Special Olympics Ohio

Athletics Manual (Rev. 10/2026)

All Special Olympics Ohio Athletics meets are run according to the USA Track and Field rules. Any modifications to those rules shall be found in this manual.

All Special Olympics Ohio regional and state level competitions will enforce the participation regulations for athletes and Unified partners, of which is derived from Article 1 of the Special Olympics Sport Rules. This rule shall be that each team and/or individual athlete or Unified partner, must play all eligible and rostered team members in every game unless a player is injured or has been removed due to disciplinary reasons. Coaches must notify the competition management prior to each game if players on the approved tournament roster will not be playing due to injury or disciplinary reasons, and this needs to be approved by the tournament director. Failure to play all eligible team members in each game will result in forfeit and disqualification.

OFFICIAL EVENTS

The SOOH Athletics season runs April through June. Athletes must be in a training program a minimum of 8 weeks prior to regional competition. To qualify for the State Athletics Competition athletes must compete at a Regional Qualifying Athletics meet without disqualification.

Special Olympics Ohio provides a range of events to offer athletes of varying abilities the opportunity to compete. The following is a list of official events available in Special Olympics Ohio.

Track Running Events:

- 50M
- 100M
- 200M
- 400M
- 800M
- 1500M
- 3000M
- 4x100M Relay
- 4x100M Unified Sports Relay
- 4x400M Relay
- 4x400M Unified Sports Relay

Track Walking Events:

- 25M Walk
- 100M Walk
- 400M Walk

- 800M Walk
- 2K Walk

Track Assisted Walking Events:

- 10M Assisted Walk
- 25M Assisted Walk
- 50M Assisted Walk

Track Wheelchair Events:

- 10M Wheelchair Race
- 25M Wheelchair Race
- 30M Wheelchair Slalom
- 30M Motorized Wheelchair Slalom
- 50M Motorized Wheelchair Slalom
- 100M Wheelchair Race

Field Events:

- Long Jump
- Standing Long Jump
- High Jump (Pentathlon Only)
- Mini Javelin
    - Male: 400g
    - Female: 300g
    - Male and Female (8-15 years): 300g
- Softball Throw
- Shot Put (***Please note: the previously titled "wheelchair shotput" will be divisioned with the traditional shot put and follow the same weights below for gender and age. Additionally, there is no longer a 2.72kg women's shot put division, and those entrants will follow the weights below based on age.**)
    - Male: 4.0kg/8.8lbs
    - Female: 3.0kg/6.6lbs
    - Male (8-11 years): 3.0kg/6.6lbs
    - Female (8-11 years): 2.0kg/4.4lbs
- Pentathlon (100M, Long Jump, Shot Put, High Jump, 400M)

RULES OF COMPETITION

Athletes are limited to entering into a maximum of 2 individual events and 1 relay event. Athletes may be entered in a Traditional Relay or a Unified Sports Relay, however athletes may not be entered in both. Pentathlon athletes will only be permitted to enter the pentathlon, and not permitted to compete in any additional events.

- Of the two individual events, athletes can enter any combination of the following:

    - 1 track event and 1 field event
    - 2 field events
    - 2 track events
- Any athlete who has been disqualified in an event at their Regional Meet may not enter in that event at the State Meet.
- Each local organization may enter more than one male/open and one female relay team.

Event Eligibility Requirements

1. Athletes who are entered in the 50M dash, may not enter into any other track running events, including relays. The 50M dash is a developmental level event, and as such an athlete may not enter into a regulation event if entered into the 50M.
2. Athletes may enter in the Standing Long Jump or the Running Long Jump, but not both.
3. Athletes may be entered in the shotput or in the softball throw, but not both.
4. Athletes who are entered in the softball throw, may not enter into the mini javelin.
5. Special Olympics athletes may be entered in either the 4x100M relay or the 4x400M relay, but not both.
6. Partners may enter in both the 4x100M and the 4x400M relays.
7. Athletes who enter into the Pentathlon may not enter into any other individual field or track event, including relays.

We will not hold an event at the State Athletics Meet if only 1 athlete registers in that event. Should this occur, the athlete will not be able to switch to a different event to replace the event that is not offered. If only one athlete registers for an event for regional competition, the athlete may elect to compete to receive a qualifying time, in order to possibly attend state in that event. However, a gold medal will not be given as the award. The athlete will receive a participation ribbon for their event. If more than 1 athlete enters an event, and scratches occur day of competition that result in only 1 athlete racing, the athlete will be permitted to run and receive a medal for the place they earn.

UNIFORM

Acceptable Attire:

- Running Shorts, Basketball Shorts, Biker Shorts
- Sweatpants
- Jogging Pants
- T-Shirts (Delegation Branded T-Shirt)
- Tank Tops
- Sweatshirts

Acceptable Footwear:

- Athletic Shoes
- Tennis Shoes
- Basketball Shoes
- Running Shoes
- Cross Trainer Shoes
- Spiked Track Shoes

Prohibited Attire and Footwear

- Denim Shorts or Pants
- Work Boots
- Hiking Boots
- Any Type of Face Painting

STARTING RACE/COMMANDS

Races 400M and Under

- In races 400M and under, the commands of the starter shall be "on your marks", "set", and when all competitors are steady, the gun shall be fired.

All Walking and Wheelchair Events

- The commands shall be "on your marks" and when all the competitors are steady, the gun shall be fired. A competitor shall not touch the ground with his/her hand(s).

Races 800M and Longer

- The commands shall be "on your marks" and when all the competitors are steady, the gun shall be fired. A competitor shall not touch the ground with his/her hand(s).
- Runners will run in their assigned lanes through the first turn as far as the nearer edge of the break line where athletes may leave their respective lanes.

Relays

- 4x100M Relays: These will follow same commands as listed above for that distance. Runners must remain in their assigned lanes for the duration of the race.
- 4x400M Relays: A three-turn stagger will be used for the start. The first leg will be run entirely in lanes. The second leg runner will start in his/her lane and will run in their lanes through the first turn as far as the edge of the break line where athletes may leave their respective lanes. In the 4x400M relay, where not more than four teams are competing, it is recommended that only the first bend, of the first lap, should be ran in lanes (subject to approval by the head official).

STARTS AND VIOLATIONS

The starter at the beginning of races will allow athletes to:

- Have ample time to settle down after taking their marks.
- Start the sequence over if any runner is off-balance.
- Not hold the runners too long after the set command.

False Starts

- **Only one false start, per race, shall be allowed without the disqualification of the athlete responsible for the false start. Any athlete responsible for further false starts, in the race, shall be disqualified.**

Lane Violations

- In all races run in lanes, each competitor shall keep within his/her allocated lane from start to finish.
- If a competitor is pushed or forced by another person to run outside his/her lane, and if no material advantage is gained, the competitor should not be disqualified.
- If an athlete either runs outside his/her lane in the straight or runs outside the outer lane on the bend, with no material advantage thereby being gained, and if no other runner is obstructed, then the competitor shall not be disqualified.

GENERAL RULES

Blind and Deaf Athletes

- A rope or sighted guide runner may be provided to assist athletes who are visually impaired.
- Local Programs should bring a rope long enough to accommodate the race, and have it approved prior to the start of the meet by the sport director or head official.
- A sighted guide runner may not be ahead of the athlete in any manner. At no time may the guide runner pull the athlete or propel the athlete forward by pushing. The sighted guide runner may not set the pace for the athlete.
- A tap start will be used for an athlete who is both deaf and blind.
- Guide runners must wear a bright orange running vest so that they are clearly distinguished from competitors.

Race Walking

- All walking events are independent unless titled as “assisted.”
- Athletes will be disqualified if they run during a walking event.
- Athletes are not allowed to enter walking events and running events. They must select one method of movement for all their track events.
- Athletes must have one foot in touch with the ground at all times.
- In all race walking events, an athlete does not have to have a straight advancing leg while competing.

- In race walking events, up to and including the 400M, the competitor shall be disqualified with no prior warning when, in the opinion of two or more officials, a technical violation has been committed that results in an advantage being gained.

Principles for Wheelchair Races

- Athletes in wheelchair races greater than the 25M, must wear a protective helmet.
- Athletes shall start with all wheels behind the start line.
- Athletes are timed from the smoke of the starter's gun (or flash of an electronic gun) to when all front wheels (two or one) of the wheelchair reach the perpendicular plane of the nearer edge of the finish line.
- Motorized wheelchairs shall not be allowed in regular wheelchair races.
- Only athletes who ambulate by use of a wheelchair may participate in the events.
- Athletes shall not be pushed, pulled or otherwise assisted during these events.
- The lanes for the wheelchair events shall be made two track-lanes wide.

10M and 25M Wheelchair Races

- Each competitor must keep in his/her lane from start to finish and may not interfere, obstruct or impede the progress of another competitor. Infractions, at the discretion of the officials, may result in disqualification.

30M Wheelchair Slalom

- Beginning at the start line, place one cone in each lane at five meter intervals. Cones should be placed in the middle of the lanes
- Athlete maneuvers his/her chair through the course, going to the right of the first obstacle and across the finish line without impeding another athlete on the course.
- Knocking down a marker constitutes a violation, and a three-second penalty will be assessed.

Motorized Wheelchair Events

- These events are restricted to motorized wheelchairs only.
- The first two wheels on each competitor's wheelchair will be regarded as the starting and finishing points of all races.
- If a competitor varies from a sequence of obstacles, he/she must, without notice from any official, resume progress at the point prior to the incorrectly passed obstacle before entering the next obstacle and complete the course in its entirety, or be disqualified. In essence, failure to complete the course as designed will result in disqualification.
- A competitor will be disqualified if that individual's coach (or assistants) enters the course boundaries during the running of the obstacle course. Coaches must remain off the track and the infield at all times during the meet. Officials will not give directional cues.

- Athletes are timed from the smoke of the starter's gun (or flash of an electronic gun) to when the front wheels of the wheelchair reach the perpendicular plane of the nearer edge of the finish line.

Motorized Wheelchair Slalom

- Each athlete will use two lanes as his/her lane, sufficiently wide enough to allow for wheelchairs.
- Place the cones on the start and finish lines 2.44 meters apart (two track-lanes width) to create four start and four finish gates and four lanes.
- Beginning at the start line, place one traffic cone (slalom flagpoles minimum of 1.22 meter) in each lane at 5-meter intervals. Cones should be placed in the middle of the lanes.
- Athlete maneuvers his/her chair through the course, going to the right of the first obstacle and across the finish line without impeding another athlete on the course.
- Knocking down a cone constitutes a violation, and a three-second penalty will be assessed.
- No penalty will be incurred as a result of touching/moving a cone.

Assisted Walking Events

- Assisted devices may consist of canes, crutches, or a walker. These devices shall be provided by the athlete.
- Athletes start behind the start line with a walking aid.
- Athletes walk using a walking aid.
- Athletes must stay in their designated lane.
- Athletes may not receive physical assistance from coaches, officials, etc.
- Athletes are timed from the smoke of the starter's gun (or flash of an electronic gun) to when his/her torso reaches the perpendicular plane of the nearer edge of the finish line.

Relay Events

- There shall be four runners on each relay team.
- Each runner shall run one-fourth the distance of the total relay. No runner shall run more than one leg of any one relay.
- A relay team which combines genders to include both male and female runners shall compete as a male relay.
- Athletes may be entered in a Traditional Relay or a Unified Sports Relay.
- Pentathlon athletes MAY NOT enter a relay. They will only be permitted to compete in the pentathlon.
- Once a relay team is set and competes at a regional competition, the 4-person relay team roster may not change and no alternates can be substituted for another athlete. You may elect to change the leg order, but this change must be noted in your registration and may not change after registration is submitted. Alternates can only be substituted prior to competing at the regional qualifying event.

Unified Sports Relay Events

- Each Unified Sports relay team shall consist of two athletes and two partners.
- Runners on a Unified Sports relay team may be assigned to race in any order.

Principles for Field Events

- In the long jump, standing long jump, shot put, and mini javelin, each athlete shall be allowed three non-consecutive attempts. All three attempts shall be measured and recorded. The longest measurement of the three attempts shall be used for scoring. All measurements shall be made in metric units.
- In the softball throw, each athlete **must** throw all three attempts consecutively. Each throw will be marked, however, only the longest of the three throws will be measured for scoring. All measurements shall be made in metric units.
- For individual field event competitions (Long Jump, Standing Long Jump, Pentathlon, and Throwing Events) a competitor shall be charged with a foul if the competitor does not initiate an attempt within one minute after the competitor's name has been called, in addition to a visual indication made by the event judge. For the High Jump, where there are three or more athletes remaining in the competition the time shall be one minute. Where there are two athletes remaining in the competition the time shall be one and a half minutes. Where there is one remaining athlete in the competition the time shall be two minutes.

Running Long Jump

- Running Long Jump:
    - The jump line will be marked with tape at 0.5 meter back from the edge of the sand pit.
    - Athletes will need to take off from behind the line. If their foot touches the line the jump should not be measured.
- All good jumps will be measured from the back of the taped line. All distances will be measured along a perpendicular line from the foul line to the closest impression on the landing area made by any part of the athlete's body or clothing.
- Prior to competition, an athlete may receive assistance from an official to mark their runway starting point.
- All jumps need to be measured in **METERS**!

Standing Long Jump

- Standing Long Jump:
    - The jump line will be the edge of the pit. If the edge of the pit is rounded, a tape line may be needed to be put down to ensure the foot does not cross the line prior to the jump.
    - If toes or feet are over the line it will not be measured.
    - All good jumps will be measured from the edge of the pit, or if a piece of tape is placed on the edge of the pit it should be measured from that back of the tape..
- The athlete shall initiate all attempts from behind the designated foul line.

- A competitor shall use both feet on the take-off. He/she may rock backward and forward lifting his/her heels and toes alternately, but he/she may not lift either foot completely off the ground.
- All distances will be measured along a perpendicular line from the foul line to the closest impression on the landing area made by any part of the athlete's body or clothing.
- When possible, the standing long jump event should be conducted in sand-filled jumping pits. If a mat needs to be used, it should be long enough to include both take-off and landing areas. The mat must be secured safely to the surface to prevent slipping. When using a sand-filled jumping pit, the foul line shall be placed at the end of the running long jump runway.
- All jumps need to be measured in METERS!

High Jump (Pentathlon Only)

- The competitor shall take off from one foot.
- The minimum opening height for all high jump competitions shall be 1.00 meter.
- Competitors shall not dive forward over the bar or jump from a two-footed take-off.
- An athlete with Down syndrome, who has been diagnosed with Atlanto-axial instability, or an athlete who has not been screened, may not participate in the high jump (including pentathlon).
- When there is a tie in the high jump event after the count back of failures, the athletes tying shall be awarded the same place in the competition – there is no jump-off to break the tie.
- In jumping events, prior to competition, athletes may have assistance from an official to mark their take-off mark.
- A competitor shall be charged with a foul if the competitor does not initiate and attempt within 1 minute after the competitor's name has been called, in addition to a visual indication made by the event judge. Additionally, the time limits will be followed as stated above in the *Principles for Field Events* section.
- High Jump is only offered to athletes as part of the pentathlon. If not participating in the pentathlon event, athletes are not able to enter high jump.
- All jumps need to be measured in METERS!

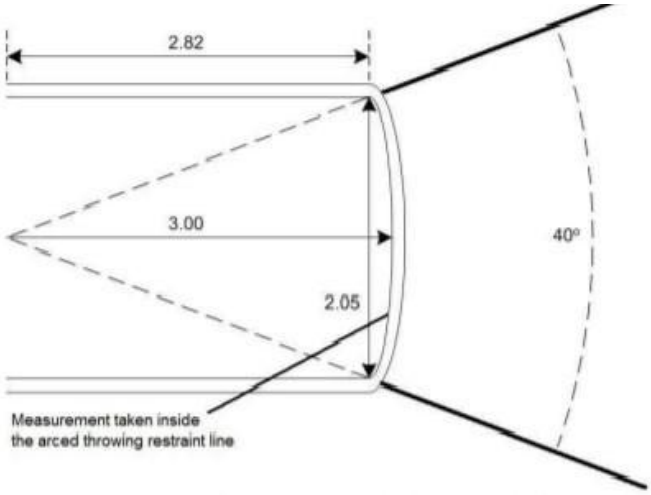
Shot Put

- The shot may be steel, brass, or a synthetic-covered implement.
- It is acceptable to include wheelchair athlete in the regular divisions of the shot put, but the weight of shot must be the same for all competitor's dependent on their age.
- A legal put shall be made from within the circle. In the course of an attempt, the athlete, or his/her wheelchair, may not touch the top edge of the stop-board, the top of the iron ring or any surface outside of the circle.
- It is legal to touch the inside of the stop-board or the iron band.
- The use of any mechanical aid shall not be allowed. For protective purposes only, the wrist may be taped.

- The shot shall be put from the shoulder with one hand only. When the competitor takes a stance in the circle to commence a put, the shot shall touch or be in close proximity to the neck or the chin, and the hand shall not be dropped below this position during the action of putting. The shot shall not be taken behind the line of the shoulders.
- The put shall be declared foul, and shall not be measured if, after entering the circle and starting the put, the competitor commits any of the following:
    - Uses any method contrary to the definition of legal put
    - Causes the shot to fall on or outside the lines marking the landing sector.
- Additionally, as a reminder, an athlete must enter and exit the ring from the back, or that attempt will be declared a foul.

Softball Throw

- The Implement
    - A 30 centimeters (11 3/4 in) in circumference softball shall be used.
- The throwing area should be set up as follows:
    - The runway shall be marked by two parallel white lines, 5 centimeters wide and 2.05 meters apart (2.82 meters in length). The throw shall be made from behind the arc of a circle drawn with a radius of 3.00 meters. The landing sector shall be marked with white lines five centimeters wide such that the inner edge of the lines, if extended, would pass through the two intersections of the inner edges of the arc, and the parallel lines marking the runway and intersect at the center of the circle of which the arc is part. The center of the circle is the point for the measurement and shall be marked. The sector is 40°.
    - Softball Throw and Mini Jav Area Diagram



- The measurement of the longest throw shall be made from where the ball first touches the ground to the inside edge of the arc.
- Only the longest throw of each athlete will be measured, after they complete 3 consecutive throws.

- Any athlete who throws a softball further than 40M cannot enter the Softball Throw. If an athlete exceeds 40M during a competition, it will result in a disqualification and the athlete will receive a participation ribbon. If this happens at a Regional Qualifying Event, he/she will not be allowed to advance to State in that event.
- It is counted as a foul if the competitor:
    - Does not throw the softball so that it initially lands completely within the inner edges of the landing sector lines.
    - Touches with any part of the body the arc as marked, or any ground beyond the arc or throwing box.

Mini Javelin (See diagram above)

- The shaft, grip, and fins shall be made out of plastic or suitable rigid material.
- The tip shall be made of soft rubber with a blunt, rounded end.
- The mini-javelin may have three or four fins. The fins shall be flat (without protrusions or roughness) and shall be perpendicular to the surface of the mini-javelin.
- The mini-javelin must be held by the grip with one hand only.
- The mini-javelin shall be thrown over the shoulder or upper part of the throwing arm and may not be slung or hurled.
- At no time may the competitor turn completely around so that his/her back is towards the throwing area.
- The measurement of each throw shall be made from where the tip first struck the ground to the inside edge of the arc.

- It is counted as a foul if the competitor:
    - Does not use the proper throwing technique.
    - Does not throw the mini-javelin so that the point (tip) lands before any other part of the implement.
    - Does not throw the mini-javelin so that the point (tip) falls completely within the inner edges of the sector lines.
    - Touches with any part of the body the arc as marked, or any ground beyond the arc or throwing box.

Pentathlon

- The five events comprising the pentathlon shall be conducted in the following order: 100M, Long Jump, Shot Put, High Jump, 400M.
- There will be at least 30 minutes in between events, with the time beginning after the first athlete finishes their attempts in each event.
- During most occasions, the pentathlon will be conducted in a one-day format. If a one-day format is not used, a two-day format will occur with events one, two and three taking place on the first day, and events four and five on the second day.

- Pentathlon athletes MAY NOT enter a relay. They will only be permitted to compete in the pentathlon.

ALTERNATES

- No alternate will be allowed for the individual events. Athletes may be listed as an alternate on relays for regional competition, however they only may be used for one traditional relay or one unified relay.
- Each relay may only have one alternate listed.
- Once a relay team is set and competes at a regional competition, the 4-person relay team roster may not change and no alternates can be substituted for another athlete. You may elect to change the leg order prior to state, but this change must be noted in your registration and may not change after registration is submitted. Alternates can only be substituted prior to competing at the regional qualifying event.
- Coaches must declare the use of any alternates in relays no later than the stated time for each regional event.

OFFICIALS

- The Starter shall have entire control of the competitors at their marks and shall be the sole judge as to whether or not any competitor has committed a false start. If it is deemed necessary, an Assistant or Recall Starter may be provided to assist the Starter in starting an event.
- The Finish Line Coordinator shall be responsible for alerting all finish line officials that a track event is about to begin and to ensure that these officials are ready to perform their assigned duties prior to the commencement of that event. When this is accomplished, the Finish Line Coordinator shall inform the officials at the starting line of this condition. It is also the duty of the Finish Line Coordinator to ensure that the finish line area is free of all unauthorized personnel during the start, the progress, and the finish of a track event. A Finish Line Coordinator may be assigned to assist the Chief Finish Line Judge and/or Chief Timer in recording times and places.

COACHES

- Coaches are not allowed in competition areas. Athletes are subject to disqualification if coaches do not adhere to the officials and USA Track & Field rules.
- Coaches will only be allowed on the track or in the infield to assist athletes with visual impairments or severe emotional or behavioral situations, after prior approval.
    - Athletes requiring this level of support must be indicated on the accompanying form, submitted with their registration, with a comment as to the explicit need of the athlete.
- Coaches cannot physically assist or pace athletes in any events. Failure to comply may result in a disqualification for that athlete.

- Coaches are responsible for knowing and understanding the rules of the sport, not only the modified rules in this manual, but also the official USA Track and Field rules, linked on the Special Olympics Ohio website.
- Coaches must make sure that all runners and walkers report to the bullpen staging area no later than 15 minutes prior to their event time. Coaches will be responsible for picking up their athlete at the awards tent.
- Protest may only be filled out based on rule discrepancies or eligibility standards. A protest based upon the judgement of an official will not be allowed. A protest must be made within thirty minutes of the completion of the event, match, or game by filling out an appropriate protest form.

DIVISIONING

- Athletes will compete in either a Male or Female division when possible.
- Athletes will compete in one of three age groups, when possible:
    - Youth: ages 15 and under (May be split 8-11 and 12-15)
    - Adult: ages 16 and older (16-21) (22-29) (30+)
    - Open Age Group: When at the discretion of the Games Committee, combining age groups may be needed to meet the required minimum number of competitors or teams in a division, or to ensure quality competition.
        - Note: The oldest member of a relay team will determine the age division of the team. It is suggested that delegations form 4 teams that are age appropriate. Male, Female, and Co-ed teams will be divisioned together unless there are enough teams within a category to create equitable divisions.
- Athletes are divisioned for competition based on their best training entry scores.
- In the event that age, gender, and/or ability levels need to be combined in a division, the Games Committee reserves the right to do so.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the event that the weather during an outdoor competition does not cooperate, we may need to delay the continuation of events until the weather improves. We will follow the guidelines set forth by the Ohio High School Athletic Association for outdoor sports. Thunder or lightning will result in a 30-minute delay, which will reset from the latest occurrence. When available and confirmed, we will continue to monitor the activity utilizing an advanced weather tracking system. The games management committee will make any call to delay, should this occur, and notify Venue Managers and/or officials, who will in turn notify those present.