

ARTISTIC GYMNASTICS

GENERAL RULES

Due to length of the Special Olympics Artistic Gymnastics Rules, Special Olympics Wisconsin (SOWI) cannot reprint the rules in this Competition Guide. Please refer to the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules on the Special Olympics, Inc. website at www.specialolympics.org. These can also be accessed through the SOWI website under Sports and Athletes / Sports Offered / Gymnastics. Coaches are responsible for reviewing SOWI and Special Olympics, Inc. rules.

OFFICIAL EVENTS OFFERED:

Gymnastics competition is not offered at the district level. All athletes are automatically eligible to advance to the Summer Games. If the number of participants changes in the future, a determination will be made regarding how the competitions are offered.

1. Men's Artistic Gymnastics (Levels 1, 2, 3)
 - a. Floor Exercise
 - b. Vault
 - c. Horizontal Bar (Levels 1 & 2 only)
2. Women's Artistic Gymnastics (Levels 1, 2, 3)
 - a. Vault
 - b. Uneven Bars
 - c. Balance Beam
 - d. Floor Exercise
 - e. All Around (combination of all scores, a-d, at same level)
3. Level A Artistic Gymnastics Events (Men or Women)
 - a. Wide Beam
 - b. Floor Exercise
 - c. Vault
4. SOWI is utilizing the Special Olympics, Inc. Artistic Compulsory Routines for the 2019-2027. Please refer to www.specialolympics.org for coaches training information, music, videos, and judges score sheets.

SECTION A – RULES OF COMPETITION

1. An artistic gymnast specializing in fewer events than the All Around may compete in two different levels with one level difference between.
2. The Special Olympics order of events for Male Artistic Gymnastics is as follows: Floor Exercise, Vault and Horizontal Bar.
3. The Special Olympics order of events for Female Artistic Gymnastics is as follows: Vault, Uneven Bars, Balance Beam and Floor Exercise.
4. Music and Routines for Artistic Gymnastics can be downloaded on the Special Olympics, Inc. website:
 - a. Women’s Artistic Gymnastics: <https://resources.specialolympics.org/sports-essentials/sports-and-coaching/gymnastics/womens-artistic-gymnastics-2019-2027>
 - 1) Women’s Floor Exercise Level A – No Music
 - b. Men’s Artistic Gymnastics: <https://resources.specialolympics.org/sports-essentials/sports-and-coaching/mens-artistic-gymnastics-2019-2027>
5. Coaches will determine the competition level for their athlete. The athletes must be able to safely perform all of the skills specified for that level.
 - a. Gymnasts may compete in all events offered with in the same level (All Around) or may be “specialists,” competing in one, two or three events but not all events. In international competitions, specialists must compete at the same level for all events entered. In local competitions, gymnasts may be one level different in the events entered, as determined by the local organizers.
 - b. In All-Around competition, athletes must compete at the same level in all four events. **Note:** If an athlete entered in the All-Around receives no score for any one of the events, or competes on different levels, then she is not eligible for an award in the All-Around event.
6. The video is the official version of the routines. The written text is provided as a supplement. If a difference exists between the video and the written text, the video must be followed.
7. Modifications for gymnasts with visual impairments
 - a. Assistance is permissible for all levels of competition. However, coaches must notify the meet director and judges of the athlete’s visual impairment before the meet and prior to each event. Audible cues such as clapping may be used in all routines.
 - b. In floor exercise, music may be played at any close point outside the mat or the coach may carry the music source around the perimeter of the mat. In vault, the gymnast has the choice of not taking a run, but using one or two steps, or holding onto a rope alongside the runway.
8. Modifications for athletes with hearing impairments
 - a. Coaches must notify the meet director and judges of the athlete’s hearing impairment before the meet and prior to the floor exercise event. In floor exercise, the coach or another gymnast may signal the athlete to begin the routine without penalty.

SECTION B – ATTIRE

1. Male gymnasts shall wear tank tops (leotards), t-shirts, and long gymnastics pants or gymnastics shorts. Gymnasts may compete in white socks, gymnastics slippers or bare feet.

2. Female gymnasts shall wear a long sleeve, short sleeve, or sleeveless leotard. Bare legs and bare feet, or wear white peds or gymnastics slippers. Flesh colored tights with bare feet are permitted, but not recommended. No deduction will be taken for use of flesh colored tights.
3. No jewelry, with the exception of one pair of stud earrings (one in each ear). All other piercing should be REMOVED, not just covered with tape or Band-Aids.
4. Hair should be pulled back from the face. Long hair should be secured in a bun, ponytail, or braid.

SECTION C – EQUIPMENT

1. Generally, see FIG equipment specifications and mat specifications for competition equipment.
2. Modifications have been made to meet skill and size requirements for Special Olympics athletes.
 - a. Additional mats may be used to accommodate smaller gymnasts or for added safety. (There are no deductions unless specified in the specific event.)
 - b. Boards may be placed on top of the allowed matting around the equipment to help gymnasts mount but should be removed immediately.
 - c. The heights of the uneven bars, parallel bars and high bar may be adjusted to meet the size of the gymnast. Where the height cannot be lowered sufficiently, additional mats may be used to raise the floor.
 - d. Vault tables are used only in Level 4. All other levels vault onto mats. Specifications are listed in the written text and on the video.
 - e. The heights of the uneven bars, parallel bars and high bar may be adjusted to meet the size of the gymnast. Where the height cannot be lowered sufficiently, additional mats may be used to raise the floor.
 - f. Balance beam
 - 1) Level A beam is 12.25 centimeters (6 inches) wide and no more than 10 centimeters (4 inches) above the panel mat it sits on. The beam may be covered with suede cloth or indoor/outdoor carpeting.
 - 2) Level I and II may use a floor beam that is 10 centimeters (4 inches) wide and 4.88 meters (16 feet) long. The top is no more than 30 centimeters (12 inches) off the ground and 10 centimeters (4 inches) from the mats or they may use a Level III beam.
 - 3) Level 2 gymnasts use either a low beam (like Levels C and 1) or a regulation beam that is 10 centimeters (4 in) wide and 4.88 meters (16 ft) long. Its height may range from 88 centimeters (34⁵/₈in) to 1.2 meters (47¹/₄in). Gymnasts receive a Bonus or competing on the high beam. Refer to the Judges Guide.
 - 4) Level III uses a regulation beam that is 10 centimeters (4 inches) wide and 4.88 meters (16 feet) long. Its length may range from 88 centimeters (34⁵/₈ inches) to 1.2 meters (47¹/₄ inches).

SECTION D – SKILL DESCRIPTIONS (See Special Olympics, Inc. Rules)

Safety Considerations

Consistent with the Special Olympics philosophy that the movement is athlete- centered, the safety of athletes is the primary concern when establishing sports rules. The establishment of international guidelines for Special Olympics gymnastics compulsory and optional routines will ensure that the athletes follow a proper progression of instruction in gymnastics skills. This will reduce the incidence of injuries. Athletes who safely perform all skills in a specific level of compulsory routines should compete at that level. Competition in optional routines has been limited to advanced-level gymnasts only.

Learning the proper progressions of skill instruction and correct spotting techniques is the responsibility of the gymnastics coach. Special Olympics commends those national/state Programs in which certified gymnastics instructors use the proper progression for teaching advanced gymnastics skills which is set forth in the Gymnastic Coaching Guide, these rules and elsewhere.

Many volunteers begin coaching with limited gymnastics expertise. These volunteers should start by teaching only the basic skills and routines. Those skills that are included in the more advanced levels should be taught by coaches with at least two years of mainstream artistic gymnastics coaching experience. It is recommended that coaches of advanced Levels 3 and 4 gymnasts have additional training in gymnastics from the National Governing Body for gymnastics in their country.

Regardless of how much safety is provided, coaches should not entice or encourage their athletes to perform skills that are beyond their reasonable ability or skills that are beyond the coaches' ability to teach. Special Olympics recommends that all gymnastics coaches become safety certified in accordance with the policy endorsed by the appropriate National Governing Body. Special Olympics concurs with the following responsibility statement:

“Even though gymnastics safety is everyone’s responsibility, the instructor or coach must bear much of it, including the responsibility to see that others do their share: the parents, the doctor and the athletes. Prevention and remediation are major responsibilities in a broad umbrella-type program under which many other points must be included: the environment, the prescribed learning progression and the physical preparedness of the athlete. These are the areas where the instructor/coach bears much of the moral and legal responsibility. It is not enough to warn and inform; all concerned must have an appreciation and understanding of the risk in every vigorous gymnastics activity.”

As shown on the video and written in the text, coaches must be in a position to spot on vault, uneven bars, and high beam before an athlete may compete in these events. The coach must remain in the remain there during the routine. The gymnast will be stopped and will receive deductions if the coach is not in the spotting position for the routine. Refer to the Judges Guide.