



# Special Olympics Minnesota Snowshoeing Handbook

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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](http://www.specialolympics.org/sports.aspx)

## **EQUIPMENT**

### **Snowshoes**

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 the widest point of the snowshoe.

The attachment of any additional “spikes” is not permitted. The snowshoe shall consist of a frame and webbing or solid decking material. The foot must be secured through a direct mount binding system to the snowshoe.

### **Footwear/Poles**

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

### **Bib Numbers**

Bib numbers must be visible on the front torso during competition. Bibs will be provided by Special Olympics Minnesota the day of competition.

## **EVENTS**

### **Races**

Race lengths being offered will be 25, 50, 100, 200, and 400 meters. Lanes will have a width of 1.5 meters. Courses may include straightaways, down and backs, or a loop like at track and field. All race lengths will be offered as traditional and Unified.

For Unified Doubles races, Athletes and Unified partners will each need an individual qualifying time to submit for registration. Athlete and Unified partners times will be added together for the Unified team time, which will be used for divisioning and awards.

All participants are allowed to register for up to three events. This can be any combination of traditional or Unified events.

## **RULES OF COMPETITION**

### **Equipment Check**

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

Competitors must always wear their assigned number on the front of their torso. This can be on his/her snowsuit or snow pants.

## **The Start**

At the start of the race, competitors must have both tips of their snowshoes behind the starting line, which is identified in the snow with a certain form or marking. No part of the competitor's body or clothing can be in contact with the starting line before the start of the race.

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.

The starting command will be as follows: Verbal command shall be "snowshoers on your mark, get set, go," with a whistle included in the 'go' command. 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.

## **False Starts**

Any competitor starting before the start signal will be charged with a false start. An official should identify and notify the competitor that is charged with a false start. A competitor making two false starts in the same race will be disqualified from that race.

## **The Race**

Only the officials and competitors competing in the race are allowed on the course. This means no assistance (see assistance categories for more information).

Pacing of the competitors is not allowed. Pacing is defined as moving along with, just ahead, just behind, or next to the competitor to cheer, coach, or time the athletes.

In the 25- and 50-meter races, each competitor should stay in their assigned lane from start to finish. Any race 100 meters or longer will use a waterfall start, and athletes can enter the inside of the track when they are able to without impeding another participant. 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.

## **Two-Minute Rule**

If during a race a competitor falls, has difficulty with a snowshoe or binding, or leave the track, they have two minutes to correct the problem.

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. In this case, the coach will be allowed on the course. Coaches are only allowed onto the course if permitted by the race official.

In any race 100 meters or longer, a competitor must progress at least 20 meters toward the finish line every two minutes. A competitor who fails to adhere to the two-minute limit or receives assistance of any kind shall be disqualified.

## The Finish

A competitor has finished the race when their torso reaches the vertical plane of the finish line. The torso is distinguished from the head, neck, arms, legs, hands, and feet.

A competitor must have both snowshoes on their feet when crossing the finish line.

## Disqualifications

A competitor will be disqualified for any of the following:

- Improperly overtaking or impeding another competitor, or in any other way intentionally interfering with another competitor.
- Leaving the designated course voluntarily or, if within the two-minute rule guidelines, does not return within the two-minute period.
- Making two false starts.
- Progressing more than three steps without both snowshoes attached to feet.
- Crossing the finish line without both snowshoes on their feet.
- Receiving physical assistance at any time during the race, unless instructed by the race official.
- Using improper (not approved) snowshoes.

## DIVISIONING

Coaches need to include the competitor's practice qualifying time for each event for which they are registered.

Be aware that to minimize the length of competition, we may put multiple divisions on the course for certain events. Please advise coaches, parents, and spectators of this so there is not confusion during or after the race.

## ASSISTANCE CATEGORIES

**Staging** – The athlete can have an assistant only through the staging area.

**Outside Lane** – This is for visually impaired athletes; the athlete will be in a lane on the outside of the course.

**1-on-1** – The athlete can have an assistant through the staging area and up to the starting line. At this point, the assistant must go to the finish line and wait for the athlete to finish the race. At no time is an assistant allowed on the course, unless permitted by the race official.

## 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
- Strategy discussions with any athlete and/or partner are prohibited once the race begins
  - If an official determines that a coach, partner, or spectator is violating this rule, the official may sanction the offending individual. Sanctions may include verbal warning, citing the coach/partner with unsportsmanlike conduct, or expulsion from the games.

## POTENTIAL FUTURE ADDITIONS

If there is interest from delegations, we could host longer races (800, 1600, etc.) or relay races (4x100, traditional or Unified, etc.).

## WHERE TO BUY SNOWSHOES

[Joe's Sporting Goods](#)

Brand: Tubbs  
Price: \$89-250

[Fleet Farm](#)

Brand: Kodiak  
Price: \$114-130

[Next Adventure](#)

Brand: Various  
Price: \$100-220

[Dicks Sporting Goods](#)

Brand: Yukon  
Price: \$100-205

[L.L Bean](#)

Brand: Trailblazer  
Price: \$80-220

[Walmart](#)

Brand: Various  
Price: \$50-175

[Amazon](#)

Brand: Various  
Price: \$50-200

[Gopher Sport](#)

Brand: Red Feather  
Price: \$159