Preamble:

Special Olympics divisions athletes on the basis of ability. This process outlines the most equitable competition environment for all Special Olympics athletes and is consistent with the Special Olympics Canada Divisioning Policy, 5000-02.

Divisioning Process

Individual Sports:

Step 1: Divide by Gender

Step 2: Divide by Ability

Proceed on the premise that the recommended performance difference between athletes in a division is 25%

Step 3: Divide number of athletes registered in an event

For 3 or more athletes:

Place athletes into division no less than 3, no more than 8

If you have more than 8 athletes in a division reduce the performance percentage to produce new ability groupings – 5% at a time is suggested. For example, an ability group could be reduced to 20% difference in performance to create two ability groupings.

For 2 Athletes entered into an event:

Athletes would compete against each other as long as their abilities are within 25% otherwise they would compete against self.

For 1 athlete entered into an event:

An athlete would compete against their own seeded time in the event. If they are competing against their own seeded time medals would be awarded as follows:

Gold Medal: Final performance is better than the seeded performance
Silver Medal: Final performance is the same as or less than the seed performance by 10%

Bronze Medal: Final performance is less than the seed performance by 11-25%

For events that are not seeded the athlete would be awarded a gold medal.
Divisioning for Judged Sports:

Step 1: Divide by gender

Step 2: Divide by ability, using predetermined levels of ability as outlined in sport rules

Step 3:

Figure Skating:
If there are more than 8 competitors in a level, athletes will be seeded by ability using their element scores.

Rhythmic Gymnastics:
If there are more than 8 competitors in a level a divisioning round will be run. Athletes will be placed in their final division according to their all round scores.

Divisioning For 10 Pin Bowling:

i. Events shall be divisioned by ability rather than age or gender.
ii. Classification for divisioning will be based upon no more than 8 competitors/teams per division.
iii. For competition, there must be a minimum of 3 entries in any one event.
iv. Handicapping for 10-Pin Bowling events will be 90% of the difference between the participant's entering average and the scratch score of 180.
NOTE: If a bowler has an average better than 180, then the number 180 can be adjusted.
v. When establishing divisions for competition…
a) Individuals will be placed into categories based on their average.
b) Doubles teams will be placed into divisions based upon the bowlers' combined averages.
c) Teams will be placed into divisions based upon the bowlers' combined averages.
vi. An individual athlete may or may not be assigned to the same division for the individual, doubles team and team competitions.
vii. Divisions will be established by the tournament director in consultation with the National Office. Divisions shall not be protested.

Divisioning for Team Sports:

Step 1: Divide by Ability

Honest Effort Rule (HER)

Divisioning heats are conducted to ensure that athletes compete against athletes of a similar ability level in their final competition. To ensure that athletes compete at the best of their ability during the divisioning round, the honest effort rule will be implemented.

Honest effort would indicate that there should be no more than 15% difference in performance between divisioning and final events. If an athlete exceeds their divisioning event performance by 15% in the final that athlete will be disqualified.

If the coach is of the opinion that his/her athlete has not competed at the best of their ability in the divisioning race, and may be in danger of violating the HER, they have the option to submit a faster time for their athlete so that they can be placed in a division, which reflects their ability.

If an athlete falls or is disqualified in their divisioning event the coach has the following options:

1) Submit a faster time or longer distance/greater height
2) Concede the event qualifying time/distance/height
3) Rerun of the event*

**NOTE*: The following events are eligible to be rerun:
Cross Country: 100m & 500m
Snowshoeing: 100m & 200m
Speed Skating: 111m & 222m
Athletics: 50m, 100m, 200m, 400m, Hurdles,
Aquatics: All 25m, & 50m races

If an athlete falls or is DQ'd in the second divisioning race they will have the following two options:
1) Submit a faster time
2) Concede the event qualifying time

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HONEST EFFORT RULE CANNOT BE PROTESTED.

Cross Country Skiing Exception:

For sports like Cross Country Skiing, where environmental changes can impact the performance of the athlete, the following procedures should be implemented:
Prior to the start of each cross-country divisioning event, a forerunner would ski the track to determine a baseline time for the course. The same forerunner would ski the track again prior to the final race in each event to establish if the track conditions favour a faster time. This will establish if a percentage change is required to be made to the honest effort rule. Coaches will be informed if a percentage change is to be made.