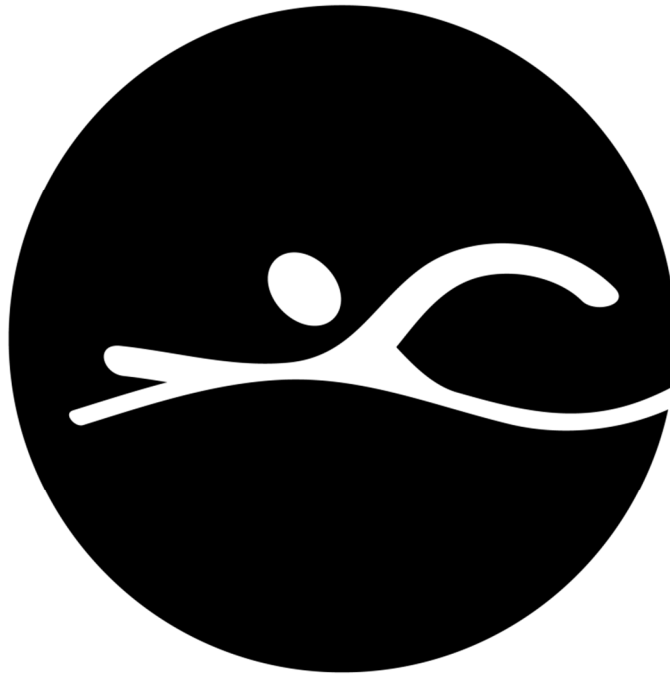


# Special Olympics Northern California

## Swimming



### 2024 Rules & Guidelines

*Developmental and Traditional Events*

**(Please Review Page 15 for 2024 Rules Changes for Swimming)**



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**SPECIAL OLYMPICS NORTHERN CALIFORNIA MISSION STATEMENT**

**SO NORCAL PLAYS BY THE RULES**

**SO NORCAL COACHES' CODE OF CONDUCT**

**SO NORCAL ATHLETES' CODE OF CONDUCT**

**SO NORCAL PARENT AND SPECTATOR CODE OF CONDUCT**

**SO NORCAL SWIMMING RULES AND REGULATIONS**

Section A: General Rules

Section B: Official Events

Section C: Coaches & Their Responsibilities

Section D: Uniforms

Section E: Facility & Supervisory Guidelines

Section F: Rules of Competition

Section G: 2024 Rule Changes

# **SPECIAL OLYMPICS NORTHERN CALIFORNIA**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

**To provide athletic opportunities to children and adults with intellectual disabilities which instill the confidence needed to succeed in life.**

***Preparing for life through sports***

**SO NORCAL PLAYS BY THE RULES.....**

**All Special Olympics competitions will be conducted in accordance with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules and the National Governing Body of Rules for each sport offered in our program. These rules are designed to protect the athletes, provide equitable conditions of competition and promote uniformity so that no competitor shall obtain an unfair advantage over another.**

**The International Olympics Committee (IOC) has granted its official recognition to Special Olympics International, Inc., and its accredited programs.**

# Special Olympics Northern California

## COACHES' CODE OF CONDUCT

Special Olympics Northern California (SO NorCal) volunteer coaches are 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 Olympics athlete in each training or 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. In addition, it is the position of SO NorCal that each volunteer coach shall agree to:

### HAVE RESPECT FOR OTHERS

- I will respect the rights, dignity and worth of athletes, other coaches and volunteers, SO NorCal staff members, and friends and spectators in Special Olympics.
- I will treat everyone equally regardless of sex, ethnic origin, religion or ability.
- I will be a positive role model for the athletes I coach.

### ENSURE A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE

- I will ensure that for each athlete I coach, the time spent with Special Olympics is a positive experience.
- I will respect the talent, developmental stage and goals of each athlete.
- I will ensure each athlete competes in events that challenge that athlete's potential and are appropriate to that athlete's ability.
- I will be fair, considerate and honest with athletes and communicate with athletes using simple, clear language.
- I will ensure that accurate scores are provided for entry of an athlete into any event.
- I will instruct each athlete to perform to the best of the athlete's ability at all preliminaries/heats and finals in accordance with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules.

### ACT PROFESSIONALLY AND TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIS/HER ACTIONS

- My language, manner, punctuality, preparation and presentation will demonstrate high standards.
- I will dress and act in an appropriate manner at all times.
- I will display control, respect, dignity and professionalism to all involved in Special Olympics, including to the athletes, other coaches and volunteers, opponents, officials, administrators, SO NorCal staff members, parents, spectators and the media.
- I will encourage athletes to demonstrate the same qualities.
- I will not drink alcohol, smoke or take illegal drugs while representing Special Olympics at training sessions or during competitions.
- I will not engage in any form of personal abuse towards, or inappropriate contact or relationship with, athletes, other coaches and volunteers, SO NorCal staff members, family members, or spectators in Special Olympics, including verbal, physical or emotional abuse.
- I will be alert to any form of abuse from other sources directed toward athletes or others in my care.
- I will abide by the Special Olympics policy that prohibits coaches/volunteers from dating athletes.

### PROVIDE QUALITY SERVICE TO THE ATHLETES

- I will seek continued improvement through performance evaluation and ongoing coach education.
- I will be knowledgeable about the Sports Rules and skills of the sport(s) I coach.
- I will provide a planned training program.
- I will keep copies of the registration, training, and competition records for each athlete I coach.
- I will follow the Special Olympics and National Governing Body rules for my sport(s) coached, as well as all SO NorCal policies and procedures as amended.

### ENSURE THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF THE ATHLETES

- I will ensure that the equipment and facilities for my sport(s) coached are safe to use.
- I will ensure that the equipment, rules, training and the environment are appropriate for the age and ability of the athletes.
- I will review each athlete's registration form and be aware of any limitations on that athlete's participation noted on that form.
- I will encourage athletes, coaches and volunteers to seek medical advice when needed.
- I will report any emergencies to the appropriate authorities after first taking immediate action to ensure the safety and well-being of those involved.
- I will maintain the same interest and support towards sick and injured athletes.
- I will allow further participation in training and competition only when appropriate.

Should the behaviors and/or abilities of any volunteer coach or other faction of a school/organization violate either the principles stated above (including the SO NorCal policies and procedures as amended) or the philosophy of the Special Olympics movement, then any of the following actions may be taken by SO NorCal in its sole discretion:

1. The coach may be notified by official warning of the undesirable behavior and be requested to remedy the situation immediately in order to continue his or her participation in Special Olympics;
2. The coach may be requested to withdraw personally or with his/her team from the remainder of any Special Olympics event or competition;
3. The coach or sponsoring school/organization may be suspended from participating in any or all Special Olympics activities or events for a specified period of time; and/or
4. The coach or sponsoring school/organization may be permanently prohibited from participating in any or all Special Olympics activities or events.

# Special Olympics Northern California

## ATHLETES' CODE OF CONDUCT

Special Olympics Northern California (SO NorCal) is committed to the highest ideals of sport and expects all athletes to honor sports and Special Olympics. All SO NorCal Athletes and Unified Partners agree to the following code:

### SPORTSMANSHIP

- I will practice good sportsmanship.
- I will act in ways that bring respect to me, my coaches, my team, and Special Olympics.
- I will not use bad language.
- I will not swear or insult other persons.
- I will not fight with other athletes, coaches, volunteers, or staff.

### TRAINING AND COMPETITION

- I will train regularly.
- I will learn and follow the rules of my sport.
- I will listen to my coaches and the official and ask questions when I do not understand.
- I will always try my best during training, divisioning, and competitions.
- I will not “hold back” in preliminary competition just to get into an easier finals competition division.
- I will follow the International Federation and the National Federation/Governing Body rules for my sport(s).

### RESPONSIBILITY FOR MY ACTIONS

- I will not make inappropriate or unwanted physical, verbal, or sexual advances on others.
- I will not drink alcohol, smoke or take illegal drugs while representing Special Olympics at training sessions, competition, or during Games.
- I will not take drugs for the purpose of improving my performance.
- I will obey all laws and Special Olympics rules.

# Special Olympics Northern California

## PARENT AND SPECTATOR CODE OF CONDUCT

Special Olympics Northern California (SO NorCal) is committed to the highest ideals of sport and expects all parents and spectators to honor sport and Special Olympics. All Special Olympics parents and spectators should observe the following code:

- Remember athletes are participating for their enjoyment. Encourage participation, but do not force it.
- Applaud good performances and efforts from all individuals and teams. Congratulate all participants on their performance, regardless of the event's or game's outcome.
- Focus on the athletes' effort and performance, rather than whether they win or lose.
- Encourage athletes to play according to the rules and to settle disagreements without resorting to hostility or violence.
- Never ridicule or yell at participants for making a mistake or losing the competition.
- Remember that athletes learn best by example. Appreciate good performance and skillful plays by all participants.
- Respect the decisions of officials, Games Management Team and Staff, and teach athletes to do the same.
- Show appreciation for event volunteers, coaches, and officials and staff. (Remember, without them there would be no opportunities for athletes).
- Condemn the use of violence in any form, whether it is by spectators, coaches, officials or players.
- Show respect for your team's or individual's opponents. Without them, there would be no event or game.
- Encourage athletes and coaches to follow the rules and the officials' decisions.
- Swearing and/or inappropriate language will not be tolerated at SONC events
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person regardless of their gender, ability, cultural background or religion.
- Abide by all posted and written policies, including SONC's Animal Policy for Practices, Competitions and Events.

**By attending an event, parents and spectators have agreed to abide by this Parent and Spectator Code of Conduct. SO NorCal reserves the right to dismiss parents and/or spectators from any SO NorCal event for violation of this Parent and Spectator Code of Conduct.**

# SO NORCAL SWIMMING RULES AND REGULATIONS

The Official Special Olympics Sports Rules shall govern all Special Olympics Swimming competitions. As an international Sports Program, Special Olympics has created these rules based upon Federation Internationale de Natation Amateur (FINA), USA Swimming and national governing body (NGB) rules for swimming. FINA or national governing body rules shall be employed except when they are in conflict with the Special Olympics Sports Rules. In such cases, the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules shall apply.

## SECTION A - GENERAL RULES

1. Each Special Olympics athlete is required to have a current Application for Participation on file in order to participate. This is in accordance with Special Olympics General Rules.
2. Each athlete must qualify by participating in a SO NorCal Regional Competition prior to the participation in the Program Championship (Summer Games).
3. **SO NorCal has a strict Animal Policy for Practices, Competitions and Events, which must be followed by all athletes, volunteers, parents and spectators at all times. Please visit [sonc.org/resources/coach-athletes-resources/coach-resources/policies-procedures-forms](http://sonc.org/resources/coach-athletes-resources/coach-resources/policies-procedures-forms) for the full policy.**
4. **No cameras, including cell phone cameras, or other recording devices are allowed behind the starting end (whether athletes are using blocks, the pool deck or performing a water start) at any time.**
  - a. **Exception: a credentialed, approved, official Meet Photographer identified by the Meet Director, may be allowed behind the blocks after the start.**

## SECTION B - OFFICIAL EVENTS

1. One-Day Competitions: SO NorCal Regionals
  - a. Athletes may only register to compete in one level.
    - i. Level 1 Developmental Events: Developmental events provide meaningful competition for athletes with lower ability levels. Athletes in Level 1 may register for a maximum of three (3) individual events. Athletes in Level 1 are not eligible to enter in a relay.
    - ii. Level 2 Traditional Events: Athletes in Level 2 may register for a maximum of two (2) individual events and one (1) relay event, or three (3) individual events.
    - iii. Level 3 Traditional Events: Athletes in Level 3 may register for a maximum of two (2) individual events and one (1) relay event, or three (3) individual events.
  - b. If a Level 1 athlete wishes to register for one (1) Level 2 Traditional Individual event, or a Level 2 athlete wishes to register for one (1) Level 1 Developmental Individual event, a "SO NorCal Petition" form must accompany your "Swimming Entry Form for One-Day Competitions". All petitions are subject to review for approval by the Sports Management Team. Athletes in Level 1 events who petition to compete in a Level 2 Traditional Individual event are not eligible to enter in a relay.
    - i. In order for a petition to be considered for a competition, coaches must submit, by the mid-point of the training season (half of the scheduled practices), the "SO NorCal Petition" form to their local SO NorCal Staff contact. Petitions not submitted, or submitted after this deadline, will not be considered. SO NorCal Staff will provide approvals/denials on submitted petitions within one week of the form being received.
2. Two-Day Competitions: SO NorCal Summer Games
  - a. Athletes may only register to compete in one level.
    - i. Level 1 Developmental Events: Developmental events provide meaningful competition for athletes with lower ability levels. Athletes in Level 1 may register for a maximum of three (3) individual events. Athletes in Level 1 are not eligible to enter in a relay.
    - ii. Level 2 Traditional Events: Athletes in Level 2 may register for a maximum of three (3) individual events and one (1) relay event, or two (2) individual events and two (2) relay events.
    - iii. Level 3 Traditional Events: Athletes in Level 3 may register for a maximum of three (3) individual events and one (1) relay event, or two (2) individual events and two (2) relay events.
  - b. If a Level 1 athlete wishes to register for one (1) Level 2 Traditional Individual event, or a Level 2 athlete wishes to register for one (1) Level 1 Developmental Individual event, a "SO NorCal Petition" form must accompany your "Swimming Entry Form for Two-Day Competitions". All petitions are subject to review for approval by the Sports

Management Team. Athletes in Level 1 events who petition to compete in a Level 2 Traditional Individual event are not eligible to enter in a relay.

- i. In order for a petition to be considered for a competition, coaches must submit, by the mid-point of the training season (half of the scheduled practices), the “SO NorCal Petition” form to their local SO NorCal Staff contact. Petitions not submitted, or submitted after this deadline, will not be considered.
- c. For SO NorCal Summer Games, athletes must register for the same events in which they participated at the Regional competition, and Regional scores will be used. If an athlete wishes to add an event for Summer Games (optional), the additional event must be within the same level as their other events and an accurate score must be obtained and submitted.
  - i. Only petitions that were accepted at the Regional competition will be considered for SO NorCal Summer Games and petitions for added events are not allowed.
  - ii. Athletes who were disqualified in an event or events at the Regional competition, have the option to submit a petition to replace the same event(s) for SO NorCal Summer Games.
    1. Replacement event(s) must remain within the same level as the other events in which the athlete is registered.
    2. Regional events where placement was awarded (no disqualification) are not eligible to be replaced.
    3. An accurate score must be obtained and submitted for any replacement event(s).
3. All scoring for events must be measured in (Minutes:Seconds.Tenths).

### **Level 1 Developmental Individual Events**

1. 10 Yard Assisted Swim
2. 15 Yard Walk
3. 15 Yard Flotation Race
4. 15 Yard Unassisted Swim
5. 15 Yard Kickboard Race
6. 25 Yard Flotation Race
7. 25 Yard Kickboard Race

### **Level 2 Traditional Individual Events**

1. 25 Yard Freestyle
2. 25 Yard Backstroke
3. 25 Yard Breaststroke
4. 25 Yard Butterfly
5. 50 Yard Freestyle
6. 50 Yard Backstroke
7. 50 Yard Breaststroke
8. 50 Yard Butterfly
9. 100 Yard Freestyle

### **Level 2 Relay Events**

1. 4x25 Yard Freestyle Relay
2. 4x25 Yard Medley Relay
3. 4x50 Yard Freestyle Relay
4. 4x50 Yard Medley Relay

### **Level 3 Traditional Individual Events**

1. 25 Yard Breaststroke
2. 25 Yard Butterfly
3. 50 Yard Freestyle
4. 50 Yard Backstroke
5. 50 Yard Breaststroke
6. 50 Yard Butterfly
7. 100 Yard Freestyle
8. 100 Yard Backstroke
9. 100 Yard Breaststroke
10. 100 Yard Butterfly
11. 100 Yard Individual Medley (IM)
12. 200 Yard Freestyle
13. 200 Yard Backstroke
14. 200 Yard Breaststroke
15. 200 Yard Butterfly
16. 200 Yard Individual Medley (IM)
17. 400 Yard Individual Medley (IM)
18. 500 Yard Freestyle
19. 1000 Yard Freestyle

### **Level 3 Relay Events**

1. 4x25 Yard Medley Relay
2. 4x50 Yard Freestyle Relay
3. 4x50 Yard Medley Relay
4. 4x100 Yard Freestyle Relay
5. 4x100 Yard Medley Relay
6. 4x200 Yard Freestyle Relay



## SECTION C – COACHES AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Coaches shall remain off the deck **(as defined by the Meet Director)** and out of the water while competition is taking place. The only exception is for deaf or blind swimmers needing assistance with starts or for certain assisted developmental events.
2. Coaches are responsible for knowing and understanding the rules of the sport, both National Governing Body and SO NorCal rules.
3. **Coaches are responsible for ensuring swimmers are aware of event times and calls and assisting them to the staging/Ready Bench area prior to their event and from the pick-up (usually awards) area after their event.**
4. The National Governing Body Rules for SO NorCal is Federation Internationale de Natation Amateur (FINA). To obtain your own FINA Rules Book:

FINA

<https://www.fina.org/swimming/rules>

## SECTION D – UNIFORMS

1. All items of a swimmer's attire are considered personal.
2. Athletes should wear a swim suit that closely resembles skin in fit and feel (nylon or lycra is recommended) and one that does not restrict movement. White or light-colored swim suits are strongly discouraged.
3. Female athletes should wear a one-piece bathing suit or two-piece racing-style swim suit. No bikini-style suit with spaghetti or thin straps is allowed.
4. Male athletes should wear a brief-style or boxer-brief-style suit, or jammer-type shorts.
5. All athletes may wear gym or board shorts with a waist band and/or drawstring that fit snugly around the waist. It is recommended that athletes wear a traditional bathing suit or other undergarments underneath the suit in case of loose shorts or loose drawstring.
6. Athletes may wear any FINA-approved swim suit.
7. T-shirts, while not recommended due to the drag, may be worn by any athlete competing in Development events. T-shirts are not recommended for athletes competing in Traditional events. If the athlete requires a t-shirt, a rash guard style top is recommended.
8. Goggles are recommended, and may be of any style, including snorkel goggles, however, no snorkel breathing apparatus may be used.
9. Swim caps are recommended for all athletes, and may be made of silicone, latex, or lycra and should be tight-fitting.
10. Nose-clips may be worn if desired, but only when necessary.
11. No athlete shall be permitted to use or wear any device that may aid his/her speed, buoyancy or endurance during a competitions such as webbed gloves, flippers, fins, etc. Athletes participating in flotation or assisted swims may use an approved flotation device (see Section F, No. 3).

## SECTION E – FACILITY & SUPERVISORY GUIDELINES

All Special Olympics Swimming training and competitive events shall be conducted in accordance with the following practices, rules and procedures in order to ensure the safety and well-being of all Special Olympics athletes, coaches, and volunteers.

1. Facility Guidelines
  - a. There shall be at least one certified lifeguard on duty for every 25 swimmers in the water.
  - b. The sole function of the lifeguard shall be to guard. If no relief lifeguard is available, the pool must be emptied even for a short duration, when the lifeguard must leave the pool side.
  - c. The head coach or event director will review the Emergency Action Plan prior to each occasion.
  - d. Athlete Application for Participation forms shall be on site and shall be discussed with the lifeguard or medical personnel on duty in advance of the swimming activity.
  - e. Pool depth must be marked and easily visible.
  - f. The minimum depth of the pool shall be 1.52 meters (5 feet) for racing starts from a starting block. A swimmer may dive from the side of the pool without starting block if depth is at least 1.22 meters (4 feet).

- Pool depth for Level 1 athletes must be shallow enough for the athletes to walk on the bottom.
2. Supervisory Personnel Guidelines: An adequate number of supervisory personnel shall be present at all swimming sessions or events. The type of personnel will vary in accordance with the following requirements:
    - a. Training Programs
      - i. Enough certified lifeguards to provide a ratio of guards to swimmers of 1 per 25.
      - ii. Enough coaches (preferably Special Olympics certified) to provide for adequate supervision and training of each athlete.
    - b. Competitions
      - i. Enough certified lifeguards to provide a ratio of guards to swimmers of 1 per 25.
      - ii. Enough supervision to provide for a ratio of observer to swimmers of 1 per 2 for those swimmers who are prone to seizures.

## SECTION F – RULES OF COMPETITION

The technical rules of competition are noted in the FINA Rule Book. National/U.S. programs may substitute their local national governing body (NGB) rules. The FINA rule book will be used for all multi-Program events. Exceptions to these rules are listed below.

1. Competition Equipment
  - a. Starting device (horn or beeper). The starting system shall be capable of providing a visual start for the hearing impaired. A strobe light in accordance with FINA rules is recommended. If a strobe light is not available, their international hand signal will be used.
  - b. Lane lines and backstroke flags.
  - c. Stop watches/timing system. At least one stop watch per lane required (two or three recommended).
  - d. For flotation races, each athlete is responsible for his/her own flotation device. The Personal Flotation Device (PFD) must be the body-wrap-around type such that if the athletes were not able to hold on to the device, the device would still support the athlete with the face out of water. The PFD must be worn at all times. The following are not acceptable as a PFD and should not be used as such at any time: kickboards, inner tubes, or floats that wrap around the arms.
  - e. Kickboards are permitted for use as a training tool to assist with kicking drills and in Kickboard Races to support the hands/arms of the athlete.
2. Traditional Events
  - a. The Meet Referee, in cooperation with the Swimming Rules Committee, shall have the following:
    - i. Authority to enforce all rules and decisions of the Official Special Olympics Rule book and FINA 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.
    - ii. Authority to adjust these rules on a case-by-case basis for the safety and well-being of an athlete.
    - iii. Authority to 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.
    - iv. Discretion to allow for certain modifications/interpretations of the current technical rules based on a physical disability characteristic, as long no advantage is given 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.
    - v. **Coaches must declare physical issues for any swimmers prior to the meet for any event(s) in which the swimmer is participating, either via the official entry/registration forms and/or a report submitted to meet officials.**
    - vi. Full control and authority over all officials, including approving their assignments and instructing them regarding all Special Olympics features or regulations related to the competition.
  - b. Standing on the bottom during any event shall not disqualify a competitor, but he/she shall not walk or use the bottom to propel themselves forward. Athletes may also use the lane line for rest, but not to propel themselves forward. Walking/jumping from the bottom to propel forward will result in a disqualification.
  - c. A coach or official may guide the swimmer by voice only. The aide is not allowed to touch the swimmer from the time of the starting signal until all swimmers have completed the race. Exception – Assisted Swims.
  - d. Assistant starters (coaches) may be used to assist athletes to maintain their positions at the starting line (block

- or in the water) or during relays.
  - e. Swimmers may be assisted from the water upon request.
  - f. In individual events of 500 yards and 1000 yards, each official of turns at the turning end of the pool shall record the number of laps completed by the swimmer in his/her lane. The official or a coach can keep the swimmer informed of the remaining number of laps to be completed by displaying "lap cards". Semi-electronic equipment may be used, including under water display.
3. Developmental Events
- a. Walking and Flotation Events
    - i. Set Up
      - 1. There should be at least one observer for every two swimmers during competition.
      - 2. The starting line should be marked the appropriate distance from the finish.
      - 3. It is recommended the depth of the pool should be no more than 1 meter (3.5 feet) deep for walking events.
      - 4. It is preferable that certified swimming officials (including referees, timers and judges) be used in walking events.
    - ii. Guidelines
      - 1. For walking events, athletes must have at least one foot touching the bottom of the pool at all times.
      - 2. No flotation device is allowed for any other race than the specified flotation races.
  - b. Assisted Swims
    - i. Each athlete is responsible for having his/her own coach/assistant. The assistant may touch, guide or direct athletes, but may not support or assist with the athlete's forward movement. The swimmer is allowed to use a flotation device (see specifications listed in Section F, 1, d). The assistant may be in the pool or on the deck.
  - c. Kickboard Races
    - i. Athletes must kick the full distance with no assistance from a coach/assistant. Athletes must use a kickboard and have two hands on the board at all times. Athletes that take a stroke, or use the lane rope or bottom of the pool to propel themselves forward, during the race, will be disqualified. Coaches, lifeguards, officials and spectators are allowed to offer encouragement and direction to the swimmer, but only from outside the swimmer's lane.
  - d. Unassisted Swims
    - i. Athletes must swim the full distance with no assistance. Coaches, lifeguards, officials and spectators are allowed to offer encouragement and direction to the swimmer, but only from outside the swimmer's lane.
4. Relay Events
- a. General Relay Rules (For One and Two-Day Competitions)
    - i. There shall be four swimmers on each relay team.
    - ii. Each swimmer shall swim one-fourth the distance (one leg) of the total relay. No swimmer shall swim more than one leg of any one relay.
    - iii. Relay swimmers should exit the pool as soon as possible following the completion of their relay leg. If they require assistance or a ladder to exit the pool, they should move to the corner of their lane at the completion of their relay leg, but shall not obstruct a swimmer in another lane. Obstruction of a swimmer in another lane can result in a team disqualification.
    - iv. **Coaches are NOT allowed to coach their athletes during relay events and must be clear of the pool deck/officials' area prior to the start of the relay event. Coaches, at the approval/direction of the Meet Director, may allow coaches to accompany relay athletes to their assigned lane and end of the pool prior to the start of the event.**
      - 1. **The only exception is for hearing-impaired athletes who may be given a physical cue to start (a tap or other visual signal at the start of the event. Subsequent swimmers/legs of the relay may not receive cues for take-offs.**
  - b. Relay Divisions (For One and Two-Day Competitions)
    - i. Divisions will be determined by Gender and Age categories.
      - 1. Gender Categories:
        - a. Male Division (all four swimmers are male)
        - b. Female Division (all four swimmers are female)
        - c. Co-ed Division (at least one swimmer is of different gender than the other swimmers)
      - 2. Age Categories

- a. Junior Division – 21 & Under (all four swimmers on the team must be 21 years of age and under)
  - b. Senior Division – 22 & Older (any one of the four swimmers is 22 years of age or older)
- c. Day-of Competition “Swimming Relay Card” (Available at the competition for One and Two-Day Competitions)
  - i. “Swimming Relay Cards” will be due to the Games Director at the given deadline on the day of the competition.
  - ii. For each relay team you wish to enter, complete a “Swimming Relay Card” as follows:
    - 1. Section 1 – Team Information – list the Delegation, Relay Team Name and Coach Name.
    - 2. Section 2 – Relay Event – indicate the relay event in which the team is entering.
    - 3. Section 3 – Athlete Order and Information – list the names of the athletes (using the list of eligible athletes from your “Swimming Relay Entry Form for One-Day Competition”) in the order they will swim (Medley Relay order is listed for you), and indicate their gender and age. Lastly, list each swimmer’s Individual Leg Time using the Minutes:Seconds.Tenths format, as well as the Total Time for the relay team. If the four athletes listed have practiced together, please enter the total team time you have recorded.
    - 4. Section 4 & 5 – For Divisioning and Awards – GMT Use Only – please do not complete.
    - 5. Incomplete Relay Cards will result in the relay team being eligible for participation only (no placement).
- d. One-Day Competitions (SO NorCal Regionals)
  - i. Qualifying and Registration Instructions
    - 1. Relay teams may be comprised of any four swimming athletes who have qualified by swimming an individual event equivalent to or further than the distance of the one relay leg. Athletes in the developmental events who petition to compete in traditional events are not eligible to enter in a relay.
    - 2. An athlete must register for a relay event with the same Level as their individual event(s) (see Page 7 for Official Event listings).
    - 3. Relay team members must come from within the same delegation (Team for Regionals/County for Summer Games).
      - a. Delegations (Counties) with less than four relay-eligible swimmers may combine for a relay.
    - 4. Athletes must be registered on the following:
      - a. “Swimming Entry Form for One-Day Competitions” AND
      - b. “Swimming Relay Entry Form for One-Day Competitions”
    - 5. Completing the Swimming Entry Forms for One-Day Competitions
      - a. “Swimming Entry Form for One-Day Competitions”
        - i. Utilize the drop-down menu under “Event/\*\*Relay” column.
        - b. Select “Relay (2)” or “Relay (3)” as the event.
        - c. Do not enter a time for the Relay event.
    - 6. “Swimming Relay Entry Form for One-Day Competitions”
      - a. Section 1 – Relay Teams Registered – enter the total number of relay teams you are registering for the competition (this number may not be exceeded on the day of the competition).
      - b. Section 2 – Athlete Personal Information – list the athletes who have registered for a relay, along with their gender, date of birth and age.
      - c. Section 3 – Distance & Event Eligibility – indicate the distance(s) and event (Freestyle or Medley) the athlete is eligible to swim.
        - i. Example 1: Joe is registered on the “Swimming Entry Form for One-Day Competitions” for the 50 Yard Freestyle, the 100 Yard IM, and a relay, and thus is a Level 3 swimmer, so you would place an “X” in the 4x25 Medley, 4x50 Freestyle, 4x50 Medley, 4x100 Freestyle, 4x100 Medley, and 4x200 Freestyle columns. Therefore, he is eligible to swim one of those relays, but not the 4x25 Freestyle relay.
        - ii. Example 2: Tom is only registered on the “Swimming Entry Form for One-Day Competitions” for the 50 Yard Breaststroke and the 50 Yard Butterfly. Therefore, he is not eligible to be listed on the “Swimming Relay Entry Form for One-Day Competitions” and may not swim a relay at the competition.
        - iii. Example 3: Sally is registered on the “Swimming Entry Form for One-Day Competitions” for the 25 Yard Freestyle, the 25 Yard Backstroke, and one relay, and thus is a Level 2 swimmer, so you would place an “X” in the 4x25 Freestyle and 4x25 Medley columns. Therefore, she is

- eligible to swim in either the 4x25 Freestyle or 4x25 Medley Relay.
- d. Section 4 – Registered Relay Number – indicate that the athlete has registered for a relay (from the “Swimming Entry Form for One-Day Competitions”).
    - i. Example 1: Joe is registered to be in one relay, so you would place an “X” under the Number “1”.
    - ii. Example 2: Tom is not registered to be in a relay, so he would not be listed on the “Swimming Relay Entry Form for One-Day Competitions”.
    - iii. Example 3: Sally is registered to be in one relay, so you would place an “X” under the Number “1”.
  - e. Section 5 – for GMT Use Only – please do not complete.
  - f. Section 6 – Relay Event Summary – indicate the number of teams you anticipate to enter for each relay event. Relay events may be changed the day of the competition. However, the total number of relay teams can not exceed the registered amount in Section 1.
    - i. Athletes may register for one relay based on the Official Events guidelines (refer to Section B – Official Events, Pages 6 & 7).
- e. Relay Events – Two-Day Competitions (SO NorCal Summer Games)
- i. Qualifying and Registration Instructions
    1. Relay teams may be comprised of any four swimming athletes who have qualified by swimming an individual event equivalent to or further than the distance of the one relay leg. Athletes in the developmental events who petition to compete in traditional events are not eligible to enter in a relay.
    2. An athlete must register for a relay event with the same Level as their individual event(s) (see Page 7 for Official Event listings).
    3. Relay team members must come from within the same delegation (County).
      - a. Delegations (Counties) with less than four relay-eligible swimmers may combine for a relay.
      - b. Athletes for Two-Day Program Championship Events (SO NorCal Summer Games) relay teams may be different than those who swam on the relay team at a Regional Event.
    4. Athletes must be registered on the following:
      - a. “Swimming Entry Form for Two-Day Competitions” AND
      - b. “Swimming Relay Entry Form for Two-Day Competitions”
    5. Completing the Swimming Entry Forms
      - a. “Swimming Entry Form for Two-Day Competitions”
        - i. Utilize the drop-down menu under “Event/\*\*Relay” and/or “\*\*Relay” column(s).
      - b. Select “Relay (2)” or “Relay (3)” as the event(s).
      - c. Do not enter a time for relays.
    6. “Swimming Relay Entry Form for Two-Day Competitions”
      - a. Section 1 – Relay Teams Registered – enter the total number of relay teams you are registering for the competition (this number may not be exceeded the day of the competition).
      - b. Section 2 – Athlete Personal Information – list the athletes who have registered for a relay, along with their gender, date of birth and age.
      - c. Section 3 – Distance & Event Eligibility – indicate the distance(s) and event (Freestyle or Medley) the athlete is eligible to swim.
        - i. Example 1: Josh is registered on the “Swimming Entry Form for Two-Day Competitions” for the 50 Yard Freestyle, the 50 Yard Butterfly and the 100 Yard IM, and a relay, and thus is a Level 3 swimmer, so you would place an “X” in the 4x25 Medley, 4x50 Freestyle, 4x50 Medley, 4x100 Freestyle, 4x100 Medley, and 4x200 Freestyle columns. Therefore, he is eligible to swim one of those relays, but not the 4x25 Freestyle relay.
        - ii. Example 2: Sadie is registered on the “Swimming Entry Form for Two-Day Competitions” for the 25 Yard Freestyle, the 25 Yard Backstroke, and two relays, and thus is a Level 2 swimmer, so you would place an “X” in the 4x25 Freestyle and 4x25 Medley columns. Therefore, she is eligible to swim in 4x25 relays only.
        - iii. Example 3: Bill is only registered on the “Swimming Entry Form for Two-Day Competitions” for the 50 Yard Breaststroke and the 50 Yard Butterfly. Therefore, he is not eligible to be listed on the “Swimming Relay Entry Form for Two-Day Competitions” and may not swim in a relay at the competition.
    - d. Section 4 – Registered Relay Number – indicate the number of relays the athlete has registered for

(from the “Swimming Entry Form for Two-Day Competitions”).

- i. Example 1: Josh is registered to be in one relay, so you would place an “X” under the Number “1”
- ii. Example 2: Sadie is registered to be in two relays, so you would place an “X” under the Numbers “1” and “2”.
- iii. Example 3: Bill is not registered to be in any relays, so he would not be listed on the “Swimming Relay Entry Form for Two-Day Competitions”.
- e. Section 5 – for GMT Use Only – please do not complete.
- f. Section 6 – Relay Event Summary – indicate the number of teams you anticipate to enter for each relay event. Relay events may be changed the day of competition. However, the total number of relay teams cannot exceed the registered amount in Section 1.
  - i. Athletes may register for one or two relays based on the Official Event guidelines (refer to Section B – Official Events, on Pages 6 & 7).
- f. Preliminary and Final Races
  - i. Preliminary races will be used to determine Final relay divisions and Final races.
  - ii. Should a relay team be disqualified in a Preliminary race, it may still swim in the Final race, but is only eligible for participation.

## SECTION G – 2024 RULE CHANGES

1. Actual rules changes listed below are in **red font, underlined and in bold print** within the rule book.
2. General formatting and wording changes.
3. Rule Change Summary:
  - a. Added SO NorCal’s Animal Policy for Practices, Competitions and Events.
  - b. Clarified Coaches Responsibilities for deck access and with swimmers before and after events.
  - c. Added National Governing Body rule about no photography allowed from the starting end of the pool.
  - d. Added requirement for coaches to declare physical anomalies for athletes who are not able to perform an event per the official event rules.
  - e. Clarified coaching rules for relays.
4. Changes within the Rules & Guidelines below:

### *Page 7 – Section A: General Rules*

#### SECTION A – GENERAL RULES

3. SO NorCal has a strict Animal Policy for Practices, Competitions and Events, which must be followed by all athletes, volunteers, parents and spectators at all times. Please visit [sonc.org/resources/coach-athletes-resources/coach-resources/policies-procedures-forms](http://sonc.org/resources/coach-athletes-resources/coach-resources/policies-procedures-forms) for the full policy.
4. No cameras, including cell phone cameras, or other recording devices are allowed behind the starting end (whether athletes are using blocks, the pool deck or performing a water start) at any time.
  - a. Exception: a credentialed, approved, official Meet Photographer identified by the Meet Director, may be allowed behind the blocks after the start.

### *Page 9 – Section C: Coaches Responsibilities*

#### SECTION C – COACHES RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Coaches shall remain off the deck (as defined by the Meet Director) and out of the water while competition is taking place. The only exception is for deaf or blind swimmers needing assistance with starts or for certain assisted developmental events.
3. Coaches are responsible for ensuring swimmers are aware of event times and calls and assisting them to the staging/Ready Bench area prior to their event and from the pick-up (usually awards) area after their event.

### *Pages 10-11 – Section F: Rules of Competition*

#### SECTION F – RULES OF COMPETITION

2. Traditional Events
  - a. The Meet Referee, in cooperation with the Swimming Rules Committee, shall have the following:
    - v. Coaches must declare physical issues for any swimmers prior to the meet for any event(s) in which the swimmer is participating, either via the official entry/registration forms and/or a report submitted to meet officials.
4. Relay Events
  - a. General Relay Rules (For One and Two-Day Competitions)
    - iv. Coaches are NOT allowed to coach their athletes during relay events and must be clear of the pool deck/officials’ area prior to the start of the relay event. Coaches, at the approval/direction of the Meet Director, may allow coaches to accompany relay athletes to their assigned lane and end of the pool prior to the start of the event.
      1. The only exception is for hearing-impaired athletes who may be given a physical cue to start (a tap or other visual signal at the start of the event. Subsequent swimmers/legs of the relay may not receive cues for take-offs.