

Advancement to Higher Level Competition

Special Olympics
Southern California



Special Olympics Sports Rules - Article 1

CRITERIA FOR ADVANCEMENT TO HIGHER LEVEL COMPETITION

Fundamental Principle

- Athletes of all ability levels have an equal opportunity to advance to the next higher-level competition provided the sport and event are offered at the next higher level of competition.
- An athlete is eligible to advance to the next competition provided she or he has:
- Participated in the previous level of competition, with the following exception:
 - An athlete or team for which there has been no competition opportunity at a Tournament or Games shall be eligible to advance to the next level of competition if one or more of the following criteria apply:
 - There is low enrollment of athletes/teams within the Program structure;
 - Opportunity to provide equitable competition within the Program structure is low or non-existent.

CRITERIA FOR ADVANCEMENT TO HIGHER LEVEL COMPETITION

- Procedure for Athlete Team and Coach Selection
- The Accredited Program receives the number of athletes or teams that will be allowed to participate at the competition by the specific organizing committee.
- Priority is given to first-place finishers from all divisions of the sport and/or event. If the number of first-place finishers exceeds the quota, select athletes or teams to advance by random draw.
- If there are not enough first-place finishers to fill the quota, all first-place finishers shall advance. The remaining quota shall be filled by a random draw of second place finishers from all divisions of the sport and/or event.
- If the quota is large enough for all second-place finishers to advance, the remaining quota shall be filled by a random draw of third place finishers from all divisions of the sport and/or event.



Coach Requirements

- Cleared Class Volunteer
- Sports Specific Course completed
- Principles of Coaching Course – online or in person training conducted by a Program approved trainer

Coach Responsibilities

Prior to USA Games



- Attend regular delegation and sport meetings
- Attend SOSC Selection Camp and SOSC Training Camp
- Willing to assist in registering athletes with proper preliminary scores for assigned sport
- Willing to commit to maintaining ongoing contact with assigned athletes, their family/guardians, and the athlete's local coach
- Must be willing to organize practice sessions throughout the year with the selected athletes to assure they are prepared for competition at the 2026 USA Games, as allowed and possible.

Coach Responsibilities

During USA Games



- Must be willing and able to serve as both a sport specific coach *and* an athlete chaperone for all Team SOSC activities during the Games. This includes 24 hour/day supervision of athletes during Games time and at all training camps.
- Attend daily coach meetings
- Ensure the safety and well-being of athletes at all times
- Reside in Games housing with athletes and coaches during Games
- Deal with conflict resolution within the Delegation
- Be accessible at all times.
- Assist athletes in completion of Healthy Athletes disciplines.

2026 USA Games Information



Timeline - 2025	
March 1	USA Games Guide
March 1	Information for Interscholastic Delegates
April 15	Coach Applications Due
June 28-29	Selection Camp
July 1	Delegate Random Draw
August 15	USA Games Registration Closes
Fall 2025	SOSC Training Camp

Timeline - 2026	
June 18, 2026	Team SOSC Send-Off
June 19, 2026	Delegation Arrival
June 20-26, 2026	USA Games
June 27, 2026	Departure

2026 USA Games Information



Sport	# of teams	Athletes	UPs	F/M	Qualifying Games
Athletics		4		2F/2M	Summer Games 2025
Interscholastic Unified Athletics		4	4	4F/4M	2025 CIF Season
Basketball	1	10		Male/Mixed	Summer Games 2025
Bocce - Unified**	1	2	2	2M/2F	Summer Games 2025
Bowling - Unified**	1	2	2	2M/2F	Bowling Championships 2024
Flag Football - Unified*	1	6	4	Male/Mixed	Summer Games 2025
Golf level 2 - Unified*	1	1	1	F	Fall Games 2024
Golf level 4		2		2M	Fall Games 2024
Softball	1	15		Male/Mixed	Fall Games 2024
Swim		4		2F/2M	Summer Games 2025
YLE		1	1		Application Based

*Unified teams are to be made up of athletes and partners of similar age and ability
 ^Male and Female athlete, male and female partner

Overall Count	
Athletes and UPs	65
Coaches & Supporting Roles	29
Total Delegation	94



ATHLETICS

TRACK EVENTS

- 50m
- **100m**
- 100m Walk
- 200m
- 400m
- 400m Walk
- 800m
- 1500m
- 3000m
- 5000m
- 10000m
- 4x100m Relay
- 4x400m Relay

Athletes:

- An athlete may be registered in up to 3 events.
- Only 50% of athletes may compete in a single event. Example: Program A has 4 athletics competitors and only 2 can compete in the 100m. This does not apply to relays.
- SPORTS PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

FIELD EVENTS

- Running Long Jump
- Shot Put

ATHLETICS List of Events & Standards						
	Male			Female		
Event	USA Games Record	Performance Standard	Division 1 Performance Standard	USA Games Record	Performance Standard	Division 1 Performance Standard
50m Run	7.62 (2014)	≥ 12.00	N/A	8.69 (2006)	≥ 13.00	N/A
100m Walk	23.3 (2018)	≤ 46.16	N/A	28.37 (2014)	≤ 57.98	N/A
400m Walk	1:58.7 (2006)	≤ 03:59.73	N/A	2:12.0 (2018)	≤ 04:23.81	N/A
100m Run*	11.9 (2022)	≤ 21.67	≤ 14.25	14.48 (2006)	≤ 26.56	≤ 17.46
200m Run	24.0 (2022)	≤ 44.03	≤ 28.95	29.2 (2022)	≤ 52.75	≤ 34.96
400m Run	54.63 (2010)	≤ 01:39.05	≤ 01:05.13	1:05.1 (2018)	≤ 02:01.37	≤ 01:19.81
800m Run	2:34.0 (2022)	≤ 04:02.49	≤ 02:39.44	2:40.4 (2022)	≤ 05:10.89	≤ 03:24.41
1500m Run	4:37.9 (2022)	≤ 08:31.48	≤ 05:36.30	5:22.7 (2022)	≤ 10:46.44	≤ 07:05.04
3000m Run	9:29.3 (2018)	≤ 17:58.94	≤ 11:42.42	11:20.3 (2022)	≤ 24:02.95	≤ 15:48.76
5000m Run	16:16.23 (2006)	≤ 29:36.25	≤ 19:27.91	21:59.9 (2018)	≤ 43:57.08	≤ 28:54.00
10000m Run	35:18.5 (2018)	≤ 1:08:13.83	≤ 44:51.34	55:54.0 (2022)	≤ 1:41:36.34	≤ 1:06:48.0
Long Jump	5.66m (2022)	≥ 2.72m	≥ 4.42m	3.94m (2022)	≥ 1.95m	≥ 3.18m
Mini Jav	29.3m (2014)	≥ 15.02m	≥ 24.45m	23.45m (2010)	≥ 11.10m	≥ 18.08m
Shot Put	14.07m (2014)	≥ 6.62m	≥ 10.78m	9.85m (2010)	≥ 4.61m	≥ 7.51m
Relays		N/A	N/A		N/A	N/A
Pentathlon		N/A	N/A		N/A	N/A



BOCCE

- Singles
- Doubles (2 Person)
- Team (4 Person)
- Unified Sports[®] Doubles (2 person: 1 athlete & 1 unified partner)
- Unified Sports[®] Team (4 Person: 2 athletes & 2 unified partners)

Athletes:

- May participate in a maximum of three (3) events.
- Unified Partners are not eligible to participate in singles.
- Competitors that require the use of a ramp must be in compliance with the current Special Olympics
- Ramp Bocce rules. Athletes using ramps will be placed in separate divisions in singles competition ONLY. Ramp singles will only be offered if there are enough competitors to create a meaningful competition.



BOWLING

- Singles
- Doubles
- Team
- Unified Sports® Doubles
- Unified Sports® Team

Athletes:

- May participate in a maximum of three (3) events.
- May select ONLY one (1) doubles event (traditional or unified)
- May select ONLY one (1) team event (traditional or unified)
- Ability will supersede gender – if divisions cannot be comprised strictly by mixed gender teams, then teams will play in male divisions.
- Competitors that require the use of a ramp must meet the qualifying standards and be in compliance with the current Special Olympics Unassisted Ramp Bowling rules.



BOWLING Sports Performance Standards

Based on single game performance

Event	Male			Female		
	USA Games Record	Performance Standard	Division 1 Performance Standard	USA Games Record	Performance Standard	Division 1 Performance Standard
Singles	-----	≥ 86	≥ 167	-----	≥ 67	≥ 131
Single Game	235 (2014)			178 (2022)		
3 Game Series	705 (2014)			534 (2022)		



GOLF

- Level 1 - Individual Skills Competition
- Level 2 – Unified Sports Alternate Shot Team Play - (9-hole)
- Level 4 - Individual Stroke Play - (9-hole)

LEVELS 2 & CONFIGURATION

- Ability will supersede gender – if divisions cannot be comprised strictly by mixed gender teams, then teams will play in male divisions.

SPORT ENTRY INFORMATION

Athletes:

- Carts will be utilized for competition in levels 2 through 5.
- Golfers must not exceed the maximum entry averages listed below.
 - Level 2 – 9-hole average of ≤ 70
 - Level 4 – 9-hole average of ≤ 70



SWIMMING EVENTS

25 yd Freestyle

25 yd Backstroke

50 yd Freestyle*

50 yd Backstroke

50 yd Butterfly

50 yd Breaststroke

100 yd Freestyle

100 yd Backstroke

100 yd Butterfly

100 yd Breaststroke

100 yd Individual Medley

200 yd Freestyle

200 yd Individual Medley

500 yd Freestyle

RELAY EVENTS

4X25 Freestyle

4x50 Freestyle

4x50 Medley

Competition at USA Games will be conducted on a 25-yard short course.

SWIMMING SPORT ENTRY INFORMATION

Programs:

- Are allowed to request a minimum of 2 athletes.

Athletes:

- An athlete may be registered in up to 3 events.
- Only 50% of athletes compete in a single event.
- Mixed gender relays are allowed and will compete in the male division.



TEAM SPORTS

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Gender is determined by following ratios:
 - Mixed Gender = Balanced ratio (60/40 or 50/50)
 - Male = Males (100), Male & Females (minimum ratio of 70/30, 80/20, 90/10)
- Ability may be considered before gender when divisioning. If divisions cannot be comprised strictly by mixed gender teams, then teams will play in male divisions.

LEVEL OF PLAY

To improve the quality of play, the quality games taskforce has defined key characteristics and competencies for the following levels of play for each team sport to be offered at the USA Games:

- INTERMEDIATE
- ADVANCED

The intent is to identify the level of play desired to bring to the Games to ensure quality competition. For example, if only two Programs request teams for a specific level in that sport, then the level would not be offered, and the Program would be allotted the next level for their team.



UNIFIED SPORTS COMPETITION

- Coaches are not allowed to play as Unified partners.
- Unified Sports Competitive model.

Similar Age Requirement

- Members of Team Sports **MUST** be within the following similar age ranges:
 - If all the members of a team are 18 years old and older, the variance between the youngest and oldest member of the team should be no more than 20 years.
 - If any member of a team is between the ages of 16 -17 (at the time of the Games) the variance between the youngest and oldest member of the team must be no more than 5 years.

Similar Ability Requirement

Athletes and partners should be of similar ability as described in Article I – Sport Rules. Please note that the Unified Sports Competitive model is not exclusive to high ability Unified partners and athletes. While the Unified Sports Competitive model emphasizes the importance of having team members of similar ability it does not prescribe that they must be of high ability only. Teams can be composed of lower ability participants if the team members are of similar ability.

Thank you!

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