Special Olympics Sports Guide

Triathlon

Special Olympics Coaching Guide

Special Olympics

Acknowledgements

The Special Olympics movement is profoundly grateful for the support of the Annenberg Foundation which has underwritten the production of this guide and resource, supporting our global goals for coaches' excellence.

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Special Olympics would also like to thank the professionals, volunteers, coaches and athletes who helped in the production of the *Triathlon Coaching Guide,* including:

- Patricia Guerra Menendez
- Anne McLindon
- Paul Whichard
- Aldis Berzins
- Eddyline Media LLC

They have helped fulfill the mission of Special Olympics: to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for people 8 years of age and older with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

Special Olympics welcomes your ideas and comments for future revisions of this guide. We apologize if, for any reason, an acknowledgement has been inadvertently omitted.

TRIATHLON COACHING GUIDE

Planning a Triathlon Training & Competition Season

Table of Contents

Goals and Objectives

Realistic, yet challenging goals for each athlete are important to the motivation of the athlete. Goals establish and drive the action of both training and competition plans.

Goal Setting

Setting goals is a joint effort between the athlete and coach and should be used to establish the athlete's training and competition plan. Accomplishing goals during practice sessions in settings similar to the competition environment will instill confidence in the athlete. Confidence helps make sport participation fun and is critical to the athlete's motivation.

The main features of goal setting include:

- Stepping stones to success
- Short term and long term goals
- Acceptance by the athlete
- Variations in difficulty (easily attainable to challenging)
- Goal measurement

Athletes may be more motivated by accomplishing short term goals than long term goals. However, do not be afraid to challenge athletes and to include them in the goal setting process. Awareness of why the athlete is participating is important when setting goals. For example, ask the athlete, "What is your focus for this training session?"

There are several participation factors that may influence athlete motivation and goal setting:

- Age appropriateness
- Ability level
- Readiness level
- Athlete performance
- Family influence
- Peer influence
- Athlete preference

As a coach, you can enhance athlete motivation by:

- Providing more time and attention to an athlete when he/she is having difficulty learning a skill
- Rewarding small gains
- Developing additional measures of achievement other than winning
- Showing your athletes that they are important to you and that you are proud of them
- Filling your athletes with self-worth

Performance Goals Versus Outcome Goals

Effective goals focus on performance, not outcome. Performance is under the control of the athlete. An athlete may have an outstanding performance and not win a competition because other athletes have performed even better. Conversely, an athlete may perform poorly and still win an event if all other athletes performed at a lower level.

Setting Realistic Goals

Effective goals are perceived as challenging, not threatening. A challenging goal is difficult but attainable within a reasonable timeframe and with a reasonable amount of effort. A threatening goal is perceived as being beyond the athlete's current capability. Realistic goals are developed from a baseline of performance during the past one or two weeks.

Setting Specific Goals

Effective goals are clear and well defined. Athletes must understand specifically what they are trying to achieve. Goals such as "I want to be the best I can be" are vague. Vague or generalized goals are not achievable because they do not provide sufficient direction.

Setting Measureable Goals

Effective goals are defined by measureable amounts such as time, distance, or percentage. This provides a quantifiable way to measure performance and assess the athlete's progress toward successfully reaching the goal. Without a measurable goal, it is impossible to know when the athlete reaches the goal and they will miss out on the opportunity to celebrate their achievement.

Setting Time Specific Goals

Effective goals have a deadline or target date for achievement. This provides urgency and keeps the athlete focused on the desired outcome.

Prioritizing Goals

Effective goals are positively stated and are limited in number. This provides meaning to the athlete. Setting a limited number of goals requires that athletes and coaches decide what is important for continued development. Establishing a few, well thought out goals prevents the athlete from becoming overwhelmed.

Benefits of Goal Setting

- Increases athlete's level of physical fitness
- Teaches self discipline
- Teaches the athlete sports skills that are essential to a variety of other activities
- Provides the athlete with a means for self-expression and social interaction
- Provides motivation and focus

Short Term Triathlon Goals

Establishing a series of short term triathlon goals will help athletes gain confidence and achieve their long term triathlon goals. Examples of short term triathlon goals include:

- Understanding triathlon terms and the three stages of the triathlon competition (swim, bike and run)
- Understanding what a transition is (between the swim and bike stages and between the bike and run stages)

- Learning the safety rules of triathlon in all three stages
- Learning to swim in open water and breathe properly while swimming
- What to do when an athlete gets tired in the water
- Learning to ride a bike (including how to brake and how to change gears)
- How to clip in and out of bike pedal clips (if using biking shoes)
- How to set a running rhythm
- What to do at the finish line

Long Term Triathlon Goals

Quantifiable long term goals should also be set by each athlete. Long term goals will include the mastering of basic triathlon skills, appropriate social behavior and functional knowledge of the rules necessary to participate successfully in triathlon competitions. Examples of long term triathlon goals include:

- Obtaining a specific 5k run pace
- Completing a 750-meter open water swim without stopping
- Learning to sight and navigate in open water off buoys or landmarks
- Passing swim buoys on the left and right side
- Learning how to ride a bike in a more aerodynamic position
- Setting a plan for what to eat and drink before, during and after competition; and practicing before the race

Assessing Goals Checklist

1. Is the goal specific and measurable?
2. Is the goal realistic and attainable?
3. Is the goal challenging?
4. Does the goal sufficiently meet the athlete's needs?
5. Is the goal positively stated?
6. Is the goal under the athlete's control and focused on their performance and no one else's?
7. Is the goal a true goal and not a result?
8. Is the goal important enough to the athlete that they will want to work towards achieving it?
9. How will this goal make the athlete's life different?
10. What barriers might the athlete encounter in working toward this goal?
11. Does the goal have a deadline?

Planning a Triathlon Training & Competition Season

There are many skills to teach athletes during the course of a triathlon season. A season-long training plan will assist you in presenting skills in a systematic and effective manner.

The Special Olympics triathlon competition includes the following three athletic disciplines:

- 750 Meter Swim
- 20K Bike
- 5K Run

This is commonly referred to as a "Sprint" triathlon.

It is recommended that there be just one coach for all three disciplines. This allows one person to manage the workouts and know the athletes' physical capabilities and how tired they are.

It is very important to not only coach athletes through the three triathlon stages, but to also train athletes for the transitions between the swim and bike stages and between the bike and run stages.

Initial training sessions cover the basic skills that athletes need to work on and then move, as soon as possible, into having them train in all three disciplines. It is not unusual for athletes to have stronger skills in one of the three disciplines and to have basic skills in the other two. As a coach, you can assess which disciplines each athlete needs more work in and invest more time in that sport at the beginning.

Sample Training Sessions

The ideal coaching session for young people lasts between 45 and 75 minutes, depending on the age and ability level of the athletes. Athletes should complete the following training sessions each week:

Beginner Triathletes:

- Two (2) Swim Sessions
- Two (2) Bike Sessions
- Two (2) Run Sessions

Intermediate-Advanced Triathletes (who are conditioned):

- Three (3) Swim Sessions
- Three (3) Bike Sessions
- Three (3) Run Sessions

If an athlete has time and is physically able, a fourth session can be added during the week for the weaker discipline(s). Elite athletes can complete 4-5 sessions per discipline each week.

Gym sessions for strength training and one rest day should also be worked into the schedule. Balancing sport and life, along with proper recovery, are critical components of triathlon.

Following is a basic training schedule for a triathlon program. It is important that each athlete have a personal training program designed for them in order to help them achieve their maximum level of performance.

Sample Practice Schedule

Sunday	40k Bike, 750 Meter Swim (to relax)
Monday	Rest Day
Tuesday	6 x 200 Meter Run (with 1 min recovery), Gym routine, Short Speed Swim
Wednesday	Short Hilly Bike, 1500 Meter Swim
Thursday	4k Run, Gym routine, Short Swim with fins and a pull buoy
Friday	20k Bike, 700 Meter Swim (easy)
Saturday	8k Run

Essential Components of Planning a Triathlon Training Session

Each training session needs to contain the same essential elements. The amount of time spent on each element will depend on the goal of the training session, the time of season the session is in, and the amount of time available for a particular session. The following elements need to be included in an athlete's daily training program.

- ❑ Warm ups
- ❑ Previously taught skills
- ❑ New skills
- ❑ Competition experience
- ❑ Feedback on performance

Coaches must understand that nutrition, hydration, rest and weight training in the gym are all part of triathlon training. Each is important for preventing injuries. It is also a good idea to incorporate TRX suspension training into strength sessions.

Following is a chart of additional elements that should be included in triathlon training:

Training Element	Frequency
Speed Session	Weekly
Fartleck (interval) Session	Weekly
Long Distance Sessions	Weekly
COMBOS (short distance swim, bike and run sets with transitions repeated several times) or Brick workout (training in two disciplines, one right after the other, such as biking and then running right after)	Every two (2) weeks
Simulated Competition (75% of the race distance)	Monthly

The final step in planning a training session is designing what the athlete is actually going to do. Remember when creating a training session using the essential components of a training session, the progression through the session allows for a gradual build-up of physical activity including the following elements:

1. Easy to difficult
2. Slow to fast
3. Known to unknown
4. General to specific
5. Start to finish (logical progression)

Principles of Effective Training Sessions

Keep all athletes active	Athletes need to be active listeners
Create clear, concise goals	Learning improves when athletes know what is expected of them
Give clear, concise instructions	Demonstrations increase the accuracy of instruction
Record progress	You and your athletes chart progress together
Give positive feedback	Emphasize and reward things the athlete is doing well
Provide variety	Vary exercises – prevent boredom
Encourage enjoyment	Training and competition is fun, help keep it this way for you and your athletes
Create progressions	Learning is increased when information progresses from: • Known to unknown – discovering new things successfully • Simple to complex – seeing that "I" can do it • General to specific – this is why I am working so hard
Plan maximum use of resources	Use what you have and improvise for equipment that you do not have – think creatively
Allow for individual differences	Different athletes, different learning rates, different capacities

Tips for Conducting Successful Training Sessions

1. Assign assistant coaches their roles and responsibilities in accordance with your training plan.
2. When possible, have all equipment and stations prepared before the athletes arrive.
3. Introduce and acknowledge coaches and athletes.
4. Review the intended program with everyone. Keep athletes informed of changes in schedule or activities.
5. Alter the plan according to the weather and the facility in order to accommodate the needs of the athletes.
6. Change activities before the athletes become bored and lose interest.
7. Keep drills and activities brief so athletes do not get bored. Keep everyone busy with an exercise even if it is rest.
8. Devote the end of the practice to a fun, group activity that can incorporate challenge and fun, always giving them something to look forward to at the end of practice.
9. If an activity is going well, it is often useful to stop the activity while interest is high.
10. Summarize the session and announce arrangements for the next session.
11. Keep the **fun** in fundamentals.

Tips for Conducting Safe Training Sessions

Coaches have a responsibility to ensure that athletes know, understand and appreciate the risks of triathlon. The safety and well-being of the athletes is the coach's primary concern. Triathlon is not a dangerous sport, but accidents do occur when coaches forget to take safety precautions. It is the head coach's responsibility to minimize the occurrence of injuries by providing safe conditions.

1. Establish clear rules for behavior at your first practice and enforce them.
   - Keep your hands to yourself.
   - Listen to the coach.
   - When you hear the whistle, Stop, Look, and Listen.
   - Ask the coach before you leave the training area.
2. Have a plan to immediately remove athletes from inclement weather.
3. Make sure athletes bring water to every practice, especially in hotter climates.
4. Check your first aid kit; restock supplies as necessary.
5. Train all athletes and coaches on emergency procedures.
6. Choose a safe practice area. Do not practice in areas with rocks or holes that could cause injury. Simply telling athletes to avoid obstacles is not enough.
7. Walk the bike and run course boundaries and remove unsafe objects.
8. Review your first aid and emergency procedures. Have someone who is trained in first aid and CPR on or very near the practice areas.
9. Warm up and stretch properly at the beginning of each training session and cool down at the end of each to prevent muscle injuries.
10. Train to improve the general fitness level of your athletes. Physically fit triathletes are less likely to get injured. Make your training sessions Active.
11. Make sure all equipment (bikes, swim gear, etc.) are in good working order.
12. Make sure athletes know basic bike mechanics and proper swim, bike and run technique.

Triathlon Practice Competitions

The more we compete, the better we get. Part of the strategic plan for Special Olympics triathlon competition is to drive more sport development at the local levels. Competition motivates athletes, coaches and the entire sport management team. Expand or add to your schedule as many competition opportunities as possible. A few suggestions are below.

1. Host a Special Olympics area or regional triathlon
2. Host or participate in practice sessions with athletes from other local Special Olympics triathlon programs
3. Ask a nearby triathlon club if your athletes can practice with them
4. Have your athletes participate in non-Special Olympics triathlons
5. Take athletes to see a local sprint or international distance triathlon, or if possible, watch a televised triathlon
6. Incorporate competition components at the end of every training session

Training for Triathlon

Athletes who compete in more than one event during the season should train in a variety of open water for the swim and on different terrain for the bike and run.

Learning to eat and drink during a competition should also be part of training for triathlon. Athletes need to experiment with a variety of gels, bars, sports drinks, etc., prior to racing and to train consistently with the food and drinks they plan to consume while competing.

Pre-Season

During the pre-season, athletes should focus on strength training in the gym. Gym sessions in the pre-season are longer than during the competition season. The pre-season is also the time to review technique in all three disciplines and to check equipment to make sure it is in good working order. Outdoor sessions should focus on building distance rather than speed.

Season

During the season, athletes should focus on improving their technique in all three disciplines. They should spend less time in the gym (twice a week) and work on improving their speed. Transition work should also be done to improve transition efficiency.

In-season training should begin with short sessions with an increase in duration as the season progresses. Coaches should draft a season-long training plan and then refine the plan month by month to fit each athlete. Monthly training should include a three-week build-up, followed by a week of recovery workouts.

Swim

The majority of triathlon swim training should focus on proper swim technique by incorporating freestyle and open water swimming drills into the practice sessions. Improved fitness happens while athletes practice good technique and speed increases as technique improves. Body position should be streamlined and balanced to reduce drag in the water. Core rotation provides power to the stroke, improves breathing position and helps maintain a small and continuous kick. The head stays down and still, rolling to the side (not lifting) to breathe.

Bi-lateral breathing is an important open water skill that should be practiced to create stroke symmetry and help athletes swim straight, get better rotation and adapt to open water elements such as waves. Additional open water skills such as sighting, buoy turns, pack swimming and drafting should be practiced regularly to help athletes properly prepare and gain confidence for the swim portion of the race

The Total Immersion swim technique (that focuses on teaching swimmers to swim efficiently) should be used to train triathletes for open water swimming.

Bike

It is important that each athlete is fitted properly to their bike. A position study should be completed for each athlete to ensure they are comfortable on their bike and have correct angles. Athletes primarily use the back muscles of their legs to provide power while biking. They should be taught to push down on the pedals in a circular motion, then pull their legs back to the top position (recovery stage) to gain power on the upstroke. Biking shoes or pedals with toe cages must be used to accomplish this. Athletes should be taught not to push with their quadriceps since they will rely on them for the run stage. The athlete's arms should be relaxed at all times while biking.

Athletes should also be taught that there is no drafting allowed on the bike course in triathlon. If the athlete does not understand what drafting is, they must be taught what it is (riding directly behind someone to take advantage of their wind block) and taught how to avoid it (stay behind three bike lengths unless passing).

Run

Athletes primarily use their quadriceps while running. They should be taught to run with a back to forward rhythm and to find a comfortable endurance pace.

Post-Season

During the post-season, it is important to respect the athlete's time off. This is the time for them to rest, recover and not focus on training. For those who wish to continue training in the off-season, a training plan should be created that emphasizes active rest, games, and recreational activities.

Age Grouping

The following age groups shall normally be used for Special Olympics triathlon competitions:

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

Age groups may be combined under the following circumstances:

1. There are less than three (3) competitors within an age group (in which case athletes shall compete in the next oldest age group and the group will be renamed appropriately)
2. If there is a need to reduce the variance between the highest and lowest scores within a division

Ability Grouping

As with other Special Olympics events measured by time and distance, triathletes should compete by ability. For both genders and all age groups, athletes should be ranked in descending order based on their submitted entry scores or divisioning events. Ranked athletes should be grouped so that the highest and lowest scores are as close as possible to the 10% guideline and the number of competitors is not less than three (3) or more than eight (8).

Sport Skills Assessment Card

The sport skills assessment chart is a systematic method useful to determine the skill ability of an athlete. The Sport Skills Assessment Card is designed to assist coaches in determining an athlete's ability level in the sport before they begin participation. Coaches will find this assessment to be a useful tool for several reasons.

1. It helps the coach determine with the athlete which events they will compete in
2. It establishes the baseline training areas of the athlete
3. It assists the coach in grouping athletes of similar ability for training
4. It measures the athlete's progression
5. It helps determine the athlete's daily training schedule

Before administering the assessment, coaches need to perform the following:

- Become familiar with each of the tasks listed under the major skills
- Have an accurate visual picture of each task
- Observe a skilled performer executing the skill

When administering the assessment, coaches will have a better opportunity to get the best analysis from their athletes. Always begin by explaining the skill you would like to observe. When possible demonstrate the skill.

Special Olympics Sport Skills Assessment

Athlete's Name		**Date**	
Coach's Name		**Date**	

Instructions

1. Have the athlete perform the skill several times.
2. If the athlete performs the skill correctly 3 out of 5 times, check the box next to the skill to indicate that the skill has been accomplished.

SWIM

- ❑ Demonstrates comfort swimming in open water
- ❑ Demonstrates ability to pass a buoy on the left and right sides
- ❑ Knows how to breathe properly while swimming
- ❑ Has ability to comfortably complete the swim to bike transition

BIKE

- ❑ Demonstrates ability to ride a bike
- ❑ Demonstrates ability to drink water while riding a bike
- ❑ Demonstrates ability to change gears on the bike
- ❑ Demonstrates ability to clip in and out of bike pedals while wearing bike shoes
- ❑ Demonstrates ability to follow course markers
- ❑ Demonstrates ability to make left and right turns
- ❑ Demonstrates ability to properly secure a helmet and put on a t-shirt, belt and tennis or biking shoes
- ❑ Demonstrates ability to complete the bike to run transition

RUN

- ❑ Demonstrates ability to tie shoelaces
- ❑ Demonstrates ability to drink water during the run

Daily Performance Record

The Daily Performance Record is designed for the coach to keep an accurate record of the athlete's daily performances as they learn a sports skill. There are several reasons why the coach can benefit from using the Daily Performance Record.

1. The record becomes a permanent documentation of the athlete's progress.
2. The record helps the coach establish measurable consistency in the athlete's training program.
3. The record allows the coach to be flexible during the actual teaching and coaching session because he/she can break down the skills into specific, smaller tasks that meet the individual needs of each athlete.
4. The record helps the coach choose proper skills and teaching methods, correct conditions and learn criteria for evaluating the athlete's performance of the skills.

Using the Daily Performance Record

At the top of the record, the coach enters his/her name, the athlete's name and their event. If more than one coach works with the athlete, they should enter the dates that they work with the athlete next to their names.

Before the training session begins, the coach decides what skills will be covered. The coach makes this decision based on the athlete's age, the athlete's interests, and his/her mental and physical abilities. The skill needs to be a statement or a description of the specific exercise that the athlete must perform. The coach enters the skill on the top line of the left-hand column. Each subsequent skill is entered after the athlete masters the previous skill. More than one sheet may be used to record all of the skills involved. Also, if the athlete cannot perform a prescribed skill, the coach may break down the skill into smaller tasks that will allow for the athlete's success at the new skill.

Conditions and Criteria for Mastering

After the coach enters the skill, he/she must decide on the conditions and criteria by which the athlete must master the skill. Conditions are special circumstances that define the manner in which the athlete must perform a skill. For example, "given a demonstration, and with assistance." The coach should always operate under the assumption that the ultimate conditions in which the athlete masters a skill are, "upon command and without assistance," and therefore, does not have to enter these conditions in the record next to the skill entry. Ideally, the coach needs to arrange the skills and conditions such that the athlete gradually learns to perform the skill while upon command and without assistance.

Criteria are the standards that determine how well the skill must be performed. The coach needs to determine a standard that realistically suits the athlete's mental and physical abilities. Given the varied nature of skills, the criteria might involve many different types of standards, such as the amount of time, number of repetitions, accuracy, distance or speed.

Dates of Sessions and Levels of Instruction Used

The coach may work on one task for a couple of days, and may use several methods of instruction during that time to progress to the point where the athlete performs the task upon command and without assistance. To establish a consistent curriculum for the athlete, the coach must record the dates he/she works on a particular tasks, and must enter the methods of instruction that were used on those dates.

Triathlon Attire

Appropriate triathlon attire is recommended for all competitors. As a coach, discuss the types of sport clothes that are acceptable and not acceptable for training and competition. Discuss the importance of wearing properly fitted clothing, along with the advantages and disadvantages of certain types of clothing worn during training and competitions. For example, long pant jeans and blue jean shorts are not proper triathlon attire for any event. Explain that they cannot perform their best while wearing jeans that restrict their movement. Take athletes to local triathlon competitions and point out the attire being worn. You can even set the example by wearing appropriate attire to training and competitions and not rewarding athletes who do not come properly dressed to train and/or compete.

Tri-Suit

The best triathlon attire is a tri-suit. The athlete can complete all three stages of the event in this attire and doesn't need to worry about changing clothes during the transitions.

Goggles

It is recommended that athletes wear goggles while swimming. This allows them good visibility in the water and protection for the eyes.

Caps

For safety reasons, athletes are required to wear swim caps during the swim portion of a triathlon. Athletes should practice swimming in caps before competition if they do not regularly wear one during practice sessions.

Bike Helmet

Athletes are required to wear bike helmets during the bike stage. Properly fitting, regulation helmets with proper fasteners are required.

Race Glasses

Athletes may wish to wear racing glasses on the bike. This protects the athlete's eyes and provides proper sun protection.

Bike Shoes

Athletes may wish to wear bike shoes. Bike shoes clip into bike pedals and provide the ability to gain proper power on the upstroke when biking.

Race Shirt

Athletes who don't wear tri-suits are required to wear a racing shirt for the bike and run stages.

Biking Gloves

Athletes may wish to wear biking gloves to protect their hands during the bike stage.

Race Belt

Athletes must plainly display their race numbers at all times. Swimmers will be body-marked, cyclist must display their bike numbers and runners must wear their bib numbers. Athletes can affix the race number to their shirt for the bike and run portion or athletes can use a race belt to display the race number for the run portion. The race belt can also be used to hold the athlete's food for the run stage.

Running Shoes

Athletes are required to wear running/tennis shoes during the run stage.

Running Cap

Athletes may wish to wear a running cap during the run stage to shield their face from the sun and/or rain.

Triathlon Equipment

The sport of triathlon requires the equipment listed below. It is important for athletes to be able to recognize and understand how the equipment works and how it impacts their performance. Have your athletes name each piece of equipment as you show it and give the use for each. To reinforce this ability within them, have them select the equipment used for their events as well.

Basic Triathlon Equipment List

- Swimsuit
- Goggles
- Cap (usually provided by the race)
- Sunblock
- Towels for transition area
- Bike
- Helmet
- Drink Bottles
- Food
- Shirt
- Shorts
- Running shoes

Option Triathlon Equipment List

- Trisuit
- Bodyglide
- Anti-fog solution
- Ear plugs
- Spare goggles
- Wetsuit
- Cycling gloves
- Bento Box (to hold food on the bike)
- Clipless pedals and bike shoes
- Sunglasses
- Tire pump
- Race belt
- Running cap

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TRIATHLON COACHING GUIDE

Teaching Triathlon Skills

Table of Contents

The Warm Up

A warm up period is the first part of every triathlon training session or preparation for competition. The warm up starts slowly and gradually involves all muscles and body parts. In addition to preparing the athlete mentally, warming up also has physiological benefits. It helps the athlete focus and prepare for the training that is about to begin.

The importance of a warm up prior to exercise cannot be overstressed. Warming up raises the body temperature and prepares the muscles, nervous system, tendons, ligaments, and the cardiovascular system for upcoming stretches and exercises. The chances of injury are greatly reduced by increasing muscle elasticity.

Warming Up:

- Raises body temperature
- Increases metabolic rate
- Increases heart and respiratory rate
- Prepares the muscles and nervous system for exercise

The warm up is tailored to the activity to follow. Warm ups consist of active motion leading up to more vigorous motion to elevate heart, respiratory and metabolic rates. The total warm up period takes at least 25 minutes and immediately precedes the training or competition. A warm up period will include the following basic sequence and components.

Activity	Purpose	Time (minimum)
Slow aerobic walk/ fast walk/ run	Heat muscles	5 minutes
Stretching	Increase range of movement	10 minutes
Event Specific Drills	Coordination preparation for training/competition	10 minutes

Aerobic Warm-Up

The aerobic warm-up includes very light activities such as walking, light jogging, walking while doing arm circles, and jumping jacks.

Walking

Walking is the first exercise of an athlete's routine. Athletes begin warming the muscles by walking slowly for 3-5 minutes. This circulates the blood through all the muscles, thus providing them greater flexibility for stretching. The sole objective of the warm up is to circulate the blood and warm the muscles in preparation for more strenuous activity.

Running

Running is the next exercise in an athlete's routine. Athletes begin warming the muscles by running slowly for 3-5 minutes. This circulates the blood through all the muscles, thus providing them greater flexibility for stretching. The run starts out slowly, and then gradually increases in speed; however, the athlete never reaches even 50 percent of their maximum effort by the end of the run. Remember, the sole objective of

this phase of the warm up is circulating the blood and warming the muscles in preparation for more strenuous activity.

Stretching

Dynamic stretching is one of the most critical parts of the warm up and an athlete's performance. A more flexible muscle is a stronger and healthier muscle. A stronger and healthier muscle responds better to exercise and activities and helps prevent injury.

Please refer to the Dynamic Stretching section for more in depth information.

Event Specific Drills

Drills are activities designed to teach sport skills. Progressions of learning start at a low ability level, advance to an intermediate level, and finally, reach a high ability level. Encourage each athlete to advance to their highest possible level. Drills can be combined with the warm up and lead into specific skill development.

Skills are taught and reinforced through repetition of a small segment of the skill to be performed. Many times, the actions are exaggerated in order to strengthen the muscles that perform the skill. Each coaching session should take the athlete through the entire progression so that he/she is exposed to all of the skills that make up an event.

Specific Warm Up Activities

Specific warm up activities for triathlon include the following:

- Slow 20-minute run
- Slow 400-meter swim
- Slow 20-minute bike

The Cool Down

The cool down is as important as the warm up, however it is often ignored. Stopping an activity abruptly may cause pooling of the blood and slow the removal of waste products in the athlete's body. It may also cause cramps, soreness, and other problems for Special Olympics athletes. The cool down gradually reduces the body temperature and heart rate and speeds the recovery process before the next training session or competitive experience.

The cool down is also a good time for the coach and athlete to talk about the session or competition.

Activity	Purpose	Time (minimum)
Slow aerobic jog	Lowers body temperature Gradually lowers heart rate	5 minutes
Light stretching	Removes waste from muscles	5 minutes

Stretching should be part of the cool down. It is vital after training and prevents the athlete’s body from becoming tense. It also aids in recovery after training. Stretching prevents injuries and helps make the athlete’s muscles long and elastic.

Dynamic Stretching

Flexibility is critical to an athlete's optimal performance in both training and competition. Flexibility is achieved through stretching. Stretching follows an easy aerobic jog at the start of a training session or competition.

Dynamic stretching raises the body temperature by practicing movements associated with a specific sport or workout. It is a series of active muscle movements that allow the athlete to work their muscles but are not held in an end position. Dynamic stretching is critical to an athlete's performance and prepares their body for the upcoming activity. It also helps accomplish the following:

- Increase power
- Improve flexibility
- Increase an athlete's range of motion

Dynamic stretching is different from ballistic stretching (when a bouncing motion is used to maximize a stretch). Ballistic stretching can be dangerous and result in stretching a muscle too far. This can cause injuries. Dynamic stretching uses controlled leg and arm movements to gently explore a range of motion. It does not stretch the muscles beyond their limits.

Some athletes, like those with Down syndrome, may have low muscle tone that makes them appear more flexible. Be careful to not allow these athletes to stretch beyond a normal, safe range.

Dynamic stretching should be performed after the warm up and before the practice/training session or competition. The types of movements completed during stretching will depend on the workout for that day.

Following are examples of dynamic stretches for triathlon. For each movement start out using small movements for the first several repetitions and then slowly increase the range of motion.

Arm Circles

While standing square with your feet shoulder width apart and arms stretched out to the side, make 10 forward circles with both arms, then 10 backwards circles with both arms. Then make 10 forward circles with one arm while the other arm makes 10 backwards circles (so both are circling in opposite directions at the same time). Then reverse each arm for 10 more circles. This helps with coordination.

Shoulder Circles

While standing square with your feet shoulder width apart and your arms at your side, make 10 slow forward circles with both shoulders, then 10 backwards circles with both shoulders.

Hip Circles

While standing square with your feet shoulder width apart and your hands on your hips, make 10 slow circles with both your hips to the right and then to the left.

Head Circles

While standing square with your feet shoulder width apart, slowly make 10 circles with your head to the right and then to the left.

Ankle Circles

While standing square with your feet shoulder width apart, raise one leg slightly and rotate your ankle in small circles to the right. Repeat 10 times and then make 10 circles to the left. Repeat with your other leg.

Walking Lunges

Step forward using a long stride and lower your body by dropping your back knee toward the ground. Keep the front knee over or just slightly behind your toes and maintain a straight posture keeping your abdominal muscles tight. Continue walking forward in this manner for 10 steps.

Leg Lifts

While standing square with your hands on your hips, swing one leg out to the side away from your torso, and then back again crossing your body in front of your other leg. Complete 10 repetitions and then repeat with the other leg. Athletes who have trouble with balance may hold onto a piece of furniture or stationary object.

Butt-kicks

While standing tall, walk forward and exaggerate the backswing of your leg so that your heel comes up to your glutes. Start this at a walk and gradually increase to a slow jog. Do 10 repetitions on each side while focusing on good form.

Hacky-sack

While standing square, lift your left leg up while bending the knee so it points out. Try to gently tap the inside of your left foot with your right hand. Do not bend forward. Return to the starting position and repeat 10 times with each leg.

Straight Jumps

Stand straight with your arms to your side. Make small jumps straight up and down in place for one (1) minute.

Twisted Jumps

Stand straight with your arms to your side. Make small jumps in place while alternating twisting your hips from one side to the other. Continue jumping for one (1) minute.

One-legged Jumps

Stand straight with your arms to your side. Lift one leg slightly and make small jumps in place while switching from one foot to the other. Continue jumping for one (1) minute.

Stretching – Quick Reference Guidelines

Start Relaxed

Do not begin until athletes are relaxed and muscles are warm

Be Systematic

Start at the top of the body and work your way down

Progress from General to Specific

Start general and then move into event-specific exercises

Easy Stretching before Developmental

Make slow, progressive stretches. Do not bounce or jerk to stretch farther

Use Variety

Make it fun. Use different exercises to work the same muscles

Breathe Naturally

Do not hold your breath, stay calm and relaxed

Allow for Individual Differences

Athletes start and progress at different levels

Nutrition and Hydration Safety Concerns

Nutrition and hydration are important aspects of teaching any endurance sport and can at times pose a safety concern if not taken seriously. As a coach, you should advise the athlete to eat a healthy balanced diet throughout their training, but it is also important for you to be aware of several conditions that pose a health risk to the athlete.

Hyponatremia

Hyponatremia is a low concentration of sodium in the blood. Most commonly seen in endurance athletes, hyponatremia is a potentially life-threatening condition. Sodium plays an important role in water balance and muscle contraction and is a required element for normal body functions. The body has a remarkable ability to maintain its sodium and water balance. However endurance events, including triathlons, challenge this critical survival mechanism.

Sodium is necessary to draw water through permeable membranes in the body and allows for distribution of those fluids throughout the entire body. Without adequate sodium, your body will no longer be able to move water across permeable membranes, causing dehydration. You can drink all the water you want, but if you don't have the sodium necessary to move it from the gut to the bloodstream, you will become hyponatremic. Depending on the intensity and duration of exercise, hyponatremia can be life-threatening.

Fluid overload, sweating and medications can cause hyponatremia. Drinking large amounts of fluids without replacing adequate sodium can lead to hyponatremia. Additionally, there is a relationship with the total volume of sweat lost during an exercise session and fluid replacement. Lost sweat (salt, other minerals and water) through prolonged exercise if replaced by water (with no salt) could produce diluted sodium in the blood stream which in turn can cause hyponatremia.

Climate also plays a role in the possibility of developing low blood sodium. In warm climates, athletes sweat more per hour requiring an increase in salt replacement. The same results can occur in cool climates. The sweat rates are lower, but drinking too much fluid can decrease the concentration of blood sodium giving the same effect as if the athlete had sweat out too much salt.

Medications such as ibuprofen, aspirin, and other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs can contribute to hyponatremia due to their interference with kidney function and their potential for masking heat exhaustion.

Women are at greater risk than men for developing hyponatremia. Women generally tend to be smaller in size than men and are more likely to develop fluid overload since it takes less fluid for small people to become overloaded/over-hydrated. Excess fluid retaining hormones in women have also been cited as contributing factors that prevent the female athlete from excreting excess fluids. The hormonal contribution to hyponatremia is still under debate.

Signs and Symptoms of Hyponatremia:

- Nausea
- Cramps
- Headaches
- Slurred speech
- Confusion/Disorientation
- Bloating
- Upset stomach

Hyponatremia in extreme cases can lead to convulsions/seizures, coma and death.

Hyponatremia can be avoided by:

- Teaching athletes to intake adequate fluid replacement with beverages containing electrolytes
- Determining individual rates of fluid loss
- Avoid using anti-inflammatory and/or pain relieving medications during exercise

Anytime an athlete exercises for over one (1) hour, electrolytes must be replaced to avoid hyponatremia. Although the exact amount varies it is generally advised that you should ingest one (1) gram of sodium per hour during endurance activities. This varies by individual and can be difficult to accomplish. Athletes need to find a healthy balance and may need to increase their salt intake in the days leading up to a big race and know how much sodium is in their sports drinks. It is difficult to adequately replace lost salt during a hot race. It is likely that more salt will be lost through sweat than can be replaced, even when consuming sports drinks. Knowing the athlete's body and having a good balance prior to the event is key to avoiding hyponatremia.

Determining individual rates of fluid loss is an excellent way to calculate how much sodium is needed to maintain a healthy system. The best way to do this is to have the athlete get on a scale before and after a workout to determine their sweat rate. The weight loss in ounces represents the amount of fluid volume in ounces to be replaced by a sports drink. Keep in mind the one (1) gram of sodium an hour replacement recommendation when choosing sports drinks.

Medications such as pain relievers and anti-inflammatories should be avoided during endurance activities because they negatively affect kidney function and can indirectly cause hyponatremia. Athletes should always check with their physician prior to using these medications in connection with physical activity.

Dehydration

Dehydration is the loss of water and salt essential for normal body function.

The basic premise behind dehydration is an inadequate intake of fluids resulting in the body losing more fluid than it takes in. The fluid/salt balance needed to maintain healthy cells and tissues can be seriously disrupted with dehydration.

Dehydration can occur in as little at 30 minutes of exercise, especially in hot weather. The body relies on sweating to dissipate the heat generated from working muscles. Sweating also helps to maintain the athlete's core body temperature. Allowing the core body temperature to be maintained within a safe range is a key element in preventing heat related injuries which may initially be caused by dehydration. The amount of sweating necessary to sustain heat loss during vigorous exercise inevitably will lead to dehydration unless adequate fluids are ingested.

Dehydration will diminish an athlete's performance and can lead to death if not corrected. Dehydration is one of the most common factors for heat related sickness such as heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Both heat exhaustion and heat stroke cause numerous deaths each year. The most serious consequence of dehydration is impaired heat dissipation which can elevate the core body temperature to dangerously high levels resulting in heat exhaustion and potentially fatal heat stroke.

Strenuous activity such as swimming, biking and running require adequate fluid/electrolyte replacement or dehydration will occur. Excessive sweating due to climactic conditions and/or intensity of exercise can rapidly dehydrate individuals if corrective measures aren't taken.

Vomiting, diarrhea, fever, diuretics, illness, a variety of medications such as anti-inflammatories, low fitness levels, sleep deprivation, lack of heat acclimatization, staying in the sun too long, not drinking enough fluids, alcohol and caffeine can all be contributing factors to dehydration.

Athletes are at risk for dehydration, especially during the summer months, for any activity lasting longer than 30 minutes. Without proper hydration, the body can quickly lose water and other essential elements running the risk of kidney problems or even death. Children, due to their smaller stature are at an increased risk of developing dehydration. For all athletes, once dehydration starts, the deterioration can be quick.

Signs and Symptoms for Dehydration

- Headache
- Dizziness
- Confusion
- Clumsiness
- Excessive sweating
- Thirst (this is not a good indicator; usually when the thirst mechanism is activated, dehydration has already occurred)
- Dark-colored urine
- Cramps
- Reddened skin
- Weak irregular rapid heart rate
- Low blood pressure
- General weakness
- Feeling cold
- Rapid and shallow breathing

Steps to Prevent Dehydration

- Drink before, during, and after exercise
- Wear proper clothing for the temperature
- Be heat acclimatized
- Avoid certain medications

The best preventative measure to ward off the possibility of becoming dehydrated is to stay hydrated. A good indicator of hydration is the output of large volumes of clear, dilute urine.

Fluid Replacement

The fluid requirement for most triathletes is 500 ml/hr. Drinking 8-20 ounces of fluids before exercise (about 2-3 hours), is highly recommended. Replacing lost fluids during exercise, especially when the duration is longer than 60 minutes, is critical.

Consuming 6-8 ounces of fluid replacement every 20 minutes of exercise is a good rule of thumb to follow, especially during endurance events such as a triathlon. Replacing fluids post exercise allows the body to hold onto the balance it seeks to achieve as well as aiding in muscle recovery, especially when the fluids contain high glycemic carbohydrates. Choose a sport drink that contains at least 6-8% carbohydrate and electrolytes.

Sport Drinks vs. Water

For all activities lasting less than one (1) hour, water alone is adequate. During prolonged exercise, anything lasting longer than 60 minutes, the fluid replacement needs to match the specific substances lost with the increased duration of activity. Sports drinks have the capacity of replacing the body's depleted supplies while contributing to muscle recovery. Sports drinks provide several advantages over water specifically by providing electrolyte replacement, carbohydrates to fuel working muscles as well as aiding in muscle recovery. The most important features of sports drinks are taste, carbohydrate and sodium content.

Sports drinks have the potential of restoring electrolytes lost during exercise, while prompting the desire to drink. The added salt and pleasant taste of sports drinks trigger the thirst response, encouraging consumption of fluids which in turn reduces the chances of developing hyponatremia and dehydration. In addition, the sodium and potassium found in certain sports drinks helps reduce muscle cramping during and after exercise.

Carbohydrates are the primary fuel that powers muscles during exercise. Sports drinks containing 6-8% carbohydrates provide the energy needed to improve our muscles' capacity for work. Many studies have shown that athletes consuming sports drinks containing 6-8% (6-8 grams of carbohydrate per 100 ml of fluid) carbohydrates can exercise longer with less fatigue than athletes that drink only water. There is a fine line however between the correct amount of carbohydrates for optimal fuel and energy and too much carbohydrates which can lead to bloating and nausea. In addition, when the carbohydrate content is too high, the rate at which fluid is absorbed into the blood from the intestine is slowed due to the delay in gastric emptying which can impede re-hydration. The rate of absorption and gastric emptying (how fast the fluid moves through the stomach into the intestines) varies per individual. Sports drinks containing 6-8% carbohydrates per 100ml of fluid are recommended during exercise to extend energy while delaying the use of stored muscle glycogen and maintaining blood sugar levels. Variations in the guidelines may be necessary for those who have difficulty ingesting and digesting high volumes of fluids with increased percentages of carbohydrates.

In addition to extending endurance, sports drinks contribute to muscle recovery. Muscle recovery depends on how well the body recovers its glycogen stores and repairs muscle tissues after exercise. Current research shows that carbohydrate replacement 30-60 minutes after exercise can have an enormous impact on an athlete's next day performance. During this one hour period of time, athletes consuming sports drinks restore about 50% more of their glycogen than those who did not consume sports drinks or replace their lost carbohydrates with simple sugars. An added advantage of drinking sports drinks during the recovery phase is that typically athletes appetites are decreased, causing a deficit in nutrition and fluid. Re-hydrating with sports drinks post exercise may be a more palatable way to replace lost nutrition during a time of suppressed appetite which will in turn speed recovery.

The bottom line is that ingesting carbohydrates during prolonged exercise delays fatigue and enhances performance. Water alone is appropriate when an activity is less than 60 minutes. Any exercise lasting longer than 60 minutes requires electrolyte and carbohydrate replacement to increase energy, aid in muscle recovery and maintain adequate hydration. Sports drinks containing 6-8% carbohydrate per 100ml of fluid are the best choice. Athletes need to be well-fueled, well-rested and well-hydrated for optimal energy and performance. Consuming sports drinks before, during and after exercise have proven benefits by replenishing muscle carbohydrate stores and restoring lost body fluids.

Protein

Protein is another important source of recovery nutrition. Maintenance, repair, optimum immune system function, and lean muscle growth all depend on protein. Protein intake after exercise (ideally within the first hour) helps rebuild the breakdown of muscle protein that occurs during high-intensity exercise.

Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion is characterized by an increase in core body temperature and heart rate. People with heat exhaustion may also exhibit fatigue, weakness, dizziness, headache, nausea (sometimes vomiting) and muscle cramps.

Heat Stroke

Heat stroke is characterized by a very high core body temperature, reddened skin and the absence of sweating. Heat stroke is the most dangerous of the heat injuries and can cause a stroke and death if not corrected.

Teaching Triathlon Skills

Swimming

Swimming is the first stage of a triathlon competition. Most triathlon swimming stages take place in open water and require solid open water swimming skills. Coaches should help athletes make the transition from pool swimming to open water swimming and make sure they have plenty of practice in open water prior to competition. Two common issues new open water swimmers face are fear of the open water and the ability to navigate.

To further promote safety in the water, coaches should encourage athletes to feel the temperature of the water before getting in. They should also not swim alone during training and always start out at an easy pace before gaining speed.

Advise athletes that they should wear colored swim caps and goggles in open water so they can both see and be seen.

Executing the Freestyle Swim Stroke

Swimming is a highly technical sport and stroke efficiency is the path to success. Coaches can help athletes achieve proper freestyle swim form by focusing on one part of the swim stroke at a time. Good technique starts with proper breathing and progresses to a balanced and streamlined body and head position, core rotation, a powerful stroke cycle, and steady even kick.

It is important for triathletes to save energy and strength in their legs for the bike and run stages of the event. Triathletes do not need a speed kick, just a kick at the beginning followed by correct hip movement.

Proper Breathing Technique

Proper breathing technique is essential while swimming. Athletes should use proper core rotation to provide momentum in the water and should breathe every second, third, or fourth stroke. The position of the head during breathing should be natural – as if turning the head to respond when someone calls your name. One goggle should remain under the water line while the other rises above the water. The motion is sideways, not up or down.

Navigating in Open Water

The best way to navigate while swimming in open water is to breathe every second or third stroke. After every 10 strokes, the athlete should lift his/her head slightly out of the water, just high enough to site the marker buoys and ensure he/she is on course. When an athlete lifts his/her head too high out of the water, the back half of their body drops creating more drag and slowing the swimmer down. It is important to

teach athletes to lift just their eyes out of the water to sight, not their entire head. The athlete can breathe before or after the sighting motion and should practice each way to determine which is more efficient and easier.

Passing Buoys on the Proper Side

When an athlete arrives at a marker buoy, he/she must always pass the buoy outside the course regardless of whether the course is the shape of a triangle, rectangle, or square. Athletes should practice passing buoys on the right side and on the left side. Each race determines the direction of the course and which side buoys will be passed on. It is very important for coaches to review the swim course with their athlete before competition and ensure the athlete knows which side to pass on.

Drafting

Drafting is allowed in the swim stage of triathlon. Athletes should be taught to take advantage of this opportunity to benefit from the work of the athletes in front of them.

Freestyle Swimming Drills

The majority of triathlon swim training should focus on proper swim technique by incorporating freestyle and open water swimming drills into the practice sessions. These drills should cover proper balanced and streamlined body position, core rotation, head position, breathing, the stroke cycle (entry, catch, pull and recovery) and the kick.

Practice Swim Sets

The following are examples of swim sets that can be used to train athletes for the swim stage of a triathlon:

Swim Set #1

500 meter warm up
2x200 meters (pull paddles optional)
200 meter recovery (pull paddles optional)
4x150 meters race pace
200 meters slow recovery

Swim Set #2

400 meter warm up
400 race pace (pull paddles optional)
1 minute rest
200 meters slow recovery

Swim Set #3
400 meter warm up
6x50 meters with swim fins at 85% (10 seconds of recovery between)
6x50 easy (20 seconds of recovery between)
200 meters slow recovery

Swim Set #4
300 meter warm up
200 meters with a pull buoy
10x100 meters:
5 at 70% (10 seconds of recovery between)
3 at 85% (20 seconds of recovery between)
2 at 90% (30 seconds of recovery between)
200 meters slow recovery

Swim Set #5
300 meter warm up
400 meters rhythm at 70%
100 meters easy recovery
200 meters rhythm at 80%
100 meters easy recovery
100 meters at 90%
200 meters slow recovery

Swim Equipment

Swim equipment, like fins, kickboards, pull buoys, and hand paddles, can be used in practice to enhance athlete training and isolate swim technique and form. When using swim equipment it is important to know and assess your athlete's strengths and weaknesses and determine whether it is appropriate for your athlete to use the equipment based upon their swim ability and technique. When used incorrectly, swim equipment can create and reinforce improper swim form and can lead to injury. Be particularly cautious when using swim paddles. The development and design of today's swim paddles has resulted in significantly larger surface areas and varying shapes. Many triathletes and swimmers do not have the shoulder strength to drive large paddles through the water and will likely compensate by dropping their elbows or resorting to an improper stroke. Hand paddles should not be used by athletes who have technical issues with their stroke, like crossing over, entering thumb first, and an ineffective catch and pull. With all swim equipment, make sure your athlete is using the equipment correctly and that it is enhancing their training and improving their technique, not creating form problems and potential for injury.

Common Swimming Errors

Error	Correction	Drill/Test Reference
The athlete raises his/her head up to breathe instead of moving it side to side	Place one fist under the head as they swim	Perform side swim
The athlete uses a speed kick	The kick in triathlon should just be the result of the momentum of the hip	Perform two kicks for each stroke
The athlete's arms move too slow	The athlete should practice cadence with air control	Perform cycles of strokes with increasing stroke counts

Skill Progression: Swimming

Your Athlete Can:	Never	Sometimes	Often
Execute a proper Freestyle Swim Stroke			
Breathe properly while swimming			
Navigate in open water			
Pass buoys on the proper side			
Totals			

Swim to Bike Transition

It is important for coaches to teach athletes to execute transitions smoothly and efficiently. During the swim to bike transition, the athlete is required to make a water to land transition, change wardrobe, take nutrition (if necessary), and start riding their bike. The transition area can often be chaotic and coaches should prepare their athletes for this ahead of time. The following should be taught regarding the swim to bike transition:

- Setting up the transition area
- Finding your bike when entering the transition area
- Efficiently changing wardrobe
- Securing your biking gear
- Exiting the transition area
- How to dress efficiently to ride the bike

Setting up the Transition Area

The athlete should be taught to layout their transition area so they can easily dress for the bike ride. They should lay their biking clothes out, have a towel ready to dry themselves, and have any nutrition they intend to take easily accessible.

Finding Your Bike

Athletes should always have a visual reference outside of the transition area to help them locate their bike. This visual reference could be a house, tree, etc.

Changing Wardrobe/Securing Biking Gear

Athletes will need to make wardrobe adjustments and/or changes between the swim and bike stages of a triathlon competition. They should dress in the following order:

- Race top (shirt)
- Helmet
- Glasses
- Race Belt
- Bike Shoes
- Gloves

Exiting the Transition Area

Athletes should be taught the proper way to exit the transition area. In doing so, the athlete should walk his/her bike to the transition area, exit, and mount the bike in the mounting area.

Common Transition Area Errors

Error	Correction
Putting the helmet on before the race top (shirt)	Put on the race top first and then the helmet
Riding the bike in the transition area	Athletes must walk/run their bike to the mounting area
Not being able to find the bike	Always have a reference point

Skill Progression: Swim to Bike Transition

Your Athlete Can:	Never	Sometimes	Often
Effectively set up the transition area			
Find their bike in the transition area			
Efficiently change their wardrobe			
Properly exit the transition Area			
Totals			

Teaching Points

Coaches should train with the athletes through the transitions, by walking through all the steps together.

Biking

Biking is the second stage of the triathlon competition. Drafting is not allowed on the triathlon bike course and athletes should be taught what drafting is and how to avoid doing it during a competition.

For safety reasons, athletes should always wear a helmet and should be encouraged to ride on safe routes (little or no traffic, well lit, and with smooth surfaces). They should be taught to stay to the right side of the road or path when riding and to pass other athletes on the left side. Athletes should practice turning and be familiar with the bike routes. They should also be encouraged to wear gloves to protect their hands.

Mounting the Bike

Athletes should put their bike shoes on in the transition area so they are ready to mount their bike when they reach the mounting area outside the transition area. More technical athletes may choose to leave their bike shoes clipped onto their bike pedals and then mount their bike and secure their shoes on their feet while they are riding.

Common Errors with Mounting the Bike

Error	Correction	Drill/Test Reference
Mounting the bike without wearing a helmet	Have the athlete secure their helmet before taking their bike off the rack	Practice changing wardrobe and securing gear prior to taking their bike off the rack
Trying to ride the bike in the transition area	Walk or run the bike to the mounting area at the transition exit before mounting the bike	Train in transitions

Proper Pedal Technique

Proper pedal technique involves moving the pedals in a circular motion. Athletes should be told to imagine drawing a perfect circle with their pedals. The pedals should be flat on the bottom portion of the circle and then the athlete should pull their feet back up to the top of the circle. Athletes should be taught not to push down with their legs from the top of the circle to the bottom so they can save their quadriceps' strength for the running stage of the competition. Biking shoes greatly aid with this since they allow the athlete to pull up on the pedals. This allows the athlete to use the muscles located on the back of the leg and "save" the front muscles for the run.

Athletes should be taught that if they need to rest during the bike and need a break from sitting on the bike seat, they can stand up on the pedals and move their body side to side as they pedal, putting all the weight on one side and then on the other side.

Common Errors with Pedaling Technique

Error	Correction	Drill/Test Reference
Pushing down on their legs	Pedal by pulling up on their feet	Practice pedaling with just one leg and then the other
Riding with shoulders up and stiff	Relax the shoulders	Relax the shoulders by moving the body side to side a little

Making Turns

The athlete's arms must be relaxed (not rigid) in order to make proper turns. When turning, the pedal that is located on the same side the athlete is turning toward must be at the top part of the circle to prevent the pedal from hitting the ground (which can cause the rider to crash). The athlete should use their weight to help with the turn by leaning their body slightly to the turning side (into the turn).

Common Errors Making Turns

Error	Correction	Drill/Test Reference
Turning with the pedal located on the turning side positioned at the bottom part of the circle	Rotate the pedal to the top part of the circle	Practice making turns with the proper pedal in the top position
Riding with rigid arms	Keep the arms relaxed to make easier movements and turns	Move arms while riding without leaving the handlebars

Braking

Braking requires minimal pressure on the brakes. Modern braking technology is such that with just a little strength, the bike will easily brake.

When braking, athletes should be taught to apply the rear brake (accessible from the right hand) before the front brake. Biking accidents commonly occur when riders brake with only the front brake. Slow braking can be safely performed with only the rear brake. Quick braking is best performed with the rear brake first, followed by the front brake. Athletes should be taught to brake with the rear brake when preparing to enter a turn. They should not brake during the turn.

Common Errors Braking

Error	Correction	Drill/Test Reference
Use of only the front brake	Use the rear brake	Practice using the rear brake with the right hand
The brake is left open on the bike	Check that both brakes are properly closed prior to riding	Check both brakes before riding
Brake with the full strength of the rider	Only use soft pressure when applying brakes	Practice starting and braking

Stopping at Aid Stations

Athletes should be taught to announce their arrival at an aid station by waiving their left arm. Riders intending to stop at an aid station should ride on the right side of the course at least 50 meters before the aid station.

Athletes should slowly brake with their rear brake when approaching an aid station and unclip their left shoe.

Common Errors with Stopping at Aid Stations

Error	Correction	Drill/Test Reference
Stopping on the left side of the road when the aid station is located on the right side	Move to the right side when approaching the aid station	Check the route map prior to riding for the position of each aid station
Stopping at an aid station without announcing the intent to stop	Announce that you are going to stop by waiving the left arm	Practice signaling an aid station stop
Braking quickly with both brakes at the aid station	Brake slowly using the rear brake	Practice a slow approach into an aid station

Biking Position

Athletes should be properly fitted to their bike and then have the fittings marked. They should not have to make their own adjustments to the bike.

Biking Drills

Biking Drill #1

30 minutes in small chain ring at 65%
12 minutes in large chain ring at 80%
3 minutes in small chain ring for recovery
12 minutes in large chain ring at 80%
3 minutes in small chain ring for rest
10 minutes slow pedaling for recovery

Biking Drill #2

15 minute warm up
8 minutes in small chain ring at over 100 rpms
2 minutes slow pedaling for rest
8 minutes in small chain ring at over 100 rpms
2 minutes slow pedaling for rest
10 minutes slow pedaling for recovery

Biking Drill #3

5 repetitions of 1 minute of rhythm in large chain ring at 80-85% followed by 1 minute of light resistance at 60-70%
10 minutes slow pedaling for recovery

Skill Progression: Biking

Your Athlete Can:	Never	Sometimes	Often
Mount the bike properly and clip into the pedals			
Exhibit proper pedaling technique			
Make proper turns			
Brake correctly			
Successfully stop at Aid Stations			
Totals			

Bike to Run Transition

As with the swim to bike transition, proper skills for the bike to run transition should be taught. When the athlete finishes the bike stage, he/she must slow down 100-200 meters prior to reaching the dismount area. To do this, the athlete must start braking with the rear brake and unclipping his/her bike shoes. When the athlete arrives at the dismount area, he/she should properly dismount and walk/run with the bike to his/her transition spot. As with the swim to bike transition, the athlete must have an external reference point to find their specific spot in the transition area.

Once the athlete locates the appropriate transition spot, he/she should put the bike in position on the bike rack, take off their biking helmet, remove their biking shoes (if not already left on the bike), put on running shoes, race belt and running cap.

If nutrition is needed, the athlete should consume the planned food or drink and start running slowly out of the transition area. Upon exiting the transition, he/she can speed up to a regular running pace.

Skill Progression: Bike to Run Transition

Your Athlete Can:	**Never**	**Sometimes**	**Often**
Properly dismount the bike prior to entering the transition area			
Leave the shoes clipped on the bike (if appropriate)			
Brake properly to arrive at the transition area			
Find his/her place in the transition area			
Properly place the bike on the rack			
Totals			

Running

When planning training routes for running, the number one concern is safety. Considerations need to be taken for lighting, sidewalks, traffic patterns, water availability, road conditions, crime threats, other runners and exercisers (bikes, roller bladers, strollers, dogs, etc.), and bathrooms.

It is important to design routes that are as close as possible to the mileage/distance that athletes will compete in. Small (tenths of a mile) differences in the actual distance of a run will not impact the eventual success of the athlete on the day of the event.

Safety risks while running include:

- Traffic
- Attackers (always have athletes run in pairs or a group)
- Dogs
- Pollution (train in the early morning or later evening in areas of high air pollution)
- Narrow roads with limited sidewalks or shoulders
- Wild animals (where applicable)
- Visibility (athletes should wear bright colors)

Pacing

Studies show that race performances are maximized when the first half of a race is run slightly slower than the second half. This is called “negative splitting.” The optimum appears to be about 51% - 49%. For example, for a 40 minute 10K, the athlete would ideally run the first half in about 20:24 and the second half in about 19:36.

Running negative splits are also a good training run strategy, since (a) it duplicates and therefore practices race strategy and race pacing, (b) psychologically it is better to feel stronger at the halfway point than to already be tiring and slowing down, (c) a mistake in a negative split (i.e. too slow of a pace early) does not have such a severe penalty as a mistake in a positive split (too fast of a pace early), leaving the runner a larger margin of error.

During training the coach should teach three (3) different paces:

1. Distance Pace
2. Rhythm Pace
3. Race Pace

Athletes should understand the difference between the paces and train at each pace on different days. It can be challenging for the athlete to understand the difference between the paces, but it is important for them to practice each so they get the most out of their training. Training is normally performed at a distance pace or rhythm pace.

During a race, athletes should start running at an easy-race pace and move into a hard race pace for the second half of the race.

Common Errors with Pacing

Error	Correction	Drill/Test Reference
Starting out too fast in a race	Start at an easy race pace and move into a hard race pace	Training at different paces

Running Drills

Running Drill #1

10 minute warm up
2x400 meters at 80% (1minute of rest between)
1 mile at 75%
2 minute recovery
2x400 at 85% (1 minute of rest between)
5 minute slow recovery

Running Drill #2

2K slow warm up
3K increasing speed from 75-85%
1K slow for recovery

Running Drill #3

10 minutes warm up
4x600 meters at 85% with 200 meters of recovery
10 minutes slow for recovery

Skill Progression: Running

Your Athlete Can:	Never	Sometimes	Often
Properly pace themselves			
Totals			

Teaching Points

It is important for athletes to understand that it is better to put in a good effort during the training and enjoy the race rather than not train well and suffer through a race. Athletes have to train and gain experience racing in order to fully understand how to enjoy competition.

It is important for the athlete to understand that there will always be an athlete ahead of them and one behind them. They should learn not to become anxious or hurried and to instead concentrate on their own race. They should remember: “The better I train, the better I’ll compete!”

Coaches Tips for Triathlon – At-A-Glance

Tips for Practice

- ❑ Simulate competitions
- ❑ Have the athlete train using the same nutrition and hydration as during competition
- ❑ Practice transitions with all equipment and check bikes every month
- ❑ Make a checklist before the race and review it with the athlete
- ❑ Review the swim, bike and run courses and identify aid station positions

Tips for Competition

- ❑ Help the athlete identify an external reference point to find his/her transition area
- ❑ Review the transition with the athlete including how he/she will change clothes
- ❑ Check the air pressure in the bike tires
- ❑ Help the athletes put Glide on in order to avoid chafing
- ❑ Help the athlete apply sun block. Athletes should never touch grease or cream since it can stain their goggles and cause a loss of visibility
- ❑ Remind the athlete to eat during the competition
- ❑ Encourage the athlete every moment
- ❑ Try to be near the athlete as much as possible while he/she is on course
- ❑ Never expose an athlete to or tolerate any behavior that would cause disqualification
- ❑ Teach the athlete the proper way to compete and good etiquette for following rules

Sample Workouts

Specific workouts depend on the individual preparedness of the athlete. Typically, a general program should be followed and adapted to the individual needs of the athlete.

Intermediate and advanced athletes can follow the same workout but perform it at a different intensity. Beginner athletes can have two days of rest instead of one.

Sample workouts for one week of training include the following:

Monday	REST
Tuesday	Fartleck run, continuous rhythm run, gym workout for upper and lower body
Wednesday	Spinning Class immediately followed by a 10 minute run. Swim 200 meters for technique, 600 meters for speed and pace and 100 meters to relax
Thursday	Run small hill repetitions followed by swim repetitions, gym workout for upper and lower body
Friday	Spinning class (45 minutes) followed by a 200 meter warm up swim, 500 meters at race pace and 100 meters to relax
Saturday	Long run
Sunday	Long bike followed by a long swim

On days where two sports are scheduled or a sport and gym session are scheduled, the athlete can complete both at one time or complete one in the morning and one in the afternoon.

Modifications and Adaptations

In competition, it is important that the rules not be changed to suit athletes' special needs. There are, however, a limited number of approved modifications to triathlon rules that do accommodate the athlete's special needs and are permitted. However, coaches can modify the training exercises, their communication and sport equipment to assist athletes in achieving success.

Modifying Exercises

Modify the skills involved in an exercise so that all athletes can participate.

Accommodating an Athlete's Special Needs

Some examples of ways to accommodate an athlete's special needs include:

- Use the sound of a bell for visually impaired athletes
- Use flags with colors for hearing impaired athletes
- Establish hand signals for hearing impaired athletes

Modifying Your Communication Method

Different athletes require different communications systems. For example, some athletes learn and respond better to demonstrated exercises, whereas others require greater verbal communication. Some athletes may need a combination – to see, hear and even read a description of the exercise or skill.

Modifying Equipment

Successful participation for some athletes requires equipment modifications to suit their particular need such as:

- The height of the handlebars
- A special drink system
- Tennis shoes instead of bike shoes
- A more comfortable seat/saddle
- A tri-suit in order to make the transition easier
- Larger buoys that are easier to see
- The addition of a lane marker along the swim course

Mental Preparation and Training

Mental training is important for the athlete, whether striving to do his or her personal best or competing against others. Mental imagery, what Bruce D. Hale of Penn State calls ”No Sweat Practice,” is very effective. The mind cannot tell the difference between what is real and what is imagined. Practice is practice, regardless of whether it is mental or physical.

Ask the athlete to sit in a relaxed position, in a quiet place with few distractions. Tell the athlete to close their eyes and picture performing a particular skill. Each is seeing themself on a large movie screen on a triathlon course. Walk them through the stages step by step. Use as much detail as possible, using words to elicit all the senses - sight, hearing, touch, and smell. Ask the athlete to repeat the image, picture rehearsing the skills successfully.

The thought behind this is that the body goes where your mind goes. Thought is energy and energy is action. The athlete can make things happen first in his/her mind and then physically.

Some athletes need help to start the process. Others will learn to practice this way on their own. The link between performing the skills in the mind and performing the skills on the field may be hard to explain. However, the athlete who repeatedly imagines himself/herself correctly completing a skill and believing it to be true is more likely to make it happen. Whatever goes into one’s mind and one’s heart comes out in their actions.

Cross Training in Triathlon

Cross training is a modern day term which refers to the substitution of skills other than the skills directly involved in the performance of an event. Cross training came about as a result of injury rehabilitation and is now also used in injury prevention. When runners sustain injuries in the legs or feet that keeps them from running, other activities can be substituted so that the athlete can keep up his/her aerobic and muscular strength.

There is a limited value and cross over to the specific exercise. A reason to "cross train" is to avoid injury and maintain muscular balance during a period of intense sport specific training. One of the keys to success in sport is staying healthy and training over the long haul. Cross training allows athletes to do event-specific training workouts with greater enthusiasm and intensity, or less risk of injury.

Gym workouts are very important to triathletes because by training all muscle groups, we don't rely on just one group of muscles to do all the work. This can help prevent injuries. Participating in obstacle course races for fun can help triathletes become stronger and more skilled. Rest days can also be active days with games like water polo, volleyball, etc.

Home Training Program

1. If athletes only train once a week with their coaches and do no training on their own, progress will be very limited.
2. Nothing improves the athlete's sport ability like playing! Parents/Guardians can challenge the athlete to family competitions for additional practice or just social outings.
3. To be effective, coaches should run a home training orientation for family members and/or training partners. This should be an active session where partners get hands-on experience with the different activities.
4. As a motivational tool, a coach may want to award a certificate of achievement to athletes and training partners who complete a set number of home training sessions during the season.

TRIATHLON COACHING GUIDE

Triathlon Rules, Protocol & Etiquette

Table of Contents

Teaching Triathlon Rules

The best time to teach the rules of Triathlon is during training. For example, during a training bike ride would be a good time to explain to athletes what drafting is and that it is not allowed during the bike stage of the competition.

As an international sports program, Special Olympics has both adopted and modified the International Triathlon Union rules. Please refer to the official Special Olympics Sports Rules, which can be found at www.specialolympics.org for the complete listing of Triathlon rules as modified and approved by Special Olympics International.

As a coach, it is your responsibility to know and understand the rules of the sport and to teach these rules to your triathletes and other coaches. To assist you with this responsibility, select rules that govern the sport of triathlon are listed below.

Competition Distance

The Special Olympics triathlon event consists of three stages:

- 750-Meter Swim
- 20K Bike
- 5K Run

Officials

There should be no fewer than the following officials:

- Head Referee
- Safety Officer
- Medical Officer
- Course Officer

Head Referee

The Head Referee shall ensure that all participants, coaches, and event support personnel are briefed about the course, safety procedures and any site-specific rules applying to the different stages of the event. The Head Referee also has the authority to stop the race or to change the distance and/or race course due to safety concerns or unforeseen circumstances.

Safety Officer

The Safety Officer is responsible for all aspects of safety related to the three stages of the event. He/she should advise the Head Referee if conditions are unsuitable for staging the competition and/or make recommendations for modifications to the course.

Medical Officer

The Medical Officer is responsible for all medical aspects related to the competition and competitors.

Course Officer

The Course Officer is responsible for the accuracy of the survey establishing the distance of the course. Prior to the commencement of competition, he/she shall inspect the course with the Head Referee and Safety Officer to ensure that all points are correctly marked and all equipment has been correctly installed and is in working order.

Athletes as Officials Program

The Athletes as Officials Program is designed to assist with the development of Special Olympics athletes to be trained in skills necessary to officiate at variable levels of responsibility, consistent with the ability of the athlete. Typically, the athlete will have a "mentor" official who teaches the athlete how to officiate. Special Olympics Programs should work with the mentor official, along with a local representative of the national governing body, to guide Special Olympics athletes participating in this program to become certified.

Swimming Conduct

Open water swimming athletes, coaches, administrators, parents and officials must "Expect the Unexpected" and be flexible at all times in the dynamic environment of the open water where anything can happen. Open water swimming stages can be conducted in any natural or man-made body of water including oceans, bays, seas, lakes, rivers, dams, reservoirs, lidos, lagoons, lochs, ponds, creeks, estuaries, straits, channels, lidos, canals and rowing basins.

Athletes may use any stroke to propel themselves through the water and may tread water or float. Athletes may stand on the ground to rest (when the water is shallow enough to permit this). Athletes are only allowed to push off the ground at the beginning and end of the swim stage. They may also rest by holding an inanimate object such as a buoy, boat, rope, or floating object as long as they do not use the object to gain forward progression.

Swimming Emergencies

A swimmer experiencing difficulty and in need of assistance shall raise one arm overhead and pump it up and down to seek assistance. A swimmer who receives official assistance must withdraw from the remainder of the race unless such assistance did not aid the swimmer in making forward progress.

Swimming Equipment

Wetsuits and other technical swimsuits that may offer buoyancy or additional protection from the cold or elements may be used. Wetsuits may not exceed 5mm thickness anywhere. No swimmer shall be allowed to use or wear any device that may be an aid to his/her speed or endurance such as fins, hand paddles, pull buoys or floats of any kind. A maximum of two swim caps may be used. If an athlete wears two swims caps, the official race cap must be worn on the outside. A reasonable application of body grease, lanolin or petroleum jelly is allowed.

Biking Conduct

Athletes shall not make any forward progress on the bike course unaccompanied by their bicycle. Athletes are not permitted to cycle with a bare torso. Cycling is not permitted inside the transition area. The sole responsibility of knowing and following the prescribed cycling course rests with each participant.

Drafting

While on the bike course, no participant shall permit his/her drafting zone to intersect with or remain intersected with the drafting zone of a leading cyclist or that of a motor vehicle. The Drafting Zone is defined as the rectangular area twelve (12) meters long and three (3) meters wide surrounding each bicycle. An athlete may enter the bike draft zone in the following circumstances: when overtaking another athlete and executing the manoeuver within 20 second; for safety reasons; 100 meters before and after an aid station or transition area; an acute turn; in a section excluded by the TD.

Safety Equipment

All participants shall wear a protective head cover, undamaged and unaltered, approved by a national accredited testing authority recognized by a National Federation affiliated with ITU. The helmet must be securely fastened at all times when the athlete is in possession of the bike, from the time they remove their bike from the rack at the start of the bike stage, until after they have placed their bike on the rack at the finish of the bike stage. All handlebar tube ends must be plugged.

Running Conduct

Participants must run or walk the entire run course and must wear their official race number. Each participant is responsible for knowing and following the prescribed course.

Equipment

Any participant who at any time wears or carries a headset, radio, headphones, or personal audio device shall be subject to a time penalty. A participant may carry a water bottle on the run portion of the course, provided that such container is not made of glass. Glass containers are prohibited.

Unified Sports® Rules

There are few differences between the rules for Unified Sports® competition and the rules outlined in the official Special Olympics Sports Rules and modifications outlined in the rules book. The additions are as follows:

1. A roster consists of a proportionate numbers of athletes and partners. A line up during the competition consists of half athletes and half partners. In triathlon, each athlete has a partner to shadow them through all three stages of the competition. Triathlon relay teams should have two more athletes than partners in the competition.
2. In team sports, division assignment is based on the best players on the roster, not the average ability of all players.
3. Team sports must have an adult, non-playing coach. Player-coaches are not allowed in team sports.

Unified Sports Triathlon is designed to contribute further to the mainstreaming of individuals with intellectual disabilities by bringing together individuals with intellectual disabilities and those without on the same team as equal partners. The equality among all teammates is enhanced when the teammates are roughly the same age and ability. The selection of athletes and partners of similar age and ability is essential for Unified Sports Triathlon training and competition.

It is very important that the Unified Sports partners know their role on the team and in Special Olympics in general. Player dominance by Unified Sports partners does not meet the intent and goals of the program and does not allow the athletes to showcase their talents. A good partner is one who competes right alongside the athlete and has a similar ability. In a perfect world, it would be impossible to differentiate between the contributions of an athlete and a Unified Sports partner.

Protests

Protest procedures are governed by the rules of competition. The role of the competition management team is to enforce the rules. As coach, your duty to your athletes is to protest any action or events that occur while your athletes are competing that you think violated the official triathlon rules. It is extremely important that you do not make protests because you and your athlete did not get your desired outcome. Protests are serious matters that impact a competition's schedule. Check with the competition manager prior to competition to learn the protest procedures for that competition.

In the event of a protest, the head coach must complete the Protest Form, which should be available at the Sport Information Desk (SID). The protest must be submitted at the Sport Information Desk no later than 20 minutes after the conclusion of the competition.

Protests and Appeals Procedures

Only the head coach or designated registered coach (in the absence of the head coach) can protest. All forms must be fully completed and should contain the following information:

- Date
- Time submitted
- Sport, Event, Age Group Division
- Athlete's name, Delegation
- Reason for protest (specific rule violation from Official Special Olympics rules)
- Coach's signature

Once the protest is submitted, a ruling will be made by the Sports Specific Jury, which consists of the Technical Delegate, Sport Manager, and Chief Official. Once the Jury makes a decision, the coach can either accept the ruling or appeal the ruling to the World Games Jury Appeal. Jury Appeals will consist of a representative of the Game's Organizing Committee (GOC), a representative of Special Olympics, and a Technical Official. All decisions made by the Jury of Appeal are final.

Triathlon Protocol & Etiquette

During Practice

Good Triathlon etiquette and protocol start at practice. Teaching your athletes good sportsmanship and respect for officials, teammates, opponents, and volunteers will carry over to when an actual competition takes place. Your role as coach sets the standard that your team will follow. Always strive to set a good example.

When practicing, make sure your athletes follow the rules they will expect to have enforced in competition. The better your athletes understand the rules, the better equipped they will be to understand why a given call was made. Being consistent in applying calls in practice will reduce confusion and frustration in competitions. Teaching respect for both officials and other competitors begins in practice. The coach needs to set high standards of sportsmanship.

Although triathlon is an individual sport, remember to teach your athletes to help each other in case unplanned or dangerous situations arise when out in open water or on the bike and run courses.

During Competition

Triathlon is a highly competitive sport that is best performed with a lot of positive emotions. Keeping emotions under control and channeled into good sportsmanship can be a challenge to the coach. Below are some important tips to share with athletes:

- In order to get to the start line on time, arrive early to the transition area to set up your transitions
- Ensure your attire is appropriate to the rules and weather conditions
- Ensure you have your correct numbers
- Always perform to the best of your ability
- Respect other competitors, your coach, and officials
- Always do a warm-up prior to starting training or competition

Sportsmanship

"Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt."

Good sportsmanship is both the coach and athletes' commitment to fair play, ethical behavior and integrity. In perception and practice, sportsmanship is defined as those qualities which are characterized by generosity and genuine concern for others. Below we highlight a few focus points and ideas on how to teach and coach sportsmanship to your athletes.

Competitive Effort

- Put forth maximum effort during each event.
- Practice the skills with the same intensity as you would perform them in competition.
- Always finish the competition – never quit.

Fair Play at All Times

- Always comply with the rules.
- Demonstrate sportsmanship and fair play at all times.
- Respect the decision of the officials at all times.

Expectations of Coaches

- Always set a good example for participants and fans to follow.
- Instruct participants in proper sportsmanship responsibilities and demand that they make sportsmanship and ethics their top priority.
- Give positive reinforcement of athlete performance.
- Respect the judgment of officials, abide by rules of the event and display no behavior that could incite fans.
- Treat opposing coaches, directors, participants and fans with respect.
- Shake hands with officials and opposing coaches in public.
- Develop and enforce penalties for participants who do not abide by sportsmanship standards.

Expectations of Athletes & Partners in Unified Sports®

- Treat teammates with respect.
- Encourage teammates when they make a mistake.
- Treat opponents with respect: shake hands prior to and after contests.
- Respect judgment of contest officials, abide by rules of the contest and display no behavior that could incite fans.
- Cooperate with officials, coaches or directors and fellow participants to conduct a fair contest.
- Do not retaliate (verbally or physically) if the other team demonstrates poor behavior.
- Accept seriously the responsibility and privilege of representing Special Olympics.
- Define winning as doing your personal best.
- Live up to the high standard of sportsmanship established by your coach.

Coaching Tips

- Teach your athletes to respect the officials and their decisions.
- Teach your athletes to play hard within the rules.
- Teach the general rules of triathlon to the athletes.
- Give sportsmanship awards or recognition after each match or practice.
- Always commend the athletes when they demonstrate sportsmanship.

Remember

- Sportsmanship is an attitude that is shown by how you and your athletes act before, during and after competition.
- Be positive about competing.
- Respect your opponents and yourself.
- Always stay under control even if you are feeling mad or angry.

Triathlon Glossary

Term	Definition
Aero Bars	Handlebars that face forward with places to put your elbows. These bars allow triathletes to maintain a comfortable aerodynamic position
Beachside Swim Start	When the swim phase begins with the athletes out of the water
Base	A foundation of fitness on which to build strength and speed
Bonk	When an athlete suddenly loses energy and fatigue sets in
Brick	A combination workout that includes two disciplines back to back, one right after the other. This can be a swim and bike or bike and run
Dolphin Dive	Method for getting through shallow water that involves a shallow dive, standing up, and repeating until the water is deep enough to swim. 
Drafting	The process of one athlete following directly behind another to save energy. This is legal in triathlon during the swim but not in the bike
Easy Pace	Swim, bike, and/or run at a relaxed pace
Fartlek	A method of interval training
Interval Training	A cardiovascular workout that involves brief near-maximum exertion interspersed with lower-intensity activity
In-Water Swim Start	When the swim phase begins with the athletes already in the water
Negative Split	When an athlete finished the second half of a race faster than the first half
PB/PR	Personal Best/Personal Record
Race Pace	Performing at the highest speed for optimum performance in a race
Rhythm Pace	A pace that is in between easy and race pace
Sight Buoys	Buoys positioned in the water for swimmers to sight off
T-1	Transition One (1): The swim to bike transition
T-2	Transition Two (2): The bike to run transition
Turn Buoys	Buoys positioned in the water to mark the course