

KOS Guidelines & Rules

There are a specific set of rules that apply to Kids of Steel® events to maximize safety and inclusion. For a complete list, contact your Provincial Triathlon Association. Some of the more important rules are highlighted below.

General Equipment Guidelines

- Athletes may use any type of bike in a KOS event. It is recommended parents get bikes checked for safety (e.g. brake integrity) prior to each KOS event.
- Athletes may wear any type of clothing in KOS events as long as they cover their chest and stomach on the bike and run.
- Use of wetsuits and certified personal flotation devices in the swim are at the discretion of the race director. Ask BEFORE the event if you have questions.

13 & Under Bike Equipment Rules

- No aero bars are permitted.
- Flat pedals and mountain bike-style clipless pedal systems (where the shoe sole touches the ground BEFORE the cleat) with single or double sided SPD (mountain bike) pedals are permitted.*
- See full KOS rules for wheel and gear recommendations.

**No other clipless pedal systems are permitted for athletes 13 yrs and younger as of Dec. 31.*



14 Years + Bike Equipment Rules

- Draft-legal** aero bars are permitted.
***Aero bars must not extend forward of the brake levers.
 **Brake levers and gears MUST be fastened to the handlebars, not aero bars.*
- Flat pedals and ALL clipless pedal systems are permitted. It is recommended that athletes entering the sport at any age use mountain bike-style pedal systems as they are much safer for transition and learning how to use clipless pedals.

Bike Equipment Rules: All Ages

Pedal cages, toe straps (old-style “toe clips”), and aero bars that extend past the brake hoods are NOT permitted at any KOS age.



To Consider...

Did you know that clipless pedals are not a significant advantage in KOS races? The time it takes to change from cycling to running shoes in transition usually cancels out any time advantage gained on the bike segment. Clipless pedals are *most* valuable in training to teach a proper pedal stroke.

Most bike frames are designed for adults who have very different core-limb proportions than youth. Make sure to get the bike fit properly when you buy a new one.



Also do not ignore complaints of knee pain or discomfort particularly if your athlete is growing. Get it checked out!





Kids of Steel®

Kids of Steel® or KOS is the national title for safe, inclusive multisport events for children and youth. This pamphlet provides a brief overview of some pertinent rules in triathlon. Contact your provincial governing body for a complete version of both the KOS and general triathlon competition rules.



Why Rules?

The KOS rules were developed to promote SAFETY in training and racing. They are NOT in place to level playing fields or produce success in the short term. Kids of Steel® stresses “Every Finisher Is A Winner”. The rules are in place to maximize the chances of every athlete finishing a successful event.



Distance rules and training guidelines have been developed to ensure LONG TERM physical, emotional, and social health of young athletes. They maximize the chance ALL athletes of all abilities, experience levels, and motivations can enjoy participating in triathlon today, tomorrow, and far into the future - whatever level they aspire to.

Triathlon Distances

Event distances in KOS and Youth races promote skill acquisition, speed, and inclusion (everyone can finish). Listed distances are MAXIMUMS in each sport. Athletes can race in shorter divisions or lower age groups* but they may NOT race up in age or distance.

*with permission from the Race Director

Ages are based on December 31 of the current year of competition.



Other Events

Other multisport events are becoming popular methods of inspiring children and youth to “tri multisport” in areas that may not have venues for each sport. For example:

- Splash n’ Dash (swim-run)
- Duathlon (run-bike-run or bike-run)
- Off-road triathlon or duathlon (trail)

It is recommended “first time” events be significantly shorter than the KOS distances.

General Triathlon Rules

The following rules apply to all triathlons for youth and adults. All competitors are expected to know the rules and follow them at all events.

Uniform

Athletes must cover their chest and stomach on the bike and run.

Swim

No forward movement using bottom, lane ropes, or walls. Athletes can stop to rest (stand up) but can ONLY move forwards by swimming. No flippers or propulsion devices allowed.

Transition



Helmet must be fastened before touching the bike (after swimming). No riding in transition (walk bike to mount line). Helmet must stay done up until after the bike is racked (after cycling).

Bike

No drafting (riding right beside or behind someone) in KOS races. Athletes must stay 3 bike lengths behind someone unless they are passing.

Run

No crawling! Walk, jog, or run.

Ages *as of Dec. 31	Swim Distance	Cycle Distance	Run Distance	Approx. Time to Complete	Why the Distances?
Under 6 years	Less than 50m	Less than 1.5km	Less than 500m	10 to 20 min.	The maximum distances are based on developmentally appropriate recommendations for TOTAL time of an aerobic event in each age group. You may notice that the total times correspond closely to the length of a physical education class in each of the age ranges.
6-7 years	50m	1.5km	500m		
8-9 years	100m	5km	1km	15 to 30 min.	
10-11 years	200m	5km	2km	20 to 40 min.	
12-13 years	300m	10km	3km	35 to 65 min.	
14-15 years	500m	10km	4km	40 to 70 min.	
16-19 years	750m	20km	5km	60 to 105 min.	