



Special Olympics New Zealand Athlete Participation Framework



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The Special Olympics New Zealand (SONZ) Participation Framework outlines the participation opportunities available to our athletes, the tiered competition pathway, the guidelines and recommendations for each tier.

The purpose of the framework is to ensure:

- Competitive opportunities for all levels of ability
- Through divisioning every athlete has an equal chance to excel during competition
- Regular competition opportunities are available in each sport offered by Clubs and athletes are adequately prepared for each new level of competition
- Athletes progress from tier one through the levels in the same sport, as they are ready, trained and able to cope with the challenges of each different environment

TIER ONE – LOCAL COMPETITION

The beginning of the competition pathway for Special Olympic athletes – Tier One events are designed to introduce the athlete to the rules, regulations and processes of sports competition. They are usually (but not always) one day local competitions where other clubs are invited to compete.

TIER TWO – REGIONAL COMPETITION

After attending a Tier One event, attendance at a Tier Two competition (in the same sport as the Tier One) seeks to provide a more competitive and challenging environment for athletes, where possible these regional events should involve travel, an overnight stay and other social aspects to expand the horizons of participating athletes from across multiple clubs.

TIER THREE – NATIONAL COMPETITION

For many, attendance at an event at this level will be the pinnacle of their competition pathway and is a significant accomplishment. In NZ the National Summer and National Winter Games run by SONZ, are held every four years with clubs and athletes gathering from around the country to take part in multi day competitions.

TIER FOUR – INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION

Special Olympic World Games are multi-day sports competitions held every four years that gather athletes from around the world.

SONZ is responsible for selecting all international delegations from those athletes who have competed in a Tier 3 event.



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New Zealand

Tier One Local Competition

Eligibility

- Athletes and volunteers must be registered with Special Olympics New Zealand
- Athletes must hold a valid medical certificate

Event Requirements

- Event to be scheduled on the SONZ Event Calendar
- Other SONZ Clubs are invited to attend the competition – to ensure athletes are competing against athletes they do not normally train with
- Usually these events are one day only – noting regional travel times and resources may impact this on occasion
- Official event programme will be created by SONZ
- Tier one event divisioning is undertaken prior to competition starting
- Event results are captured in SONZ Games Management System (GMS)
- Clubs award certificates or ribbons

Recommended

- Athletes and coaches undertake the recommended training of a minimum of ten sessions/hours, to best prepare for tier one competition
- Consideration be given when selecting the sport to compete in, to future competitions – noting Tier 2 (regional competition) attendance can only be in the same sport the athlete has attended a Tier 1 competition in
- Where possible qualified technical sport officials will adjudicate the competition

NB.

- Participation in a mainstream sport event can act as a Tier 1 competition (for the purposes of achieving Tier 2 eligibility). Subject to approval from SONZ and the National Sporting Organisation.



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Tier Two Regional Competition

Eligibility

- Athletes have competed in a Tier 1 competition in the same sport they wish to register
- Athletes and volunteers must be registered with Special Olympics New Zealand
- Athletes must hold a valid medical certificate

Event Requirements

- Event to be scheduled on the SONZ Event Calendar
- Minimum of two SONZ Clubs registered to compete – to ensure athletes are competing against athletes they do not normally train with
- Usually these events are scheduled over two days – unless sanctioned by SONZ
- Official event programme will be created by SONZ
- Qualified technical sport officials will adjudicate the competition
- Tier two event divisioning is usually undertaken at the end of day one of competition
- Event results are captured in SONZ Games Management System (GMS)
- Clubs award ribbons and medals
- Maximum Effort policy applies

Recommended

- Athletes and coaches undertake the recommended training of a minimum of ten sessions/hours, to best prepare for tier two competition (this is in addition to any training undertaken to prepare for tier one competition)
- Consideration be given when selecting the sport to compete in, to future competitions - noting Tier 3 (national competition) attendance can only be where the athlete has attended a Tier 2 in that same sport within the qualification period
- The event to include where possible an overnight stay and other off field social aspects in the programme



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Tier Three National Competition

Special Olympics New Zealand host national competitions every four years – the National Summer Games and National Winter Games.

These National Games are multi-day sporting competitions, held on a residential basis which gather athletes from around the country to compete in a variety of season-specific sports.

Eligibility

- Athletes have competed in a Tier 1 and Tier 2 competition in the same sport prior to attending a tier 3 competition
- Athletes and volunteers must be registered with Special Olympics New Zealand
- Athletes must hold a valid medical certificate

Event Requirements

- Event to be scheduled on the SONZ Event Calendar
- Official SONZ/SOI sport and divisioning rules will be used throughout the competition
- These events will be held over 3-4 days, with each sport programmed within the overall schedule as appropriate to the requirements of that sport
- The competition will offer a wide range of all disciplines and levels
- Qualified technical sport officials will adjudicate the competition
- Ribbons and medals will be awarded
- Maximum Effort policy applies

Recommended

- Athletes and coaches undertake the recommended training of a minimum of ten sessions/hours, since their tier two competition
- Consideration be given when selecting the sport to compete in, to future competitions - noting Tier 4 (international competition) attendance can only be where the athlete has attended a Tier 3 in that same sport within the qualification period
- The event to include where possible a number of other services and social engagements in the programme eg opening ceremony, healthy athletes programme etc



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Tier Four International Competition

Special Olympics World Games are held every four years – the World Summer Games and World Winter Games.

These International Games are multi-day sporting competitions, held on a residential basis which gather athletes from around the world to compete in a variety of season-specific sports and provide a unique opportunity for our athletes to experience International competition, travel and cultures.

To qualify for inclusion in a World Games, athletes must have participated in the same sport at the last National Games.

Eligibility

- Athletes have competed in a Tier 3 competition in the same sport prior to attending a tier 4 event
- Athletes and volunteers must be registered with Special Olympics New Zealand
- Athletes must hold a valid medical certificate

Event Requirements

- SONZ are responsible for selecting all International Delegations
- Selection camps will be attended by all athletes, coaches and support staff
- Invitation and attendance at events at this level will be approved by SONZ Board of Trustees with an allocated quota, budget and management plan

Recommended

- Special Olympics Clubs are encouraged to nominate athletes who they believe can cope with the pressure of international competition, time away from home and the associated challenges of international travel, team dynamics and fitness requirements