

Uniqueness from Other Sports Organizations

Special Olympics is more similar than different from other sports organizations. However, it is important to identify those **five areas** that make Special Olympics unique.

- 1- Special Olympics does not charge a fee to athletes (or their families) to train or compete.
- 2- A variety of sports opportunities are provided for all ability levels.
- 3- Ability grouping are created through a process called divisioning to provide equitable competition (evenness) for all athletes within each ability grouping (division).
- 4- Awards are provided to all participants who compete.
- 5- The established criteria for athlete advancement to higher levels of competition is based on order of finish for each division and random draw.

Official and Nationally Popular Sports

Official Summer Sports

Aquatics	Golf*
Athletics	Gymnastics
Basketball	Powerlifting*
Bowling	Roller Skating
Cycling	Softball
Equestrian	Tennis
Football (Soccer)	Volleyball

Official Winter Sports

Alpine Skiing	Floor Hockey
Cross Country Skiing	Speed Skating
Figure Skating	

Nationally Popular Sports

Bocce	Snowshoeing*
Badminton	Table Tennis
Sailing	Team Handball

****Golf and Powerlifting were elevated to Official status in 1997. Snowshoeing was elevated to Nationally Popular status in 1998.***

Special Olympics Divisioning

Special Olympics organizes its competition so that, wherever possible, athletes compete against others of similar ability. This process is called **divisioning**

Athletes or teams are divisioned using the following basic procedure:

1- **Divide by Gender:** Male, Female, or Combined (under some circumstances)

2- Divide by Age:	<u>Individual Sports:</u>	<u>Team Sports</u>
	8-11	15 & under
	12-15	16-21
	16-21	22 & over
	22-29	30 & over

3- **Divide by Ability:**

- * Pre-competition information and scores are set in by coaches.
- * On-site preliminary events (timed heats or team observations)
- * In individuals sports, it is suggested that then difference between the fastest time and the slowest time within a final division should not vary by more than 10%.

4- **Combining groups:**

- * Age groups and/or male and female may be combined if this achieves a closer matching of ability.
- * The minimum number of athletes or teams in a division is 3. The maximum is 8.

Honest Effort: According to the Official Special Olympics Rules, athletes are to participate honestly and with maximum effort in all preliminary trials and/or finals. Athletes who fail to do so shall be disqualified from all remaining events by the relevant Sports Rule Committee at the competition.

Special Olympics Competition events by Levels:

- 1 - Local ----- - School, City, Parish, etc.
- 2 - Area ----- Combine Parish Program
- 3 - Chapter/State ---- All area program compete in a variety of sports.
- 4 - District ----- Sections in the state (north/south)
- 5 - Regional ----- Several chapters/state compete against one another
- 6 - World Games ---- Summer & Winter (countries all over the world compete)