2020 SWIMMING SEASON OVERVIEW

Registration

- Programs must abide by registration deadlines. Programs that do not meet registration deadlines will not be eligible to compete.
- In order to attend any event or practice all participants must have up to date forms and/or certifications on file with Special Olympics Massachusetts by published deadline.
- See deadlines on page 5.

Swimming Quota

- Summer Games –
  - 600 (Traditional)
- Relay’s will not count towards an athlete’s advancement to Summer Games.
- SOMA will follow guidelines outlined in Special Olympics Rules Article 1 on advancement.

Waivers

- In order to advance to a State level season ending tournament (summer games) all participants must compete at and qualify through a regional qualifier. No waivers will be granted.
- An athlete who is sick or injured may be granted a waiver if Special Olympics MA is notified in advance or immediately after tournament and if quota has not been reached by those who have attended a qualifier.
- Waivers will not be giving out for behavioral issues or athlete doesn’t feel like attending that day.

Sport Resources

A variety of coaching resources are available for download at the Special Olympics sport resource page (https://resources.specialolympics.org/sports-essentials). These include:

- Sport Essentials
  - Article One / Coaching S.O. Athlete / Sport Rules / Coaching Guides / Athlete & Coach Development Models
- Unified Sports
  - Online Certification Course / Unified Sport Models / Team Assessment Tools / Principles of Meaningful Involvement / Tutorial Videos / Unified Guidelines
Uniform Guidelines for Swimming (*Participants & Coaches*)

- **Players**
  - Proper swim suite (*no two piece for female*)
  - Matching swim cap (*recommended*)
  - Sandals
  - Swim Googles (*recommended*)

- **Coaches**
  - Special Olympics Massachusetts branded Gear or dress shirt
  - Khaki Pants or shorts or black sweat pants. No ripped jeans or jean shorts

**Website / Event Info**

- All Events are posted to the calendar page Special Olympics MA website.
- Event pages will include:
  - Programs assigned to event
  - Event timelines
  - Event contact Information and On site leaders
  - Event Schedule with participation #’s by event
  - Weather policy

- Spring Season Resource Page
  - Links to events
  - Sport rules
  - Registration form

**Levels of Competition**

- **Qualifying Tournament**
  - In order to advance on to State Summer Games athletes must participate in a qualifying tournament
  - Medals and ribbons will be awarded based on placement within their division
  - Gold medal winners automatically advance. Silver – 6th place will advance by place until quota is full

- **Season Ending State Tournaments**
  - Summer Games
    - Criteria to attend: *must have competed at a Qualifying tournament* and received a pre-determined award. No waivers will be granted
    - Have attended all assigned competition events
    - Medals and ribbons will be awarded based on individuals placement.
SWIMMING SEASON CALENDAR

- Registration Deadlines
  - Qualifying Tournaments –
    - Bridgewater & Milford April 8, 2020
    - Springfield & Boston April 29, 2020
  - Season Ending Tournament Summer Games – May 20, 2020

- Qualifying Tournaments
  - Bridgewater State University – April 19, 2020
  - Milford High School – April 26, 2020
  - Springfield College – May 2, 2020
  - Boston University – May 2, 2020

- Season Ending State Tournaments
  - Summer Games June 12-14, 2020
  - Swimming is back at Harvard for Summer Games

SWIMMING REGISTRATION

- Athletes must register for one of the following categories and may participate in up to three events with in that category. **May not** cross categories

- Category 1 –Developmental Categories
  - 10Y Assisted, 15Y Unassisted, 15Y Walk 25 Y Assisted
  - 15Y Flotation, 25Y Flotation

- Category 2 – Non Developmental
  - Freestyle – 25Y, 50Y, 100Y, 200Y, 4x25Y, 4x50Y, 4x100Y, 4x200Y
  - Breaststroke- 25Y, 50Y, 100Y, 200Y
  - Backstroke – 25Y, 50Y, 100Y, 200Y
  - Butterfly -25Y, 50Y, 100Y
  - Medley – 100Y, 200Y, 4x25Y, 4x50Y, 4x100Y
SWIMMING RULES

- USA Swimming is the NGB for the United States SOMA swim meets will be officiated by USA Swimming and will follow USA Swimming rules and guidelines.
- A list of common swimming disqualifications is below and posted on the Special Olympics Massachusetts Website
- SOMA is working with USA Swimming to get certified officials at the qualifying rounds

Flotation Events

- For flotation events, each athlete is responsible for his/her own flotation device. The device must be of the body wraparound type such that if the athlete were to not be able to hold onto the device, the device would still support the athlete with his/her face out of the water.
- Acceptable Flotation devices
  - These devices include vests and belts
- Unacceptable Flotation devices
  - inner tubes or floats that wrap around the arms are not acceptable for use at any time
  - kickboards

Common Swimming DQ’s

- Freestyle
  - Walking on the bottom
  - Pulling on the lane lines
- Butterfly
  - Non-simultaneous hand touch
  - Wrong kick style (usually flutter kick)
  - Underwater recovery of arms
  - Arms in wrong plane (usually freestyle)
- Breaststroke
  - Non-simultaneous hand touch
  - Wrong kick style (usually flutter kick)
  - Arms in wrong plane
- Backstroke
  - Turning over before touching the wall
  - Pulling lane lines
  - Not swimming on back
- All relays/individual events
  - False starts

See USA Swimming Rules for a full listing of rules and regulations for each stroke
Coach Education Criteria

Below is the most current version of the United States Coaches Education system that is required of all Special Olympics coaches as outlined by Special Olympics North America. This progression chart was approved by the Special Olympics United States Leadership Committee in Fall of 2018.

Sport Assistant Coach
- Valid Class A Form
- Special Olympics MA General Orientation
- Concussion Certification
- Protective Behaviors

Level 1 - Certified Coach (core coach knowledge)
Traditional Special Olympics Coach
- All Sport Assistant Coach Requirements
- Coaching Special Olympics Athlete
  - Online course via Human Kinetics Coach Education
  - Or in person training conducted by a Chapter approved trainer

Unified Sports
- All Sport Assistant Coach Requirements
- Coaching Unified Sports
  - Online Unified Sports course via NFHS
  - Or in person training conducted by a Chapter approved trainer

Level 2 - Certified Coach (Sports Specific Knowledge)
Traditional Special Olympics and Unified Sports
- All Level 1 requirements
- Sports Specific Course
  - Online for those sports where online courses have been developed
  - Or in person sport specific training

** NOTE- Level required of Head Coaches attending a USA Games in specific sport being coached

Level 3 - Certified Coach (Advanced Coaching Knowledge)
- All Level 2 requirements
- Principles of Coaching
  - Or in person training conducted by a Chapter approved trainer

** NOTE- Level required of Head Coaches attending a World Games in specific sport being coached

If you have any questions about your certification status or certification status of the coaches in your program please contact your Business Operations contact
Smoking, Drinking, Illegal Substances

- Special Olympics Massachusetts has established that all competition venues, housing facilities, ceremonies venues, and Olympic Towns will be alcohol, tobacco, cannabis (of any form), non-control substances & vaping free. Any coach, chaperone, volunteer, family member or athlete in violation of the Policy will face disciplinary action from SOMA, which could result in the violating individual(s) being sent home and suspended from future participation. SOMA Coaches, Chaperones, Volunteers, Family Members or Athletes must agree to abstain from the consumption of alcoholic beverages, tobacco, cannabis, and vaping during the entire course of all Special Olympics Massachusetts competition events.

- No concealed weapons, firearms are allowed at any Special Olympics Massachusetts event!

Best Practices of a Safe Coach

The following bullets are simple best practices of a safe coach and reminders for all Special Olympic Massachusetts coach

- Limit 1 to 1 interaction with athletes
  - always be with in the sight line or ear shot of others
- Always submit an incident report after an injury
- Follow injury and concussion return to play policy
- Never distribute any medication that is not in its original container
- Mandated reporter
  - SOMA coaches are not mandated reporters,
  - you know your athletes and if you suspect that they are subject to any abuse or in immediate danger do not hesitate to notify the police and Special Olympics staff
- Before any trip, event or overnight
  - review code of conduct
  - clearly explain rules and behavior expectations for all (athletes, chaperones, partners)
- Create a session long training plan that sets goals that focus on athlete development and skill improvement