



Match Fixing Policy

Values

Everyone involved in sport joins with good intentions, and we are all expected to do our best to treat each other with respect and comply with our policies and rules. Special Olympics New Zealand athletes with intellectual disabilities must be cared for, treated with respect and their welfare placed at the centre of everything we do in the sport.

Special Olympics New Zealand (SONZ) knows everyone involved in the sport is here because of a shared passion for the sport and care for the people involved. We all want to be fair, impartial, responsible, and trustworthy in all our actions for the sport. We need to protect and uphold the integrity of the sport and those who work and play within it, against the risks that arise from match-fixing. Match-fixing has no place in our sport.

Purpose

Match-fixing is a type of competition manipulation in sport because it involves deliberately changing how sport is played and the outcome of a match for individual gain. While it has not been a major problem for sport in Aotearoa New Zealand in the past, we all must be vigilant in keeping an eye out for it, so it doesn't become common.

This policy aims to highlight how match fixing works in the Special Olympics context and the processes implemented to ensure that this doesn't happen at Special Olympics Events.

Application

This policy applies to anyone involved in Special Olympics New Zealand, including volunteers, participants, supporters, club members, employees, service providers, and families/whānau of participants.

What is match-fixing?

Match-fixing is a form of competition manipulation that threatens the integrity of sport. In the wider sporting context match fixing means any improper alteration of a competition that can be gambled upon, such as bets placed on arranged outcomes for money. Match-fixing is a crime.

Betting on a SONZ event is unlikely to happen due to the nature of the Sport however, it is prohibited, and any betting would be a breach to the SONZ Code of Conduct and may result in disqualification and a SONZ ban. In the context of SONZ a form of Match-fixing may occur where a person tries to improperly influence the overall result of a game, race, or event for personal benefit. An example of this is where this may take place so that a team or athlete can be placed in a lower division giving them a higher chance of receiving a medal.

Examples of ways the result can be deliberately influenced include:

- athletes deliberately don't give maximum effort
- players deliberately make mistakes, errors or miss shot
- a coach fields a weakened team during divisioning

Controls to Mitigate Match Fixing

The principles of divisioning

At Special Olympics competitions, all athletes are given an equal chance to participate, perform and be recognized for doing their best by their teammates, family and fans. This happens through a unique process called divisioning. The outcome of divisioning is that athletes are ultimately grouped wherever possible by similar age, gender, and ability giving everyone a reasonable chance to win. You can see divisioning in action in all Special Olympic sports in various forms.

How are divisions set?

- There should be no more than a 15 percent difference between the most highly skilled athlete or team and the lowest skilled athlete or team in each division.
- Special Olympics suggests a guideline of no more than 15% variance between the highest and lowest scores within any division. This 15% guideline is not a rule.

The Maximum Effort Rule

The Maximum Effort rule is used to ensure that participants are competing with Maximum Effort at all stages of competition and is used:

- to provide a fair competitive environment for athletes, and
- as a resource for officials/event directors to create a fair competitive environment

Time based sports often apply a percentage rule, where a percentage is established and published for each event in which the rule will be applied. Athletes and teams may not exceed this percentage of improvement from their divisioning score to their final score. If an athlete or team exceeds this performance percentage, disqualification may take place.

For full details on the divisioning process and the maximum effort rule see the Special Olympics Sport Rules:

[Sports-Essentials-Sports-Article-1-Rules-2021-English.pdf \(specialolympics.org\)](#)

Summary

Whilst match fixing in Special Olympics is different to the wider sporting context and the ramifications are less severe it is still taken seriously to ensure that we provide fair competition for all athletes.