Special Olympics Northern California

Bowling



2027 Rules & Guidelines

Singles, Ramp Assisted and Ramp Unassisted

(There are No Rule Changes for Bowling)

Special Olympics Northern California

Revised 7/8/26

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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

SONORCAL 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.

Special Olympics Northern California

COACHES CODE OF CONDUCT

Special Olympics Northern California (SONorCal) 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 SONorCal 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, SONorCal 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, SONorCal staff members, parents, spectators and the media.
- I will encourage athletes to demonstrate the same qualities.
- I will not use any alcohol or tobacco products, vaping products, or cannabis products 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, SONorCal 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 SONorCal 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 SONorCal policies and procedures as amended) or the philosophy of the Special Olympics movement, then any of the following actions may be taken by SONorCal 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 (SONorCal) is committed to the highest ideals of sport and expects all athletes to honor sports and Special Olympics. All SONorCal 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 use any alcohol or tobacco products, vaping products, or cannabis products 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.
- If I exhibit behavior that violates the code of conduct, I may face disciplinary actions, which could include a warning letter, a suspension, or an expulsion.

Special Olympics
Northern California

PARENT AND SPECTATOR CODE OF CONDUCT

Special Olympics Northern California (SONorCal) 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 SONorCal 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 SONorCal'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. SONorCal reserves the right to dismiss parents and/or spectators from any SONorCal event for violation of this Parent and Spectator Code of Conduct.

SONORCAL BOWLING RULES AND REGULATIONS

The Official Special Olympics Rules shall govern all Special Olympics Bowling competitions. As an international sports program, Special Olympics has created these rules based upon the United States Bowling Congress (USBC). USBC rules shall be employed except when they are in conflict with the Official 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. SONorCal 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 for the full policy.

SECTION B - OFFICIAL EVENTS

1. Individual Singles
   a. Traditional Singles
   b. Ramp Assisted
   c. Ramp Unassisted

SECTION C - DIVISIONS

Individual Singles athletes will be divisioned by event, gender, age group and scoring average. The age groups are as follows:

1. Ages 8-11
2. Ages 12-15
3. Ages 16-21
4. Ages 22-29
5. Ages 30 and up

SECTION D - COACHES AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Coaches shall remain off the lanes while competition is taking place. The only exception is any coach assisting Ramp Assisted bowlers.
2. Coaches are responsible for knowing and understanding the rules of the game, both National Governing Body and SONorCal rules.
3. The National governing Body Rules for SONorCal is the United States Bowling Congress. To obtain your own USBC Rules Book:

United States Bowling Congress
www.bowl.com/rules

SECTION E – UNIFORMS

1. In instances of uniform violations, USBC rules will be enforced.
2. Collared Shirt (Recommended, unless required by venue), and shorts or pants. Females may wear a skirt or pants. Team shirts are not required. Shorts or pants must be neat and clean (no rips, holes, tears, etc.). Jeans are strongly discouraged. Hats are not recommended.
3. All bowlers must wear approved bowling shoes and should provide their own. However, most bowling centers do provide shoes, but inventory may be limited.

SECTION F - EQUIPMENT

1. Bowlers should provide their own bowling shoes and bowling ball. However, most bowling centers have house balls, but their inventory may be limited.
2. For Ramp Unassisted and Ramp Assisted bowling, athletes may use any ramp that has been approved by the Special Olympics Bowling Competition Committee.
   a. Ramps are used when an athlete does not have the physical ability to roll a ball with their hand or hands.

SECTION G - RULES OF COMPETITION

General Rules & Modifications

1. Training (practice) requirements for the Regional Competition
   a. The qualifying score for a Regional Competition consists of the average score of a minimum number of games, as determined by SONorCal prior to the start of the season, from Special Olympics sanctioned trainings.
   b. Bowlers will bowl no more than 2 games of ten frames each per training.
   c. It is highly recommended that bowlers train using alternating lanes as described below in Item 2, b, i, provided the bowling center can accommodate this method.

2. Regional Competitions
   a. Bowlers will roll two games of ten frames each.
   b. Bowlers will play on two lanes (a pair) during competition, as described below.
      i. Once the bowler completes a frame on one lane, for his/her next frame he/she will bowl on the alternate lane.
      ii. Some bowling centers may not have the ability to alternate lanes, in which case, bowlers within a division shall be placed on the same lane for the duration of the competition.

3. Fouls
   a. Foot foul censors are to be turned on during competition. If a bowler commits a foul, by stepping over the foul line during delivery, it counts as a shot, and any pins knocked down are re-spotted without counting.

4. Ramp Bowling
   a. Athletes are only allowed to use a ramp if they are physically unable to roll a ball with their hand or hands.
   b. Ramp Unassisted Bowling
      i. Athlete aims ramp into position without assistance.
      ii. Athlete positions the ball on the ramp and pushes the ball in a forward motion down the lane.
   c. Ramp Assisted Bowling
      i. Athlete aims ramp into position with assistance.
      ii. Athlete positions the ball on the ramp with assistance.
      iii. Athlete must push the ball in a forward motion down the lane.
      iv. Assistant may only assist the athlete in guiding, aligning or directing the ramp and assist the athlete in positioning the ball on the ramp, but may not assist in the forward movement of the ball down the lane.

4. Tie-break Rules
   a. For any level of bowling, if two or more individuals/teams are tied in total score after two games of bowling, those participants will finish in a tie, and will be awarded the same place.
   b. In the event of a tie in a division, the appropriate number of places will be skipped when awarded.

SECTION H - 2027 RULE CHANGES

1. There are NO rule changes for BOWLING in 2027.