athlete's arm swing by moving the athlete's arm through the entire spiking movement
Verbal	Tell the athlete what to do	Footwork: "run forward to the line; then return, running backward"
Demonstration	Show the athlete the proper technique	Soccer: one athlete shoots on goal while another watches
Partial Physical Assistance	Place the athlete's hands in the proper position	Golf: coach physically adjusts the athlete's hands on the golf club with the correct grip

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Unit 2 - Managing Athlete Behavior

The goal is for coaches to meet each athlete where he/she is and treat him/her accordingly. However, a coach may often have certain expectations of an athlete that may not be realistic ... not because the coach does not care, but because the coach does not understand or appreciate the differences that may exist.

When an athlete exhibits what is generally perceived as inappropriate behavior, the inappropriate behavior may not be defiance, acting out or silliness. These behaviors may simply be a reflection or part of the person and/or what is operating in the moment.

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Unit 2 - Managing Athlete Behavior

Athlete Behavior Characteristics	Strategies to Improve Learning
Swimmer has a short attention span	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Dwell on a stroke or activity for short periods of time; provide numerous activities focusing on same task2. Provide different opportunities for repetition and review, which is the key to gaining new skill.3. Work one-on-one to gain full attention.
Basketball athlete yells if he/she misses a shot	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Emphasize the other aspects of the game besides shooting2. Work on shooting drills without a hoop3. Begin to shoot at a hoop but in a non-game setting with a one-on-one coach
Bowler doesn't wait their turn	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Have a coach at the lane help with the order of bowlers, explain whose turn it is2. Have the bowler wait with a coach behind the bowling area until their turn is up3. Emphasize the order and that the bowler will always follow the same individual

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Unit 3 - Preparing & Coaching for Competition

- A key goal of Special Olympics is to provide an opportunity for all athletes to experience success in competitions.
- A Special Olympics athlete can benefit from many aspects of a competition (including meeting new people, participating in the festivities of Opening Ceremonies and other social events, the excitement of traveling to new places and staying away from home, etc.). None of these things, however, should be as important to the coach as the focus on the participation in the competition itself.

This section highlights ways to improve the quality of an athlete's competition experience.

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Unit 3 - Preparing for Competition

Registration

- Provide accurate entry and team roster information, qualifying times, and skills assessment scores.
- Help the Competition Committee prepare a successful competition for your athletes by meeting their registration deadlines.

Official competition rules

- A good Competition Committee will instruct its officials/referees to enforce the Official Special Olympics Rules. Make sure you know them.
- Teach your athletes the rules and, during training, phase out your verbal reminders about rules. At competition, coaches may have little or no opportunity to assist athletes when they are not following the rules. (A coach cannot be on the track with them!)



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Unit 3 - Preparing for Competition

Supervision

- Discuss the challenges associated with participating in competition away from home, and why adequate, non-coaching support personnel are needed.
 - Transportation
 - Lodging (need for same-sex supervision)
 - Social activities
 - Coaches meetings (who will supervise athletes during these?)
 - Multiple events to supervise, awards ceremonies, etc.
- Design a supervision worksheet with the essential elements covered.



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Unit 3 - Preparing for Competition

Travel and overnight

- Discuss overnight concerns with parents or group-home supervisors.
- Write up a simple checklist of items to bring and distribute to athletes and parents
- Make sure that all special medication needs are understood. Coaches may have to assist with handling medications. Have all medical forms and information readily available at all times.
- Work out the most effective rooming arrangements, taking into account athlete choice, behavioral and personality clashes, etc.

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Unit 3 - Competition-Day Coaching

Guidelines for success:

Teach responsibility & independence

- Assist athletes in dressing appropriately, understanding what is happening at the competition site, maintaining a focused attitude and appropriate behavior.

Arrive early

- Allow time for putting on uniforms, warm-up and stretching routine and focusing on the competition.

Encourage maximum effort in divisioning & competition

- Applying the “honest-effort” rule from the Special Olympics Rule book

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Unit 3 - Competition-Day Coaching

Guidelines for success:

Let athletes compete without direct supervision

- Not running down the side of the track shouting instructions, allowing the competition officials to conduct the competition and allowing athletes to make mistakes and helping them learn from their mistakes.

Make any official protests calmly

- If you think there is a valid reason to protest the outcome, do so in a calm manner, following the competition guidelines and not involving athletes in disputes with officials.

Help athletes learn from winning & losing

- Deal graciously and realistically with winning and losing. Focus on effort made, recognize accomplishments and new skills that were performed and taking something positive away from the experience.

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Unit 3 - Competition-Day Coaching

The coach can be the key person who makes any competition experience a good one. Taking time to adequately prepare for competition and plan for on-site supervision and that coaching is time well spent.

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Unit 4 – Managing the Program

The successful Special Olympics coach:

Is sports and coaching knowledgeable

- Special Olympics is a sport organization
- Technical knowledge of the sport and how to teach it is essential if coaches are to effectively help athletes improve their sport skills and truly benefit from Special Olympics.
- Successful coaches are constantly looking for opportunities to learn more about the sport.

Is Special Olympics knowledgeable

- Special Olympics has a clearly defined mission, philosophy, and rules that have been developed through years of worldwide experience with athletes with intellectual disabilities.
- A better understanding of these will benefit your athletes.

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Unit 4 – Managing the Program

The successful Special Olympics coach:

Recruits and trains assistant coaches

- Individualized coach-athlete teaching is key to successful training in Special Olympics.
- Assistant coaches can be recruited to help provide individualized attention.
- Assistant coaches are useful only if they are trained and coordinated at practice.

Recruits and trains athletes

- A coach is also a promoter and recruiter; always tries to expand participation

Assists with appropriate sport selection

- Age appropriate, is the athlete able to participate safely and successfully and does the athlete have a choice of participating in a different sport or event.

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Unit 4 – the successful Special Olympics coach:

Offers activities for all abilities

- In order to accommodate a range of abilities

Puts a priority on safety

- This is the coach's number one priority

Conducts high-quality training and competition

- Appropriate training, activities such as training days or camps, helps develop pride in being an athlete and organizes competition opportunities if none exist

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Unit 4 – the successful Special Olympics coach:

Involves families

- Educates families and group-home providers about the benefits of Special Olympics, appropriate nutrition and food choices and training at home.

Assists with community inclusion

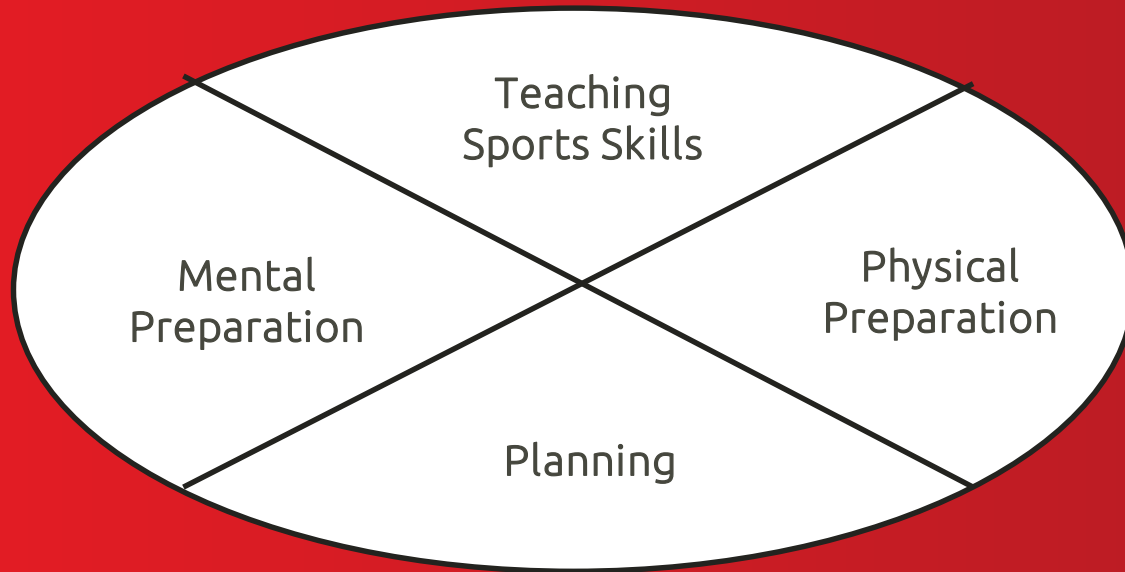
- Improves social and communication skills, opportunities to talk about Special Olympics at civic functions and assistance in joining non-Special Olympics sports opportunities

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Unit 4 – Area of Focus

Athlete Safety



Coaching Philosophy

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Unit 4 – Preparation



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Improved Performance & Well-Being

- TRAINING → the key
- COMPETITION → the means
- OUTCOMES → skill, confidence, courage, & joy
- GOAL → better preparation for life
- RESULTS → lifelong skills, acceptance & increased independence



Let's Get After It and Get It Done!

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Level 2 Swimming

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Level 2 Swimming

Coach ratio:

Athletes	Level II	Level I		Athletes	Level II	Level I
1-4	1	0		33-36	3	6
5-8	1	1		37-40	3	7
9-12	1	2		41-44	3	8
13-16	1	3		45-48	3	9
17-20	2	3		49-52	4	9
21-24	2	4		53-56	4	10
25-28	2	5		57-60	4	11
29-32	2	6		61-64	4	12



All Coaches and Unified Partners must complete the Level 1 certification prior to their participation with a team. Level 1 certification requires a Volunteer Application and Level 1 online training and both items are found [here](#).

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SOMN Swimming Events

Special Olympics Minnesota adheres to Special Olympics, Inc Sports Rules for Swimming. Any modification to these rules are highlighted in this training.

Special Olympics Minnesota Swimming events offered at State:

- Backstroke – 200, 100, 50, 25
- Breaststroke – 100, 50, 25
- Butterfly – 100, 50, 25
- Freestyle – 400, 200, 100, 50, 25, 15
- Individual Medley – 100
- Flotation Race – 50, 25, 15
- Assisted Swim – 50, 25, 15
- Relay – 4 x 50 Freestyle, 4 x 25 Freestyle, 4 x 25 Unified Freestyle, 4 x 50 Unified Freestyle

All areas offer swimming competitions. To contact the Sports Program Manager for information about your Area competition please see the map and contact list below.

Areas 1, 2, 3 - Dani Druse dani.druse@somn.org | 701.721.5635

Areas 4, 5, 6, 8 - Leah Wolkow leah.wolkow@somn.org | 320.760.7053

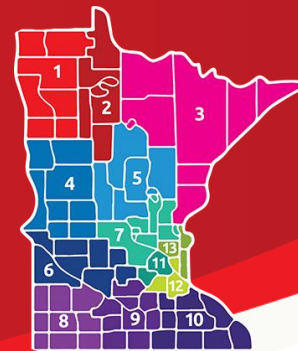
Area 7- Kelly Monicatti monicattik@aomn.org | 763.270.7168

Areas 9,10 Zak Armstrong zak.armstrong@somn.org | 763.270.7175

Area 11 – Jake Krier jake.krier@somn.org | 763.270.7178

Area 12 – Sarah Richardson sarah.richardson@somn.org | 763.270.7175

Area 13 - Emily Garness emily.garness@somn.org | 763.270.7179



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Swimming Event Descriptions

Freestyle

Athletes may start in either a front or back position and may use any stroke style. Athletes may switch strokes during the race and does not have to be a recognized stroke. However, athletes may not walk during freestyle events.

Distances Offered: 400, 200, 100, 50, 25, and 15

Backstroke

The backstroke, also known as the back crawl, is probably the easiest of all competitive strokes to teach and learn, as the swimmer has his/her head out of the water, unlike front crawl, where the face is in the water and breathing and arm coordination must be mastered.

Athletes must start with two feet and two hands touching the wall and have an alternating arm motion with a flutter kick. The most common DQ is flipping to the stomach, non-alternating strokes, for more than 1 ½ strokes.

Distances Offered: 200, 100, 50 and 25



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Breaststroke

When swimming the breaststroke the swimmer is prone in the water, and the arm and leg actions are symmetrical. The swimmer breathes in at the beginning of each arm stroke. Breaststroke is the only competitive stroke where the arm recovery is carried out under water and where a greater amount of frontal resistance is experienced. The arm action is an out sweep, down sweep, in sweep and up sweep with recovery in a streamline position.

Athletes must start with two feet and at least one hand touching the wall. At each turn and the finish of the race, the touch shall be made with both hands simultaneously at, above, or below the water level. The most common DQs are for one-handed touches and using a flutter kick.

Distances Offered: 200, 100, 50 and 25

Butterfly

The butterfly stroke is generally taught after the swimmer has established basic skills in the other three competitive strokes. The butterfly stroke relies on good timing and simultaneous arm and leg actions. The stroke is best taught by breaking it down into three phases: kick, arm action and breathing.

Athletes must start with two feet and at least one hand touching the wall. At each turn and the finish of the race, the touch shall be made with both hands simultaneously at, above, or below the water level. The most common DQs are for one handed touches and using a flutter kick.

Distances Offered: 100, 50 and 25

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Individual Medley

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

Distance Offered: 100

Flotation Race

Each athlete entered in a flotation event is responsible for having their own flotation device. Athletes signed up for a flotation race are not allowed to have an assistant for the race. If an athlete needs assistance (in addition to flotation device), they must register for assisted swim. The device must be U.S. Coast Guard approved and support the athlete with their face out of the water (flotation devices such as aqua joggers or other waist belts, kickboards, inner tubes or floats that wrap around the arms are not acceptable). Athletes with an unapproved flotation device will not be allowed to participate.

Distances Offered: 50, 25 and 15

Assisted Swim

Each athlete is responsible for having their own coach/assistant. The assistant may touch, guide, or direct the athlete but may not assist the athlete's forward movement. The swimmer is allowed to use a flotation device (see above specifications). The assistant may be in the pool or on the deck. Make sure to notify state office if special considerations need to be made for athletes with visual impairments.

Distances Offered: 50, 25 and 15*

**5-minute race time maximum for event.*

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Freestyle Relay

Each athlete will swim 1- 25m or 1- 50m leg of the race using any stroke style. Athletes who participate in the 25m flotation or assisted race can compete in the 4x25 relay with a flotation device. If relay athlete needs assistance, contact SOMN staff.

- Relay Exchanges: Swimmers in positions 1, 2 and 3 must touch the wall prior to the next swimmer leaving the wall. Athletes must be in the pool to start, no dive starts.
- Athlete Relay Substitutions: In an attempt to create an equitable system to allow for relay substitutions but maintain the intent of the divisioning process, we will allow a relay team to make ONE substitution. The newly created team may swim any time slower than their qualifying score, but only 5% faster. If a team making a substitution swims more than 5% faster than their qualifying score, they will receive a participation ribbon.

Distances Offered: 4 x 25 and 4x50

Unified Freestyle Relay

Unified Relay teams must have two athletes and two Unified partners. Teams must have competed as a relay team at an area competition.

1. Each relay is only allowed one substitution, regardless if it's an athlete or UP
2. Athlete substitutions are allowed at the area and state level and will swim under the rules outlined under the Freestyle Relay on page 5
3. If a Unified relay has a Unified Partner with an excused absence at the area level, another Unified Partner may sub in the day of the meet but that Unified Partner must be registered for competition. The relay team will receive a participation award. The area qualifying score will be used for state divisioning and the original relay team registered for area will run at state. This would count as the relay's one substitution.
4. Unified Partner substitutions are not allowed at state.

Distance Offered: 4 x 25 and 4 x 50

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Swimming Rules

The Meet

- Starts: All starts will consist of two commands ... “Take your marks,” and then upon all swimmers being stationary, the start signal.
- Staging & Competition Area: A closed competition policy, which includes staging and competition areas, will be enforced. This is being done to provide a more controlled and manageable event. We do, however, realize that a small percentage of athletes may need individualized assistance in order to perform to the best of their ability. In cases when the individual performance of an athlete may be affected or when their behavior may affect the performance of other athletes, coaches or chaperones will be allowed to accompany those athletes in competition areas otherwise considered closed.
- Divisions: To maximize pool time, some divisions will be run simultaneously in the pool.
- At State, we will not be providing finish line towels. We will provide a plastic caddy for each athlete in which to place any personal items (towels, glasses, deck shoes, etc). Volunteers will bring caddies to the finish line for athletes.
- As a general rule, please bring athletes to staging at least 15 minutes prior to their scheduled start time, but note staging postings in case we are running ahead or behind schedule.

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- Starts: Breaststroke, Butterfly and Freestyle, athletes must have two feet and one hand touching the wall. Backstroke, athletes must have two feet and two hands touching the wall. No dive starts, relay participants must start in the water.
- Turns: Breaststroke and Butterfly, at each turn the touch shall be made with both hands simultaneously at, above, or below the water level. Backstroke and Freestyle, at each turn the touch shall be made with one hand at, above, or below the water level. Flip turns are allowed in the backstroke and freestyle.
- Finish: Breaststroke and Butterfly, at the finish of the race both hands must touch simultaneously at, above, or below the water level. Backstroke and Freestyle, at the finish of the race one hand must touch the wall.
- Touching the Ground or Lane Rope: If during competition an athlete touches the ground they are okay. Athletes can use this or the lane ropes for a break, but cannot propel forward from the ground or rope. If athletes propel themselves forward they will be disqualified and receive a participation ribbon.
- Walking Events: Only at some Area competition. Check with Area Sports Program Managers/Associates.
- Flotation Events: In accordance with SOI Swimming rules, each athlete entered in a flotation event is responsible for having their own flotation device. Athletes signed up for a flotation race are not allowed to have an assistant for the race. If the athletes need assistance, they must register for assisted races. The device must be of the body wrap around type such that if the athlete were to not be able to hold on to the device, it would still support the athlete with the face out of the water (flotation devices such as aqua joggers or other waist belts, kickboards, inner tubes or floats that wrap around the arms are not acceptable). No exceptions. Do not expect to use flotation devices outside of this definition.

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- **Assisted Events:** Each athlete is responsible for having their own coach/assistant. The assistant may touch, guide or direct the athlete but may not support or assist the athlete's forward movement. The swimmer is allowed to use a flotation device (see above specifications). The assistant may be in the pool or on the deck. Make sure to notify state office if special considerations need to be made for visually impaired athletes.
- **Unassisted Events:** Athletes must swim the full distance without assistance. All events are considered to be unassisted unless titled assisted. In flotation races, athletes may use a flotation device but do not have assistance.

*Using the above guidelines, please check to make sure you have entered athletes in the correct events.

- Athletes may wear a flotation device in a relay.

Relay Rules

- **Relay Exchanges:** Swimmers in positions 1, 2 and 3 must touch the wall prior to the next swimmer leaving the wall. Participants must start in the pool.
- **Relay Substitutions:** In an attempt to create an equitable system to allow for relay substitutions but maintain the intent of the divisioning process, we will allow a relay team to make ONE substitution. The newly created team may swim any time slower than their qualifying score, but only 5% faster. If a team making a substitution swims more than 5 percent faster than their qualifying score, they will receive a participation ribbon.
- **Relay Order:** Recommend practicing in the same order that you will compete in. Order of teammates submitted at registration can change if needed though.

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Types of Assistance Needed

All teams must provide assistance with their own registered Level 1 coaches.

- Entry/Exit- Assisting the athlete getting into/out of the pool. The assistant does not stay in the pool during the event.
- Touch Start- Athlete requires someone to tap them to indicate the start of the race.
- Visual Start- Athlete requires a visual prompt to indicate the start of the race.
- Staging- Athlete needs an assistant present with them throughout the staging process (assistant not allowed beyond staging area).
- On-Deck- Athlete needs someone on the deck during the actual race. Also allowed in staging
- Outside Lane- Athlete requires a lane next to the wall of the pool (ex. Athlete may have a seizure and needs someone very close by.)
- Middle Lane- Athlete requires middle lane of pool (ex. Athlete is significantly distracted by crowd and will not complete race).
- Pool Lift- Athlete needs a mechanical lift to get them into and out of the water (note: not available at all event sites).

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Swimming Divisioning

Swimming Divisioning (3-8 athletes per division)

- **Ability** - Practice qualifying score for each event
- **Age** - (approx. 8-15, 16-21, 22-29, and 30 and older)
- **Divisions** - The scores within a division are 15 percent between highest and lowest scores.

Registration

Registration is done [online](#) by Heads of Delegation or Head Coaches. In order to register online the coach must have a username and password. If you need help with registration please contact your [Sports Program Manager](#).

When a coach registers a team they must submit the following:

1. Practice qualifying score for each event that an athlete/partner competes in
2. Coaches on each team
3. Athletes/partners must have appropriate paperwork submitted in order to register

If an athlete is attending the State competition they must attend Area first.

State Divisioning - divisions are based on an Athlete's Area results

Combining Lanes - Be aware that in an attempt to minimize the length of the competition, we may put multiple divisions in the pool for certain events. Please advise coaches, parents, and spectators of this so there isn't confusion on why an athlete is so much faster or slower than another during a single race, or why an athlete who physically placed fourth in a race may receive a gold medal or first place ribbon.



Special Olympics
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Area Competitions

Area	Date	Location	City	Register	Contact
Area 1	March 21	Franklin Middle School	Thief River Falls	March 6	dani.druse@somn.org
Area 2	April 26	Bemidji High School	Bemidji	April 11	dani.druse@somn.org
Area 3	May 11	Lincoln Park Middle School	Duluth	April 26	dani.druse@somn.org
Area 4	May 3	Discovery Middle School	Alexandria	April 19	leah.wolkow@somn.org
Area 5	March 27	Little Falls Middle School	Little Falls	March 13	leah.wolkow@somn.org
Area 7	April 14	Becker High School	Becker	March 31	monicattik@somn.org
Area 8/9	April 27	Gustavus Adolphus College	St. Peter	April 14	zak.armstrong@somn.org
Area 10	April 14	Rochester Rec Center	Rochester	March 31	zak.armstrong@somn.org
Area 11	April 14	South View Middle School	Edina	March 31	jake.krier@somn.org
Area 12	April 7	Washington Tech Magnet School	St.Paul	March 24	sarah.richardson@somn.org
Area 13	May 18	Centennial High School	Circle Pines	May 5	emily.garness@somn.org

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State Competition

Date	Location	City	Quota Due	Register By
June 21-23	University of St. Thomas	St. Paul	May 1	May 28

Competition Details

- Summer Games Celebration Ceremonies will be Friday night at the University of St. Thomas
- Athletes may enter three individual events and one relay.
- All Unified Relay teams must have competed as a relay at an area competition. Refer to relay rules for substitution rules
- Although the pool depth would now allow it in some events, we will continue to not offer diving starts at the area or state level
- Athletes can only compete in one sport at Summer Games
- Unified Partners can register for one 4X25 team and one 4X50 team

Swimming events offered at State

- Backstroke – 200, 100, 50, 25
- Breaststroke – 100, 50, 25
- Butterfly – 100, 50, 25
- Freestyle – 400, 200, 100, 50, 25, 15
- Individual Medley – 100
- Flotation Race – 50, 25, 15
- Assisted Swim – 50, 25, 15
- Relay – 4 x 50 Freestyle, 4 x 25 Freestyle, 4 x 25 Unified Freestyle, 4 X 50 Unified Freestyle

Special Olympics
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Practice, Skill Development & Resources

Special Olympics Minnesota wants to make sure that you have confidence in your knowledge of swimming rules, skills and practice ideas. Listed below are Special Olympics swimming resources that can help with the training and skill development for athletes.

Special Olympics Swimming Resources

[Special Olympics Minnesota Swimming Page](#) (rules and handbook)

[Swimming Coaching Guide](#)

[Planning a Training Season](#)

[Teaching Swimming Skills](#)

[Swimming Quick Start Guide](#)

For additional resources and video tutorials on Special Olympics swimming please visit <http://www.specialolympics.org/Aquatics.aspx>

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SOMN Health Programs

SOMN offers health programs to integrate into your sports season to enhance your athletes performance, health, nutritional knowledge and overall wellbeing.

- SOFit- unified approach to improving and protecting health and wellness for people with and without intellectual disabilities. Comprehensive, 360 degree look at wellness and human spirit.
 - 8 weeks, unified pairs
 - Coaches lead educational topics including: cooking, healthy grocery shopping, importance of varying workouts, healthy beverage choices.
 - Customizable to groups interest
 - Four pillars of wellness: physical, nutrition, emotional and social.
 - Coaches Manual includes all lessons and activities. Athlete Playbook allows athletes to track lessons and activities.

Questions? Want materials?

Contact Kelsey Sparks | Health Programs Coordinator Kelsey.sparks@somn.org

Special Olympics
Minnesota



SOMN Health Programs

SOMN offers health programs to integrate into your sports season to enhance your athletes performance, health, nutritional knowledge and overall wellbeing.

- Fit5
 - Plan for physical activity, nutrition and hydration
 - Recommending 5 days of physical activity, 5 fruits and vegetables and 5 bottles of water
 - Fitness cards offer exercises to challenge abilities. These can be done at practice, the gym and home.
 - Build your practice using fitness cards to focus on endurance, flexibility, and strength
 - Athlete handbook to track progress and follow program at home

[Start now! Fit5 Guide and Training Cards](#)

Questions? Want materials?

Contact Kelsey Sparks | Health Programs Coordinator Kelsey.sparks@somn.org

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Coach Recognition Item

Each coach that becomes Level 2 certified or recertified in a sport is able to order one coach item per calendar year. Information can be found [HERE](#).

Please note that if you have not completed a Level 2 training or recertification course, or you have already received an item for the year, you will not be shipped an item.

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Level 2 Swimming Quiz

Level 2 certification is not processed until you have completed the Level 2 quiz.

To take the Level 2 Swimming quiz please [click here](#).

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