



Special Olympics Minnesota Track and Field Handbook

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COACH CERTIFICATION RATIO TABLE

The updated coach certification ratio tables can be found in the Special Olympics Minnesota Coaches Portal under policies and fact sheets, or here: [Coach Ratio Table](#)

MORE INFORMATION

Practice ideas, skill assessment/development, and rules can be found in the SOI Quick Start Guides and SOI Rules for each respective sport can be found at www.specialolympics.org/sports.aspx

TRACK EVENTS

General Events

In races 400 meters or less, the commands of the starter will be “on your marks... set...” and, when all competitors are set, the gun will be fired.

In races 800 meters or more, the commands of the starter will be “on your marks” and, when all competitors are set, the gun will be fired. A competitor should not touch the ground with their hands.

For 800-meter races, athletes will stay in the lanes through the first turn and break toward lane one at the break-line marked after the first turn. For starting 1500-meter races or more, a waterfall start will be used. Athletes may cut in as soon as they have space to not interfere with another athlete.

If a competitor is pushed or forced by another person to run or walk outside their lane, and if no material advantage is gained, the competitor should not be disqualified.

During walking events, athletes must always have one foot in touch with the ground.

Per the United State Track and Field Rulebook, athletes may use spiked shoes provided they comply with all parts of the attire rule. Any rule from the competition site supersedes the USTAF rule. For track events, there is a maximum of 11 spike positions and 9 millimeters in length (for high jump, 12 millimeters is the maximum length).

The athlete is timed from the smoke of the starter’s gun to when their torso reaches the perpendicular plane of the nearest edge of the finish line unless noted otherwise.

Physical Assistance Events – Distances offered (meters): 50, 25, 10

Athletes can have a **person** on the track to guide them, however the athlete must propel themselves under their own power. Delegations must provide a registered coach or Unified partner for the track guide assistant.

Athletes can also have an assistance device that follows the same rules as below.

Device Assistance Events – Distances offered (meters): 50, 25, 10

Athletes can provide their own assistance **devices**. Assistance devices may consist of canes, crutches, or a walker.

The walking device must be fully behind the start line to start the race. Athletes must walk if using a device.

Athletes may not receive physical assistance from coaches, officials, etc.

There is a 5-minute maximum time limit for all assisted/unassisted races of 100 meters or less.

Motorized Wheelchair Races – Distances offered (meters): 100, 50, 25

The first two wheels on each competitor’s wheelchair will be regarded as the starting and finishing points of all races, and times will be reported as such.

Motorized Wheelchair Obstacle Course – Distance offered (meters): 25

The athlete will complete a 360-degree circle within the 3-meter box which will be marked by cones two meters up from the starting line. Upon completion, the athlete weaves in and out of four cones set 3 meters apart, then completes a second 360-degree circle between the 3-meter box marked with cones starting 5 meters from the finish line.

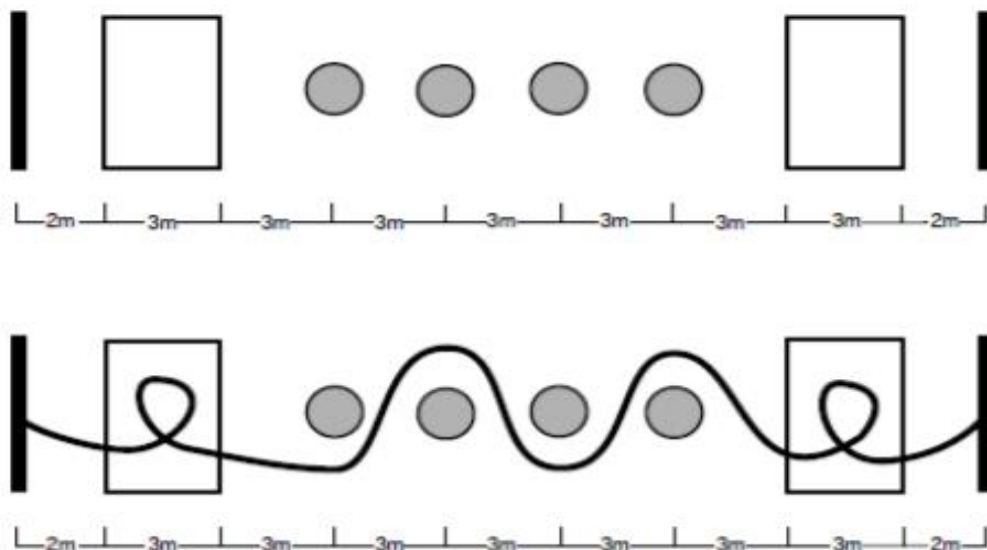
The box (3 meters by 3 meters) is used only as an indicator for the athlete to complete the 360-degree circle. No points and/or time shall be deducted for touching or going over the lines. The box can be outlined with chalk and cones.

If a competitor varies from a sequence of obstacles, they 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.

A competitor will be disqualified if that individual’s coach enters the course boundaries during the running of the obstacle course. Coaches may instruct from outside the marked boundaries of the course. Judges and officials will not give directional cues.

Knocking down a marker in the middle section of the course constitutes a violation, and a 3-second penalty will be assessed. Competitors who do not make an obvious attempt to go between each pair of markers are subject to disqualification at the discretion of the course official.

A diagram for this event can be found below:



Non-motorized Wheelchair Events – Distances offered (meters): 100, 50, 25, 10

Athletes will start with all wheels behind the start line. Athletes are timed from the smoke of the starter's gun to when all front wheels (two or one) of the wheelchair reach the perpendicular plane of the nearest edge of the finish line.

Athletes will not be pushed, pulled, or otherwise assisted during these events. Each competitor must stay in their lane from start to finish and may not interfere, obstruct, or impede the progress of another competitor. Infractions, at the discretion of the judges, may result in a disqualification.

Non-Motorized/Motorized Wheelchair Slalom – Distances offered (meters): 50, 30

Each athlete will use two lanes as their lane to allow room for wheelchairs to be conducive with the course. Cones should be placed in the middle of the lanes. A diagram of the course can be found in the [SOI rules](#) on page 13.

The athlete maneuvers their chair through the course, going to the right of the first obstacle (usually a cone) and across the finish line without impeding another athlete. Knocking down a cone constitutes a violation, and a 3-second penalty will be assessed.

Rules for Relays and Substitutions

In Unified, relay teams must have two athletes and two Unified partners.

Any relay team that is missing one participant at a regional competition can run with the remaining 3 participants at the competition for a participation award.

The original team will be eligible for state if the missing participant is eligible for an exemption from the state office.

Below are options for delegations to select how to proceed at the regional competition.

- Option 1: Team can replace missing person with another registered participant that is not currently registered in another relay event.
 - If the replacement is the same role (athlete for athlete, Unified partner or coach for Unified partner), the team that runs at the regional will be eligible to run at state.
 - The team that runs at the regional will advance to state.
 - Delegations can notify the state office if they would like the originally registered team to run at state.
 - If the replacement is not the same role, the team that runs at the regional will not be eligible to run at state.
- Option 2: Team can run with the three participants present at the competition.
 - If missing participant does not receive an exemption from the state office, then the relay team will not advance to state.

Any relay team that is missing one participant at the state competition will be allowed to run the relay with the 3 members present and receive participation for that event. There will be no substitutions at state.

Any relay team missing two or more participants at a regional competition will not be allowed to run and will not advance to state. Any relay team missing two or more participants at the state competition will not be allowed to run.

Rules for Blind and Deaf Athletes

A rope (provided by delegation) or sighted guide runner may be provided to assist athletes who are visually impaired. Ropes may only be used for races up to 100 meters.

Guide runners must be provided by the delegation and be registered for the competition as a coach or Unified partner. A sighted guide runner will not be ahead of the athlete in any manner, pull the athlete or propel the athlete forward by pushing.

A tap start will be used for an athlete who is both deaf and blind.

FIELD EVENTS

In the field events, each athlete will be allowed three attempts. All three attempts will be measured and recorded for breaking ties. The longest measurement of the three attempts will be used for scoring.

Running Long Jump

Distance will be measured from the closest impression on the landing area made by any part of the body or limbs to the takeoff line for all jumps. All jump attempts will be measured from takeoff, which will be at least 0.5 meters from the pit.

For the running long jump, an athlete must be able to jump at least 1 meter. If an athlete jumps less than 1 meter at the regional competition, they cannot advance to state in the running long jump.

Standing Long Jump

Distance will be measured from the closest impression on the landing area made by any part of the body or limbs to the takeoff line for all jumps. All jump attempts will be measured from takeoff, which will be at the edge of the pit.

Athletes will use both feet on the takeoff. They can rock backward and forward lifting their heels and toes alternately but may not lift either foot completely off the ground.

Athletes can compete in either the standing or running long jump, but not both.

High Jump

The minimum opening height for all high jump competitions will be 1 meter. The athlete will take off from one foot. Athletes will not dive forward over the bar or take off from a two-footed stance.

Shot Put

The shot may be steel, brass, or a synthetic-covered indoor shot put. Women's shot is 3 kilograms (6.6 pounds). Men's shot is 4 kilograms (8.8 pounds). It is acceptable to include wheelchair athletes in the traditional divisions of the shot put, but the weight of the shot must be the same for all competitors in a division.

A legal put will be made from within the circle. During an attempt, the athlete (or wheelchair) may not touch the top edge of the stopboard, the top of the iron ring, or any surface outside of the circle. It is legal to touch the inside of the stopboard or the iron ring.

The put will be declared a foul and will not be measured if, after entering the circle and starting the put, the competitor uses any method contrary to the definition of a legal put, or if the competitor causes the shot to fall on or outside the lines marking the landing vector.

Softball Throw and Tennis Ball Throw

Distance will be measured from the start line to where the ball first contacts the ground, not the final location of the ball. These throwing events are for athletes who throw the ball 15 meters or less. If an athlete throws more than 15 meters, they will be awarded participation and cannot advance to state in that event.

Athletes can use any method of throwing, including both overhand and underhand. A softball with a circumference of 30 centimeters will be used for the softball throw, while a tennis ball will be used for the tennis ball throw.

Pentathlon

The five events comprising the pentathlon are the 100-meter run, long jump, shot put, high jump and the 400-meter run.

If the achieved time or distance is not given in the pentathlon score table, the score for the nearest lesser performance should be read. Score tables can be found in the [SOI Athletics rule book](#) starting on page 16. Final scores are comprised of scores from all events and awarded as one event, resulting in one ribbon/medal.

Note: When registering for the pentathlon, qualifying scores will be actual times and distances for the five events, not values from the pentathlon score table.

COMPETITION DETAILS

Registration Information

Athletes are allowed to compete in three individual events and one relay event, or the pentathlon and one relay. Athletes must abide by the rules of the event in which they are entered. This includes the rules regarding walking versus running. An athlete may be disqualified if they run in a walk event, pass the baton to the wrong team in a relay, or run outside of their lane and impede the progress of another runner.

The softball and tennis ball throw are developmental events designed to provide meaningful competition for athletes that are not ready for the shot put. Athletes with a qualifying score of 15 meters and above for the tennis ball or softball throw may not compete in this event. Athletes may only enter one of the throwing events.

Track Events Offered at Competition

10 meters: Assisted Walk (Device or Physical), Non-Motorized Wheelchair

25 meters: Walk, Dash, Assisted Walk (Device or Physical), Assisted Dash (Physical), Wheelchair Race (Motorized or Non-Motorized), Wheelchair Obstacle Course (Motorized)

30 meters: Wheelchair Slalom (Motorized or Non-Motorized)

50 meters: Walk, Dash, Assisted Walk (Device or Physical), Assisted Dash (Physical), Wheelchair Race (Motorized or Non-Motorized), Wheelchair Slalom (Motorized or Non-Motorized)

100 meters: Walk, Run, Wheelchair Race (Motorized or Non-Motorized)

200, 400, 800, 1500 meters: Walk, Run

4x100: Relay, Unified Relay

Pentathlon (see page 7 to see the events included)

Divisioning

Coaches need to include an athlete's practice qualifying time and/or distance for each event that an athlete is registering for. At the state competition, divisions will be based on the athlete's regional results.

Be aware that to minimize the length of the competition, there may be multiple divisions on the track for certain events. Please advise athletes, coaches, parents, and spectators of this so there is not confusion on why an athlete is so much faster or slower than another during a single race, or why an athlete who physically placed fourth in a race may receive a gold medal or first place ribbon.

Open Divisions

Open divisions will be available in all events at the state competition. Open divisions provide an inclusive opportunity for athletes that cannot or do not wish to compete in a competitive gendered division. For information on which days of the state competition these divisions will compete, please reach out to sports@somn.org.

Delegations will need to notify the state office during the Errors and Exceptions process for the state competition of athletes who wish to compete in open divisions. Athletes who wish to compete in an open division must compete in open divisions for all registered events.

Athletes in an open division for shot put will use the 3 kilogram (6.6 pounds) shot.

Starting Blocks

Starting blocks may be used in 100M Run, 200M Run, 400M Run, and the 4x100M Relay. Blocks will need to be supplied by the delegation, and the athlete should be registered with "1-on-1" assistance so someone is present to take the blocks off the track.

Track and Field Assistance Categories

Guide Runner: When an athlete is visually impaired and needs someone to run with them. Must be provided by the delegation and registered as a coach or Unified partner.

Whistle Start: The race will start with a whistle instead of the starting gun. This should only be used when athletes have severe reactions to the starting gun.

Visual Start: The race will start by starting gun, but an official/assistant will signal near the athlete to give them a visual cue to start.

Touch Start: The race will begin by starting gun, but an official/assistant will touch the athlete to give them a cue to start.

Middle Lane: Athlete will be on the middle lanes. On an 8-lane track, the athlete would be placed on lanes 2-7.

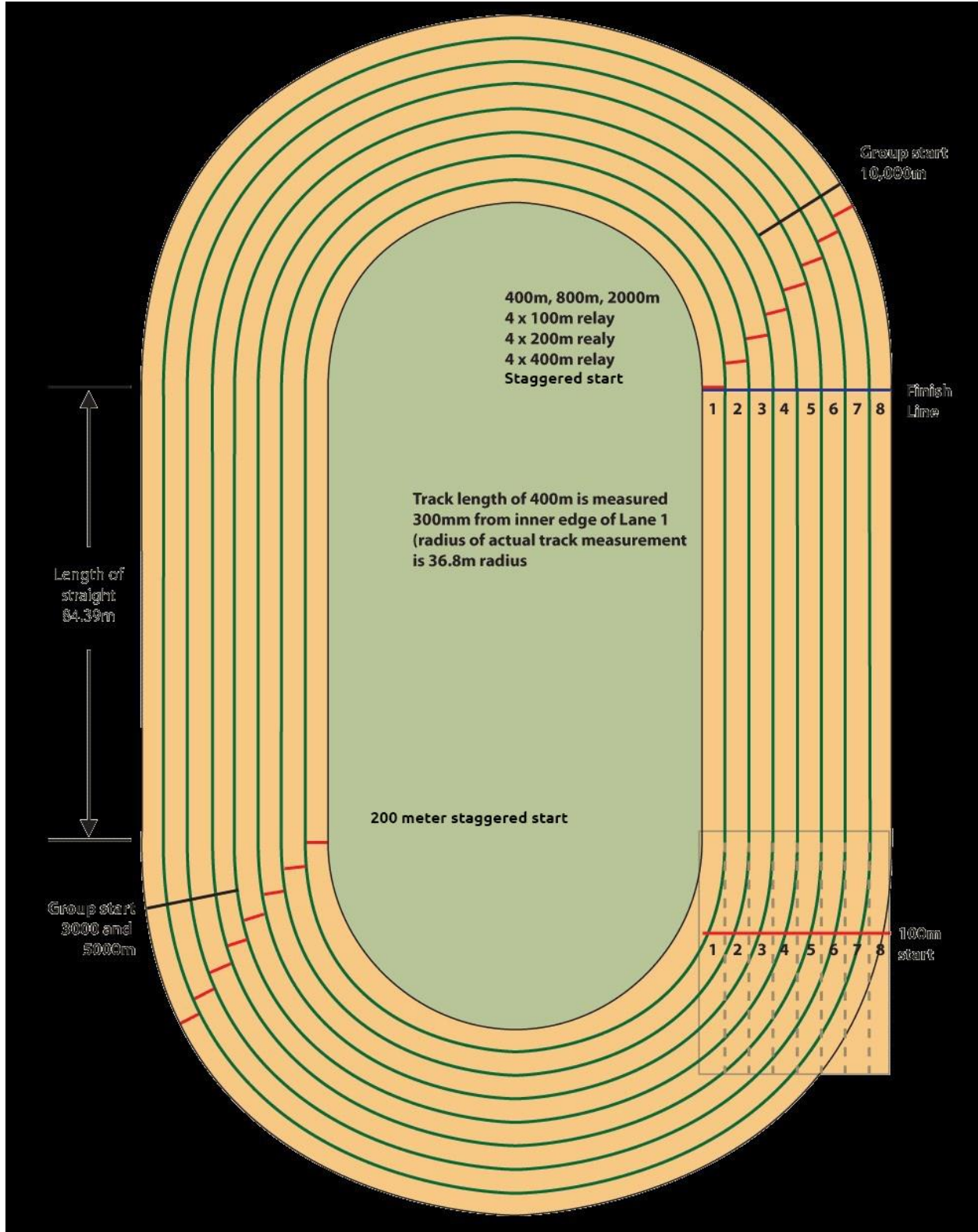
Outside Lane: Athlete will be on an outside lane. On an 8-lane track, the athlete would be placed on lane 1 or 8.

Staging: Athlete is allowed to have a registered assistant throughout the staging area.

Rope: Athlete uses a rope/guide provided by the delegations. This is only offered in races 100 meters or shorter. The athlete will also be on an outside lane.

1-on-1: Athlete is allowed to have an assistant through the staging area and up to the starting line. At this point, the assistant must go to the finish line and wait for the athlete to finish the race. **At no time is an assistant allowed on the track**, except in a physical assisted event.

TRACK DIAGRAM



SPORTSMANSHIP

Good sportsmanship is both the coach's and athlete's commitment to fair play, ethical behavior, and integrity. In perception and practice, sportsmanship is defined as those qualities which are characterized by generosity and genuine concern for others. Below we highlight focus points and ideas on how to teach and coach sportsmanship to your athletes by leading by example.

Competitive Effort

- Put forth maximum effort during each event
- Practice the skills with the same intensity as you would perform in competition
- Always finish a race/event; Never quit

Fair Play Always

- Comply with the rules
- Demonstrate sportsmanship and fair play
- Respect the decision of the officials
- Allow coaches to coach
 - Spectators should not be involved in coaching during an event
 - Spectators should be present to add to a positive, supportive, and competitive environment