

“How to Division your Special Olympics Event”

Special Olympics
Pennsylvania



Age Groups



Individual Events:

- ▶ Ages 8-11
 - ▶ Ages 12-15
 - ▶ Ages 16-21
 - ▶ Ages 22-29
 - ▶ Ages 30 and over
- Additional age groups may be established if there are a sufficient number of competitors in the “30 and over” age group.



Team Events: (e.g. relays, team sports, doubles)

- ▶ Ages 15 and under
 - ▶ Ages 16-21
 - ▶ Ages 22 and over
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- Additional age groups may be established if there is a sufficient number of teams in the “22 and over” age group. The age group of a team is determined by the age of the oldest athlete on that team on the opening date of the competition.
 - An athlete’s age group shall be determined by the athlete’s age on the date of the opening of the competition.

Combining Age Groups



Age Groups may be combined under the following circumstances:

- Individual sports, if there are less than three competitors within an age group, the athletes shall compete in the next oldest age group.
- Age groups may also be combined to reduce the variance between the highest and lowest scores within a division.
- Team sports: within each ability group, an age group may be competing against a team of a different age group. If there is only one team within an age or ability group, that team must compete against teams of other age and ability groups.



- Ensuring fair divisioning of athletes for competition is one of the primary duties of the competition management (which may include a Technical Delegate).
- Where exceptions to these criteria are necessary, competition management will review proposed modifications to these criteria and make a final decision based on the goal of providing the most dignified and challenging competition experience for each athlete.
- The competition management has final authority concerning divisions and any variation from these criteria.
- Protests based on divisioning are not allowed.

Introduction to Divisioning



- Special Olympics suggests a guideline of no more than 15% (.15) variance between the highest and lowest scores within any division.
- This 15% statement is not a rule.
- Example: If the lowest bowler in the division has a 15-games scratch average of 78 the score of the highest bowler in the division may be 89.7 or rounded for 90



Examples

Scored Event

➤ MIniJav

$$4.62 \text{ meters} \times .15 = 0.693 + 4.62 = 5.31$$

Timed Events

➤ Athletics – 50 Meter Run

- $55.01 \times .15 = 8.25 + 55.01 = 63.25$ or 1:03.25

- 1st convert 1:06.00 to seconds = 66.00

- $66 \times .15 = 9.9 + 66 = 75.9$ or 1:15.9

Exercise – Bowling Divisioning with Guideline of 15% Difference



	<u>15 Game</u>	<u>Division</u>
Karen	67	
Suzie	75	
Jimmy	85	
Robert	90	
Sam	92	
Tessa	98	
Lisa	99	
Jen	99	
Becky	100	
Mike	102	
Shane	102	
Nancy	109	
Carla	115	
Olivia	117	
Todd	136	
Denise	140	
Luci	143	
Donny	147	

Answer to the Exercise – Bowling Divisioning w/ Guideline of 15% Difference



	<u>15 Game</u>	<u>Division (15%)</u>	<u>Divisioning 20% and Mixed Genders</u>
Karen	67	1	1
Suzie	75	1	1
Jimmy	85	2	2
Robert	90	2	2
Sam	92	2	2
Tessa	98	3	2
Lisa	99	3	2
Jen	99	3	2
Becky	100	3	2
Mike	102	3	3
Shane	102	3	3
Nancy	109	4	3
Carla	115	4	3
Olivia	117	4	3
Todd	136	5	4
Denise	140	5	4
Luci	143	5	4
Donny	147	5	4

Ability and Determining Criteria for Divisioning



An athlete's ability is the primary factor

The ability of an athlete or team is determined:

- by an entry score from a prior competition or
- is the result of a seeding round or
- preliminary event at the competition itself.

The team Head Coach is responsible for ensuring that the athlete score utilized for divisioning most accurately reflects the true ability of the athlete.

Forms should be provided to allow coaches to amend qualifying or preliminary scores that will be utilized in the divisioning process.

- 1 week prior to the competition team rosters with entry scores are sent to your contact person. This is your chance to update the scores.

Other factors that are significant in establishing competitive divisions are age and gender.

Note: "Preliminary" in these rules refers to on-site divisioning events utilized to determine final divisions.



- Within each division the minimum number of competitors or teams is three and the maximum number is eight.
- In some cases, however, the number of athletes or teams within a competition will be insufficient to achieve this goal.
- The following procedures describe the sequential process for creating equitable divisions and also provides guidance for managing athlete participation when factors preclude ideal divisioning.

Divisioning Individual Sports: Timed and measured events



Step One: Divide Athletes By Gender.

- ✓ 1) Divide athletes into two groups based upon gender: female and male.
- ✓ 2) Athletes shall normally compete against other athletes of the same gender, unless the IF/NGB rules specifically allow mixed-gender events.

✓ In PA

The only sports that requires same sex divisioning is Powerlifting and Gymnastics.

Some individual events are also same sex such as mini jav, shot put, etc.



Step Two: Divide Athletes by Age.

- ✓ Divide male and female athletes into the following age groups: ages 8-11; 12-15; 16-21; 22-29; and ages 30 years and over. An additional age group may be established if there are a sufficient number of competitors in the 30 years and over age group.
- ✓ An athlete's age group shall be determined by the athlete's age on the date of the opening of the competition.

Step Three: Divide Athletes By Ability.



- 1) To complete the divisioning process, the following guidelines shall be applied according to the event being divisioned.
 - ▶ a) In events that are measured in time, distance, or points:
 - ▶ i. For both genders and all age groups, rank athletes in descending order based upon submitted entry scores or divisioning events.
 - ▶ ii. Group these ranked athletes so that the highest and lowest scores are as close as possible to the 15% guideline and the number of competitors is not less than three (3) or more than eight (8).
 - ▶ b) In events that are judged and when divisioning events will be conducted during the competition:
 - ▶ i. For both genders and all age groups within a performance level, rank athletes in descending order based upon divisioning scores.
 - ▶ ii. Group these ranked athletes so that the highest and lowest scores are as close as possible to the 15% guideline and the number of competitors is not less than three (3) or more than eight (8).
 - ▶ c) In events that are judged and where divisioning events will not be conducted during the competition:
 - ▶ i. The nature of judging precludes the use of scores from prior competitions(s) in divisioning. Without scores from preliminary competition, performance level remains as the only criterion of athlete ability.
 - ▶ ii. For both genders and all age groups, identify athletes within each performance level.
 - ▶ iii. If more than eight athletes are in the same gender and age group of a performance level, group athletes into divisions of no less than three and no more than eight competitors.

Exercise – Bowling Divisioning with Age Groups



	<u>Age</u>	<u>15 Game</u>	<u>Division</u>
Karen	31	67	
Suzie	21	75	
Jimmy	25	85	
Robert	24	90	
Sam	22	92	
Tessa	13	98	
Lisa	19	99	
Jen	25	99	
Becky	8	100	
Mike	19	102	
Shane	55	102	
Nancy	44	109	
Carla	54	115	
Oliver	54	117	
Todd	45	136	
Denise	29	140	
Luci	22	143	
Donny	32	147	

Ages 8-11
Ages 12-15
Ages 16-21
Ages 22-29
Ages 30 and
over

Answer to Exercise – Bowling Divisioning with Age Groups



	<u>Age</u>	<u>15 Game</u>	<u>Division (20% & Mixed Age Groups)</u>	
Karen	31	67	1	
Suzie	21	75	1	Ages 8-11
Jimmy	25	85	2	Ages 12-15
Robert	24	90	2	Ages 16-21
Sam	22	92	2	Ages 22-29
Tessa	13	98	3	Ages 30 and over
Lisa	19	99	4	
Jen	25	99	2	
Becky	8	100	3	
Mike	19	102	4	
Shane	55	102	5	
Nancy	44	109	5	
Carla	54	115	5	
Olivia	54	117	5	
Todd	45	136	6	
Denise	29	140	6	
Luci	22	143	6	
Donny	32	147	6	

Divisioning Team Sports



Step One: Divide Teams By Gender.

- ✓ Divide teams into two groups based upon gender. Female teams shall compete against other female teams and male teams shall compete against other male teams. Mixed gender teams shall be divisioned with male teams unless there are sufficient mixed gender teams of similar ability to make a separate division.

In PA

- ✓ We have very few female teams. Not enough to make a full division so female teams, male teams and mixed teams are all divisioned together for equitable competition.

Step Two: Divide Teams By Ability.



- ✓ Special Olympics team sport competitions shall utilize sport specific skills assessment tools and a divisioning round to assess the level of ability of the participating teams.
- ✓ Refer to the Special Olympics Sports Rules for each team sport for a description of the skills assessment tool. Additional information regarding the assessment of team sports for divisioning purposes can be found in the Special Olympics Sports Management Team Guide.
- ✓ Group teams according to ability based upon the skills assessment tool and results from the divisioning round.
- ✓ Create divisions of no less than three and no more than eight teams.

In PA

- We also use last years results to assist in Team Divisioning
- We use results from local competitions

EASTERN SPRING SECTIONAL 5V5 PRELIM SCHEDULE - May 5, 2012



1 – Philadelphia No Doubt	<u>14 – Avon Grove Blue Streak</u>
2 – Delaware Dunkers	15 – Berks Blazers
<u>3 – Chester Cougars</u>	16 – Bucks One
4 – Monroe Bears	17 – Montgomery Greyhounds
5 – Lehigh All Stars	<u>18 – Montgomery Stars</u>
6 – Philadelphia Phlames	19 - Bucks Two
<u>7 - Bethlehem City Wolfpack</u>	20 – Delaware Cavaliers
8 – Lebanon Cruisers	21 - Monroe Cubs
9 – MONCO Abington Rockets	<u>22 – Schuylkill Lightning</u>
10 – Philadelphia Panthers	23 - MONCO Lansdale Titans
<u>11 - Chester Jaquars</u>	24 – Schuylkill Thunder
12 - Montgomery Knights	25 – Philadelphia Hawks
13 - Lancaster Hoopsters	

	Court 1	Court 2	Court 3	
	9:30 am	1 v 3	10 v 13	19 v 18
	9:35 am	2 v 5	11 v 12	20 v 21
	9:40 am	7 v 6	8 v 9	25 v 23
	9:45 am	10 v 11	13 v 14	17 v 19
	9:50 am	1 v 4	12 v 15	20 v 22
	9:55 am	2 v 3	14 v 16	24 v 25
	10:00 am	9 v 6	15 v 17	21 v 23
	10:05 am	4 v 5	16 v 18	22 v 24
	10:10 am	7 v 8		

Resolving Divisioning Issues



- When the above process has been completed there will be instances where there will still be less than three competitors or teams in each division. In such cases the following method should be used:
 - ✓ **Modify Age Groups:** Age groups may be broadened to achieve an equitable division of no less than three athletes or teams. The age group should then be re-named to accurately reflect the age range of the competitors.
- If there are still divisions of less than three competitors or teams:
 - ✓ **Modify Ability Range:** The ability range may be broadened beyond the 15% guideline.
- If there are still divisions of less than three competitors or teams:
 - ✓ Combine athletes of different genders provided that it will not pose a risk to the health and safety of athletes to do so.
 - ✓ Final divisions of less than three athletes or teams are only permissible once age groups and ability range have been broadened as far as possible within the above guidelines.
 - ✓ Where exceptions to these criteria are necessary, competition management will review proposed modifications to these criteria and make a final decision based on the goal of providing the most dignified, safe and challenging competition experience for each athlete. Competition management has final authority concerning divisions and any variation from these criteria. Protests based on divisioning are not allowed.

Proxy Events



- Proxy events are used in some cases to division for multiple events at a competition by either using one preliminary event or one designated final event.
- For example, in the case of alpine skiing, a Giant Slalom proxy event may be used to division for the finals for the Slalom, Giant Slalom, and Super Giant Slalom races. In the case that a proxy event is used for divisioning, an athlete's performance in any of the final races may be used to division for subsequent finals at that competition.
- For example, if a Giant Slalom proxy event is used to division for three events (Giant Slalom, Slalom and Super Giant Slalom), and, after the first event has been run (Giant Slalom), it becomes clear based on performance that an athlete needs to be moved to a higher or lower division, competition

Responsibilities of the Athletes



- Sportsmanship is important in developing a well-rounded athlete. Athletes are expected to follow the Special Olympics Official Sport Rules and the Athlete's Code of Conduct. Athletes who break the rules may be disqualified from further participation.
- Athletes are also expected to give maximum effort when competing. This is the only way the divisioning process can work as it was intended. Athletes who do not participate honestly and with maximum effort in all preliminary trials and/or finals violate the true spirit of competition and may even be disqualified from competition.

Responsibilities of the Coach



- Coaches have an important role in an athlete's life. Next to family members, coaches interact more with athletes than anyone. In many instances, coaches become like family. Therefore, coaches must place the health and safety of Special Olympics athletes above all else. They too must follow the Official Sport Rules and the Coaches Code of Conduct.
- Coaches are also critical in helping competition management teams make divisioning work. Divisioning works best when coaches submit accurate preliminary scores. This helps athletes get into the proper division as well as gain additional competition experience.



Wrap Up

- When divisioning remember:
- An athlete's ability is the primary factor
- Create divisions of no less than three and no more than eight teams/individuals.
- Use the guideline of no more than 15% (.15) variance between the highest and lowest scores within any division.
- **No where in this presentation did you see the comment that only 3 teams or 3 individuals should be in a division.**