



# Snowshoeing

## Sport Rules

*Special Olympics*





**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

- 1. GOVERNING RULES..... 3
- 2. OFFICIAL EVENTS..... 3
  - 2.1 25 Meter Race..... 3
  - 2.2 50 Meter Race..... 3
  - 2.3 100 Meter Race..... 3
  - 2.4 200 Meter Race..... 3
  - 2.5 400 Meter Race..... 3
  - 2.6 800 Meter Race..... 3
  - 2.7 1600 Meter Race..... 3
  - 2.8 5K Race..... 3
  - 2.9 10K Race..... 3
  - 2.10 4 x 100 Meter Relay Race..... 3
  - 2.11 4 x 200 Meter Relay Race..... 3
  - 2.12 4 x 400 Meter Relay Race..... 3
  - 2.13 4 x 100 Meter Unified Sports® Relay Race..... 3
  - 2.14 4 x 200 Meter Unified Sports® Relay Race..... 3
  - 2.15 4 x 400 Meter Unified Sports® Relay Race..... 3
- 3. COURSES..... 3
  - 3.1 Track Course..... 3
  - 3.2 Long Distance Course..... 3
  - 3.3 Event Specific Layouts should include the following:..... 3
- 4. EQUIPMENT..... 4
  - 4.1 Shoeshoes..... 4
  - 4.2 Footwear..... 4
  - 4.3 Poles..... 5
  - 4.4 Bib Numbers..... 5
- 5. PERSONNEL..... 5
  - 5.1 Officials..... 5
  - 5.2 Officials' Duties..... 5
- 6. RULES OF COMPETITION..... 5
  - 6.1 Equipment Check..... 5
  - 6.2 The Start..... 5
  - 6.3 The Race..... 6
  - 6.4 Disqualifications..... 7
  - 6.5 The Finish..... 7
  - 6.6 Relay Races..... 7
- Appendix A: WATERFALL START LINES..... 9



## **1. GOVERNING RULES**

The Official Special Olympics Rules shall govern all Special Olympics Snowshoeing competitions. Special Olympics, Inc. is the International Governing Body for Snowshoeing.

Refer to Article 1, <http://media.specialolympics.org/resources/sports-essentials/general/Sports-Rules-Article-1.pdf>, for more information pertaining to Codes of Conduct, Training Standards, Medical and Safety Requirements, Divisioning, Awards, Criteria for Advancement to Higher Levels of Competition, and Unified Sports.

## **2. OFFICIAL EVENTS**

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 competitor's skill and interest.

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

- 2.1 25 Meter Race
- 2.2 50 Meter Race
- 2.3 100 Meter Race
- 2.4 200 Meter Race
- 2.5 400 Meter Race
- 2.6 800 Meter Race
- 2.7 1600 Meter Race
- 2.8 5K Race
- 2.9 10K Race
- 2.10 4 x 100 Meter Relay Race
- 2.11 4 x 200 Meter Relay Race
- 2.12 4 x 400 Meter Relay Race
- 2.13 4 x 100 Meter Unified Sports® Relay Race
- 2.14 4 x 200 Meter Unified Sports® Relay Race
- 2.15 4 x 400 Meter Unified Sports® Relay Race

## **3. COURSES**

- 3.1 Track Course
  - 3.1.1 The track course is a 400-meter continuous loop with a course width of at least one meter for each competitor in a race.
  - 3.1.2 The 400-meter track loop should be relatively flat.
  - 3.1.3 The course should be prepared so that conditions are similar for all parts of the track.
  - 3.1.4 The direction of competing shall be left-hand inside.
- 3.2 Long Distance Course
  - 3.2.1 A long-distance course shall offer a variety of terrain and loops around the area for distances of 1600 meters and longer.
- 3.3 Event Specific Layouts should include the following:
  - 3.3.1 25-, 50- and 100-Meter Races



- 3.3.1.1 Run on a straight area of the course or on a separate course to allow for events to run concurrently.
- 3.3.1.2 Lanes should be marked and delineated on the track for the 25-, 50- and 100-meter events.
- 3.3.1.3 These lanes should be at least one meter wide each with wider lanes up to 1.7 meters wide being preferable.
- 3.3.2 200 Meter Race
  - 3.3.2.1 Run over a portion of the 400-meter course.
- 3.3.3 400 Meter Race
  - 3.3.3.1 Run one lap of the entire 400-meter course.
- 3.3.4 800 Meter Race
  - 3.3.4.1 Run two laps on the 400-meter course.
- 3.3.5 1600 Meter Race
  - 3.3.5.1 Run over varied terrain and may use the 400-meter loop as a start and finish.
- 3.3.6 5K and 10K Races
  - 3.3.6.1 Run on varied terrain on a trail.
- 3.3.7 4 x 100 Meter Relays
  - 3.3.7.1 Run over 400-meter course with three exchange zones.
  - 3.3.7.2 Each zone will be 20m in length and clearly marked.
  - 3.3.7.3 The start of the zone shall be nearest to the starting line.
- 3.3.8 4 x 200 Meter Relays
  - 3.3.8.1 Run over 400-meter course with two exchange zones.
  - 3.3.8.2 The exchange zone will be 20m in length and clearly marked.
  - 3.3.8.3 The start of the zone shall be nearest to the starting line.
- 3.3.9 4 x 400 Meter Relays
  - 3.3.9.1 Run over 400-meter course with one exchange zone.
  - 3.3.9.2 The exchange zone will be 20m in length and clearly marked.
  - 3.3.9.3 The start of the zone will be nearest to the starting line.

## **4. EQUIPMENT**

### **4.1 Snowshoes**

- 4.1.1 The snowshoe frame itself shall not be smaller than 17.78 cm x 50.8 cm (7 inches x 20 inches). This measurement shall be taken at the longest point of the snowshoe and at the widest point of the snowshoe. The frame measurement will not be taken along a curved line. This means that snowshoes shall have frames with at least two points that are a minimum of 17.78 cm apart (width) and at least two points that are a minimum of 50.8 cm apart (length).
- 4.1.2 Factory installed toe and heel traction claws are acceptable. The attachment of any additional "spikes" is not permitted.
- 4.1.3 The snowshoe shall consist of a frame and webbing or solid decking material.
- 4.1.4 The foot must be secured through a direct mount binding system to the snowshoe.
- 4.1.5 Competitors should wear the same style, brand, type, size (or pair) of snowshoes and type of clothing for divisioning and finals competition of a particular event.

### **4.2 Footwear**



4.2.1 Competition footwear may include, but is not limited to running shoes, hiking boots or snow boots. All competitors are required to wear footwear.

**4.3 Poles**

4.3.1 The use of poles is optional.

**4.4 Bib Numbers**

4.4.1 Bib numbers must be visible in the front torso during competition.

**5. PERSONNEL**

**5.1 Officials**

5.1.1 Chief of Course

5.1.2 Chief of Race

5.1.3 Chief Starter

5.1.4 Assistant Starter

5.1.5 Finish Line Judge

5.1.6 Referees

5.1.7 Chief Timer

5.1.8 Technical Delegates or other Officials may be added for larger events.

**5.2 Officials' Duties**

5.2.1 The Chief of Course is responsible for preparing, maintaining and controlling the course so that it conforms to the official sport rules. (i.e., physical layout/marketing of field of play).

5.2.2 The Chief of Race oversees the competition and ensures that the equipment is legal, and the race specifications agree with the official rules.

5.2.3 The Chief Starter commences the starting sequence once the competitors have lined up. The starting line judge decides whether a start is good or false.

5.2.4 The Starter ensures that all competitors are properly positioned behind the starting line before the start. The Assistant Starter stands ten (10) meters from the starting line and stops the competitors from continuing the race if a false start is declared.

5.2.5 The Finish Line Judge registers the times and race number of the competitors as they cross the finish line to determine their finishing order.

5.2.6 Referees assigned to positions along the course to oversee the progression of the race and monitor compliance with rule on progress.

5.2.7 The Chief Timer is responsible for the direction and coordination of the officials working in the timing area. Supervises manual times and electronic timing; serves as backup referee and assist finish judge.

**6. RULES OF COMPETITION**

**6.1 Equipment Check**

6.1.1 All snowshoes and batons will be measured and checked by an official prior to each competition.

6.1.2 Competitors must always wear their assigned number in a position visible to the officials.

**6.2 The Start**

6.2.1 At the start of the race, competitors must have both tips of his/her snowshoes behind the starting line, which is identified, in the snow with either color or some form of marking. No



part of the competitor's body or clothing can in contact with the starting line or the snow ahead before the start.

- 6.2.2 All supports, such as blocks or holes, which give a competitor an advantage at the start, are prohibited.
- 6.2.3 All competitors in each division shall start on the starting line side by side at the same time. There will be no timed interval starts.
- 6.2.4 Competitors may begin the race/leave the start area after the start signal.
- 6.2.5 Starting command will be as follows:
  - 6.2.5.1 Verbal command shall be "Racers Ready" (competitor is expected to hold position).
  - 6.2.5.2 The start signal shall be a verbal "Go" or firing of a starting pistol.
  - 6.2.5.3 An additional visual start indicator (flag) may be used to assist competitors with a hearing impairment. A tap touch start may be used for an athlete who is visually impaired.
- 6.2.6 False Starts
  - 6.2.6.1 Any competitor starting before the start signal is given will be charged with a false start.
  - 6.2.6.2 A false start occurs when a competitor significantly moves any body part before the start signal after coming to a still set position after the "Racers ready" command and before the starting signal.
  - 6.2.6.3 An official should identify and notify the competitor that is charged with a false start.
  - 6.2.6.4 Any competitor making two false starts in the same race will be disqualified from that race.

### 6.3 The Race

- 6.3.1 Only the officials and competitors competing in the race are allowed on the course.
- 6.3.2 When using a curved course, the Chief of Course must ensure that all competitors must have an opportunity to cover the same distance, either by a waterfall start or other means dictated by the shape of the course. See Appendix A for a waterfall start diagram.
- 6.3.3 A competitor may not progress forward more than three meters unless they have both snowshoes attached to their feet.
- 6.3.4 Pacing of competitors is not allowed. Pacing is defined as moving along with, ahead of, just behind or next to a competitor for more than 3 meters by persons not participating in the same race or use of any kind of timing device used to advise the competitor of their race time.
- 6.3.5 In the 25 Meter, 50 Meter and 100 Meter races, each competitor should keep in the allotted lane from start to finish. Unless a material advantage has been gained, or impedance or interference with another competitor occurs, a competitor shall not be disqualified if he or she leaves the lane.
- 6.3.6 Two-Minute Rule
  - 6.3.6.1 If during a race a competitor falls, has difficulty with a snowshoe or binding, or leaves the track, he/she has two minutes to correct the problem. In any race 100 meters or longer a competitor must progress at least 20 meters toward the finish line every two minutes.
  - 6.3.6.2 A competitor who fails to adhere to the two-minute limit or receive assistance of any kind shall be disqualified.





- 6.3.6.3 The closest referee will be responsible for providing a one-minute warning and timing of the violation.
- 6.3.6.4 Officials should allow the competitor 2 minutes to return to the course before intervening unless the situation poses a safety concern for the competitor or other competitors on the course.

#### 6.4 Disqualifications

- 6.4.1 Officials shall have the authority to order the race to be re-held excluding any disqualified competitor.
- 6.4.2 A competitor or relay team will be disqualified for the following.
  - 6.4.2.1 Improperly overtaking or impeding another competitor, or in any other way intentionally interfering with another competitor.
  - 6.4.2.2 Preventing another competitor from passing.
  - 6.4.2.3 Jostling or obstructing another competitor, to impede his or her progress. The action must be judged to be beyond incidental to result in disqualification.
  - 6.4.2.4 Leaving the designated the course.
  - 6.4.2.5 Making two false starts.
  - 6.4.2.6 Making an improper exchange on the relay exchange zone.
  - 6.4.2.7 Failing to adhere to progress within the two-minute time limit.
  - 6.4.2.8 Progressing more than three meters without both snowshoes attached to his / her feet.
  - 6.4.2.9 Crossing the finish line without both snowshoes on his / her feet.
  - 6.4.2.10 Receiving physical assistance at any time after he/she crosses the start line to begin the race or before he/she crosses the finish line.
  - 6.4.2.11 Using improper (not approved) snowshoes or a baton.
- 6.4.3 Regardless of whether there has been a disqualification, Officials, in exceptional circumstances, shall also have the authority to order the race to be re-held if he considers it just and reasonable to do so.

#### 6.5 The Finish

- 6.5.1 A competitor has finished the race when his/her torso reaches the vertical plane of the finish line. The torso is distinguished from the head, neck, arms, legs, hands, and feet.
- 6.5.2 A competitor must have both snowshoes on his/her feet when crossing the finish line.

#### 6.6 Relay Races

- 6.6.1 Exchange
  - 6.6.1.1 The designated exchange zone is the 20-meter-long space within the vertical planes extending up from two lines on the track 20 meters apart. The zones shall start and finish at the edges of the zone lines nearest the start line in the running direction.
  - 6.6.1.2 A proper exchange of the baton must take place within the exchange zone between the incoming and outgoing runner.
  - 6.6.1.3 Competitors awaiting the baton will be positioned by officials on the track prior to the start of the race (for the 4 X 100 Meter Relay) or, as the leading runner passes the 200 meter to go point (for the 4 x 400 Meter Relay) in the same order (inside to out) as the order of their respective incoming team member.



- 6.6.1.4 Competitors waiting for the baton can take an inner position on the track as incoming team members approach, provided they do not jostle or obstruct another competitor so as to impede the other competitor's progress.
- 6.6.1.5 Competitors in the 4 x 100 Meter Relay about to receive the baton may commence running not more than 10 meters before the exchange zone. A line shall be marked on the track to denote this extended limit. If a competitor does not follow this Rule, their team shall be disqualified.
- 6.6.1.6 If dropped, the baton shall be recovered by the competitor who dropped it. He/he may leave their lane to retrieve the baton provided that, by doing so, they do not lessen the distance to be covered. In addition, where the baton is dropped in such a way that it moves sideways or forward in the direction of running (including beyond the finish line), the competitor who dropped it, after retrieving it, must return at least to the point where it was last in his hand, before continuing in the race. Provided these procedures are adopted where applicable and no other competitor is impeded, dropping the baton shall not result in disqualification. If a competitor does not follow this Rule, his/her team shall be disqualified.
- 6.6.1.7 The baton shall be passed within the exchange zone. The passing of the baton commences when it is first touched by the receiving competitor and is completed the moment it is in the hand of only the receiving competitor. In relation to the exchange zone, it is only the position of the baton which is decisive. Passing of the baton outside the exchange zone shall result in disqualification.
- 6.6.2 Relay Disqualifications
  - 6.6.2.1 Competitors, before receiving and/or after handing off the baton should keep in their general area or position relative to the inside edge track until the course is clear to avoid obstruction to other competitors. If a competitor impedes a member of another team by running out of position or lane, his or her team shall be disqualified.
  - 6.6.2.2 Assistance between team members by pushing or by any other method shall result in disqualification of that team.
  - 6.6.2.3 Competitors in the 4 X 400 Meter Relay are not permitted to begin running outside the exchange zones and shall start within this zone. If a competitor does not follow this Rule, their team shall be disqualified.
- 6.6.3 Baton
  - 6.6.3.1 The relay baton shall be a smooth hollow tube, circular in section, made of wood, metal or any other rigid material in one piece.
  - 6.6.3.2 Metal batons are acceptable, but caution must be used if handling them with bare skin in cold weather.
  - 6.6.3.3 The baton length shall be 280 to 300 millimeters.
  - 6.6.3.4 The outside diameter shall be 40 millimeters and it shall not weigh less than 50grams.
  - 6.6.3.5 It should be colored to be easily visible during the race.
  - 6.6.3.6 The baton shall be carried by hand throughout the race. Competitors are not permitted to place substances on their hands to obtain a better grip of the baton.
- 6.6.4 Unified Sports®
  - 6.6.4.1 Unified Sports relay teams shall be made up of two Special Olympics athletes and two Unified Sports partners. The competitor order in the relay is up to the decision of the coach.





- 6.6.5 Team Roster
  - 6.6.5.1 A relay team consists of 4 competitors, any team with fewer than 4 competitors must forfeit.
- 6.6.6 Participation
  - 6.6.6.1 Each competitor must complete one-fourth of the distance of the total relay. No competitor may complete more than one leg of any one relay.
- 6.6.7 Use of Guide Runners
  - 6.6.7.1 A sighted guide runner may not be ahead of the athlete in any manner. At no time may the guide runner pull the athlete or propel the athlete forward by pushing.
  - 6.6.7.2 Guide runners must clearly identify so that they are clearly distinguished from competitors.

**APPENDIX A**

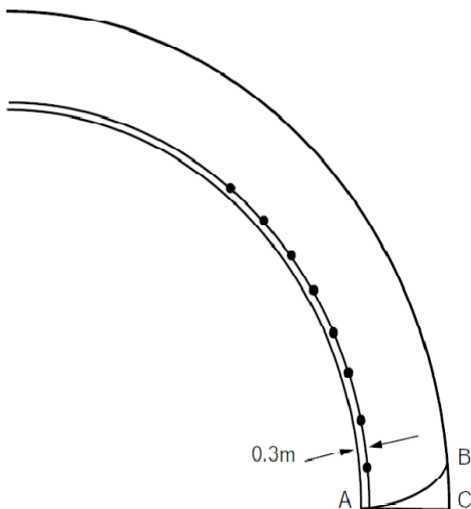
**WATERFALL START LINES**

Guidelines for those Using Oval

Waterfall (curved) starting lines are used for all races in Special Olympics Snowshoeing not run entirely on a straightaway (200 meters and up and the relays). The waterfall starting line will ensure that each competitor runs the same equal distance going into the curve, from any starting position along this waterfall start line (i.e., snowshoer starting along the outer edge of the track covers the same distance as snowshoer starting along the inside edge of the track).

In the diagram below the curved line A to B is the waterfall starting line. An athlete starting at point B would cover the same distance on the track as a person starting at point A, when measured to the upper pin location, point D, ~25 meters into the curve.

D



The curved be row of pins 0.3 meters

waterfall starting line may established by driving a 3.05 meters (10 ft) apart, (12 in) from the curb-- the



first pin to be 0.3 meters (12 in) from the curb at the start. For a 9.75-meter (32 ft) track, 10 pins are sufficient.

Using a steel tape or rope 30.48 meters (100 ft) or longer, and with the pin furthest from the start as center, scribe an arc (the waterfall start line) from pole to outer curb of track.

The distance for spacing of the pins—3.05 meters—is an arbitrary and sufficiently accurate interval.

This will not be an arc of a circle as the radius will change as the tape loses contact with each successive pin.