



13. Criteria for Advancement to Higher Level Competition

13.1 Fundamental Principle

- 13.1.1 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.

13.2 Eligibility for Advancement

- 13.2.1 An athlete is eligible to advance to the next competition provided she or he has:
 - 13.2.1.1 Participated in the previous level of competition (e.g., an athlete must compete in Program level Games before advancing to the World Games), with the following exception:
 - 13.2.1.2 An athlete or team for which there has been no competition opportunity at a Tournament or Games shall be eligible to advance to the next level of competition if one or more of the following criteria apply:
 - 13.2.1.2.1 There is low enrollment of athletes/teams within the Program structure;
 - 13.2.1.2.2 The opportunity to provide equitable competition within the Program structure is low or non-existent;
 - 13.2.1.2.3 It is cost prohibitive for the Program to conduct the event/competition within its Program structure; or
 - 13.2.1.2.4 The athletes/teams have been training or competing in mainstream competition.
 - 13.2.1.2 An athlete or team for which there has been no competition opportunity at a Tournament or Games shall be eligible to advance to the next level of competition if one or more of the following criteria apply:
 - 13.2.1.2.1 There is low enrollment of athletes/teams within the Program structure;
 - 13.2.1.2.2 The opportunity to provide equitable competition within the Program structure is low or non-existent;
 - 13.2.1.2.3 It is cost prohibitive for the Program to conduct the event/competition within its Program structure; or
 - 13.2.1.2.4 The athletes/teams have been training or competing in mainstream competition.
- 13.2.2 Training and competition must be in the same sport the athlete will participate in at the next level of competition.
- 13.2.3 If additional events within that sport are available at the next level of competition, athletes must receive proper training.

13.3 Procedure for Athlete Team and Coach Selection

- 13.3.1 Programs must publish the process and criteria in advance.
- 13.3.2 The Accredited Program, working with the GOC, determines the number of athletes or teams that will be allowed to participate at the competition in question by sport and/or event. This is the quota to be filled.
- 13.3.3 The Accredited Program identifies the number of athletes or teams eligible for advancement within the sport/event based on participation in competition at the lower level.
- 13.3.4 If the number of eligible athletes or teams does not exceed the quota, all athletes and teams shall advance.
- 13.3.5 If the number of eligible athletes or teams exceeds the quota, athletes or teams that advance shall be selected as follows:
 - 13.3.5.1 Priority is given to first place finishers from all divisions of the sport/event. If the number of first place finishers exceeds the quota, select athletes or teams to advance by random draw.
 - 13.3.5.2 If there are not enough first place finishers to fill the quota, all first place finishers shall advance. The remaining quota shall be filled by a random draw of second place finishers from all divisions of the sport/event.
 - 13.3.5.3 If the quota is large enough for all second place finishers to advance, the remaining quota shall be filled by a random draw of third place finishers from all divisions of the sport/event.
 - 13.3.5.4 Repeat this process, adding each place of finish as necessary, until the quota is filled.
 - 13.3.5.5 These procedures apply to both individual and team sports, including Unified Sports.
- 13.3.6 Accredited Programs are encouraged to develop selection criteria for coaches based on certification, technical background and practical experience that will enhance the competitive experience of Special Olympics athletes. SOI shall have the right to review approved deviations

13.4 Adherence

- 13.4.1 The criteria for athlete advancement is an essential component of the Special Olympics movement. Under extraordinary circumstances when the criteria cannot be met, authority

- to deviate from established procedures may be requested, provided the alternate selection procedures do not conflict with the Fundamental Principle of athlete advancement.
- 13.4.2 Accredited Programs may request authorization to add additional criteria for advancement based on behavior, medical or judicial considerations and/or to deviate from these advancement procedures due to the size or nature of their Program.
 - 13.4.3 Requests to deviate from the established procedures must be submitted in writing as follows:
 - 13.4.3.1 For advancement to Multi-National, Regional and World Games: SO- World Games Department will consider and approve/ disapprove all requests.
 - 13.4.3.2 For advancement to Competitions at or below the Program Level: The Accredited Program will consider and approve/disapprove all requests. SOI shall have the right to review approved deviations.

13.5 Special Considerations

- 13.5.1 In the event an athlete is unavailable to attend a competition event due to a conflict, the following procedures will apply;
 - 13.5.1.1 Area Competition
 - 13.5.1.1.1 The athlete will be permitted to attend another Area event upon request from their Area Director to another Area Director. The athlete will be eligible for advancement when they make such request prior to the registration deadline of the other Area's competition.
 - 13.5.1.1.2 In the case the conflict arises just prior to, or the day of the event and is due to illness or death of a family member, the athlete must contact the Area Director within 24 hours and provide documentation to be eligible to attend another Area's competition.
 - 13.5.1.1.2.1 If the sport involves quotas, the athlete competing will be charged to his/her Area's quota regardless of where they participate in the event.
 - 13.5.1.1.2.2 If the sport involves participation or placement for advancement, the athlete will be placed in a division consistent with sport rules.
 - 13.5.1.1.3 In the case where the final Area competition is missed due to illness or death of a family member, the Area Director must contact the State office within 24 hours in order to file an appeal for the athlete to advance and be eligible for placement.
 - 13.5.1.1.4 Appeals will not be heard for cases where the published date of competition was missed and the athlete failed to make a reasonable effort to attend another Area event.
 - 13.5.1.2 Sectional Competition
 - 13.5.1.2.1 In the case of a known conflict, the coach/LTP coordinator must contact the State office prior to registration for that event in order to secure an alternate Sectional site.
 - 13.5.1.2.2 In the case where a conflict arises just prior to or the day of the event, and is due to illness or death of a family member, the coach/LTP coordinator must contact the State office within 24 hours and provide documentation to be eligible to attend another Sectional competition.
 - 13.5.1.2.1.1 If the sport involves quotas, the athlete competing will be charged to his/her Area's quota regardless of where they participate in the event.
 - 13.5.1.2.1.2 If the sport involves participation or placement for advancement, the athlete will be placed in a division consistent with sport rules.
 - 13.5.1.2.3 In the case where the final Sectional competition is missed due to illness or death of a family member, the coach/LTP coordinator must contact the State office within 24 hours in order to file an appeal for the athlete to advance and be eligible for placement.
 - 13.5.1.2.4 Appeals will not be heard for cases where the published date of competition was missed and the athlete failed to make a reasonable effort to attend another Sectional event.

13.5.1.3 Team/League Competition

13.5.1.3.1 If an athlete exceeds more than two (2) absences on competition dates during the league, a coach/LTP coordinator must contact the State office within 24 hours in order to file an appeal.

13.5.1.4 Appeal process

13.5.1.4.1 Upon documentation to the State office, an appeals committee will hear the case and make a determination within 1 business day, whether the athlete may compete for advancement at the next level.

13.5.1.4.2 The committee will consist of but not limited to;

SONJ coach
SONJ athlete
SONJ Area Director
SONJ staff member

13.5.1.4.3 The decision by the appeals committee will be the final decision and decided on a case-by-case basis.