

SNOWSHOE RACING

GENERAL RULES

The Official Special Olympics Sports Rules shall govern all Special Olympics snowshoe racing competitions. Special Olympics, Inc. is the international governing body for snowshoeing. For more information, visit www.specialolympics.org.

OFFICIAL EVENTS OFFERED:

1. 50m Race
2. 100m Race
3. 200m Race
4. 400m Race
5. 800m Race
6. 4x100m Relay Race
7. 4x200m Relay Race
8. 4x400m Relay Race

Athletes may compete in a maximum of three events (two individual events and one relay event or two relay events and one individual).

SECTION A – COLD WEATHER SAFETY

As per Special Olympics, Inc. and the International Ski Federation and United States Ski Association Joint Regulations:

- a. There are three main factors to be considered by the jury regarding cold weather safety: the temperature, the duration of the exposure, and clothing and other protection against cold weather. These factors together with any other relevant information, such as the "wind chill factor," must be taken into consideration when a decision is made regarding cold weather.

SECTION B – RULES OF COMPETITION

1. All snowshoes will be measured and checked by the referees prior to each event.
2. Athletes must wear their assigned bib number on the front of the uniform top in a position visible to the officials at all times.
4. The Start
 - a. Snowshoe racers must have both snowshoes behind the starting line at the start.
 - b. All supports (example: blocks or holes which give an athlete an advantage at the start) are prohibited.
 - c. In every event, each division start is a mass start. (There are no timed interval starts.)
 - d. The start command shall be "Racers Ready" then the starters will sound the gun or give the "Go" command signaling the athletes to leave the starting area.
 - e. The starting command will be as follows:
 - 1) Verbal "Racers Ready" (competitor is expected to hold position)

- 2) Verbal "Go," or firing of a starting pistol
 - 3) An additional visual start indicator (flag) may be used to assist athletes with hearing impairments
- f. 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 3m 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.
 - g. Unless a material advantage has been gained, or impedance or interference with another athlete occurs, a competitor shall not be disqualified if he or she leaves the lane.
 - h. Any competing athlete who jostles or obstructs another athlete, so as to impede his or her progress, shall be liable to disqualification from that event. The action must be judged to be intentional and beyond incidental to result in disqualification. The Referee shall have the authority to order the race to be re-held excluding any disqualified athlete.
 - i. Regardless of whether there has been a disqualification, the Referee, 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.
 - j. Any competitor starting before the start signal is given will be charged with a false start. 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. An official should identify and notify the athlete that is charged with a false start. Any competitor making two false starts in the same race will be disqualified from that race.
5. The Race
- a. Only the officials (no spectators) are allowed on the track.
 - b. For races 50m and 100m, the athlete must run in a straight line.
 - c. Two-minute rule: If the competitor falls during competition, has difficulties with a snowshoe or binding, or leaves the track, he/she has two minutes to correct the problem. A competitor who fails to adhere to this two-minute time limit or receives assistance of any kind shall be disqualified. Timing of the two minutes is the responsibility of the closest field judge.
 - d. Officials should allow the competitor two minutes to return to the course before intervening, unless the situation poses a safety concern for the competitor or other competitors on the course.
 - e. A competitor may not progress forward more than 3m unless they have both snowshoes attached to their feet.
6. The Finish
- a. A snowshoe racer has finished the race when any part of his/her torso reaches the vertical plane of the finish line. The torso is distinguished from the head, neck, arms, legs, hands and feet.
 - b. To be official, a snowshoe racer must have both snowshoes attached to his/her feet when crossing the finish line.

7. Relay Races
 - a. The designated exchange zone is the 20m long space within the vertical planes extending up from two lines on the track 20m apart. The zones shall start and finish at the edges of the zone lines nearest the start line in the running direction.
 - b. A proper exchange (tag/touch) shall consist of the incoming competitor touching any part of the body of the outgoing competitor with his/her hand. Clothing covering the hand or body will be considered part of that hand or body. Snowshoes are not considered part of the body.
 - c. The tag/touch must occur within the designated exchange zone. The bodies of the athletes may be outside the zone at the time of the tag/touch. Making the tag/touch outside the exchange zone shall result in disqualification.
 - d. Athletes, before receiving and/or after the tag/touch should keep in their lanes or zones until the course is clear to avoid obstruction to other athletes. If an athlete willfully impedes a member of another team by running out of position or lane, his or her team shall be disqualified
 - e. The runners in the second, third and fourth legs of the relay races shall, under the direction of a designated official, place themselves in their waiting position in the same order (inside to outside) as the order of their respective team members as they complete their legs.
 - f. 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.
 - g. A relay team consists of four competitors, any team with fewer than four competitors must forfeit.
 - h. 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.

SECTION C – FACILITIES

1. The track course is a 400m continuous loop with a course width of at least 1m for each competitor in a race. The 400m track loop should be relatively flat. The course should be prepared so that conditions are similar for all parts of the track. The direction of competing shall be left-hand inside. (An oval track is not required.)
2. Event Specific
 - a. 100m Race – run on the straight side of the track
 - b. 200m Race – run over half of the 400 meter loop
 - c. 400m Race – run over the entire loop
 - d. Relays – run over the entire loop with each of the four athletes completing one leg
 - e. 800m Race – run on varied terrain in a looped fashion on a trail (the course must have suitable checkpoints)

SECTION D – EQUIPMENT

1. The snowshoe frame itself shall not be smaller than 17.78 x 50.8 cm (7 inches x 20 inches) as measured by the frame. Snowshoes must be made of a frame with decking material (no plastic shoes are allowed). The snowshoe shall consist of a frame and webbing or solid decking material.
2. Factory installed toe and heel traction claws are acceptable. The attachment of any additional “spikes” is not permitted.
3. The foot must be secured through a direct mount binding system to the snowshoe.

4. Competition footwear may include, but not limited to running shoes, hiking boots or snow boots. All competitors are required to wear footwear.
5. The use of poles is optional.

SECTION E – DISQUALIFICATIONS

1. A competitor or relay team will be disqualified for the following:
 - a. Improperly overtaking or impeding another competitor, or in any other way intentionally interfering with another competitor.
 - b. Preventing another competitor from passing.
 - c. Leaving the designated course.
 - d. Making two false starts.
 - e. Making an improper exchange on the relay exchange zone.
 - f. Failing to adhere to progress within the two-minute time limit.
 - g. Progressing more than 3m without both snowshoes attached to his / her feet.
 - h. Crossing the finish line without both snowshoes attached to his / her feet.
 - i. 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.
 - j. Using improper (not approved) snowshoes.