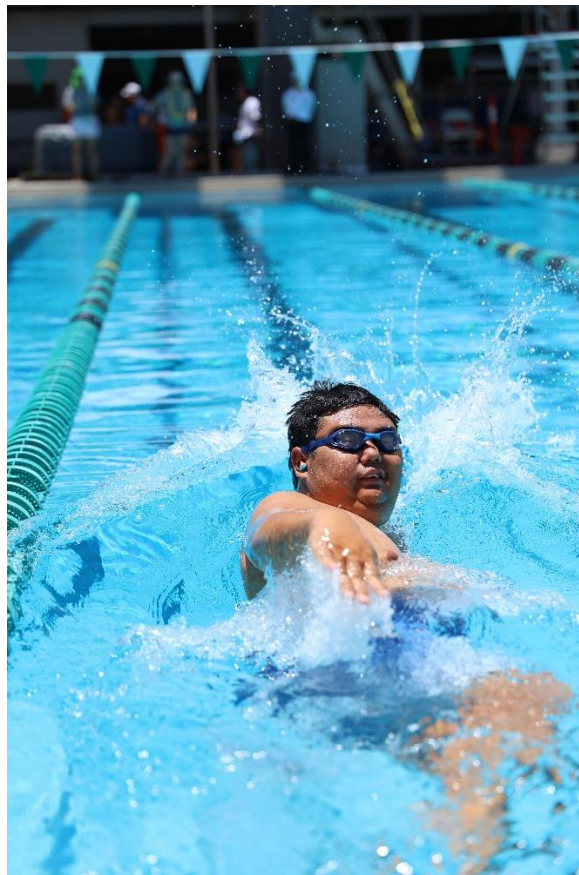


***Special  
Olympics***  
*Hawai'i*



# ***Swimming***



***Sport Information Guide***  
***Rules and Guidelines***  
***Spring 2026***

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### **Special Olympics Mission Statement:**

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.

### **Additions or changes to the 2025 Rules:**

**Section B** - 2025 Deadlines and Dates have been updated.

For more information please go to [www.sohawaii.org](http://www.sohawaii.org) or contact Greg Terhune via e-mail [sohisports@sohawaii.org](mailto:sohisports@sohawaii.org) or cell phone at (808) 779-9461

These Official Special Olympics Hawaii (SOHI) Swimming Rules shall govern all SOHI Swimming Competitions. SOHI has created these rules based upon USA Swimming Rules. USA Swimming Rules shall be employed except when they are in conflict with the Official SOHI Swimming Rules. In such cases, these Official SOHI Swimming Rules shall apply.

## SECTION A - GENERAL RULES

1. Each Special Olympics athlete is required to have a valid Medical Form (Application for Participation) filled out by a certified physician and a signed Release form in order to participate. These forms must be on file with their Area Director and with the State Office.
2. All Coaches and Assistant Coaches must fill out a Volunteer Information Form and meet Class "A" Volunteer criteria in order to participate.
3. All Head and Assistant Coaches must complete NFHS Concussion Training.
4. Each team/delegation must have a Head Coach certified by SOHI in swimming to participate in Summer Games.
5. For more information regarding Coaches Certification and Class A Volunteer requirements please visit: <https://sohawaii.org/get-involved/coaches/>
6. Athletes must participate in a training program run by a registered delegation. Athletes must comply with Delegation, Area, and State training policies and standards and must meet minimum attendance requirements set by the State, Area, or Delegation to participate in Area, Regional, or State competition.
7. Each athlete is required to participate in their qualifying Area or Regional competition to participate in the State Summer Games. They must participate in an event to qualify for that same event at State Games. Relay teams must compete at Area Games to qualify for State Summer Games.
8. No Make-up competitions will be allowed to qualify athletes who have missed Area or Regional competition.
9. All delegations must abide by the most current COVID Guidelines and Protocols.

## SECTION B – IMPORTANT DATES – SWIMMING

Event	Date/Deadline
Official Training May Begin	January 2026
Coaches Certification Clinic	February 22, 2026
Official Training Must Begin for Delegations/ Teams	February 1, 2025
All Athletes must begin training/ All Medicals due/ Last day to transfer delegations	Check with Area Directors
Registration Deadlines for Area or Regional Competition	Given by Area/Regional Director
Area Competitions	Varies by Area; April/ May
Summer Games	June 5,6,7 2026

**SECTION C – SPECIAL OLYMPICS HAWAII TRAINING POLICY**

1. Delegations must offer enough training sessions so that athletes have the opportunity to gain the skills and fitness levels required to be successful in their specific events.
2. Athletes must attend enough training sessions gain the skills and fitness levels required to be successful in their specific events.
3. SOHI recommends that every athlete is offered at least two training opportunities per week with every training opportunity being at least 1 – 1 ½ hours in duration (Per the Global Strategic Plan). However, SOHI will accept a minimum of one training session a week for at least 90 minutes.
4. Area and Regional Competitions, scrimmages, and mini-meets count as training sessions.
5. SOHI requires that athletes/ Unified Partners attend a minimum of 75% of training sessions offered by their delegation. Delegations may require a higher attendance percentage, but may not require athletes/Unified partners to attend more than 90% of training sessions.
6. Athletes with documented injury or illness during a season may receive an exemption from the above policy, but must participate in a minimum of **50%** of practices during the season and have the requisite skills and be physically capable (strength, fitness, injury/sickness fully healed with doctor’s clearance) of successfully participating in the sport as determined by their Head Coach.

**SECTION D – OFFICIAL EVENTS AND EVENT NUMBERS**

1. The following is a list of official events available in Special Olympics Hawaii. The range of events is intended to offer competition opportunities for athletes of all abilities. Coaches are responsible for providing training and event selection appropriate to each athlete’s skill and interest.
2. All events have corresponding event #'s for registration, odd numbers for Females and even numbers for Males. These numbers correspond to the order the events will be run at Regional competition and, for the most part, at Summer Games.

**SOHI Official Swimming Events**

<b>Level I- Olympic Style Events</b>			<b>Level II - Youth &amp; Lower Ability Events</b>		
<b>Events</b>	<b>Event #</b>		<b>Events</b>	<b>Event #</b>	
	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>		<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>
50M Freestyle	9	10	25M Freestyle	21	22
100M Freestyle	27	28	25M Breaststroke	35	36
200M Freestyle	39	40	25M Backstroke	41	42
			25M Butterfly	13	14
50M Breaststroke	45	46	<b>Level III –Developmental Events</b>		
100M Breaststroke	15	16	15M Flotation Race	1	2
200M Breaststroke	25	26	15M Backstroke (Assisted)	3	4
			15M Freestyle (Assisted)	5	6
50M Backstroke	33	34	15M Freestyle (Unassisted)	7	8
100M Backstroke	19	20			

200M Backstroke	11	12	<b>Please Note:</b> <b>A. See Section N (page 19) for the order in which each Event will be swum.</b>
50M Butterfly	23	24	
100M Butterfly	43	44	
100M Individual Medley	31	32	
<b><u>Relays</u></b>		<b><u>Event #</u></b>	<b>Note:</b> Relays are open (mixed age and gender) and have one event # per event.
100M Freestyle Relay (4x25)		29	
200M Freestyle Relay (4x50)		37	
100M Medley Relay (4x25)		17	
200M Medley Relay (4x50)		47	

## SECTION E - REGISTRATION RULES

Note: An Athlete with Down Syndrome who has been diagnosed with Atlanto-Axial instability may not participate in Butterfly events, Individual Medley events, and may not use diving starts in training or competition.

### **General Registration Notes**

1. Listed on pg. 4 are all the SOHI Swimming events. Please refer to the numerical order of events in Section N (pg. 19).
2. For swimming events, record all times as follows: (Minutes : Seconds . Tenths). Example: an athlete swims the 100 yard freestyle in 2 minutes and 32. 60 seconds. His/her time is recorded or registered as 2: 32. 60

### **Level I and II Events:**

1. Swimmers may enter up to a total of four events, either two individual events and two relays, or three individual events and one relay. This applies to Area/Regional Meets and the Summer Games
2. The athlete will be able to swim any event at Summer Games for which he/she swam in the Area/Regional Meet. This applies even if the athlete is disqualified for violating Section K (Competition Technical Rules and Modifications) in the Area/Regional Meet.
3. Males and Females will be placed in the same heat if there are not enough entrants in that event for quality competition. Athletes will be assigned heats according to ability level.
3. If delegations want to combine to form a relay team at Summer Games, they must practice together and swim at an Area/Regional Meet together. See below for specific rules about relay events.
4. At Summer Games, time trials (aka "Preliminary Round") will be held on Saturday; Finals will be held on Sunday. Some events with few entries **may be Finals only**, held Saturday or Sunday.
5. Athletes disqualified for violating Section K (Competition Technical Rules and Modifications) in the Area/Regional Meet and/or during the Preliminary Round at the Summer Games will be heated to swim in the Finals of the Summer Games.
6. Swimmers entered in a 100yd or 200yd event may not enter a 25yd race in that same stroke.
7. Athletes displaying proficiency in the 25yd events (based on times and technique) may be asked to move into a more advanced event.

### **Level III Events (aka “Developmental Events”)**

1. Swimmers who participate in Level III Events cannot enter Level I or II events, with one exception (See following, Rule #4).
2. Swimmers may enter a maximum of two Level III events.
3. Swimmers may not enter both the 15yd Freestyle Unassisted Swim and the 15yd Freestyle Assisted Swim.
4. Athletes can enter the Level III 15yd Freestyle (Unassisted) and the Level I and II 25yd Freestyle if a written request is approved. This rule accommodates athletes who are trying to advance beyond developmental events. These athletes cannot enter other Level III events.
5. At Summer Games, Level III events will be Finals only, held on Saturday. Medals will be awarded on Saturday at the conclusion of all Level III events.
6. For flotation events in Level III events, each athlete is responsible for his/her 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 still support the athlete with his/her face out of the water.

### **Relay Events**

1. Only six names may be entered on a relay team (four primary swimmers and two alternates). All entered athletes, including the alternates, must have times for the distance and stroke of their relay legs.
2. An alternate may be listed for multiple teams for the same delegation.
3. Alternates must meet all training and qualifying standards and must compete at Area/Regional competition to qualify for State Games.
4. At Area/Regional Meets, four of the six listed athletes must swim in order for the relay team to be eligible for a place and to advance to the Summer Games. If an alternate swims but no time is listed for that alternate on the relay form, the team receives a participation ribbon.
5. At Area/Regional Meets, if two teams in the same event from the same delegation are missing swimmers, the teams may be combined to form one team. Only the members of this team qualify in this event for the Summer Games.
6. At the State Summer Games, the four athletes who swam at Area/Regional Meet will be listed as the starters. They can be substituted in the Preliminary Round for the other two eligible athletes. Only the four athletes who swam in the Preliminary round can swim in the Finals for the team to be eligible for a place. If a substitution is made from Prelims to Finals the team can only receive a participation ribbon. If there are no prelims for a relay event, teams must use the four swimmers from Area Games to be eligible for a place.
7. At State Summer Games, If two relay teams from the same delegation in the same event are missing swimmers they may combine to form one team. All above rules still apply.

### **SECTION F – COMPETITION ATTIRE**

1. Athletes must wear USA swimming approved swimwear. Swimwear shall include only a swimsuit, cap, and goggles.
2. For men, the swimsuit shall not extend above the navel nor below the knees. For women, the swimsuit shall not cover the neck, extend past the shoulder, nor extend below the knee. Women should wear one-piece racing suits. Rash guards, “street clothes” (i.e., clothing that is not designed as swimwear, such as shorts and t-shirts), watches, wristbands and bracelets,

necklaces/chains and bulky jewelry that may be a safety hazard are not allowed (Exceptions below).

3. The Referee may, on a case-by-case basis, exempt an athlete from the rule prohibiting rash guards based on the swimmer's religious beliefs, medical conditions, or other reasons (e.g., health and well-being).
4. Swimsuits worn for competition must be non-transparent and conform to the current concept of appropriate.
5. No competitor shall be permitted to use or wear any device that may aid his or her speed, buoyancy or endurance during a competition (except flotation races in Level III events) such as webbed gloves, flippers, fins, etc.). Goggles may be worn.
6. For flotation events in Level III events, each athlete is responsible for his/her 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 still support the athlete with his/her face out of the water.
7. The Referee shall have the authority to bar offenders from the competition until they comply with the rules.

## **SECTION G – EQUIPMENT**

1. Starting devices may include the following: whistle, tone, air horn, or buzzer. Athletes with hearing or sight impairments may receive a hand signal or touch/tap from a designated official. Coaches will be responsible for notifying the Referee about the hearing or sight impairment of an athlete.
2. The timing system may be an electronic system, touch pads, and/or stopwatches. At least two watches per lane are required.
3. Flags should be located five meters from each end of the pool to indicate the distance to the finish, especially for backstroke and Medley events. Flags should not be removed during competition or training sessions.

## **SECTION H – OFFICIALS**

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 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 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 not give advantage over another swimmer.
3. 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.
4. The 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. He/she shall enforce all rules and decisions of the Official Special Olympics Rule book and USA Swimming rules and shall decide all questions relating to the actual conduct of the meet.
5. Officials may include the Meet Director, Referee, Stroke and Turn Judges, Chief Timekeeper, Timekeepers, Starter, and Assistant Starters.

6. Assistant Starters may be allowed to assist a swimmer during their start if the swimmer has a hearing or vision impairment.
7. It is preferable that certified swimming officials (including the referee, timers, and judges) be used in all events.

## **SECTION I - COACHES AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Coaches must stay in defined coaches' areas. Athletes are subject to disqualification if coaches do not adhere to the official's instructions, SOHI rules, and USA Swimming rules.
2. Coaches are responsible for knowing and understanding the rules of the sport, not only the modified rules in this manual, but also NGB rules. The National Governing Body of Rules for Special Olympics Aquatics is **USA Swimming**. <https://www.usaswimming.org/swimmers-parents/learn-the-basics/rulebook>
3. Coaches must make sure that all swimmers report to the Clerk of Course in the Staging Area no later than the designated, or announced, check-in time for each event.
4. Protests concerning the eligibility of an entered competitor must be made to the Registration Director of the Games prior to the commencement of the meet, or to the Referee prior to the meet.
5. Protests relating to matters which developed during the conduct of the competition must be made in writing to the Referee at once and not later than 30 minutes after a result has been announced.

### **The Head Coach**

6. Each team must have a SOHI certified Head Coach for Swimming in order to bring athletes to Summer Games. It is recommended that all coaches be certified by Special Olympics Hawaii.
7. The Head Coach should possess a current certification in CPR and standard first aid (or equivalent).
8. It is recommended that the Head Coach have some level of water safety training.
9. The Head Coach must ensure that the necessary supervisory personnel are present at all practices and mini-meets.
10. The Head Coach must be aware if any of their swimmers have a history of seizures and they must make the lifeguards and Assistant Coaches aware. They must also alert officials at all swim meets. Wherever possible, athletes with a history of seizures should swim next to the wall.
11. The Head Coach must make sure there are enough coaches (preferably certified) to provide for adequate supervision and training of each athlete.

## **SECTION J – DIVISIONING**

1. Athletes are generally divided by gender and then, if possible, by the following age groups:
  - a. Junior: ages 15 and under
  - b. Senior: ages 16-21
  - c. Masters: ages 22-29
  - c. Senior Masters: ages 30 and over
  - d. Open Age Group: reserved for combining age groups to meet the required minimum number of competitors or teams in a division, or to ensure quality competition.

Note: The oldest member of a relay team determines the age division of the team. It is suggested that delegations form teams that are age appropriate. All relay teams are entered in combined gender divisions.

2. Athletes are divisioned at Regional competition based on their training entry scores and/or previous competition times. Athletes are divisioned at State Games based on their Regional competition times.

## **SECTION K – COMPETITION TECHNICAL RULES AND MODIFICATIONS**

### **(Individual Strokes, Relays, and Developmental Events)**

All competitive swimming events held under USA Swimming sanction shall be conducted in accordance with the following rules, which are designed to provide fair and equitable conditions of competition and promote uniformity in the sport so that no swimmer shall obtain unfair advantage over another.

It is not the purpose of the Rules and Regulations of USA Swimming (the national governing body) contained herein to set standards of care for the safety of the swimmer. Safety considerations should be addressed by the swimmer, the swim coach, the swim club and the local public entity or pool owner where events are held.

#### **1. STARTING PROCEDURES**

1. At the commencement of each heat, the Referee shall signal to the swimmers by a short series of whistles to remove all clothing except swimwear, followed by a long whistle indicating that they should take and maintain their positions on the starting platform, the deck, or in the water. In backstroke and medley relay events, at the Referee's first long whistle the swimmers shall immediately enter the water and at the second long whistle shall return without undue delay to the starting position.
2. When the swimmers and officials are ready, the Referee shall signal with an outstretched arm to the Starter that the swimmers are under the Starter's control.
3. Starts may be from the starting block, the deck, or in the water. On the Starter's command "take your mark", the swimmers shall immediately assume their starting position, in the forward start, with at least one foot at the front of the starting platform or on the deck, or, in backstroke and medley relay events, assume the backstroke starting position. Swimmers starting in the water must have at least one hand in contact with the wall or starting platform or rope. When all swimmers are stationary, the starter shall give the starting signal.

#### **2. FALSE STARTS**

1. Any swimmer starting before the starting signal is given shall be disqualified if the Referee independently observes and confirms the Starter's observations that a violation occurred. Swimmers remaining on the starting blocks shall be relieved from their starting positions with the "Stand Up" command and may step off the blocks.
2. If the starting signal has been given before the disqualification is declared the race shall continue without recall. If the referee independently observes and confirms the Starter's observation that violation occurred, the swimmer or swimmers who have false started shall be disqualified upon completion of the race.
3. If the recall signal is activated inadvertently, no swimmer shall be charged with a false start and the Starter shall restart the race upon signal by the Referee.
4. A swimmer who would otherwise be charged with a false start may be relieved of the charge if the false start was caused by the swimmer's reaction to the "Stand Up" command.

5. A swimmer shall not be disqualified for an illegal starting position at the start if the race is permitted to proceed. Enforcement of the correct starting position is the responsibility of the Starter.

### **3. BREASTSTROKE**

1. Start – The forward start shall be used.
2. Stroke – After the start and after each turn when the swimmer leaves the wall, the body shall be kept on the breast. It is not permitted to roll onto the back at any time except at the turn after the touch of the wall where it is permissible to turn in any manner as long as the body is on the breast when leaving the wall. Throughout the race the stroke cycle must be one arm stroke and one leg kick in that order. All movements of the arms shall be simultaneous and in the same horizontal plane without alternating movement.

The hands shall be pushed forward together from the breast on, under, or over the water. The elbows shall be under water except for the final stroke before the turn, during the turn and for the final stroke at the finish. The hands shall be brought back on or under the surface of the water. The hands shall not be brought back beyond the hip line, except during the first stroke after the start and each turn.

During each complete cycle, some part of the swimmer's head shall break the surface of the water. After the start and after each turn, the swimmer may take one arm stroke completely back to the legs. The head must break the surface of the water before the hands turn inward at the widest part of the second stroke.

3. Kick – After the start and after 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 and in the same horizontal plane without alternating movement.

The feet must be turned outwards during the propulsive part of the kick. Scissors, alternating movements, or downward butterfly kicks are not permitted except as provided herein. Breaking the surface of the water with the feet is allowed unless followed by a downward butterfly kick.

4. Turns and Finish – At each turn and at the finish of the race, the touch shall be made with both hands separated and simultaneously at, above, or below the water level. At the last stroke before the turn and at the finish an arm stroke not followed by a leg kick is permitted. The head may be submerged after the last arm pull prior to the touch, provided it breaks the surface of the water at some point during the last complete or incomplete cycle preceding the touch.

### **4. BUTTERFLY**

1. Start - The forward start shall be used.
2. Stroke - After the start and after each turn, the swimmer's shoulders must be at or past the vertical toward the breast. The swimmer is permitted one or more leg kicks, but only one arm pull under water, which must bring the swimmer to the surface. It shall be permissible for a swimmer to be completely submerged for a distance of not more than 15 meters (16.4 yards) after the start and after each turn. By that point, the head must have broken the surface. The swimmer must remain on the surface until the next turn or finish. From the beginning of the first arm pull, the body shall be kept on the breast, except at the turn after the touch of the wall where it is permissible to turn in any manner as long as the body is on the breast when leaving the wall. Both arms must be brought forward over the water and pulled back simultaneously under the water throughout the race.
3. Kick - All up and down movements of the legs and feet must be simultaneous. The position of the legs or the feet need not be on the same level, but they shall not alternate in relation to each other. A scissors or breaststroke kicking movement is not permitted.

4. Turns - At each turn the body shall be on the breast. The touch shall be made with both hands separated and simultaneously at, above, or below the water surface. Once a touch has been made, the swimmer may turn in any manner desired. The shoulders must be at or past the vertical toward the breast when the swimmer leaves the wall.
5. Finish - At the finish, the body shall be on the breast and the touch shall be made with both hands separated and simultaneously at, above, or below the water surface.

## **5. BACKSTROKE**

1. Start – The swimmer shall line up in the water facing the starting end, with both hands placed on the gutter or on the starting grip. Standing in or on the gutter, or bending the toes over the lip of the gutter before or after the start is prohibited. When using a backstroke ledge at the start, the toes of both feet must be in contact with the end wall or face of the touchpad. Bending the toes over the stop of the touchpad is prohibited.
2. Stroke - The swimmer shall push off on his back and continue swimming on the back throughout the race. Some part of the swimmer must break the surface of the water throughout the race, except it shall be permissible for the swimmer to be completely submerged during the turn and for a distance of not more than 15 meters (16.4 yards) after the start and after each turn. By that point, the head must have broken the surface of the water.
3. Turns - Upon completion of each length, some part of the swimmer must touch the wall. During the turn the shoulders may be turned past the vertical toward the breast after which an immediate continuous single arm pull or an immediate continuous simultaneous double arm pull may be used to initiate the turn. The swimmer must have returned to a position on the back upon leaving the wall.
4. Finish - Upon the finish of the race, the swimmer must touch the wall while on the back.

## **6. FREESTYLE**

1. Start – The forward start shall be used.
2. Stroke – In an event designated freestyle the swimmer may swim any style, except that in a medley relay or an individual medley event, freestyle means any style other than butterfly, breaststroke or backstroke. Some part of the swimmer must break the surface of the water throughout the race, except it shall be permissible for the swimmer to be completely submerged during the turn and for a distance of not more than 15 meters (16.4 yards) after the start and each turn. By that point the head must have broken the surface.
3. Turns – Upon completion of each length the swimmer must touch the wall.
4. Finish – The swimmer shall have finished the race when any part of his person touches the wall after completing the prescribed distance.

## **7. INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY**

The swimmer shall swim the prescribed distance in the following order: the first one-fourth, butterfly; the second one-fourth, backstroke; the third one-fourth, breaststroke; and the last one-fourth, freestyle.

1. Start - The forward start shall be used.
3. Stroke - The stroke for each one-fourth of the designated distance shall follow the prescribed rules for that stroke.
3. Turns
  - A. Intermediate turns within each stroke shall conform to the turn rules for that stroke.

B. The turns when changing from one stroke to another shall conform to the finish rules for the stroke just completed, and shall be as follows:

- (1) Butterfly to backstroke - The swimmer must touch as described in the Butterfly guidelines. Once a legal touch has been made, the swimmer may turn in any manner, but the shoulders must be at or past the vertical toward the back when the swimmer leaves the wall.
- (2) Backstroke to breaststroke - The swimmer must touch the wall while on the back. Once a legal touch has been made, the swimmer may turn in any manner but the shoulders must be at or past the vertical toward the breast when the swimmer leaves the wall and the prescribed breaststroke form must be attained prior to the first arm stroke.
- (3) Breaststroke to freestyle - The swimmer must touch as described in the Breaststroke guidelines. Once a legal touch has been made, the swimmer may turn in any manner.

4. Finish - The swimmer shall have finished the race when any part of his/her person touches the wall after the prescribed distance.

## 8. RELAYS

1. Freestyle Relay - Four swimmers on each team, each to swim one-fourth of the prescribed distance using any desired stroke(s). Freestyle finish rules apply.
2. Medley Relay - Four swimmers on each team, each to swim one-fourth of the prescribed distance in the following order: first, backstroke; second, breaststroke; third, butterfly; and fourth, freestyle. Rules pertaining to each stroke used shall govern where applicable. At the end of each leg, the finish rule for each stroke applies in each case.
3. Rules Pertaining to Relay Races
  - A. No swimmer shall swim more than one leg in any relay event.
  - B. When automatic relay take-off judging is used, each swimmer must touch the touchplate or pad in his/her lane at the end of the course to have finished his/her leg of the relay race.
  - C. In relay races a swimmer other than the first swimmer shall not start until his/her teammate has concluded his/her leg.
  - D. Any relay team member and his/her relay team shall be disqualified from a race if a team member other than the swimmer designated to swim that leg enters the pool in the area where the race is being conducted before all swimmers of all teams have finished the race. *Exception: When an in-the-water start is required or such start is approved by the Referee.*
  - E. Each relay team member shall leave the water immediately upon finishing his/her leg, except the last member. Allowances will be made for athletes who have difficulty leaving the pool from their lane.

Clarification of Relay Rule E:

In the SOHI Sport Information Guide for Swimming under Section I - Guidelines for Officiating Swimmers with Disabilities - Physical Disabilities, Rule #4 states:

“Relay swimmers who cannot exit the water immediately may be allowed to remain in the lane until all relays have finished so long as they do not interfere with the other swimmers or the timing equipment.”

This rule is in effect for all Special Olympics athletes who cannot physically exit the water from their lane under their own power. All swimmers who can exit the water on their own should be encouraged to do so.

All swimmers exiting the water shall do so without interfering with the swimmers in other lanes. Any swimmer who enters another lane before all swimmers complete the race shall be deemed to have interfered with swimmers in other lanes.

- F. In relay races, the team of a swimmer whose feet have lost touch with the starting platform (ground or deck) before his/her preceding teammate finishes his/her leg of the race shall be disqualified.
- G. In relay races involving in-the-water starts, the team of a swimmer whose hand has lost touch with the end of the course before his/her preceding teammate finishes his/her leg of the race shall be disqualified, unless the swimmer in default returns to the original starting point at the wall before the preceding teammate finishes his/her leg of the race.

## **9. MODIFICATIONS FOR EVENTS**

1. Standing on the bottom during Freestyle events or during the Freestyle portion of the medley events shall not disqualify a competitor, but he/she shall not walk.
2. Standing upon the bottom in the racing course is allowed only for the purpose of resting. A swimmer who walks on or propels up or forward from the bottom shall be disqualified.
3. Holding on to the lane line during a race is allowed only for the purpose of resting. A swimmer who pulls or propels him/herself along the course using the lane line shall be disqualified.
4. A coach or official may guide the swimmer by voice only. No one is allowed to touch the swimmer from the beginning of each heat (signaled by the whistles of the Referee) until all swimmers have completed the race. The exceptions to this rule are as follows:
  - A. During a relay race blind and visually impaired swimmers may be touched to signal the approach of the prior swimmer in order to know when to start his/her leg of the race.
  - B. A coach or coach's designee may touch a swimmer during the backstroke for the limited purpose of shielding the swimmer's head from hitting with pool wall just prior to a turn or finish.
  - C. For Level III assisted events, a coach or coach's designee may assist the athlete as permitted in the subsection below concerning Level III (Developmental) Events for "15 yd Assisted Swim."
5. Assistant starters may be used to assist athletes in maintaining their positions at the starting line.
6. Swimmers may be assisted from the water upon request.

**10. LEVEL III (DEVELOPMENTAL) EVENTS** - These events provide meaningful competition for athletes with lower ability levels. In all Level III events coaches will be allowed to give verbal assistance to swimmers from the side or end of the pool as long as they do not interfere with the judges or timers.

For all Level III events: All of the rules, above, for Starting Procedures (K.1.), False Starts (K.2.), and Modifications for Events (K.9.) shall apply, unless stated otherwise in this section.

1. 15yds. Assisted Swim
  - A. Each athlete is responsible for having his/her own coach or coach's designee ("Assistant"). The Assistant may touch or direct the athlete, but cannot assist with the athlete's forward movement. The Assistant cannot interfere with another swimmer or that swimmer's Assistant. If the Assistant is in the water with the athlete, the swimmer cannot use a flotation device unless absolutely necessary for safety reasons. If a flotation device is used it must meet the specifications listed below (see "15 yds. Flotation Race").
2. 15 yds. Assisted Backstroke Race
  - A. All rules apply from the 15 yds. Assisted Swim (above).
  - B. The swimmer must stay on his/her back from the start of the race until he/she touches the wall. The coach may hold the athlete in the starting position on his/her back prior to the start of the race.
3. 15 yds. Flotation Race
  - A. Each athlete is responsible for his/her own flotation device. The device must be of the body wrap around type such that if the athlete were to not be able to hold on to the device, the device would still support the athlete with the face out of the water. (Flotation devices such as kickboards, inner tubes, or floats that wrap around the arms are not acceptable for use at any time).
  - B. A coach or coach's designee ("Assistant") may enter the water to position the athlete at the starting line, but cannot touch the swimmer once the race starts. The Assistant may remain in the water and move ahead of the swimmer and verbally encourage and coach the swimmer as long as the Assistant does not interfere with their swimmer or with another swimmer or that other swimmer's Assistant.
4. 15 yds. Unassisted Swim
  - A. Athletes must swim the full distance with no assistance. Flotation devices are not allowed.
  - B. A coach or coach's assistant ("Assistant") may enter the water with the athlete, but must back away from the swimmer prior to the start of the race and cannot provide any assistance during the race from within the water. The Assistant who remain in the water during the race must stay behind the starting block or starting line during the race.

## **SECTION L - GUIDELINES FOR OFFICIATING SWIMMERS WITH DISABILITIES**

### **GENERAL**

1. **Authority** - The USA Swimming Rules & Regulations grant the Referee the authority to modify the rules for the swimmer with a disability. Disability is defined as a permanent physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. This section contains guidelines and suggestions for making such modifications.
2. **Responsibilities** -
  - A. Athlete - The athlete (or the athlete's coach) is responsible for notifying the Referee, prior to the competition, of any disability of the athlete. The swimmer/coach shall provide any assistant(s) or equipment (tappers, deck mats, etc.) if required.
  - B. Referee - The Referee's responsibilities include:
    1. Inquiring regarding the athlete's needs and determining what modifications will be required.

2. Instructing the Starter and Stroke & Turn officials as to the accommodations to be made for that swimmer.

Some of the modifications, which the Referee may make to accommodate the athlete with a disability, are:

1. A change in starting position.
2. Reassignment of lanes within a heat, e.g., exchanging Lanes two and seven.
3. Allowing the athlete's assistant(s) on the deck or in the water to assist with a start.

Other allowable modifications are further described in this section under the type of disability.

### **BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED**

1. **Start** - With an audible starting system, no modification is usually required for a blind or visually-impaired swimmer. They may, however, require assistance getting to and on the block. Should they feel insecure starting from the block or deck, an in-the-water start may be allowed.
2. **Turns and Finishes** - A blind or visually-impaired swimmer is permitted to have a "tapper", which is a pole with a soft-tipped end. The swimmer is tapped with the "tapper" as notification of turns and the finish. Sound devices shall not be used. It is the swimmer's responsibility to provide the tapper(s) and operator(s), who shall be positioned within the confines of the swimmer's lane at the ends of the pool.
3. **Relay Take-Offs** - A physical touch may be required to signal the relay swimmer when his/her teammate has touched the wall. The specific method may be tailored to the swimmer's preference so long as it does not aid the swimmer's take-off or interfere with the timing.

### **DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING**

1. Deaf and hard of hearing swimmers require a visual starting signal, i.e., the Starter's arm signals. The Referee may reassign lanes within the swimmer's heat, i.e., exchanging one lane for another, so that the strobe light or Starter's arm signals are shown in Figure 1. A false start rope is required in the event of a recall.

### **INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES (from USA Swimming Rulebook)**

A deck or in-the-water start is allowable and the swimmer may be permitted to have an assistant on the deck when necessary. No other specific rule modifications are required other than patience and clarity in communicating instructions.

### **PHYSICAL DISABILITIES**

1. **Start** - Swimmers with physical disabilities:
  - A. May take longer to assume their starting position;
  - B. May not be able to hold onto the starting grips or gutter for a start;
  - C. May need assistance on the deck or from in-the-water to maintain a starting position;
  - D. May need to assume a modified starting position on the blocks, deck, gutter or in-the-water in order to maintain their balance.

For freestyle, breaststroke and butterfly, a forward start (facing the course) shall be used. The Referee, however, may allow modifications such as the following:

- A. The swimmer may start from the front of the block so that a forward step need not be taken;

- B. The swimmer may start from a sitting position on the block or on the deck;
  - C. The swimmer may assume a starting position in the water, with or without assistance;
  - D. If the swimmer cannot use a hand to maintain contact with the wall, some other part of the body may be used.
2. **Stroke/Kick** - In judging the stroke or kick of a swimmer with a physical disability, the Referee and Stroke & Turn Judge should follow the general rule that: if a part of the body is absent or cannot be used, it is not judged; if it is used during the stroke or kick, it should be judged in accordance with the USA Swimming rules.
- Judgments should be made based on the actual rule - not on the swimmer's technique. For example, the breaststroke swimmer with one arm or leg shorter than the other, may have a non-symmetrical stroke or kick, but as long as the arm or leg in action is simultaneous, it would meet that portion of the rule. No flotation devices should be permitted.
3. **Turns/Finishes** - Touches shall be judged in the same manner as strokes and kicks, i.e., on the basis of the arm(s) and/or hand(s) that the swimmer can use. In breaststroke and butterfly events, the competitor must reach forward as if attempting a simultaneous two-hand touch. When a swimmer has a different arm length, only the longer arm must touch the wall, but both arms must be stretched forward simultaneously. Swimmers with no arms or with upper limbs too short to stretch above the head may touch the wall with any part of the upper body.
4. **Relays** - Relay swimmers who cannot exit the water immediately may be allowed to remain in the lane until all relays have finished so long as they do not interfere with the other swimmers or the timing equipment.

## SECTION M – SAFETY RULES AND GUIDELINES

All Special Olympics Swimming training and recreational sessions and competition 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. Basic Rules
  - A. There shall be at least one certified lifeguard on duty for every 25 swimmers in the water. Lifeguards must have current lifeguard, CPR, and first aid certificates.
  - B. A lifeguard may not be engaged in any other activity while performing his/her duty as a lifeguard. If a coach is also a trained lifeguard, he/she may not coach and guard at the same time – each position is separate.
  - C. 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 a lifeguard must leave the pool side.
  - D. The Head coach or Event Director will review the Emergency Action Plan prior to each occasion.
  - E. Athlete Medical Forms shall be on site and shall be discussed with the lifeguard or medical personnel on duty in advance of the aquatic activity.
  - F. Pool depth must be marked and easily visible.
  - G. The minimum depth of the pool shall be 1.52 meters (5 feet) for racing starts from starting block. A swimmer may dive from the side of the pool without starting block if the depth is at least 1.22 meters (4 feet).

- H. Safety lines must be in place to divide shallow and deep water areas during recreational aquatic activities.
- I. A pool facility shall not be used unless a satisfactory inspection rating is received prior to any Special Olympics participant entering the water.
- J. An athlete with Down Syndrome who has been diagnosed with Atlanto-Axial instability may not participate in Butterfly events, Individual Medley events, or use a diving start. For additional information and the procedure for waiver for this restriction, please refer to Article 1.
- K. When an athlete's swimming competence during warm-ups or Divisioning races leads the referee to believe that the athlete is not capable of completing the race distance and may put his/her life in danger, the Referee may require a test of swimming competence before the athlete is allowed to compete in any further swimming event.

## 2. Emergency Action Plan

An Emergency Action Plan shall be in place prior to any Special Olympics participant entering the water for any reason, be it training, competition or recreation. The original plan should be written and reviewed by the staff on hand. The plan shall include the following:

- A. The procedure for obtaining emergency medical support if a medical doctor, para-professional, or medical support is not present.
- B. The posts and areas of responsibilities for each lifeguard.
- C. The procedure for obtaining weather information or weather watch information, particularly if the event is outside.
- D. The procedure for reporting accidents.
- E. The chain of command in case of a serious accident including who is assigned to talk to the press.
- F. Other items as may be required by local jurisdictions.

## 3. Supervisory Personnel Requirements

An adequate number of supervisory personnel shall be present at all aquatics sessions, events or recreational activities. The type of personnel will vary in accordance with the following requirements:

- A. Recreational Programs:
  - Enough certified lifeguards to provide a ratio of guards to swimmers of 1 per 25.
- B. Training Programs:
  - Enough certified lifeguards to provide a ratio of guards to swimmers of 1 per 25.
  - Enough coaches (preferably Special Olympics certified) to provide for adequate supervision and training of each athlete.
- C. Competitions:
  - Enough certified lifeguards to provide a ratio of guards to swimmers of 1 per 25.
  - Enough supervision to provide for a ratio of observer to swimmers of 1 per 2 for those swimmers who are prone to seizures.
  - Enough supervision to provide for a ratio of observer to divers of 1 per 10.

#### 4. Responsibilities of the Head Coach or Event Director

The Head Coach or Event Director shall have the overall responsibility for the Special Olympics aquatics practice sessions or events.

- A. Providing an orientation to all aquatics personnel before the Special Olympics session or event.
- B. Coordinating the facility with host agency prior to arrival.
- C. Ensuring that necessary supervisory personnel are available.
- D. Preparing or assuring that an emergency action plan is in place as described in section C, Safety Considerations, which follows.
- E. Examining the facility to ensure that the minimum quality standards are present in the following areas for each aquatic session or event:
  - 1) Safety equipment
  - 2) Traffic patterns
  - 3) Sanitary water conditions
  - 4) Safe environmental factors
  - 5) When a beach or lake is used for a Special Olympics aquatics session or event, the Director of Aquatics shall take extra precautions to ensure that safe aquatics practices are followed.

Note: All participants, including athletes, coaches and volunteers who participate in any boating activity, whether in a pool or on open water, are required to wear a certified personal flotation device (PFD) at all times when inside the boat.

- F. Ensuring that lifeguards are aware of Special Olympics athletes who may have a history of seizures.
- G. Medical restrictions exist for some athletes (for example, Down syndrome athletes diagnosed with Atlanto-Axial Instability competing in butterfly, individual medley events and dive starts). Prior to allowing athletes to compete in these events, the Event Director should review the General Rules section on eligibility.

## SECTION N – ORDER OF EVENTS

1. Events will be run in the following order at Regional competitions. Events will be skipped if there are no registered participants, but event numbers will stay the same. The Summer Games schedule will approximate this schedule, but may vary depending on which events are run as Finals only events. The Meet Referee has the authority to deviate from the listed schedule in specific circumstances.

### Order of Events:

### Event #

#### LEVEL III

	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>
15M Flotation	1	2
15M Backstroke (Assisted)	3	4
15M Freestyle (Assisted)	5	6
15M Freestyle (Unassisted)	7	8

#### LEVELS I AND II

50M Freestyle	9	10
200M Backstroke	11	12
25M Butterfly	13	14
100M Breaststroke	15	16
100M Medley Relay (4 x 25)	17 (Combined Gender)	(No event # 18)
100M Backstroke	19	20
25M Freestyle	21	22
50M Butterfly	23	24
200M Breaststroke	25	26
100M Freestyle	27	28
100M Freestyle Relay (4 x 25)	29 (Combined Gender)	(No event # 30)
100M Individual Medley	31	32
50M Backstroke	33	34
25M Breaststroke	35	36
200M Freestyle Relay (4 x 50)	37 (Combined Gender)	(No event # 38)
200M Freestyle	39	40
25M Backstroke	41	42
100M Butterfly	43	44
50M Breaststroke	45	46
200M Medley Relay (4 x 50)	47 (Combined Gender)	(No event # 48)

## **Special Olympics Coaches Code of Conduct**

Special Olympics is committed to the highest ideals of sport and expects all coaches to honor sport and Special Olympics. This is the SOI and SOHI Coaches Code of Conduct. Local Delegations and Area Programs may also have Codes of Conduct specific to their program with certain specifications not included below. All Special Olympics coaches agree to observe the following code:

### **Respect for Others:**

I will respect the rights, dignity and worth of athletes, coaches, officials, other volunteers, 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 preliminary competition and finals competition in accordance with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules.

### **Act Professionally and Take Responsibility for My Actions:**

My language, manner, punctuality, preparation and presentation will demonstrate high standards.

I will display control, respect, dignity and professionalism to all involved in the sport (athletes, coaches, opponents, officials, administrators, parents, spectators, media, etc.).

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, during competition, or at any Special Olympics event or function.

I will refrain from any form of personal abuse towards athletes and others, including verbal, physical and emotional abuse.

I will be alert to any form of abuse from other sources directed toward athletes in my care.

### **Quality Service to the Athletes**

I will seek continual 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 medical, training and competition records for each athlete I coach.

I will follow the Special Olympics Hawaii and National Federation/Governing Body rules for my sport(s).

## Health and Safety of Athletes

I will ensure that the equipment and facilities are safe to use.

I will ensure that the equipment, rules, training and environment are appropriate for the age and ability of the athletes.

I will review each athlete's medical form and be aware of any limitations on that athlete's participation noted on that form.

I will encourage athletes to seek medical advice when required.

I will maintain the same interest and support toward sick and injured athletes.

I will allow further participation in training and competition only when appropriate.

## Violations of the Code of Conduct:

I understand that if I violate this Code of Conduct I will be subject to a range of consequences, up to and including being prohibited from coaching in Special Olympics.

Furthermore, I understand that I accept the responsibility for the behavior of the athletes under my supervision.

Should the behaviors and/or attitude of any coach or other faction of the member organization be contrary to the principles, goals, or philosophies of Special Olympics, then one or more of the following steps may be taken by the Games Committee, Sport Officials, or other representatives of Special Olympics Hawaii in an effort to alleviate the situation without further affecting Special Olympic athletes or the competition:

The coach may be notified of the undesirable behavior and requested to remedy the situation for continued participation, **and/or** the coach may be requested to withdraw personally, or as a team or organization, from the remainder of the event or tournament.

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

Prevent the coach, team organization, or specific members of the delegation from participating in any or all Special Olympics events for a specified period of time, **and/or** prevent the coach, team, organization, or specific members of the delegation from participating in Special Olympics indefinitely.

**Athlete/ Unified Partner Code of Conduct**  
**Must be signed by athlete/partner and legal guardian each season**

Special Olympics Hawai'i is committed to the highest ideals of sport and expects all athletes to honor sports and Special Olympics. The following code of conduct applies to in-person events, virtual events and activities (Zoom, etc.) and on relevant social media platforms. All athletes and Unified Partners agree to the following code:

**Athlete/ Partner Standards of Behavior**

- I will practice good sportsmanship.
- I will learn and follow the rules of my sport.
- I will act in ways that bring respect to my coaches, team, Special Olympics, and me.
- I will attend 75% or more of practices.
- I will participate in all activities as deemed necessary by my Head Coach or Head of Delegation.
- I will always try my best during training, divisioning events, and competition.
- I will obey all safety rules
- I will listen to and respect my coaches and officials and ask questions when I do not understand
- I will not "hold back" in preliminary competitions just to get into an easier finals competition division
- I will abide by and follow all laws, Special Olympics Hawai'i rules, and National Federation/Governing Body rules for my sport(s).
- I will not use or bring alcohol, drugs/controlled substances, or tobacco products at/to any Special Olympics event (practices, competitions, fundraisers, etc.)
- I will not verbally insult or abuse others or use inappropriate language (swearing). This applies to in-person, virtual and social media settings.
- I will not possess harmful or threatening weapons.
- I will not act in a violent, sexually inappropriate or disruptive manner with other athletes, coaches, volunteers, or staff. This includes inappropriate or unwanted physical, verbal, or sexual actions or behaviors, both in-person and on-line.

**Disciplinary Measures for violations of the Code of Conduct**

Minor Offenses: non-illegal or non-aggressive behaviors

- 1) 1<sup>st</sup> offense – verbal warning
- 2) 2<sup>nd</sup> offense – written warning with the possibility of short-term suspension, depending on severity of violation. Consequences may include:
  - a) Removal from practice(s)
  - b) Removal or suspension from Area/Regional competition
  - c) Removal or suspension from State Games, a season, or a longer period of time.
- 3) 3<sup>rd</sup> offense – Suspension from program for a period to be determined based on severity and timing of the current and past violations. Suspensions may range from one season to three years. If prior violations are minor, and/or not recent history, suspensions will be reviewed.

Major Offenses: Illegal acts and aggressive behaviors including sexual harassment, physical assault and threats of physical violence

- 1) Immediate suspension from the program, AND
- 2) Suspension or Removal from the SOHI program, suspension length determined by the SOHI Risk Management Group.

All disciplinary action may be appealed to the SOHI Appeals Committee by the athlete/ partner and/ or their legal guardian.

Note: All offenses will be documented and kept on file.

**Travel to competitions or events:** Athletes and Youth (8-17) Partners

In order for any Special Olympics Hawai'i athlete/youth partner to travel to a Regional or State competition they must meet the following travel requirements.

- Be able to travel with a Special Olympics designated chaperone for the duration of the event, including flights.
- Be able to independently manage the activities and skills of daily living, ie. toileting, showering, personal hygiene, etc., with minimal help.
- Cannot be a danger to themselves or others
- Cannot be a flight risk and must listen to instructions from their chaperone, coaches and Head of Delegation.
- Be able to compete in their events independently, or only with the level of assistance allowed in the rules for their specific events.

Athlete/ Partner:

I understand that I am to abide by this Code of Conduct, I will be subject to a range of consequences by Special Olympics Hawai'i up to and including not being allowed to participate.

Athlete/ Partner Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Season: \_\_\_\_\_  
*To be signed by athlete/partner to indicate this code of conduct has been explained to them*

Athlete/ Partner Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Season: \_\_\_\_\_  
*To be signed by athlete/partner to indicate this code of conduct has been explained to them*

Athlete/ Partner Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Season: \_\_\_\_\_  
*To be signed by athlete/partner to indicate this code of conduct has been explained to them*

Parent/guardian: (Required for participants 17 and under or for any athlete who is not their own legal guardian)

I understand that I am to do everything in my power to ensure that this athlete/partner understands and upholds this code of conduct.

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Season: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Season: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Season: \_\_\_\_\_