

4.2 Selection

Reference: SOA_4.2PP – Selection Policy and Procedure

1. POLICY STATEMENT

Special Olympics Australia is committed to an athlete selection policy that is non-discriminatory, fair to athletes and provide pathways for all athletes who wish to progress to a higher level. It will reflect the Special Olympics Inc. Sports rules and fundamental principle that ‘athletes of all ability levels have an equal opportunity to advance to the next higher-level competition provided the sport and event are offered at the next highest level of competition.’

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to support the objectives of:

- conducting selections in accordance with Special Olympics Inc. Sports rules and providing a pathway for all athletes who are striving to be the best they can possibly be.
- ensuring all athletes who are eligible for selection has the same opportunity regardless of where they live.
- providing a selection process that is fair and consistent for all athletes.

3. SCOPE

The policy is applicable to all athletes, coaches, volunteers, officials, committee members, and staff of Special Olympics Australia.

4. DEFINITIONS

Quota

A quota is the maximum number of athletes which may participate in any competition depending on the size and space of the venue and the time available to run the competition.

Special Olympics Australia Board

Directors acting as a Board of Directors.

National Sports Advisory Group

The national sports advisory group reports to the General Manager for sport and works with the Chief Executive Officer to provide advice on matters concerning the sports program and support the process in setting quotas for national games. The committee is made up of experienced State Committee Sports Managers.

State and National Selection Committee

The selection committee is made up of volunteers representing a range of skills and expertise with sound knowledge of Special Olympics philosophy, structure, rules, and conventions.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

Head of Sport and Competition

The Head of sport and competition is responsible for ensuring the organisation understands and is supported effectively to comply with this policy and procedure.

National Selection Committee

The national selection committee are responsible for reviewing from time to time the selection process and advising management on the organisations policy and procedure position for the selection of athletes at competitions.

The members of the selection committee are responsible for acting with integrity, objectively and impartially while overseeing the selection process. The selection committee is responsible for ensuring that the selection process is

conducted in accordance with the official Special Olympics Inc. Sports rules.

National Sport Advisory Group

The key responsibilities of the group include advising on sports development and competition events, including World Games.

State Selection Committee

The members of the selection committee are responsible for acting with integrity, objectively and impartially while overseeing the selection process. The selection committee is responsible for ensuring that the selection process is conducted in accordance with the official Special Olympics Inc. Sports rules.

6. PROCEDURE

6.1 Eligibility for Advancement

An athlete is eligible to be considered for advancement to the next level of competition provided the registered athlete has participated in the previous level of competition. Training and competition must be in the same sport the athlete will participate in at the next level of competition.

6.1.2 Club or Regional Competition

To be eligible for club or regional events an athlete must be registered with SOA or a Sports club affiliated with SOA and must be 8 years of age on the first day of Competition. Also:

– Has been appropriately trained by a qualified coach in their respective sport and meets the required Minimum Training standards**

** Minimum training standards: Athletes must reach a level where they have the necessary sports skills and physical fitness to be adequately prepared to compete meaningfully and safely before entering any club or regional competition. This is typically a minimum of 8 sessions under a qualified coach to enable an athlete to reach this standard.

Coaches Will:

- Develop the athlete's sports skills and physical fitness.
- Prepare athletes adequately for competition.
- Regularly monitor and record athlete's performance.
- Ensure the scores/times/distance submitted on an athlete's entry form are true, accurate and current.

6.1.3 State Competition, annually or every 2 years

To be eligible for State Competition an athlete must be registered with SOA or a Sports club affiliated with SOA and must be 8 years of age on the first day of competition. Also:

- Have competed in a minimum of 2 club or regional events prior to the state competition to obtain accurate entry information.
- Regularly trained with a qualified coach in the lead up to the event.
- Current and accurate Scores/Times/Distances are recorded and are submitted by the coach prior to competition.

Coaches Will:

- Develop the athlete's sports skills and physical fitness.
- Prepare athletes adequately for competition.
- Regularly monitor and record athlete's performance.
- Ensure the scores/times/distance submitted on an athlete's entry form are true, accurate and current.

6.2 National Games (including Junior specific events) Every 4 years.

6.2.1 Quotas

Quotas are determined by the National Sports Advisory Group in consultation with the Games Organising Committee. Quotas are informed by a number of factors including competition numbers per sport, which states/territories they are registered from and venue limitations. The decision on the quota is then submitted to the Chief Executive Officer for approval and communicated to the states/territories.

6.2.2 Minimum Age

Athletes must be at least 8 years of age at the first day of competition and for Junior specific events not more than 15 years of age on the first day of competition. Athletes must be endorsed and strictly meet the criteria for the Support ratio of 1:4 for National Games and 1:3 for Junior Events.

6.2.3 Athlete Selection Process – Individual Sports

Athlete selections will be based on the competition and results from the Special Olympics Australia approved qualifying State Events. For an athlete to be considered for selection at the qualifying State event an athlete must have progressed through all previous levels of competition and met the eligibility criteria for those competitions. All registered athletes will be eligible for selection.

At this level of competition, all affiliate members must be full members of Special Olympics Australia.

The State Selection Committee will facilitate the athlete selection process. The athlete selection will be conducted in accordance with the official Special Olympics Inc. Sports rules (Article 1)

In filling the allocated Special Olympics quota per sport:

- Priority is given to first place finishers from all individual divisions* of the sport/event. If the number of first place finishers exceeds the quota, athletes are selected by random draw.
- If there are not enough first place finishers to fill the quota, all the first-place finishers are automatically selected. The remaining unfilled quota shall be filled by a random draw of second place finishers from individual divisions of the sport.
- This process is repeated, adding each place of finish as necessary, until the quota is filled.
- Emergencies (alternate athletes) will also be selected at this time.

*Selections will be conducted from individual events. Relays, team or pair events results will not be considered for individual sports.

6.2.4 Athlete Selection Process - Team Sports

Selections will be based on the competition and results from the Special Olympics Australia approved qualifying State Events.

For team sports (such as basketball, cricket, football, softball) selection will be based on selecting a team of athletes of similar ability. Similar ability teams can be selected from any division/level and depending on participation numbers and quota requirements, selection might not be from the highest division.

The National Sport Advisory Group shall determine the divisions/level required at the National event.

A Sport (specific) Selection Panel (SSP) will be appointed by the State Committee and report to the State Committee to submit player recommendations to the State Selection Committee for selection of team sports. This SSP will be appointed prior to the qualifying event and will include representatives involved in the sport in their state.

The SSP will assess players during the qualifying competition and submit their final player assessment rating and recommended team/s of similar abilities (including alternates) to the State Selection Committee at the conclusion of the competition.

If more than one team meets the selection criteria, a random selection of the teams will take place to determine the team that is selected for the next level of competition.

The SSP will be required to conduct their reviews with the highest level of integrity and confidentiality, to act objectively and demonstrate impartiality in their findings, opinions, and recommendations.

6.2.5 Club Endorsement

Following the athlete selection process, via the Club Chair, each accredited Club will receive a confidential list of potential athletes (including emergency members) to be offered positions on a State Team.

Each accredited Club must appoint an independent Panel made up of at least three members to complete endorsements on the list of potential athletes. The state sports coordinator must be included in the decision-making

process.

Based on the ratio of 1 team official to 4 athletes, the Club Panel will be requested to submit endorsements, via the Special Olympics Australia Endorsement Form and within the required timeframe, for each athlete, verifying the following:

- An athlete's ability to adhere to the Special Olympics Australia Code of Conduct.
- If an athlete has a behavioral and/or social problem, that it will not interfere with team harmony and can be managed in a Support ratio of 1:4 ratio.
- An athlete's medical condition would not be detrimental to the athlete or team.
- In not endorsing any athlete for selection based on the above criteria, the accredited Club must support their decision outlining any issue and how this will be managed for future selection opportunities. It is recommended that a management plan is developed in consultation with the athlete and the athlete's parent, carer or guardian. This is to be submitted with the Club's recommendation to the State Selection Committee.
- Each athlete considered for endorsement must not be endorsed if a current violation of the athletes code of conduct is in place, please refer all cases to Special Olympics Australia General Manager Athlete and Corporate Services.

6.2.6 Athlete Offer & Acceptance

On receipt of club feedback (within required timeframe) athletes will be forwarded written offers to join the State Team, which will require the athlete to accept or decline the offer.

Acceptance will be subject to return of necessary documentation including reviewing the Athlete Code of Conduct.

6.3 World Games

6.3.1 Quotas

Special Olympics Inc. and the World Games Organising Committee determine the quota numbers per sport. These are allocated to each Special Olympics Region (i.e., Special Olympics Asia Pacific) and divided between the National Accredited Programs in that region, based on participation numbers per sport.

Upon receiving a quota and invitation to attend a World Games, the Special Olympics Australia Board will assess the feasibility of accepting the full quota from both a financial and non-financial perspective and will sign off on the size of the team and the budget.

Following Board approval Special Olympics Australia will advise the States of the National Team and sport quota allocations.

6.3.2 Minimum Age

Special Olympic Australia's minimum age for travelling to the World Games is 15. Any athlete who is under the age of 15 at the time of departure for the World Games is ineligible for selection.

6.3.3 Athlete Selection Process – Individual Sports

Selections will be based on the competition and results from the Special Olympic Australia approved qualifying National Event.

The National Selection Committee will facilitate the Athlete Selection Process with input and advice from the appointed National Team Head of Delegation and National Team Head Coach for each sport.

Athlete selection will be conducted in accordance with the official Special Olympics Inc. Sports rules (Article 1)

In filling the allocated Special Olympics Inc. quota per sport:

- Priority is given to first place finishers from all individual divisions* of the sport/event. If the number of first place finishers exceeds the quota, athletes are selected by random draw.

- If there are not enough first place finishers to fill the quota, all the first-place finishers are automatically selected. The remaining unfilled quota shall be filled by a random draw of second place finishers from individual divisions of the sport.
- This process is repeated, adding each place of finish as necessary, until the quota is filled.
- Emergencies (alternate athletes) will also be selected at this time.

*Selections will be conducted from individual events. Relays, team or pair events results will not be considered for individual sports.

6.3.4 Athlete Selection Process - Team Sports

Selections will be based on the competition and results from the Special Olympics Australia approved qualifying National Event.

For team sports (such as basketball, cricket, football, softball and Netball) selection will be based on selecting a team of athletes of similar ability. Similar ability teams can be selected from any division/level, and depending on participation numbers and quota requirements, selection might not be from the highest division. Special Olympics International will determine the required division/level at World Games.

A Sport (specific) Selection Panel (SSP) will be appointed to submit player recommendations to the National Selection Committee for selection of team sports. This SSP will be appointed prior to the qualifying event and will include a generic National/State Sports Organisation representative, the appointed National Team Head Coach and where possible the National Team Assistant Coach.

With Team entries the appointed State Head Coach will be required to submit an Individual Assessment Rating Form, which includes each athlete's position/s and playing number.

The SSP will assess players during the qualifying competition and submit their final player assessment rating and recommended team/s of similar abilities (including alternates) to the National Selection Committee at the conclusion of the competition.

If more than one team meets the selection criteria, a random selection of the teams will take place to determine the team that is selected for the next level of competition.

The SSP will be required to conduct their reviews with the highest level of integrity and confidentiality, to act objectively and demonstrate impartiality in their findings, opinions, and recommendations.

6.3.5 State Endorsement

Following the athlete selection process, via the State Committee Chair, will receive a confidential list of potential athletes (including emergency members) to be offered a position on the National Team.

Each State Committee must appoint an independent panel made up of at least three members (i.e., Head of Delegation from State team, State Committee Chair or delegate, State Committee Sports Manager) to complete endorsements on the list of potential athletes.

Based on the ratio of 1 team official to 4 athletes, the Panel will be requested to submit endorsements, via the Special Olympics Australia Endorsement Form and within the required timeframe, for each athlete, verifying the following:

- An athlete's ability to adhere to Special Olympics Australia Code of Conduct.
- If an athlete has a behavioral and/or social problem, that will not interfere with team harmony and can be managed in a support ratio of 1:4.
- An athlete's medical condition would not be detrimental to an athlete or team.
- In not endorsing any athlete for selection based on the above criteria, the panel must support their decision outlining any issue and how this will be managed for future selection opportunities. It is recommended that a

management plan is developed in consultation with the athlete and the athlete's parent, carer or guardian. This is to be submitted with the panel's recommendation to the National Selection Committee.

6.3.6 Athlete Offer and Acceptance

On receipt of State Committee feedback (within required timeframe) athletes will be forwarded written offers to join the National Team, which will require the athlete to accept or decline the offer.

Acceptance will be subject to return of necessary documentation including signed Code of Conduct, completed Medical Forms as required by Special Olympics International, and Passport Eligibility.

6.4 International Invitational Games

6.4.1 Quotas

Special Olympics Australia is occasionally invited to take part in national and international competitions. Depending on the specific invitation these events may be for one or more sports and may be open to individuals and/or teams. On receiving an invitation and quota the Special Olympics Australia Board, in concert with the National Sports Advisory Group, will assess whether to accept the invitation, taking financial and other aspects into consideration.

If the invitation is accepted the Board will sign off on the size of the team and the budget and proceed to announce the competition opportunity.

6.4.2 Minimum Age

Athletes must be a registered athlete who is at least the age of 15 years at the first day of competition.

6.4.3 Eligibility

Priority shall be given to athletes that have not represented their Country, State or club as a Special Olympics Australia representative in the current or preceding calendar year of the Invitational Event.

6.4.4 Athlete Selection Process

Depending on the conditions outlined in the invitation, Special Olympics Australia will ask for Expressions of Interest from States/Territories that wish to be part of the invitational event.

States may express an interest to fill the full quota for a sport/team or just the option for individuals to be part of a National delegation.

The appropriate selection process for any particular invitation will be determined by the make-up of the team (i.e., whether the team is a state or a national team).

The State Committee Chairs will be required to acknowledge acceptance in writing of an athlete and official allocation plus the criteria for filling the quota.

If a State cannot fill a quota based on the criteria, they must forfeit the quota. The National Sports Advisory Group re-distributes the quota to another State that can fill the quota based on the criteria.

The independent State Selection Committee are to conduct:

- The athlete selection process in accordance with the National Selection Policy for athletes considering the criteria, participation/results in a nominated state selection event, age, code of conduct, medical and support-ratio requirements.
- The official's selection process in accordance with the National Selection Policy for Officials.

6.5 National Winter Games

6.5.1 Quotas

Special Olympics National Winter Games take place every four years. They provide athletes with the opportunity to compete in a national alpine competition for both Alpine Skiing and Snowboarding. Special Olympics Australia, with National and State Wintersports Coordinators will determine the quota for National Winter Games (if required).

6.5.2 Minimum Age

Competition is open age and athletes must be at least 8 years of age from the first day of competition.

6.5.3 Eligibility

Athletes need to attend a minimum of one Wintersports camp/program per year in at least 2 of the 3 years up to and including National Winter Games year (except new athletes who need to be registered for a minimum of 1 year and attend at least 1 camp/program in the year prior to National Winter Games). Camps/programs that are recognised include:

- Special Olympics Australia Wintersports camp
- DWA Race Week
- NSW and VIC Interschool's
- DWA Resort Service Program

6.5.4 Athlete Selection Process

Attendance is open to all athletes who have participated in the Special Olympics Australia Wintersports program and meet the above eligibility criteria. The opportunity will be communicated to all Special Olympics Australia registered athlete's participating in the Wintersports program and they can nominate to participate at the Games.

6.5.5 State Endorsement

Upon collation of athlete nominations, the National Wintersports Coordinator will provide the list to each State Committee for endorsement. A panel will liaise with the State and State Wintersports Coordinator to gain endorsement for each athlete.

Based on the ratio of one team official to four athletes, the panel will be requested to submit endorsements, via the Special Olympics Australia endorsement form and within the required timeframe, for each athlete, verifying the following:

- An athlete's ability to adhere to the Special Olympics Australia Code of Conduct.
- If an athlete has a behavioural and/or social problem, that will not interfere with team harmony and could be managed in a support ratio of 1:4.
- An athlete's medical condition would not be detrimental to a travelling team.
- If a State does not endorse an athlete for selection based on any of the above criteria, the State must support their decision in writing, referring to any issues and outlining how they have managed and addressed with the athlete and the athlete's parent/carer or guardian. This must be submitted along with the club's recommendations to the State Committee.
- In not endorsing any athlete for selection based on the above criteria, the state must support their decision outlining any issue and how this will be managed for future selection opportunities. It is recommended that a management plan is developed in consultation with the athlete and the athlete's parent, carer or guardian. This is to be submitted with the Club's recommendation to the State Committee.

6.5.6 Athlete Offer and Acceptance

The list of confirmed athletes is sent to the State Committee Chair by the Facilitator for the process to be signed off. The State will inform athletes in writing when an offer is made. The letter will include information regarding any relevant levy amounts and will seek formal acceptance of the offer from the athlete.

7. SELECTION VARIATIONS**7.1 Variation to the policy**

In consultation with the National Sports Advisory Group and National Selection Committee, variations to the selection policy, its process and eligibility requirements may be applied in certain circumstances this can include but not limited to.

- Federal and State government health directives

- Limited access to sport facilities.
- Policies and procedures pertaining to national Sporting organisations.
- SOI World games quota allocations
- International and state travel restrictions.
- SOI and SOAP directives.
- Special Olympics Australia directives

Changes that may be applied can include but are not limited to policy areas below.

- Athlete eligibility for further advancement
- The selection processes.
- Qualifying events.

7.2 Adoptions of variations and limitations

All changes and variation to the policy must be fully endorsed by the National advisory group and implemented by the state and National Selection Committees. The National Sports Advisory group represents all Special Olympics Australia State programs and includes Special Olympics Sports experts.

The adopted variations shall apply only to the events that are affected by circumstances that require decision making to support the health and wellbeing of Special Olympics Australia Athletes and volunteers and therefore requires changes to normal operations.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

SOA_3.1PP - Athlete Eligibility
SOA_5.6PP - Registration
SOA_6.3PP - Code of Conduct
Special Olympics Official General Rules

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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