KAYAKING

The Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Kayaking shall govern all Special Olympics competitions. As an international sports program, Special Olympics has created these rules based upon International Canoe Federation (ICF) Flatwater Rules for kayaking found at http://www.canoeicf.com/. ICF or National Governing Body (NGB) rules shall be employed except when they are in conflict with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Kayaking or Article I. In such cases, the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Kayaking shall apply.

SECTION A—OFFICIAL EVENTS

The following is a list of official events available in Special Olympics.

The range of events is intended to offer competition opportunities for athletes of all abilities. Programs may determine the events offered and, if required, guidelines for the management of those events. Coaches are responsible for providing training and event selection appropriate to each athlete's skill and interest.

1. Singles Tourist kayak (KT):   KT1 - 200m, 500m
2. Doubles Tourist kayak (KT):   KT2 - 200m, 500m
3. Unified Sports® Doubles Tourist kayak (KT):   KT2 - 200m, 500m
4. Singles Professional kayak (K):   K1 -200m, 500m
5. Doubles Professional kayak (K):   K2 -200m, 500m
6. Unified Sports Doubles Professional kayak (K): K2 -200m, 500m

SECTION B—EQUIPMENT

1. Standardized Touring Kayaks and paddles are to be provided by games organizing committees for each athlete. If athletes choose to bring their personal kayaks and/or paddles, they must meet ICF specifications.

2. Helmets, if deemed necessary by the event director due to the course being in moving water, where there are obstructions or shallow water where a capsizing athlete might strike his/her head.

3. Personal Floatation Devices (PFD) are required and must meet local standards set by National Governing Bodies (NGB) for water safety.

4. Aqua shoes are optional for athletes in practice and competition.

SECTION C—RULES OF COMPETITION

1. Divisioning

    a. Divisioning will be conducted in accordance with the Special Olympics Summer Sports Rules, Article 1—Section I. The maximum number of athletes per division in kayaking is six.

    b. Athletes should complete a preliminary and final race for each distance entered. Initial classifications for the divisioning events will be based on qualifying times submitted with the athlete's registration.

    c. Divisions for the divisioning events will be based on the qualifying times submitted on the athletes registration form. Divisions for finals will be based on the times athletes receive in their divisioning events.

2. Honest Effort Rule

    a. Athletes must participate honestly and with maximum effort in all divisioning and/or final competition.

    b.   Athletes that are identified as not participating to their full potential with the intent of being placed in a lower division will be disqualified from competition.

3.   Rules

    a.   At the start line, kayaks will be stabilized by personnel holding their stern on pontoon. However, athletes should be able to control the kayak point to the proper direction towards finish line and keep the kayak stationary until the start of the race. (Adaptations will be utilized for difficult weather conditions).

    b.   The start of all races will begin with the starting signal by a shot or a short, powerful sound. The starter will announce to the competitors the time remaining before the start by saying, "Start within 10 seconds." Also a drop with a White Flag (60cm x 40cm) from the shore line will indicate the start of the race along with the starting signal. If a competitor starts to paddle away before the start signal has been given, he/she is charged with a "false start." Automated starting systems may also be used.

    c.   Athletes must remain inside their assigned lane otherwise they will be disqualified.

    d.   If an athlete crosses the lane barrier and impedes the other athlete, this will be justification for a disqualification through the protest procedure and the athlete that was impeded has the option of starting the race at a later time for a proper score.

    e.   Coaches are allowed to assist athletes in/out of the kayak, once the athlete is in the kayak and called to the start, the coach must report to the shoreline. No coaching is permitted from the shoreline. Encouragement to the athletes is always allowed.

    f.   Coaches will not be allowed to have a kayak in the water while competition is being conducted.

4.   Protests and Appeals

    a.   Any protest involving the judgment of the referee or judge will not be given consideration.

    b.   The Protest must be in written form, using the Protest Form available form the Sport Information Desk (SID).

    c.   Only the Head of Delegation or designated Head Coach may protest and must do so no later than 30 minutes after the conclusion of the event.

    d.   Once the Jury/Sports Specific Rules Committee has made its decision, the Head of Delegation can either accept or appeal to the Jury of Appeals/ Games Rules Committee (GRC).

    e.   All decisions made by the Games Rules Committee will be final.

5.   Uniform

    a.   Athletes will be required to wear shirt and shorts during all practice and competition.

    b.   Coaches should ensure that all athletes bring a change of clothes when attending kayaking practice and competition.

    c.   Swim suit, swim hat and aqua shoes will be required for the water test.

    d.   As kayaking is an outdoor event, it is suggested that athletes bring a set of warm clothing and rain wear.

SECTION D—SAFETY

1.   There will be umpire/safety boat on the water during practice and competition. The number of umpire/safety boats will depend upon weather and the ability levels of the athletes.

2.   Athletes must remain in the kayak at all times while on the water. Legs must be in the kayak at all times.

3.   Horseplay on the water may lead to the athlete being removed from competition or a similar penalty.

4.   Athletes must be seizure-free for 1 year prior to competing.