



# SWIMMING

## INDIVIDUAL EVENTS

25yd Backstroke(M/F)\*\*  
25yd Breaststroke (M/F)  
25yd Butterfly (M/F)  
25yd Freestyle (M/F)\*\*  
50yd Backstroke (M/F)  
50yd Freestyle (M/F)  
100yd Freestyle (M/F)  
100yd Individual Medley (Coed)  
200yd Freestyle (Coed)

## RELAY EVENTS (Traditional & Unified)

4 x 25yd Freestyle (Coed)\*\*  
4 x 25yd Medley (Coed)\*\*  
4 x 50yd Medley (Coed)

\*\* - Denotes those events open to swimmers requiring flotation devices. In the 4 x 25yd Medley Relay, flotation devices in the Freestyle or Backstroke relay legs only.

The Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Swimming shall govern all Special Olympics competitions. Special Olympics has created these rules based upon Federation International de Natacion Amateur (FINA) rules, otherwise known as World Aquatics, which 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.

An athlete with Down syndrome who has been diagnosed with Atlanto-axial Instability may not participate in Butterfly events, Individual Medley event, or diving starts.

## COMPETITION MANAGEMENT

**All swimming events at Summer Games will be competed in a 25 yard pool. If your County Program is training and obtaining times in a metric pool, you must convert your times by multiplying by .9144.**

1. The Meet Referee, in cooperation with the Games Director, shall have the authority to adjust these rules on a case-by-case basis for the safety and well-being of an athlete. The Meet Referee may intervene in the competition at any stage to ensure that the appropriate regulations are observed; and shall adjudicate all protests related to the competition in progress.
2. The Meet Referee shall have the discretion to allow for certain modifications/interpretations of the current technical rules based upon a physical disability characteristic. Such interpretation shall be requested and ruled on prior to the athlete's participation in a final and shall not give advantage over another swimmer. Stroke interpretations will be concerned with the action a limb(s) is performing. The Stroke Judge shall be concerned with what action the arm or leg action constitutes.
3. The Meet Referee shall have full control and authority over all officials, approve their assignments and instruct them regarding all Special Olympics features or regulations related to the competitions. They shall enforce all rules and decisions of the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules and FINA/World Aquatics rules and shall decide all questions relating to the actual conduct of the meet, the final settlement of which is not otherwise covered by these rules.
4. Refer to the Swimming Safety Policy under Event Policies prior to any training, competitive, or recreational swimming session.

All entries must be in GMS by the Summer Games deadline of May 6th, however you will not need to enter your scores at this time. All entry times for swimming are due on May 21st directly to the Swim Management Team and any corrections or updated scores are due on May 29th directly to the Swim Management team.

## PRELIMINARY/ FINALS & TIMED FINALS FORMAT & DIVISIONING INFORMATION

1. Swimmers can enter a maximum of three (3) events.
  - a. Individual events with a distance of 50-yards or less will have preliminary and final heats.
  - b. All relay events and individual events with a distance of 100-yards or more will only swim final heats.
2. Swimmers are seeded in preliminary and timed final heats based on entry times seeded slowest to fastest. Heats are filled to the maximum lanes available.
3. Swimmers must participate in a preliminary of an event to be eligible for the final in that event, if a preliminary heat is offered.
  - a. Swimmers will be advanced and seeded in the final based on their preliminary time seeded slowest to fastest. Heats are filled to the maximum lanes available.
  - b. If a swimmer is disqualified in a preliminary, they will be advanced and seeded in the DQ heats for the final without regard to times. Lane and heat assignments will be random.
  - c. The DQ heats for a final will receive only participation ribbons and be able to swim.
  - d. The finals heats, other than the DQ heats, will be for medal and ribbon awards.
    - i. Participation ribbons will be given for any swimmer disqualified in a final heat.
    - ii. Any swimmer swimming faster than 20% of their preliminary round time will be disqualified and receive a

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participation ribbon. This does not apply to relay events utilizing timed finals.

- iii. Any relay team swimming faster than 30% of their qualifying time in a relay event utilizing timed finals entry times will be disqualified and receive a participation ribbon.
3. Swimmers should only enter into Swimming events.
  - a. The Swimming timeline will be tight so we do not want swimmers to miss swimming events while participating in another sport.

## SPORT RULES

### UNIFORM OR EQUIPMENT SPECIFICATIONS

1. All participants must wear swimsuits that are non-transparent and conform to the current concept of an appropriate swimsuit.
2. The Swimming Sport Management Team or sport official shall have the authority to bar offenders from competition, until they comply with this rule.
3. No competitor shall be permitted to use or wear any device that may aid their speed, buoyancy or endurance during a competition (except flotation races) such as webbed gloves, flippers, fins, etc. Goggles may be worn.
4. For events in which flotation devices are allowed, each athlete is responsible for their own flotation device. The device **must** be of the body wraparound type such that if the athlete were to not be able to hold onto the device, the device would support the athlete with their face out of the water. **Noodles are prohibited.**
5. Starting devices may include the following: whistle or horn. Athletes with hearing impairments may receive hand signal starts from the starter or a designated official.
6. Watches (timing system); at least one (1) watch per lane is required.
7. Electronic timing equipment button watches (manual timing system) is required at competition.

### GENERAL RULES

1. Rules require a water depth of four (4) feet or more for a deck entry. All events beginning in water less than four (4) deep require all swimmers for that event to begin in the water with one (1) hand on the wall.
2. The starting signals shall be "Take your marks", followed by an electronic tone. There will be no recall of swimmers when a false start occurs, so long as the remaining swimmers have not been affected by the false start.
3. Participants shall start, finish and compete on their own, **without assistance.**
4. Standing on the bottom during freestyle events or during the freestyle portion of the medley events shall not disqualify a competitor, but they shall not walk.
5. Standing on the bottom in the racing course is allowed only for the purpose of resting. Walking on or jumping from the bottom must disqualify the offender.
6. Swimmers may be assisted from the water upon request.

### PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The following swimming performance standards are new to the Summer Games Swimming competition. Their intent is to assist coaches in determining the proper event for athletes of varying abilities, while also challenging athletes to reach their maximum potential. Please note that the performance standards are only in place for certain events.

1. Minimum Time
  - a. It is strongly recommended that athletes swimming faster than the minimum time should move to the next longest distance in that event (i.e. moving from the 25yd Freestyle to the 50yd Freestyle).
  - b. Athletes swimming faster than the minimum time will not be disqualified or penalized.
  - c. This performance standard is meant to further challenge our athletes with the goal of improving their swimming

SWIMMING PERFORMANCE STANDARDS		
Event	Minimum Time	Maximum Time
Females 25yd Freestyle	27 seconds	
Males 25yd Freestyle	21 seconds	
Females 25yd Backstroke	32 seconds	
Males 25yd Backstroke	29 seconds	
Females 50yd Freestyle		1 minute 45 seconds
Males 50yd Freestyle		1 minute 30 seconds
Females 50yd Backstroke		1 minute 50 seconds
Males 50yd Backstroke		1 minute 50 seconds
Females & Males 100yd Freestyle		3 minutes
Females & Males 200yd Freestyle		5 minutes 30 seconds



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abilities.

2. Maximum Time
  - a. Athletes swimming slower than the maximum time limit are required to move to the next lowest distance of that event, or consider another event (i.e. moving from the 50yd Freestyle to the 25yd Freestyle).
  - b. The maximum time listed will also be used for entry cutoffs. Athletes with qualifying times slower than the listed maximum time must choose another event.
  - c. Any athlete swimming slower than the maximum time will be disqualified and pulled from the pool.
  - d. If the disqualification occurs during prelims, the athlete will **NOT** be allowed to swim that event during finals.

## STROKE STANDARDS

1. Stroke judges will adhere to the stroke standards outlined below.
2. Disqualification (DQ) of a swimmer who does not conform to Special Olympics and FINA/World Aquatics standards is required. If these standards are not upheld, it is unfair to the swimmer who has been properly trained and entered into an appropriate event. All stroke standards apply to all athletes and Unified partners. The referee has the discretionary power to allow for certain modifications and interpretations of rules based upon the physical or sensory disability of the individual swimmer. It is the coach's responsibility to inform the referee about an athlete who has a physical problem that could cause a DQ. **The referee may allow a deviation if notified before a race.**
3. Breaststroke Standards
  - a. From the beginning of the first arm stroke after the start and after each turn, the body shall be kept on the breast. It is not permitted to roll onto their back during their swim.
  - b. All movements of the arms shall be simultaneous without alternating movement.
  - c. In the leg kick, the feet must be turned outwards during the propulsive part of the kick. Scissors, alternating movements or downward butterfly kicks are not permitted except after the start and each turn. At any time prior to the first breaststroke kick, a single butterfly kick is permitted. Following which, all movements of the legs shall be simultaneous without alternating movement. Breaking the surface of the water with the feet is allowed unless followed by a downward butterfly kick.
  - d. Hands shall be pushed forward together from the breast, on, under, or over the water. Hands shall be brought back on or under the surface of the water.
  - e. At the finish, the touch shall be made with both hands simultaneously at, above, or below the water surface. The shoulders shall be in line with the water surface. At each turn, the touch shall be made with both hands simultaneously at, above, or below the water surface, and the shoulders shall be in line with the water surface.
  - f. While swimming the breaststroke, swimmers may use a head position of any depth as long as their face breaks the surface of the water at least once during every cycle of the stroke. At the start and after each turn, specifically, the head must begin to break the surface of the water before the widest pull of the second arm stroke.
  - g. In the individual medley, the completion of the breaststroke portion is considered as a turn (both hands shall touch simultaneously.) In the medley relay, finishing the breaststroke portion is considered as the end of the race (both hands shall touch simultaneously).
4. Freestyle Standards
  - a. The swimmer's head must break the surface of the water within 15 meters of the start.
  - b. Freestyle means that, in an event so designated, the competitor may swim any style. In freestyle turning and finishing, the swimmer can touch the wall with any part of his body. A hand touch is not required.
  - c. Standing on the bottom during the freestyle events or during the freestyle portion of the medley events shall not disqualify a competitor, but they shall not walk.
5. Butterfly Standards
  - a. Both arms must be brought forward together over the water and brought backward simultaneously.
  - b. The swimmer's head must break the surface of the water within 15 meters of the start.
  - c. The body must be kept on the breast and both shoulders kept in line with the surface of the water from the beginning of the first arm stroke after the start and on the turn.
  - d. All movements of the legs and feet must be executed in a simultaneous manner. Simultaneous up and down movements of the legs and feet in the vertical plane are permitted. The legs or feet need not be at the same level, but no alternating movement is permitted.
  - e. When touching at the turn or upon finishing a race, the touch shall be made with both hands simultaneously at, above, or below the water surface on the same level. The swimmer's shoulders must be in the horizontal position.
  - f. At the start and at the turns, a swimmer is permitted one (1) or more leg kicks and one (1) arm pull under the water, which must bring his body to the surface.
6. Backstroke Standards

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- a. The competitors shall line up in the water, facing the starting end, with the hands placed on the gutter or on the starting grips. The feet, including the toes, shall be under the surface of the water. Standing in or on the gutter, or bending the toes over the lip of the gutter is prohibited. The swimmer is not allowed to make any movement with any part of his body before the starting signal has been given.
  - b. At the signal for starting and when turning, the swimmer must push off and swim upon their back throughout the race. The hands must not be released before the starting signal has been given.
  - c. Any competitor leaving his normal position on the back before the head, shoulder, foremost hand, or arm has touched the end of the course for the purpose of turning or finishing shall be disqualified. The swimmer may turn his body beyond the vertical, after the foremost part of the body has touched the wall during a turn, but the swimmer must have returned to a position on his back before the feet leave the wall.
  - d. The swimmer's head must break the surface of the water within 15 meters of the start.
  - e. When swimming the 50, 100, or 200 backstrokes, swimmers may use the backstroke flip turn to turn around at each wall (not legal if used at the finish of the event). The turn allows the swimmer to turn on to the stomach before the flip turn. During the turn the shoulders may be turned past the vertical toward the breast after which an immediate continuous single arm pull or immediate continuous simultaneous double arm pull may be used to initiate the turn. The swimmer may only attempt a single arm or simultaneous double arm stroke while on the stomach. Before the completion of the single or simultaneous double arm stroke, the swimmer must begin the flip turn. An arm stroke is not required while on the stomach during the flip turn. However, at no time is the swimmer allowed to kick while on the stomach without also using an arm stroke. The swimmer must touch the wall with some part of their body before proceeding to swim the remaining length of the event.
7. Individual Medley Standards
- a. Order: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke and freestyle. (Reminder: In the IM, "freestyle" means any other stroke than the butterfly, backstroke or breaststroke.)
  - b. Rules pertaining to individual strokes govern disqualifications.
  - c. The turns from one (1) stroke to another are considered finishes, NOT turns, and are to be judged accordingly.

## RELAY EVENTS

1. No Swimmer may swim more than one (1) leg in any relay.
2. A swimmer may not start until his preceding teammate finishes their leg.
3. Each relay member will leave the water immediately after finishing their leg.
4. All events will be designated as combined (coed).
5. In Medley Relay events, each swimmer is to swim 1/4th of the prescribed distance continuously in the following order: Backstroke, Breaststroke, Butterfly, and Freestyle.
6. In relays, Traditional teams and Unified teams will be combined. Divisioning will be based upon qualifying scores only. Relay teams may have zero (0), one (1) or two (2) Unified partners. Members of a relay team may be assigned to swim in any order. Please designate the order on the entry form.