

Swimming Rules

Valid through 2025

Special Olympics
New Hampshire



Special Olympics New Hampshire has created this set of rules based on the rules outlined by Special Olympics International as well as the International Swimming Federation (FINA)'s rules - FINA is the National Governing Body for Swimming.

These rules shall be used to govern all Special Olympics New Hampshire Swimming competition through the end of 2025 when we next review these rules.

Events Offered

- 10 Meter with Support
- 10 Meter
- 15 Meter with Support
- 15 Meter
- 25 Meter with Support
- 25 Meter Freestyle
- 50 Meter with Support
- 100 Meter with Support
- 4 x 25 Meter Freestyle Relay
- 4 x 25 Meter Medley Relay
- 4 x 25 Meter Unified Sports Freestyle Relay
- 50 Meter Freestyle
- 25 Meter Backstroke
- 50 Meter Backstroke
- 25 Meter Breaststroke
- 50 Meter Breaststroke
- 25 Meter Butterfly
- 50 Meter Butterfly
- 100 Meter Freestyle
- 4 x 50 Meter Freestyle Relay
- 4 x 50 Meter Medley Relay
- 100 Meter Backstroke
- 100 Meter Breaststroke
- 100 Meter Individual Medley
- 100 Meter Butterfly
- 200 Meter Backstroke
- 200 Meter Freestyle
- 200 Meter Breaststroke
- 400 Meter Freestyle

Registration

- An athlete may compete in up to four events.
- With Support: Athlete uses a floatation device and/or needs assistance of another individual.
 - If assisted by another individual, the assistant may touch, guide, or direct the athlete, but may not support or assist with the athlete's forward movement.
- An athlete with Down syndrome who has been diagnosed with Atlanto-Axial instability may not participate in Butterfly events, Individual Medley events, or diving starts.

Divisioning

- For the Area Swim meet, qualifying scores must be provided during the registration period, however, coaches are encouraged to update the score to reflect a more accurate score if it is appropriate prior to the state competition by the end of the scratch period.

Equipment

- Swimmers cannot wear any device that may aid his or her speed, buoyancy, or endurance except in “with support” events – this includes webbed gloves, flippers, and fins for example.
- Each athlete is responsible for his or her own floatation device if used in a “with support” event.
 - The floatation device must be of the body wrap-around type such that if the athlete were to not be able to hold onto the device, the device would still support the athlete with his/her face out of the water.
 - Floatation devices such as kickboards, inner tubes or floats that wrap around the arms are not acceptable for use at any time.
- Goggles may be worn by the swimmer.
- Swimwear must conform with current FINA rules – exceptions for medical, cultural, religious or modesty reasons may be granted.
- It is allowed for swimmers who have epilepsy to wear a piece of equipment to discreetly alert the lifeguard in the event of a seizure.

Competition

GENERAL RULES

- Standing on the bottom during any event shall not disqualify a competitor, but he/she shall not walk on or jump from the bottom.
- Swimmers may be assisted from the water upon request.
- On the Starter’s command “Take your Marks”, Athletes shall immediately take up a starting position. When all swimmers are stationary, the Starter shall give the starting signal.
- Starts may be from the starting block, beside the starting block, or 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.

RELAY PROCEDURE

- There are four swimmers on each relay team.
- Each swimmer shall swim $\frac{1}{4}$ the distance of the total relay.
- Each Unified Sports relay team shall consist of two athletes and two Unified Sports partners.
- Relay swimmers should exit the pool as soon as possible following the completion of his/her relay leg.
- Relay swimmers, who cannot exit the water immediately, may be allowed to remain in their lane until all relays have finished, so long as they do not interfere with the other swimmers or the timing equipment.
 - A swimmer remaining in the water should move a short distance away from the end of the pool, close to the lane rope, but not obstruct a swimmer in another lane.

Disqualification

- A stroke judge and turn judge are present at all competitions and will determine if a swimmer is disqualified.
- In a relay, obstruction of a swimmer in another lane shall cause the team to be disqualified.