

INTRODUCTION TO DIVISIONING

Special Olympics is founded on the principle of providing a sport and training environment that allows individuals to participate on a fair and level playing field with their competitors.

Special Olympics Prince Edward Island competitions provide athletes with the opportunity to demonstrate sport skills they have acquired during training. Special Olympics PEI athletes, like all dedicated athletes, strive for their best performance at each competition. To enhance their competition experience, competitions should be organized to highlight the athletes. In Special Olympics, this means that regardless of an athlete's place of finish, each performance is considered a personal victory. The athlete is paramount.

Special Olympics PEI has developed modified rules, when necessary, in order to maximize the successful participation of all athletes and to encourage competition throughout every level of the organization. Competitions must be conducted consistently, in accordance with these recognized rules and capably officiated. In addition, family, friends, and spectators should be given the opportunity to share in the athletes' achievements during the competition.

The fundamental difference which sets Special Olympics PEI competitions apart from those of other sports organizations is that athletes of all ability levels are encouraged to participate and every athlete is recognized for his/her performance. Competitions are structured so that athletes compete with other athletes of similar ability in equitable divisions. Historically, Special Olympics PEI has suggested that all divisions be created where the variance between the highest and lowest scores within that division does not differ more than 10-25%.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMPETITOR

Athletes shall abide by the letter and spirit of the rules and be responsible for conducting him or herself in a sportsmanlike manner at all times. Athletes who do not conduct themselves in this manner, or who are offensive by action or language toward other athletes, coaches, volunteers, opponents, officials, and/or spectators may be disqualified from further participation.

The sports specific rules committee at the competition shall disqualify athletes who do not participate honestly and with maximum effort in all preliminary trials and/or finals from all remaining events.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COACH

Coaches shall place the health and safety of Special Olympics PEI athletes above all else.

Coaches shall abide by the letter and spirit of the rules and be responsible for conducting him or herself in a sportsmanlike manner at all times. Coaches who do not conduct themselves in this manner, or who are offensive by action or language toward athletes, other coaches, volunteers, opponents, officials, and/or spectators, may be prohibited from coaching.

Coaches shall be knowledgeable of all existing Special Olympics PEI and National/International Governing Body competition rules and regulations, and prepare their athletes prior to competition in accordance with those rules.

Coaches shall ensure that athletes compete in events within their sport, which challenge their potential and are appropriate to their ability.

Coaches shall be honest and instruct athletes to compete with maximum effort in all preliminary trials and/or finals or he/she shall be prohibited from coaching by the sports specific rules committee at the competition.

Team Coaches shall ensure that athletes of all ability levels on a team participate in every game.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMPETITION ORGANIZERS

Competition Organizers shall ensure that a complete range of events is scheduled in each sport to provide maximum competition opportunities to athletes.

Competition Organizers shall organize competition in accordance with Special Olympics PEI principles and conduct all events to the letter and spirit of the rules of the sport.

Competition Organizers shall utilize the procedures for divisioning when structuring Special Olympics PEI competitions.

Competition Organizers shall ensure conditions for outdoor individual sports are measured and differences are adequately applied to the preliminary times (with technology or a volunteer runner who is not competing) so that the Maximum Performance Rule (MPR) is more accurately measured.

EXPLANATION OF THE DIVISIONING PROCESS:

SOPEI will adhere to the Special Olympics Canada Divisioning Policy 5000-02. Please refer to this document for an explanation of the divisioning process.