



Special Olympics Minnesota 2025 Alpine Skiing & Snowboarding Handbook

**Special
Olympics**
Minnesota



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COACH CERTIFICATION RATIO TABLE

The updated coach certification ratio tables can be found in the Special Olympics Minnesota Coaches Portal under policies and fact sheets, or here: [Coach Ratio Table](#)

MORE INFORMATION

Practice ideas, skill assessment/development, and rules can be found in the SOI Quick Start Guides and SOI Rules for each respective sport can be found at www.specialolympics.org/sports.aspx

EVENTS

Glide – The glide event is a non-gated, 10-meter course for beginning skiers. For athletes who enter the glide, this will be their only event.

Slalom, Giant Slalom, and Downhill – These events will be held at three different skill levels: Novice, Intermediate, and Advanced.

RULES OF COMPETITION

Rules of competition for the Federation Internationale de Ski (FIS) and Special Olympics Inc. will be used for all events conducted by Special Olympics Minnesota. The rules listed below are highlights of the rules of competition along with any exceptions that are different from www.fis-ski.com.

Assistance

An athlete may not receive physical assistance when running the course; however, verbal encouragement or direction is allowed.

Coaches are encouraged to assist their athletes in warming up and during pre-race runs but cannot be on course or shadow skiing next to the course during a timed race.

One-Minute Rule

During competition, if the competitor moves out of the general direction of the line of the course (fall, miss a gate, lose a ski, etc.) they will have one minute from the time of the deviation to re-enter the course. A competitor who fails to adhere to this one-minute time limit, or receives physical assistance of any kind, will be disqualified from that run.

An athlete is not automatically disqualified for falling but is for receiving physical assistance within the one-minute period. Athletes who are not able to re-enter the course on their own within one minute should be removed from the course by their coach.

Start Command

For all Special Olympics alpine events at each ability level, the start command shall be as follows: “5, 4, 3, 2, 1, go!” The timer begins when the athlete’s front boot crosses the start line, or when the electric timing wand is activated. If the athlete is having trouble starting, the start referee may assist in the forward momentum of the athlete.

Performance Standards

Coaches will need to evaluate the ability of each skier to determine the appropriate level for competition (novice, intermediate or advanced). A maximum time limit of 3 minutes will be set for all intermediate and advanced events to keep the competition at a timely pace.

Athletes that cannot complete the course in the allotted time should be registered for the next lower level of competition. Special Olympics Minnesota staff may move an athlete to a different level for safety reasons or to keep the pace of the meet.

Gate Line

The gate line in downhill and giant slalom, where a gate consists of two pairs of poles holding panels between them, is the imaginary shortest line between the two inner poles at ground (snow) level. The gate line in the slalom is the imaginary shortest line between the turning pole and the outside pole at ground (snow) level.

Correct Passage

A gate has been passed correctly when both the competitor's ski tips and both feet have passed across the gate line. This may be done in one of three ways:

1. On the actual descent of the course,
2. The athlete may pass below the gates, climb up the hill and come back down through the gates, or
3. The athlete may pass below the gates, climb up the hill and break the plane from below the gates without passing through them

If a competitor loses a ski without committing a fault (not by straddling a slalom pole), then the tip of the remaining ski and both feet must have passed the gate line. The start and finish lines are the same as the gate line.

If a competitor removes a pole from its vertical position before both the competitors' ski tips and both feet have passed the gate line, the ski tips and feet must pass the original gate line (marking in the snow).

Downhill

Course inspection is allowed prior to the timed run.

The downhill race will consist of one timed run. If an athlete does not record a time, they will receive a participation award.

Glide/Slalom/Giant Slalom

Course inspection will be allowed prior to timed runs.

The glide, slalom, and giant slalom races will consist of two separate timed runs. The combined times for each discipline will determine the results for awards, although within a division, all athletes with two times will place above athletes with only one time due to a disqualification or otherwise not finishing a run. If an athlete does not record a time in either run, they will receive a participation award.

PROTOCOL AND ETIQUETTE

The following are rules that are to be applied to all people on the slopes:

- Always stay in control and be able to stop or avoid other people or objects
- People ahead of you have the right of way, and it is your responsibility to avoid them
- You cannot stop where you obstruct a trail or are not visible from above
- Whenever starting downhill or merging into a trail, look uphill and yield to others who are uphill from you
- Always use devices to help prevent runaway equipment
- Observe all posted signs and warnings. Keep off closed trails and out of closed areas
- Prior to using any lift, you must have the knowledge and ability to load, ride and unload safely

DIVISIONING AND HANDICAPPING

Divisioning is the process by which athletes are placed in competitive groups of three to eight athletes of similar ability for competition. While the fundamental components of divisioning are ability, age, and gender, in smaller sports we often end up relying much more on ability and we will potentially combine genders or create wide age ranges.

Delegations that plan to attend state must attend the alpine skiing and snowboarding qualifier meet. If an athlete or delegation is excused from participation (prior approval by Special Olympics Minnesota staff required) they will need to find someone with a current NASTAR handicap to function as their pacesetter. Contact Special Olympics Minnesota staff at sports@somn.org for additional information.

EQUIPMENT AND SAFETY LIST

The equipment needed for competition and practice is a set of skis or a snowboard, poles, and an appropriate helmet.

A helmet appropriate for ski racing shall be required for all competitors in official training and competition for all levels. Helmet fit and selection should be made with the help of a knowledgeable alpine coach or ski shop employee.

Alpine Helmet Regulations: Helmets must bear a CE mark and conform to recognized and appropriate standards such as CEH.Din 1077, ASTM F2040, SNELL S98, or RS 98. To attest that a helmet fulfills all FIS requirements, it must have a conformity label affixed by the manufacturer in a non-removable way, at the back of the helmet, in a position where it is not covered by the goggle strap. Conformity label must contain the text "Conform to FIS Specifications RH 2013."

SPORTSMANSHIP

Good sportsmanship is both the coach's and athlete's commitment to fair play, ethical behavior, and integrity. In perception and practice, sportsmanship is defined as those qualities which are characterized by generosity and genuine concern for others. Below we highlight focus points and ideas on how to teach and coach sportsmanship to your athletes by leading by example.

Competitive Effort

- Put forth maximum effort during each event
- Practice the skills with the same intensity as you would perform them in competition
- Always finish a race; Never quit

Fair Play Always

- Comply with the rules
- Demonstrate sportsmanship and fair play
- Respect the decision of the officials