

Special Olympics Kentucky ***Snowshoeing*** ***Manual***

**Rules, Regulations, &
Training Information**



This manual is a compilation of both
Special Olympics International and International Racing Standards for Snowshoeing.
All snowshoeing events will be run according to the rules in this manual.

Revised: Winter 2008

SNOWSHOEING MANUAL

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MISSION OF SPECIAL OLYMPICS

The mission of Special Olympics is to provide **year-round** sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children **and** adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

PURPOSE

Special Olympics is a **worldwide** program of Sports Training and Athletic Competition open to individuals with intellectual disabilities regardless of their abilities. **The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has granted it's Official recognition to Special Olympics International, Inc. (SOI).**

SOKY PLAYS BY THE RULES

All Special Olympics competitions shall be conducted in accordance with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules, **which are designed to protect the athletes, provide fair and equitable conditions of competition and promote uniformity so that no competitor shall obtain unfair advantage over another.**



Special Olympics
Kentucky

THE SPECIAL OLYMPICS KENTUCKY COACHES CODE OF CONDUCT

Special Olympics Coaches are role models whose behavior should serve as a positive example for their athletes. Their behavior should reflect a concern that the fairest and most positive competitive experience is equally available to every Special Olympian in a competition. The Coach has the unique opportunity to influence the development and personal growth of many individuals. For this reason, it is important that the coach adhere to the standards of ethical decision making and teaching. Recognizing this point, it is the position of SOKY that the coach shall:

- Provide a good example in appearance, conduct, language and sportsmanship while striving to set an example of the highest ethical and moral conduct.
- Demonstrate and instill in their players a respect for and courtesy toward the opposing players, coaches, officials and spectators.
- Exhibit and develop in their players the ability to accept defeat or victory gracefully. The coach shall never place the value of winning above the value of instilling the highest desirable ideals of character.
- Be knowledgeable of and follow all existing Special Olympics and National Governing Body Rules.
- Provide for the general welfare, safety, health and well being of each Special Olympian in their charge – this entails supervision 24 hours a day.
- Direct criticism toward your athletes in a constructive, positive and objective manner.
- Ensure that each athlete has a current/valid SOKY medical on file with the state office and that copies of all medicals are with you during any Special Olympics activity.
- Cooperate with the SOKY staff and Competition Directors in establishing and conducting a quality athletic program.
- Encourage spectators (family members & other team supporters) to display conduct of respect and hospitality toward opponents and officials and to recognize good play and sportsmanship.
- Refrain from using alcohol or any mind altering substance while at Special Olympics events/competitions.
- Refrain from use of all tobacco products at SOKY events (i.e. sports venues, staging areas, opening/closing ceremonies, etc).
- Do not engage in any inappropriate contact or relationship with SOKY athletes and/or volunteers.

Should the behaviors and/or abilities of any coach or other faction of your school/organization be contrary to these responsibilities or to the philosophies of Special Olympics, then one or more of the following actions may be taken by SOKY:

1. The coach may be notified of the undesirable behavior and be requested to remedy the situation for continued participation. In other words an official **warning** will be given.
2. The coach may be withdrawn personally or as an organization from the remainder of an event or tournament.

In the event of extreme and/or repeated behavior contrary to the best interests of Special Olympics athletes or Special Olympics, SOKY may:

1. Prevent the coach or organization from participating in any or all Special Olympics events for a specified period of time.
2. Prevent the coach or organization from participating in Special Olympics Kentucky indefinitely.

ATHLETE CODE OF CONDUCT

Participation in Special Olympics Kentucky is both an honor and a privilege. Therefore, athletes in the SOKY program must accept and carry-out these responsibilities:

1. Dress and act at all times in a manner that is a credit to Special Olympics.
2. Refrain from taunting or taking part in other forms of poor sportsmanship.
3. Commit to knowing and playing by the rules of your sport.
4. Treat all athletes, volunteers and competition officials with respect and communicate in a courteous manner.
5. Respect all competition facilities and equipment.
6. Treat your opponent with respect and courtesy.
7. Refrain from taking part in the consumption of alcoholic beverages and/or controlled substances while at a Special Olympics event/activity.
8. Refrain from smoking or using chewing tobacco at any competition venue.

Athletes who do not conduct themselves according to the above responsibilities, are subject to the following action(s):

1. The athlete may be notified of an undesirable behavior and be requested to remedy the situation for continued participation. In other words, an official **warning** will be given.
2. The athlete may be ejected from a game or competition for violation of any of the above and given an official warning.

In the event of extreme and/or repeated behavior contrary to the best interests of Special Olympics, the following actions may be taken:

1. An athlete may be placed on **probation** or be **suspended** for a specified period of time.
2. An athlete may be **banned** from any future participation in the Special Olympics Kentucky program.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS AGE GROUPS

Athletes **MUST** be at least eight (8) years of age to participate in the traditional Special Olympics Program.

- **IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE IN POWERLIFTING, AN ATHLETE MUST BE SIXTEEN (16) YEARS OF AGE.**

1. These Special Olympics age groups have been selected as being most representative of those used in sports competitions internationally.
2. The following age groups shall be used for all Special Olympics Games and Competitions.

A. Individual Sports

- 1) ages 8-11
- 2) ages 12-15
- 3) ages 16-21
- 4) ages 22-29
- 5) ages 30 years and over
- 6) Open Ages Groups reserved for combining age groups to meet the required minimum number of competitors or teams in a division

B. Team Sports and Relay Events

- 1) Junior: ages 15 and under
 - 2) Senior: ages 16-21
 - 3) Masters: ages 22 and over
 - 4) Open Age Group: See above
3. An athlete's age group is determined by the athlete's age on the opening date of the Games or competition. The age of the oldest athlete on a team shall be used to determine the age group in which that team will compete.
 4. Combining Age Groups: In situations where there are not enough competitors to hold competition in a certain age group, the athletes should be moved into the next oldest age group. If there are not enough athletes within the Masters age group to hold an event, the athletes within the Masters age group shall be moved to the Open age group.

DIVISIONING

The fundamental difference, which sets Special Olympics 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 or her performance.

Competitions are structured so those athletes compete with other athletes of similar ability in equitable divisions. Historically, Special Olympics has recommended that divisions be created where the variance between the highest and lowest scores within that division differs by no more than 15%. This is **NOT** a rule but should be used as a guideline for establishing equitable divisions when there is the appropriate number of athletes.

All Special Olympics competitions are governed by National Governing Body Rules, (i.e. USA Track & Field, High School Basketball Association, etc.). To help ensure that all ability levels can compete and experience successful participation, Special Olympics has modified some of the NGB rules.

PROCEDURES FOR DIVISIONING

ABILITY is the primary divisioning factor in Special Olympics. The ability of an athlete or team is determined by an entry score from a prior competition or a preliminary event. **Other factors which are significant in establishing divisions are age and sex.**

SMART COACHES PREPARE FOR SUCCESS!

An organized coach will give his or her athletes the edge on competition day. How many coaches prepare athletes for weeks and months for an event to find on the day of competition they did not plan for the unexpected?

Take for example, the coach who buys new uniforms for his team but waits for the day of competition to find out the uniforms don't fit. Or the coach who trains his/her basketball team using a junior size basketball, only to find out at the State Tournament an official high school leather ball is used. How many coaches will train their athletes in the 100 meter sprint by using a whistle instead of a starter's pistol? While some coaches give their athletes the advantage in competition, others put their players at a disadvantage.

Coaching on the day of the event is quite different from coaching during practice sessions. On the day of competition, the athlete should be expected to perform only those skills which he/she has already learned well. Although some strategies can be refined, the introduction of new skills may confuse and/or distract the athlete and may affect performance.

Coaches need to establish a checklist early on to assure their athletes will have everything they will need to perform at their best on the day of competition. Will your athlete's running shoes be broken in by the day of the race? When will the uniforms be distributed so that it can be determined who will need a different size? Will you need to bring a tape measure to mark off the long jump runway?

Organizing your needs will allow you to assign some jobs to parents, assistant coaches and volunteers who work in your program. This will take some of the burden off you and at the same time guarantee that nothing will be forgotten.

It is your responsibility to prepare your athletes for competition. Don't fall short on the day of the event. Refer to the following competition checklist to help you prepare. Although some items are not required for every event, all deserve consideration at one time or another, so please make additions as needed for your program.

COACHES "SURVIVAL" LIST

ADMINISTRATION

- Event schedule
- Directions/Maps
- Emergency Phone Numbers
- Athlete Medicals
- Transportation Confirmation
- Copies of Registration Materials
- Money
- SOKY Sport Manual
- NGB Rules Book

UNIFORMS

- Warm-ups
- Extra socks
- Women's Athletic Bra
- Uniforms for competition
- Sneakers
- Athletic supports for males
- Hat/Visor

MEDICAL

- Athletic Tape
- Sunscreen
- Special Diets
- Snacks
- First Aid Kit
- Medications (clearly marked)
- Water
- Eye Wear Protection

EQUIPMENT

- Cones
- Rope
- Tape
- Sport Specific Equipment
- Cassette Tape (gymnastics)
- Stopwatch
- Towels
- Scorebook

OVERNIGHT PACKING

- Underwear
- T-shirts
- Sweater
- Sweatshirt
- Socks
- Sneakers
- Slacks
- Jacket
- Toiletries
- Shoes

MISCELLANEOUS

- Pens/Pencils
- Clipboard
- Change for phone and/or vending machines
- Laundry marker
- Kleenex
- Alarm clock
- Extra Toothbrush
- Bug Spray

SNOWSHOEING

The Official Special Olympics Sports Rules shall govern all Special Olympics Snowshoeing competitions. Special Olympics has developed these rules based upon the International Racing Standards for Snowshoeing, (IRSS). The IRSS shall be employed except when they are in conflict with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules. In such cases, the Official Special Olympics Rules shall apply.

EVENTS OFFERED

1. 25 Meter Race
2. 50 Meter Race
3. 100 Meter Race

Snowshoeing is a Winter Sport – The SOKY Winter Sports Season runs November – March. The State Snowshoeing Competition is held each year in conjunction with the Winter Games. Winter Games are held at the end of January at Perfect North Slopes in Lawrenceburg, IN.

The winter season in Kentucky can vary from having a lot of snow to very little. Athletes training for Snowshoe Competition are forced to look for alternative methods of training. Therefore, it is certainly appropriate for Snowshoe athletes to train on dryland, grass or sand.

EQUIPMENT

Athletes **MUST** provide their own snowshoes for competition.

1. The snowshoe shall not be smaller than 8 inches x 25 inches (20.5 cm x 64 cm)
2. The snowshoe shall consist of a frame and webbing or solid decking material.
3. The foot must be secured through a direct mount binding system to the snowshoe.
4. Factory installed toe and heel traction claws are acceptable.
5. Competition footwear may include but are not limited to running shoes, hiking boots, snow boots, etc.
6. The use of poles is optional.

PERSONNEL

1. Officials

- a. Venue Director
- b. Starting Line Judge
- c. Stagers
- d. Finish Line Judge/Timer
- e. Field Judges

2. Official Duties

- a. The Venue Director is responsible for maintaining proper track dimensions and conditions. The Venue Director oversees the competition and ensures that the equipment is legal and that the race starts are in agreement with the official rules.
- b. The Starting Line Judge gives the start signal, “Racers Ready – GO” and by firing a start gun or drop of a flag once the competitors have lined up. The Starting Line Judge decides whether a start is good or false.
- c. Stagers receive athletes into the staging area and work from the official heat sheets putting athletes in order for competition.
- d. The Finish Line Judge registers the times on the official heat sheets.
- e. Field Judges are assigned to positions along the track to oversee the progression of the race.

RULES OF COMPETITION

1. It is recommended that athletes enter at least two official events.
2. All snowshoes will be measured and checked by the referees prior to each event.
3. Athletes must wear their assigned number in a position visible to the officials at all times.
- 4. The Start:**
 - a. Snowshoers must have both tips of his/her snowshoes behind the starting line.
 - b. All supports (such as blocks or holes which give an athlete an advantage at the start) are prohibited.
 - c. In Time Trials, athletes are timed individually one racer at a time. On final competition day, each division start is a massed start.
 - d. On the start command, “Racers Ready – GO” the athletes leave the start area.
 - e. A false start requires a re-start of the race.

5. The Race:

- a. Only the officials and athletes (no spectators) are allowed on the track.
- b. For races 25, 50 and 100 meters the athlete must run in a straight line.
- c. **Two-minute rule: If during competition, the competitor falls, has difficulty with a snowshoe or binding, or leaves the track, he/she has two minutes to correct the problem. A competitor who fails to adhere to the two-minute time limit or receives assistance of any kind shall be disqualified. Timing of the two minutes is the responsibility of the closest field judge.**
- d. A competitor may not progress forward more than 3 meters unless they have both snowshoes attached to their feet.

6. The Finish:

- a. A snowshoer has finished the race when any part of his/her torso reaches the vertical plane of the finish line.
NOTE: The torso is distinguished from the head, neck, arms, legs, hands and feet.
- b. **To be official, a snowshoer must have both snowshoes on his/her feet when crossing the finish line.**

7. Disqualification:

A competitor will be disqualified for:

- 1) improperly overtaking another competitor or in any other way interfering with another competitor.
- 2) preventing another competitor from passing.
- 3) leaving the designed course.
- 4) making two false starts.
- 5) Failing to adhere to the two-minute rule.
- 6) Progressing more than 3 meters without both snowshoes attached to his/her feet.
- 7) Crossing the finish line without both snowshoes on his/her feet.

SNOWSHOE RETAILERS

- Special Olympics athletes **MUST** provide their own snowshoes for training and competition.

The following Snowshoe Companies have established relationships with Special Olympics and may offer discounts to Special Olympics Groups.

Sherpa Snowshoe Company

PO Box 607

Milwaukee WI 52301-0601

1-800-621-2277

Fax: 414-347-4143

Internet: www.sherpasnowshoes.com

Ask for the Friends and Family discount

Tubbs Snowshoe Company

52 River Road

Stowe, Vermont 05672

1-800-882-2748

Fax: 802-253-9982

Internet: www.tubbssnowshoe.com

Redfeather Snowshoes

4705 A Oakland Street

Denver, CO 80239

1-800-525-0081

www.redfeather.com

**Before you order new snowshoes for your program, you should call the SOKY office in Frankfort to see if grant money or additional discounts are available.
Call Trish at 1-800-633-7403.**

TRAINING AND COACHING TIPS

Snowshoeing has quickly become one of the worlds most popular winter activities. Snowshoeing shares the same excellent cardiovascular workout as Cross Country Skiing while eliminating much of the cumbersome equipment. All that is really needed is a pair of snowshoes and some snow.

Snowshoes allow for a feeling of ‘floating’ over the deepest piles of snow. Snowshoeing is for everyone – young and old.

THE SNOWSHOE

There are five parts to any snowshoe:

Frame - The outside that gives the snowshoe its shape; symmetrical and asymmetrical. The symmetrical frame centers the foot in the middle of the shoe while the asymmetrical frame is more in the shape of the foot allowing the feet to be closer together eliminating the "snowshoe waddle". The toe of the frame is raised up and the tail is weighted to make sure that snow does not collapse on the shoe for better movement. Generally, the smallest frame which allows flotation on the snow is best for racing.

Binding System - This secures the athlete (the shoe) to the snowshoe. Look for a solid landing platform, little movement inside the binding, comfort, and no contact with the frame.

Pivot system - This allows for normal walking motion. There is a hole in the decking which allows the toe of the foot to go into the snow and push off while the frame remains on the surface of the snow. There is a Stationary Pivot System (SPS) which does not allow the shoe to drop away from the frame, and a Rotational Pivot System (RPS) which does. SPS is best for speed, while a RPS is best for longer distances.

Crampons or claws - Spikes which grab the snow and provide the traction when conditions are slippery. They are located beneath the binding which also allow them to aid in pushing off.

Decking - The material which is attached to the frame and provides the majority of the flotation.

Shoe weight and size are critical in snowshoeing. It is estimated that 1 extra pound on the foot equals 5-10 pounds of weight on the back. Also, narrower is better to keep the weight centered, the less directly beneath the torso, and the frame will not hit the lower legs as much. Body weight is a very small factor. Everyone will sink in dry, powdery snow no matter how big the snowshoes are, but even the heaviest athlete will be able to snowshoe in moist, compacted snow in even the smallest shoe. Keep the snowshoe as small as possible for the snow conditions. Rules state that the snowshoe must be at least 8 inches wide and 25 inches long.

HOW TO DRESS FOR TRAINING AND COMPETITION.

Clothing must be appropriate to the weather conditions. Incorporate the “25 degree rule” when training and competing. This means that if the temperature outside is 40 degrees, dress like it is 65 degrees. This is how warm you will feel from the heat generated by your workout. It is best to dress in layers, so you can add or subtract clothes as needed.

FOOTWEAR: Nylon or polypropylene socks are a must. Any type of shoe can be used. If a boot is used, make sure there is flexibility in the ankle.

PANTS AND TOPS: Use the three layer system:

1. Inside layer of long underwear
2. Middle layer is the insulating layer and would consist of a sweater or fleece top
3. The outer layer should be weather proof; wind pants, wind breaker, etc.

HATS AND GLOVES: Both a MUST!

THE WARM-UP

Whether you are warming-up for practice or for competition; the most important thing is that you WARM-UP!

Warming up raises the body temperature and prepares the muscles, tendons and cardiovascular system for upcoming stretches and body movements. A proper warm-up reduces the chance of injury.

Snowshoeing is an activity which exercises the entire body – warm-up activities will physically prepare the body for snowshoeing.

Dryland warm-ups:

1. Walking
2. Jogging
3. Jumping Jacks
4. Dancing to fast music
5. Jumping rope

On-snow warm-ups:

1. Running in place with or without snowshoes
2. Jumping jacks with snowshoes on
3. Knee ups

TEACHING THE START FOR THE SHORTER SPRINT RACES:

The 25 M, 50 M & 100 M events are considered sprint races. The start of a snowshoe sprint has many difficulties because of the shape of the snowshoe and the alignment of the feet on them. A forward accelerating thrust and forward body lean is virtually impossible because the racer will fall forward or slip backward.

Teaching the skill:

- Stand upright with one leg in front of the other and both knees slightly bent.
- At the start of the race, thrust upward with the rear leg and forward vigorously pumping arms
- Use the front leg as an anchor which serves as the base for the upward and forward thrust of the rear leg
- Press directly downward on the anchor leg at the start to prevent falling or slipping backward
- Continue running to the finish

Teaching the Sprint:

- Run with a straight back so the maximum distance is attained on each side.
- Forward propulsion is achieved by thrusting the toe downward and backward through the toe hold.
- Arm movement is vital – the forearm and upper arm should form a 90 degree angle at the elbow.
- Pump the arms (one forward and one back) with every stride.
- The arm and leg movements should be synchronized for maximum speed.
- The stride should be as long as possible without being dangerous.
- Move in a straight line toward the finish line.