



Dear Special Olympics Athlete,

Congratulations on becoming a part of Special Olympics Washington! This handbook is your first step and resource into the community that is Special Olympics Washington. Through your commitment to Special Olympics and its programs, we challenge you to train and compete in all the sports that you can and lead in your community through the different programs we offer. There are many exciting ways to be an Athlete and a leader, so be sure to ask your coach or the Special Olympics office for more resources.

Special Olympics Washington **BUILDS** communities and **LEADS** in Wellness through Sports and Inclusion, but we can't do it without you! The mission is to provide year-round sports training and competition for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. By participating in sports, physical fitness and health education programs, you will increase self-confidence and social skills, improve physical and motor skills, and have more opportunities to grow as people.

This handbook is designed to introduce SOWA to you and to provide general information needed as an Athlete. It contains an outline of the organization, policies and guidelines, form samples, training and competition information, calendars, sports rules and regulations, and much more.

In addition to this handbook, each head coach may also acquire publications from SOWA staff that include:

- Official Special Olympics Winter Sports Rules book
- Official Special Olympics Summer Sports Rules book
- National Governing Body sports rules
- Plus regular publications distributed by SOWA to coaches and volunteers

Please contact your SOWA Senior Region Manger for any additional information or resources that you may need.

We wish you luck, and can't wait to see you out on the field and out in the community!

Dave Lenox  
Chief Executive Officer

Joe Hampson  
Vice President, Sports and Outreach



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## Introduction

### Quick Facts – Special Olympics Inc.

- Founded 1968 by Eunice Kennedy Shriver and the Joseph P. Kennedy Foundation.
- Currently one million athletes worldwide in 150 countries.
- Hold World Winter and World Summer Games on alternate two-year schedule.
- Expanded Special Olympics movement worldwide.

### Quick Facts – Special Olympics Washington (SOWA)

- Incorporated in Washington in 1975 as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.
- Governed by a 30 plus member board of directors.
- Staffed by 20 plus sports, business and administrative professionals.
- Over 8,500 volunteers support the organization statewide.
- Over 14,500 athletes with intellectual disabilities.
- Over 62,000 family members statewide.
- Vision is to help persons with intellectual disabilities be accepted and respected.
- Mission is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition.
- Persons with intellectual disabilities may participate in sports and other programs.
- Individuals are eligible at age eight with no upper age limit.
- There is no cost to participate for athletes or their families.
- Athletes are provided a volunteer coach for training and competition.
- Athletes are organized into athletic divisions according to age, gender and ability.
- Organized into four regions - King County, Northwest, Southwest and East Regions.
- Competition in each sport takes place at local, regional and statewide events.
- Four sports seasons are offered each year in 19 different Olympic-type sports.
- Unified Sports: Special Olympics athletes paired with non-Special Olympics athletes.
- Healthy Athletes: Athletes receive free dental, vision, feet and nutrition exams.
- Athlete Leadership: Athletes become board members, officials and public speakers.
- So Get Into It: A school-based curriculum promoting awareness and acceptance
- Funding: Supported by individuals, corporations, foundations and civic groups.



## **History**

Founded in 1968 by Eunice Kennedy Shriver and the Joseph P. Kennedy Foundation, Special Olympics formed to improve the lives of the intellectually disabled. That year, 1,000 athletes from 26 states and Canada competed in an Olympic type competition at Soldier Field in Chicago. During a time when individuals with intellectual disabilities were most often confined to institutions, the organization of Special Olympics began a movement to change the world's view about intellectually disabled people. The Special Olympics movement has grown to over one million athletes worldwide in 150 countries. Special Olympics Inc. holds the World Winter and World Summer Games on an alternate two-year schedule.

Special Olympics Washington (SOWA) incorporated in 1975 as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization following several years of program presentation by local community volunteer groups. A board of directors that provides guidance to SOWA staff and volunteers governs the organization.

## **Vision and Mission**

The vision of Special Olympics is to help bring all persons with intellectual disabilities into the larger society under conditions whereby they are accepted, respected and given the chance to become useful and productive citizens.

The mission of Special Olympics Washington provides year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults 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.

## **Athletes**

Persons with intellectual disabilities, regardless of ability level, may participate in sports and other programs offered by Special Olympics Washington. Individuals are eligible for training and competition at age eight. There is no upper age limit. More than 14,500 Special Olympics athletes compete in Special Olympics Washington programs at no cost to them or their families.

Each athlete is provided a volunteer coach as an individual competitor or via a team sport. Athletes train for a period of time prior to competing at local, regional and state tournaments. Four sports seasons are offered each year in 19 different Olympic-type sports that are governed by official rules and regulations provided by Special Olympics Inc. Athletes are organized into athletic divisions according to age, gender and ability.



## 4 Regions

SOWA is organized into four regions including the King County Region, the Northwest Region, the Southwest Region and the East Region. The Northwest Region includes Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish and Whatcom counties. The Southwest Region includes counties from Pierce County south to the state border, west to the Pacific Ocean and throughout the Olympic Peninsula. The East Region includes all counties east of the Cascade Mountains to the eastern, northern and southern state borders.



<b>Northwest Region Areas:</b>	<b>East Region Areas:</b>
Whatcom	Yakima Valley: Yakima/Kittitas/Nlickitat
Skagit/Island	Benton/Franklin/Walla Walla
Snohomish	Southeast: Whitman/Asotin/Columbia/Garfield
<b>King County Region Areas:</b>	Grant/Adams
West KC	North Central: Douglas/Okanogan/Wenatchee
East KC	Northeast: Spokane/Ferry/Stevens/Lincoln/Pend Oreille
South KC	
<b>Southwest Region Areas:</b>	
Pierce	
Peninsula: Callam/Jefferston/Kitsap/Cig Harbor	
Timberland: Thurston/Lewis/Mason/Pac/Fq/Grays Harbor	
Columbia River: Clark/Cowlitz/Skamania/Wahkiakum	

## 16 Areas

SOWA is organized into 16 areas across Washington State including Whatcom, Skagit / Island, Snohomish, West King, East King, South King, Pierce County, Peninsula, Timberland, Columbia River, Yakima Valley, Tri-Cities, Southeast Area, Gant / Adams County, North Central Area, Northeast / Spokane Area.

## Training & Competition

Competition in each sport takes place at local, regional and statewide events. Individuals and teams compete in divisions according to age, gender and ability. Year-round training, directed by qualified coaches, is the primary goal of Special Olympics. Prior to each sports season, volunteer coaches are trained and certified at clinics conducted by Special Olympics professionals and other sports experts. Officials and event committees also receive training.

## Sports & Seasons

- Winter Season & Winter Games  
Alpine Skiing, Basketball, Cross Country Skiing, Figure Skating, Speed Skating, Snowboarding
- Spring Season & Summer Games  
Aquatics (Swimming), Athletics (Track & Field), Cycling, Power Lifting, Soccer



- Summer Season & Summer Sports Classic Golf, Softball
- Fall Season  
Bowling and Volleyball (recreational)

## **Unified Sports®**

Special Olympics Unified Sports® is an inclusive sports program that combines an approximately equal number of Special Olympics athletes (individuals with intellectual disabilities) and partners (individuals without intellectual disabilities) on teams for training and competition.

Three models exist within Unified Sports: competitive Unified Sports, Unified Sports Player Development and Unified Sports Recreation. All three models provide different types of experiences in team sports such as basketball, soccer and volleyball and in other sports such as bocce, golf and tennis. Unified Sports is now offered throughout the world and has been a Special Olympics internationally sanctioned program since 1989.

## **Healthy Athletes**

Special Olympics Healthy Athletes is a program designed to help athletes improve their health and fitness. This leads to an enhanced sport experience and improved well-being. Athletes can receive oral health screenings and eye exams at no cost to the participant, and programs in other health specialties are being developed worldwide.

## **Athlete Leadership Program**

Special Olympics Athlete Leadership Programs (ALPs) allow athletes to explore opportunities for Special Olympics participation in roles previously considered “non-traditional.” Such participation might come in the form of serving on the Board of Directors or as a committee member; or an athlete acting as a spokesperson, team captain, coach or official. Participation in ALPs may be in addition to or in place of participation in traditional Special Olympics Programs.

## **So Get Into It**

The So Get Into It program is a school-based curriculum that helps teachers and students promote awareness and acceptance of people with developmental disabilities. The program is available to school districts via Special Olympics Washington and Special Olympics, Inc.

## **Volunteers**

Volunteers continue to be the source of support for SOWA athletes across the state of Washington. Over 8,500 people volunteer as a coach, sports official, chaperone, committee member, fundraising volunteer, and in many other areas. SOWA programs and services





could not be provided without the support and commitment provided to the athletes by volunteers.

## **Funding**

SOWA is entirely supported by private contributions from individuals, corporations, foundations and civic groups. Although SOWA is not an official United Way agency, employees may designate SOWA as the beneficiary of workplace giving programs.

## **Coaches' Responsibilities**

The coach is ultimately responsible for the safety, health and general welfare of all Special Olympics athletes in their charge. The coach is also responsible for being knowledgeable and responsive to special needs or requirements of individual athletes.

Other responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- notifying the Region Sports & Training Manager at the beginning of a sport season of the intent to coach a Special Olympics team;
- attending a Coaches' Training School;
- attending the pre-season coaches' meeting to receive pertinent information and to express needs for volunteers, equipment, uniforms, and transportation;
- ensuring that all athletes have valid "Application for Participation" forms on file before working with a team. The coach is required to keep a copy of this form with them at all times, i.e. at local practices, while traveling to and from competitions. Athletes practicing with expired Athlete Medical/Release Forms will not be covered by Special Olympics insurance;
- being present at all practices and events;
- stressing good sportsmanship and setting a good example for the athletes;
- providing complete supervision of athletes at all times while in the coaches' charge;
- developing a sound training plan conducive to skill development at a reasonable rate, always keeping the health and safety of athletes in mind;
- warning players of the inherent risks in the sport and the danger of using questionable techniques;
- providing a safe environment for practice, including proper and safe equipment required for the sport;



- evaluating athletes for injuries and ability limits, and determining any subsequent limits to participation injuries or ability may cause;
- providing proper first aid and determining emergency procedures that are well publicized and easy to implement; and
- matching players properly for practice or competition.

## **Coaches Guidelines**

Coaches are ultimately responsible for the overall quality of training programs Special Olympics athletes receive. The role of the coach is crucial to the safety and success of each athlete involved in Special Olympics Washington. The following guidelines have been set in place to help guide the coach.

### **A coach must...**

- maintain adequate records of Application for Participation forms;
- view the Protective Behaviors Video;
- be screened by the Washington State Patrol;
- attend regularly scheduled Region coaches meetings;  
**(Note:** All Region coaches meetings are mandatory. Each team wanting to participate in the upcoming season must have representation at Region coaches meetings.)
- begin the teams athletic training at least eight weeks prior to Chapter competitions;
- submit all qualifying scores for both Region and State Games, prior to the deadline, to their Region Sports & Training Manager;
- read and understand the Coaches Handbook, noting deadlines, procedures, National Governing Body (NGB) and Special Olympics Inc. (SOI) rules;
- contact their Region Sports & Training Manager for information about upcoming events and deadlines;
- obtain, read and use a SOI Sports Skills Program Guide for the sport of participation; • understand the insurance policy and accident reporting system; and
- be first aid trained.

### **A coach is not required, but is encouraged to:**

- develop a record-keeping system to track athlete progress (This system also serves as valuable documentation in case of injury);
- encourage additional physical conditioning or fitness training for the athletes outside of regular practices (many coaches set up once-a-week aerobics or conditioning class at community health facilities to compliment sports practices);
- recognize athletes, assistants and other volunteers at the end of each sports season (i.e. end-of-season potluck, dessert night, pizza party, certificates); and
- regularly send information to parents, guardians and volunteers, and conduct regular parent/guardian/volunteer meetings (it is important that parents, guardians, and



volunteers are fully aware of the policies, procedures, events, rules and deadlines required by SOWA).

Unified Coaches of a team sport may not also participate as a partner. However, a Unified Coach of an individual sport may participate as a partner if another certified coach is on the team designated to take over as Head Coach during competition.

## **Coaches Code of Conduct**

Special Olympics Washington is a non-profit organization that sponsors high quality physical fitness training and sports competitions for people with intellectual disabilities. The primary purpose of this Code of Conduct is to establish a high standard of behavior for coaches to ensure the safety and well-being of all athletes involved in training and competition.

Coaches are expected to meet the following standards while participating in Special Olympics, whether in transit, during practice, or at a competition:

1. Abide by the rules and policies of Special Olympics Washington.
2. Exhibit good sportsmanship and act as models for Special Olympics Washington.
3. Refrain from, and prohibit, physical and verbal abuse, profanity and other inappropriate behavior.
4. Refrain from and prohibit the use of alcohol, illegal drugs, and controlled substances. (Tobacco in restricted areas)
5. Guarantee adequate supervision of athletes.
6. Refrain from felonies and misdemeanors, including the possession of harmful weapons.
7. Within 24 hours, notify the Region Sports & Training Manager of any offense in Category A of the Athlete Code of Conduct.

If a coach does not meet these standards, Special Olympics Washington:

- will notify the coach of the undesirable behavior; and
- may suspend the coach indefinitely; or
- may expel the coach.

## **Volunteer Screening**



Special Olympics Washington must ensure coverage through the Special Olympics Corporate Insurance Policy (SOCIP), and all volunteers must be registered in accordance with and comply with Special Olympics general rules. The SOCIP includes coverage for general liability, automobile liability and participant accident coverage. Some of the general rules are briefly outlined below, along with the recommended practices.

It is paramount that SOWA establish, identify and have access to a single database of names and addresses of individual volunteers. This is required by Special Olympics Inc. and the corporate insurance company, and is necessary to address risk management policies. This also helps SOWA track volunteer employee community service records often requested by companies, and to provide information to companies for volunteer matching fund donations. SOWA also requires this information so that proper recognition and thank you letters can be presented to volunteers.

1. The Volunteer Application form distributed by Special Olympics Washington is the **only** valid form to be used by volunteers. The form includes reference to RCW 9A.73.085 of Chapter 486, Laws of 1987 and a signature of compliance is required. All volunteers must use the same form, with no alterations made to the liability language or signature portion. The Volunteer Application form is identified and dated for each year's activities and is not an open-ended enrollment.
2. To register as a volunteer for Special Olympics Washington, all volunteers must complete the Volunteer Application form or the Applicant Disclosure form, including signatures, referencing the same RCW 9A.73.085 ruling at the venue site, to ensure current data and signature. Participation in a specific activity each year, such as Summer Games, requires completion of the Application form each year.
3. It is the responsibility of each Venue Manager, or their designee, to maintain their volunteer database and ensure that the information and signatures are valid each year, using one of the identified documents for that purpose.
4. Venue volunteer records need to be compiled into an Excel spreadsheet that can be sent to SOWA, using the same fields that appear in the Applicant Disclosure form.
5. Each volunteer database will be consolidated into a single file. SOWA needs this database for liability purposes as well as any accounting to our national office, insurance company, community service verification, and matching funds from employers.
6. No individual or group volunteering in support of SOWA is exempt from the requirements.
7. Washington State Patrol clearance is only necessary for class A and some B volunteers who have direct personal contact, or whose volunteer work may require that they be alone with athletes (i.e. coaches, assistant coaches, chaperones, Unified Sports partners, and private vehicle drivers); or have a specific financial relationship to the organization.



## Statement of Eligibility

To be eligible for participation in Special Olympics, a competitor must agree to observe and abide by the Official Olympics Sports Rules.

Special Olympics was created and developed to give individuals with intellectual disabilities the opportunity to train and compete in sports activities. No person shall, on the grounds of sex, race, religion, color or national origin, be excluded from participating in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity of Special Olympics.

There is no maximum age limitation for participation in Special Olympics. The minimum age requirement for participation in Special Olympics competition is eight years of age.

A person is considered to have intellectual disabilities for purposes of determining his or her eligibility to participate in Special Olympics if that person satisfies any one of the following:

1. The person has been identified by an agency or professional as having an intellectual disability as determined by their localities;  
(or)
2. The person has a cognitive delay as determined by standardized measures, such as intelligent quotient or IQ testing, or other measures generally accepted within the professional community, in the country of the accredited program, as being a reliable measurement of the existence of a cognitive delay;  
(or)
3. The person has a closely related developmental disability. A closely related developmental disability means having functional limitations in both learning (such as IQ) and in adaptive skills (such as in recreation, work, independent living, self-direction, or self-care). However, persons whose functional limitations are based solely on a physical, behavioral, or emotional disability, or a specific learning or sensory disability, are not eligible to participate as Special Olympics athletes, but may be eligible to volunteer for Special Olympics as partners in Unified Sports, if they otherwise meet the separate eligibility requirements in participation in Unified Sports set forth in the Sports Rules.

## Application for Participation

Application for Participation, Form 0001, Rev 3/02 (also known as athlete medical/release) is required for any SOWA athlete participating in Special Olympics Washington at any level (local, regional, State) at the beginning of a sport season. A participation form is valid for



three years. Forms are available from any SOWA office. The form must be copied on both sides to ensure that the release form is signed.

Before a coach actively begins training sessions with a team, a form for all new athletes must be completed, and a copy of the current form for each continuing athlete must be present. These forms must be fully completed, signed and dated by the athlete (if 18 years of age or older), or the athlete's guardian, and the physician that examined the athlete. Without the required signatures, the document is not valid. Incomplete forms mailed to SOWA are returned to the Region Sports & Training Manager with a checklist of incomplete information attached.

All completed forms must be sent to the Region Sports & Training Manager for approval. The Region Sports & Training Manager will then file the original with the State Office.

Without a current and completed Application for Participation form in the possession of the coach, Sports & Training Manager, and the SOWA Office, an athlete should not be allowed to participate in any training or competition at any level (Local, Region, State).

Application for Participation forms are for the protection of the athletes and the volunteers working with them. Without information the forms provide, athletes could possibly be in life-threatening situations and SOWA may not have necessary information to assist them. The form also serves as the document to register athletes for SOWA sports programs, and for SOI secondary accident insurance coverage.

Coaches are responsible for keeping copies of the forms with them **at all times** when athletes are present for a Special Olympics related purpose.

It is an unpleasant task for anyone to deny athletes participation in competition due to incomplete Application for Participation form. Coaches, SOWA staff, parents and guardians, must make every effort to ensure a current form is on file for each athlete.

Region Sports & Training Managers will review the Application for Participation printouts prior to quarterly deadlines. The forms are compiled into a print-out, listing all athletes within the Region that have completed forms on file at the State office. Athletes whose forms are to expire as of the start of the upcoming season are also monitored by the SOWA staff, and coaches and athletes will be notified when new Application for Participation forms are needed.

SOWA guidelines on how many sports an athlete may participate in per season include:

- As long as funding and human resources are available, athletes may train in up to two sports per season, but may compete in only one sport.
- Athletes that train in two sports per season must decide the sport they will compete in at Regional and State tournaments.
- Athletes that train for a team sport and an individual sport in the same season must compete in the team sport at Regional and State Tournaments.



## **Unified Partner Release Form**

This form is required for non-Special Olympics athletes participating in Unified Sports. It does not require a physician's signature but must be filled out and the release portion signed by the participating player (partner). The handling of the Unified Partner form is the same procedure as outlined previously for the Application for Participation form. Unlike the Athlete form, the Partner form does not expire.

## **Atlanto-Axial Instability/Medical Treatment Forms**

Special release/provision forms are available for athletes with Atlanto-Axial Instability and athletes who for religious reasons cannot complete the standard form. These forms should accompany the standard form when returned to Region Sports & Training Managers. Forms are available through the SOWA office.

Samples of these forms can be found in the Forms section of the Coaches Handbook. Deadlines for submitting Application for Participation forms are four times a year, coinciding with seasonal sports training programs. Submit any time prior to these dates for participation during the upcoming season.

## **Application Deadline Dates**

Deadline dates for Application for Participation forms can be obtained from the Region Sports & Training Managers or the SOWA office.

## **Athlete Code of Conduct**

Special Olympics Washington prides itself in sponsoring high quality physical fitness training and sports competitions. The primary purpose of the Athlete Code of Conduct is to establish a high standard of athlete behavior to ensure the safety and well-being of all athletes involved in training and competition. All athletes are expected to abide by the code of conduct and standards of behavior as established by Special Olympics Washington.

### **Athlete Standards of Behavior**

While participating in Special Olympics Washington, whether in transit, during practice, at a competition, or in any associated social activity, athletes are expected to exhibit good sportsmanship and to meet the following standards of behavior:

#### **Category A – Refrain from:**

- Use of alcohol, illegal drugs or any controlled substance.
- Unwanted physical or verbal sexual overtures.
- Physical abuse or any unwelcome physical contact.
- Violent or disruptive behavior.



- Felonies, misdemeanors, possession of harmful weapons, or any other illegal or socially unacceptable behavior which seriously disrupts or impedes participation of an athlete or others.

**Category B – Refrain from:**

- Profanity or verbal abuse.
- Tobacco use in restricted areas.
- Frequent unexpected absences.
- Poor personal hygiene.

**Athlete Disciplinary Measures**

In **Category A**, Special Olympics Washington (defined as State staff and Region Sports & Training Managers) reserve the right to immediately suspend any athlete, pending an investigation of the offense.

In **Category A**, the following progressive disciplinary measure will be exercised by the SOWA staff member:

- a. Verbal warning given to the athlete.
- b. Personal meeting with the athlete:  
Athletes under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent/guardian or caseworker. The meeting will be documented in writing with copies distributed to the athlete, Region Sports & Training Manager, State office, coach's file, and parent/guardian or caseworker.

**Athlete Disciplinary Measures (cont.)**

- c. Individual disciplinary action taken:  
The action may include suspension or expulsion. In cases of suspension or expulsion, a review may be conducted at the end of the suspension period. In cases of very serious or repeated incidents, permanent expulsion by SOWA may be required.
- d. State Office advised of action taken.

In **Category B**, the following progressive disciplinary measures are to be exercised by the coach:

- a. Verbal warning given to the athlete.
- b. Written warning issued to the athlete, with copy to Region Sports & Training Manager.
- c. Suspension from practices or competition during the specific sport season. Further action must be referred to the Program Director or Chief Executive Officer in the SOWA Office.
- d. The athlete has the right to appeal, with a written plan in place to improve behavior.





## **Team Registration Procedures**

### **Pre-Season**

A coach must register a team with the Region Sports & Training Manager before the beginning of each sports season. This information will be used as a mailing list for information during the season, for bracketing and to schedule practice visits and scrimmages.

### **Competition**

The SOWA Event Registration Packet is to be used to register a team for Regional and State competitions. (See sample in Forms section of this handbook.)

The packets will be mailed out to all coaches who are actively coaching that season. Registration forms will be distributed by the Region Sports & Training Managers to the coaches. Coaches must complete the forms and send the forms to the SOWA office approximately one month prior to the competition.

The only additional information required for State competition in a team sport is the Team Cover Sheet.

For a schedule of deadlines for Region and State competitions contact your Region Sport & Training Manager.

## **Commercial Messages**

In order to avoid commercial exploitation of persons with intellectual disabilities, no uniforms, bibs or other signs bearing competition numbers, worn by Special Olympics athletes during competition, or opening or closing ceremonies of any tournaments or Games may be emblazoned with commercial names or commercial messages unless it is the normal markings of the manufacturer.

Special Olympics athletes participating in training or practice sessions, or other non-tournament or Games activities, may wear clothing or use non-apparel items (sports bags, etc.) that contain small and attractively designed identifications of corporate or organizational sponsors.

These rules apply to Special Olympics Games and competitions because of the relationship Special Olympics Inc. has with the U.S. Olympic Committee and other governing bodies. However, because of the voluntary nature of most Special Olympics Games Organizing Committees, the following rules of thumb regarding commercial messages should be followed at all Special Olympics competitions:

1. Volunteers may wear clothing that bear small and attractively designed names or logos identifying corporate or organizational sponsors while attending Games and competitions, so long as those displays do not exceed an area of six square inches or



its metric equivalent. All placement of sponsor logos must be approved by the SOWA Marketing Department.

2. Sports officials may not wear, carry or use other apparel items that contain the names or logos of corporate or organizational sponsors (except for normal commercial markings) during the opening or closing ceremonies, competitions or sports demonstrations. At other times, or at Games venues other than the sites of opening and closing ceremonies, competitions or demonstrations (such as at the sites of training and practice sessions), officials may wear, carry or use clothing or other items that contain sponsors' names or logos if those displays comply with those permitted to be displayed by volunteers, as listed above.
3. The opening ceremonies of all Games shall celebrate the athletic skill, accomplishments, and courage of Special Olympics athletes. It is the policy of SOI that no banners or other signage bearing the names of commercial sponsors or their products may be displayed at the site of opening ceremonies of any World Games, Regional Games, or Multi- National Games. Accredited Programs may permit commercial banners and signage that are subordinate to Special Olympics pageantry, that do not violate any other provision of this Section, and are in the utmost good taste, consistent with the first sentence of this subsection.

## **SOWA Logo and Name**

The Special Olympics logo is the official trademark of the worldwide Special Olympics program and is registered with the U.S. Patent Office. Use of the logo, has been licensed to Special Olympics Washington by Special Olympics Inc. for presentation of Special Olympics programs in Washington State. Strict rules and regulations regarding use of the logo are given to SOWA by SOI to follow. In return, local programs must meet these rules and regulations at all times.

Only the SOWA office can grant permission to use the SOWA logo or name. Before using the logo on uniforms, printed materials, etc., the local program should contact the SOWA Sports & Training Manager for approval. The Sports & Training Managers have information about proper use of the logo and name through the Special Olympics Washington Style Guide. The Sports & Training Manager may consult with the SOWA Marketing Department for final approval. Electronic media art of the SOWA logo can be obtained through the SOWA office.

Special Olympics Washington may approve use of the logo and name:

- when a local program wants to include its name with the official logo using the official local program logo template available via the SOWA office;
- when the logo will be used in conjunction with a fundraising event or promotion; • when an organization or business wants to use a logo along with the SOWA logo; and
- when a local program wants to create a communication tool (e.g., brochure, banner).

Sample proofs of materials using the name or logo (artwork, ad copy, uniform designs, draft, scripts, etc.) must be submitted to the SOWA Sports & Training Manager at least three weeks



prior to initiating the project. The activity or project cannot commence without SOWA approval.

For further information, please consult the **Special Olympics Washington Style Guide** provided on the SOWA website - [www.sowa.org](http://www.sowa.org).

## **SOWA Team Logo Samples**

Below are examples of team uniform logo usage. They are to be used for guideline purposes



More guideline can be found on our website <http://www.sowa.org>

## **Fundraising Regulations**

Anyone adhere raising to money the following the policymaker of Special Olympics Inc. or Special Olympics Washington must use a Fundraising Registration Form (see "Forms" section of this handbook and at [www.sowa.org](http://www.sowa.org)) must be submitted to the SOWA Sports & Training Manager at least forty working days prior to the commencement of a fund raiser. After receiving the registration form, the SOWA Sports & Training Manager will either approve the fund raiser or explain why it cannot be approved. A copy of the Fundraising Registration Form must be available at the event for insurance to be provided. All approved forms are for one-time approvals only and are valid only for the stated term of the event. After the fund raiser, the financial results must be filed with the Sports & Training Manager who will forward the activity report to the SOWA Accounting Manager and Marketing Department.



## Logo Use Policy

Local, Region and State programs are required to comply with the Graphics Standards Guide published by Special Olympics Inc. and Special Olympics Washington. Following is a summary of Special Olympics International policy regarding logo use on uniforms and other equipment.

Team uniforms and equipment utilizing a logo must have the design approved in writing by your region Sports & Training Manager before going to print. Teams will not be allowed to wear any new uniforms that do not comply with SOI and SOWA policies and replacement of these uniforms will come at the team's expense.

- The official Special Olympics logo should appear on all athletes uniforms. It may appear as the only logo on the uniform or in conjunction with a team logo, (e.g. a small Special Olympics logo may appear on the left chest or sleeve of the uniform top, with "Everett Bears" and a picture of a bear appearing on the body of the shirt.)
- The Special Olympics logo must be produced in its official form, enlarged or reduced. It may not be distorted or altered in any way. Artwork of the official logo may be obtained from your SOWA Sports & Training Manager or the SOWA Marketing Department.
- The State designation (Washington) must appear on the logo. Region and program (local) designations may be added below the State designation, but they may not be used alone. The criteria for approving a fund raiser are as follows:
- Fund raising expenses should not exceed 25-30% of gross revenues. This means that at least 70-75% of every dollar raised should be returned to SOWA. Exceptions may be approved in special cases.
- The Sports & Training Manager will work with the SOWA Marketing Department to approve materials using the Special Olympics or Special Olympics Washington name and logo.
- Adequate measure must be taken to ensure that official Special Olympics Inc., SONA, and SOWA sponsors are given the right of first refusal to fund and participate in the event.
- In-kind donations can be solicited to reduce cash expenditures. In-kind forms are available through the SOWA office and must be provided to the donor to meet IRS and audit rules.
- The fund raiser must not cross local or region geographical boundaries without written permission from the SOWA office.
- The fund raiser must not publicize a tobacco product or an alcoholic beverage.
- The fund raiser must be consistent with and supportive of the Special Olympics image as presented in the Special Olympics Inc. Public Relations Guidebook.



- The degree of effort required of volunteers must be consistent with the return.
- Fiscal policies and procedures must be followed and can be obtained by contacting the SOWA office. Funds must be deposited in an approved SOWA account.
- The fund raiser must comply with all federal, state and local laws.

Note : Chapter-wide events (e.g. Law Enforcement Torch Run Campaign) do not require fund raiser applications. However, coordination and approval must occur between the persons conducting the event and the SOWA office.

## **Insurance Coverage for Volunteers**

Special Olympics Washington carries three kinds of insurance to protect volunteers:

### **General Liability**

This coverage protects volunteers and athletes from claims of bodily injury, property damage, or personal injury due to their alleged negligence during the conduct of Special Olympics activity. The limit per occurrence for bodily injury or property damage is \$1,000,000. There is additional \$20,000,000 Umbrella Liability coverage.

### **Automobile Liability**

Special Olympics Washington volunteers, whether driving their own cars or rented vehicles, have liability coverage as long as the vehicle is in the process of being used for a Special Olympics activity. The limit of coverage is \$1,000,000 per occurrence.

The automobile coverage has also been broadened to include Hired Auto physical damage coverage with a \$25,000 per vehicle limit with a \$1,000 per claim deductible. This coverage is in excess of any other automobile liability insurance, which the owner of the automobile must carry. The driver or owner of the vehicle's policy is primary. The policy does not cover physical damage to the vehicle and should not be confused with comprehensive or collision insurance.

### **Accident**

SOWA also has a policy that provides accidental medical coverage for volunteers and athletes who are injured while participating in a Special Olympics activity or who are injured while traveling directly to or from a Special Olympics activity. The limit, whether for medical benefit, accidental death, or accidental dismemberment, is \$5,000 per incident. The claim must be filed within one year of the accident.

For more detail about SOWA insurance coverage for both volunteers and athletes, call the SOWA Sports & Training Manager or the SOWA office



## Insurance Procedures

Special Olympics Washington athletes, volunteers and coaches are insured while participating in a Special Olympics activity, or while traveling directly to or from a Special Olympics activity, by North America Specialty Insurance Company up to a maximum of \$5,000 per incident. This is secondary coverage, in excess of a person's personal coverage, which must be used first.

Liability coverage with the same company is provided to cover lawsuits or proven negligence to a maximum of \$2,000,000 per Chapter, with an umbrella liability coverage with Fireman's Fund Insurance Company for \$20,000,000.

In the case of any incident, accident or injury at a Special Olympics activity, or traveling to and from that activity:

1. Complete an Incident Report Form for any incident/injury. If the incident/injury is a claim, the claim-processing unit will automatically send out a cover letter and the appropriate form. (A sample Incident Report Form is included in the Forms section of this handbook.)
2. All Incident Report Forms should be forwarded to:  
Special Olympics Claims Service  
C/O American Specialty Claims Services, Inc.  
North Main Street, PO Box 459  
Roanoke, IN 46783-0459  
Telephone: 1-800-566-7941 Fax: (219) 673-1291
3. Incident Report Forms should be routed through the SOWA Sports & Training Manager for additional signatures and awareness of all incidents.
4. Should there be a serious or fatal injury please call the 24-hour, seven days a week 800 number above.

Incident Report Forms are available from the SOWA office and at every Special Olympics Washington tournament or competition.

## Coaches Training

The Training Mission of Special Olympics Washington is to provide appropriate, high quality, year-round sports training in all official sports to each SOWA coach. Training for coaches ultimately provides athletes opportunities to steadily improve sports skills, competitive ability, and the ability to more actively participate in life.

To achieve the goal of high quality training, Special Olympics Inc. provides a certification program available to all Special Olympics coaches. In Washington, a coach must attend a General Orientation and a Sports-Specific Session, pass the sport exam (if applicable), and complete a 10-hour practicum with athletes (after the training session) to become certified by Special Olympics Inc. in a particular sport.



Each Special Olympics team must have at least one certified coach, who is identified, as the Head Coach, in order to train and compete at any level in Special Olympics Washington. In addition, each team must practice for eight weeks prior to State competitions.

Additional training is offered to coaches throughout the year including Unified Coaching, Principles of Coaching, and Advanced Coaching. Coaches should contact the Sports and Training Manager for a schedule of course offerings. Information about upcoming General Orientations and Sport-Specific Sessions can be obtained from the Sports and Training Manager.



## Coaches Certification Program

The Special Olympics Washington Coaches certification is a critical component of its mission and philosophy. Structured training for Special Olympic athletes has demonstrated positive results time and time again. Individuals with little or no sports skills prior to Special Olympics training become accomplished athletes, excelling in sports previously considered impossible for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Special Olympics Washington offers a range of programs to assist in education of coaches and the training of athletes, including the following:

### I. General Orientation

General Orientation provides an overview of the Special Olympics movement and Special Olympics Washington. This course is designed for volunteers, chaperones, family members and professionals that have an interest in providing sports opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities. The course contains information about Special Olympics philosophy, organization, rules and sports opportunities. The orientation is a required component of the volunteer Coach Certification Program. All Special Olympics Washington Head Coaches are required to be certified as a Volunteer Coach. General orientation is offered on line at [www.sowa.org](http://www.sowa.org) as well as in a classroom setting as needed:

- Introductory Orientation
- Special Olympics Philosophy and Mission
- Organizational History and Structure
- Developmental Disabilities
- Sports Rules

### II. Volunteer Coach Course

The Volunteer Coach Course is a six-hour, sport specific training designed for volunteers that intend to coach Special Olympics athletes. The course is a prerequisite for becoming a Special Olympics Head Coach. Assistant Coaches are encouraged to be certified, however it is not required. Course topics include: athlete assessment, official events, rules and regulations, skills teaching, practice drills, competition preparation, and training with Special Olympics athletes.

To receive the Volunteer Coach certification participants must:

- Watch the General Orientation Presentation and pass the test
- Attend the Sport-specific Volunteer Coach Course (6 hours)
- Complete a coaching practicum (10 hours)
- Submit the completed certification form

Volunteer Coach Certification – Sport Specific

- Ten Hour Practicum – Training Session
- Practice Plans and Competition/Games understanding





- Rules and Fundamental Skills Development

### **III. Unified Sports® Coach Course**

This classroom course covers topics that include team selection, training strategies, and competition guidelines for Special Olympics Unified Sports teams. Coaches are required to be certified as a Volunteer Coach in the sport they will be coaching.

To receive a Special Olympics Unified Sports Coach certification, participants must be a certified Volunteer Coach and:

- Attend the Special Olympics Unified Sports Training School (2 hours)
- Complete a practicum of coaching a Unified Sports team (10 hours)
- Complete the Unified Coach Certification – Unified Sports
- Complete a ten hour practicum – Training Session
- Have an understanding of Unified Philosophy
- Understand the competition guidelines and rules

### **IV. Principles of Coaching Course**

The Principles of Coaching Course is a highly interactive classroom course covering a range of topics related to coaching Special Olympics athletes. Drawing from examples in several sports, the course includes sections on coaching philosophy, planning, administration, sports psychology, injury prevention, and physical preparation of athletes. This course is strongly recommended for all coaches, especially for those serving as Head Coach or Coordinator.

To receive the Principles of Coaching Course certification participants must:

- Attend the Principles of Coaching Course (6 hours)
- Complete a coaching practicum (10 hours)
- Submit the completed certification form

Principles of Coaching Certification

- Ten Hour Practicum – Training Session
- Application of Coaching Philosophy
- Planning and Administration
- Sports Psychology
- Physical Preparation and Nutrition

### **V. Advanced Coach Course**

The Advanced Coach Course is designed for coaches with at least one year s Special Olympics coaching experience. The majority of the course is run on-field/on-court and features in-depth sport skill development, advanced training principles, and competition strategies. The course includes a hands-on training session with Special Olympics athletes.

To receive the Advanced Coach Course certification, participants must:

- Attend the sport-specific Advanced Coach Course (6 hours)
- Complete a coaching practicum (10 hours)
- Submit the completed certification form



#### Advanced Coach Certification – Sport Specific

- Ten Hour Practicum – Training Session
- Advanced Training Principles
- In-depth Skills Development
- Competition Tactics and Strategies
- Enhancing Athlete Performance

#### **VI. Protective Behaviors**

The Protective Behaviors Course covers appropriate behavior for coaches and athletes in regards to interpersonal relationships. This course is required for all coaches and is offered on line at [www.sowa.org](http://www.sowa.org) and is also available in a classroom setting as needed.

To receive the Protective Behaviors, Course certification participants must:

- Watch the Protective Behaviors Presentation and pass a test •
- Complete the written test

#### **Coach Certification Requirements**

All teams must have a designated certified Head Coach prior to any athlete training. The Head Coach must be designated as such on all registration forms (only one Head Coach may be designated).

##### **Head Coaches must:**

- Be 18 years of age or older on day of Coaches Training School
- Have a Washington State Patrol clearance
- Be First Aid trained
- Be Special Olympics Inc. sport specific certified:
  - Attend a general session training
  - Attend a Sport Specific Coaches Training School, finish the practicum, and process a completed application

##### **Assistant Coaches must:**

- Be 16 years of age or older on first day of athlete training
- Submit a Volunteer Application and Washington State Patrol clearance

##### **Unified Head Coach must:**

- Be 18 years of age or older on day of Coaches Training School
- Have Washington State Patrol clearance
- Be Special Olympics Inc. sport specific certified:
  - Attend a general training session
  - Attend a Sport Specific Coaches Training School, finish the practicum, and process a completed application
- Be Unified Certified:
  - Attend a Unified Training School, finish the Practicum, and process a completed application
  - Refrain from Playing on the Team



### **Motor Activities Training Program**

The Motor Activities Training Program does have a certification process. Anyone interested in coaching at this level must meet with their Sports and Training Manager to review activities, requirements and guidelines of the MATP.

### **Special Olympic Athlete transitioning to Coaching must:**

- Attend a General Session
- Attend a Sport Specific Training School and complete the ten-hour practicum
- Serve as an Assistant Coach for two years, under the supervision of a Head Coach
- Be evaluated after the two-year apprenticeship to determine whether further mentoring is needed or if the coach is able to act as a Head Coach

### **Waiver of Coach Certification Requirement**

It is the policy of Special Olympics Washington that all head coaches be certified through Special Olympics Inc. This entails attending a SOWA General Orientation Training, a sport specific SOWA Coaches Training Session (CTS), performing a ten-hour practicum in that sport and mailing in the certification application. No one may act as Head coach for a team unless they are certified before the start of the season.

Waivers of required certification for one year will be permitted for the following reasons only if:

- An Assistant Coach for the team takes over as Head Coach due to the resignation of a Head Coach after all CTS s for that sport have been offered that year.
- Upon late resignation notification, a team finds themselves without a Head Coach and no Assistant is willing to take the position. In this circumstance, an active certified coach from another Special Olympics sport may take over as Head Coach to avoid disbanding the team.
- In the case of a Head Coach not being able to attend a state competition, an active certified coach from another Special Olympics sport may take over as Head Coach to avoid disbanding the team.
- Other waivers will be allowed on a case by case basis when a qualified candidate from the community without certification requests to be a Head Coach. These requests must be made to a SOWA Sports and Training Manager and must be approved by the SOWA Program Director.



## **Successful Coaching in Special Olympics**

### **Sports Knowledge**

The more knowledge a coach has about basic sports skills, the more the coach will be able to teach skills properly and in sequence, and thus the coach and the athletes will have a much more enjoyable and rewarding experience.

### **Motivation**

A highly motivated and energetic coach that uses skills and knowledge will help ensure a successful and enjoyable experience for the athletes, other coaches and volunteers.

### **Empathy**

The ability to listen and understand the thoughts and feelings of athletes is critical in Special Olympics. Successful coaches possess empathy, and are able to understand joy, frustration, anxiety and anger experienced by athletes.

### **Behavior**

Special Olympics coaches are models whose behavior serves as a positive example for the athletes. Positive behavior ensures the fairest and most positive competitive experience is equally available to every Special Olympics athlete. With Special Olympics athletes, tempering overly competitive urges and desires helps assure a positive competitive experience for all.

### **Objectives**

The objective in Special Olympics is to have fun and make the sport enjoyable for the participants. The objective is also to help athletes develop:

- physically - by learning sports skills, improving physical conditioning, developing good health habits and avoiding injuries;
- psychologically - by learning to control their emotions and to develop feelings of self-worth; and
- socially - by learning to cooperate in a competitive context and by learning appropriate standards of behavior (sportsmanship).

With proper leadership, sports programs produce athletes that accept responsibilities, other individuals, and most of all accept themselves.

## **Sports and Training Resources (Special Olympics Inc.)**

Sports and training resources are available via many sources. SOWA can provide you with materials filed at the SOWA office. It is recommended, however, that coaches review the Special Olympics Inc. website for a variety of coaching resource materials.

For information about ordering sports and training resources from Special Olympics Inc., please go to the national Special Olympics website at [www.specialolympics.org](http://www.specialolympics.org), and click on Coaches to view a host of available resources available.



## Competition Opportunities

Special Olympics Washington offers year-round sports program in four sports seasons. Regional tournaments are held during each sports season, and State Games are held following the winter, spring and summer seasons. The seasons and sports include:

### Winter Sports Season

- Alpine Skiing
- Basketball
- Cross Country Skiing
- Figure Skating
- Speed Skating

### Spring Sports Season

- Aquatics
- Athletics (Track & Field)
- Cycling
- Power Lifting
- Soccer

### Summer Sports Season

- Softball
- Golf

### Fall Sports Season

- Bowling
- Volleyball (recreational sport)  
Regional tournaments are offered for bowling.  
There are no state games for bowling or volleyball.

## Special Olympics Age Groups

Athletes must be at least eight years of age to participate in Special Olympics competition. Certain sports and events may further restrict athlete participation based on age. If pertinent, additional age requirements are indicated in the specific rules for each sport in the Sports Rules.

The following age groups shall normally be used for all Special Olympic competitions:

### Individual Sports

- Ages 8-15
- Ages 16-21
- Ages 22 and over
- Additional age groups may be established if there are a sufficient number of competitors in the 30 and over age group.



### **Team Sports and Relay Events**

- Ages 15 and under
- Ages 16-21
- Ages 22 and over
- Additional age groups may be established if there is a sufficient number of teams in the 22 and over age group.

Age groups may be combined under the following circumstances:

- In individual sports, if there are less than three competitors within an age group, the athletes shall compete in the next oldest age group. That age group shall then be renamed to accurately reflect the entire range of competitors within that age group. Age groups may also be combined to reduce the variance between the highest and lowest scores within a division.
- In team sports within each ability group, age groups may be combined to create divisions. If there is only one team within an age or ability group, that team must be combined with other teams for competition.
- An athlete's age group shall be determined by the athlete's age on the opening date of the competition.
- The age group of a team is determined by the age of the oldest athlete on that team on the opening date of the competition.

## **Forming Competition Divisions**

An ideal division for competition is based on the ability level of the athletes. Based on Article 1 of Special Olympics, divisions are created with a minimum of three and a maximum of eight competitors or teams in each division. In some cases, however, the number of athletes or teams within a competition will be insufficient to achieve this goal. The following procedures describe the sequential process for creating equitable divisions by event and providing guidance for managing athlete participation when factors preclude an ideal division process.

### **1. Divide Athletes by Gender**

Athletes shall compete against other athletes of the same sex, unless:

- a. The sport specifically allows coed events (e.g. pairs skating, bowling, tennis, etc.)
- b. There are only two male or two female athletes within an event. These athletes may compete against one another or be combined with athletes of the opposite sex who are of similar age and ability.
- c. There is only one male or one female athlete within an event. This athlete shall be combined with athletes of the opposite sex who are of similar age and ability.



- d. There is only one athlete, male or female, of any age or ability, registered to compete in an event. This athlete shall be allowed to compete in a single person division.
- e. A relay team that consists of both male and female athletes shall compete in the male division of the competition.

## **2. Divide Athletes by Age**

Athletes shall compete against other athletes within the same age group, unless:

- a. There are a low number of competitors within an age group. These athletes shall compete in the next oldest age group. That age group shall then be renamed to accurately reflect the entire range of competitors within that age group.
- b. After dividing athletes by ability, age groups are broadened and/or individual athletes are reassigned to other age groups to improve the similarity of scores between athletes within a division.

## **3. Divide Athletes by Ability**

When the number of athletes competing is inappropriate, the variance between the highest and lowest scores in the division should be equitable. To achieve equitability:

- a. The age group may be broadened. Athletes within the new age should then be re-ranked and grouped into divisions. This process should be repeated until the highest and lowest scores within each division are as similar as possible.
- b. Athletes may be individually reassigned to another division that is more similar to their own ability, regardless of age group.

## **Criteria for Advancement to Higher Level Competition**

The criteria for athlete advancement, along with division procedures, are considered two of the most critical elements of Special Olympics that distinguish it from virtually every other sports organization in the world. Adherence to fundamental principles of athlete advancement is essential for the consistent implementation of Special Olympics Programs worldwide. Special Olympics Washington, as an accredited program, must adhere to and administer the following criteria that can be found in the Official Special Olympics Summer Sports Rules Book (pages 29h-29j).

### **Quota Allocation**



All Programs need to have a system for quota allocation to manage the number of athletes attending a competition. The procedures used for selecting athletes to fill assigned quotas for an event must follow the procedure set forth in this section.

### **Eligibility for Advancement**

1. The athlete must be eight years or older and participate for a minimum of eight weeks in an organized training program.
2. The athlete must abide by the Athlete Code of Conduct.
3. If offered, the athlete **should** compete at a local competition.
4. If a Region competition within a sport is offered, the athlete **must** compete at the Regional competition, regardless of advancement to State competition.

### **Procedure for Athlete and Team Selection**

1. SOWA staff will determine the number of athletes and/or teams that will be allowed to participate at the next competition by sport and/or event. This is the quota to be filled.
2. Identify the number of athletes or teams eligible for advancement within the sport/event based on eligibility requirements.
3. If the number of eligible athletes or teams does not exceed the quota, all athletes and teams shall advance.
4. If the number of eligible athletes or teams exceeds the quota, athletes or teams that advance shall be selected as follows:
  - a. Priority is given to first place finishers from all divisions of the sport/event. If the first place finishers exceed the quota, athletes or teams advance by random draw.
  - b. If there are not enough first place finishers to fill the quota, all first place finishers shall advance. The remaining quota shall be filled by a random draw of second place finishers from all divisions of the sport/event.

### **Procedure for Athlete and Team Selection (cont.)**

- c. If the quota is large enough for all second place finishers to advance; the remaining quota is filled by random draw of third place finishers from all divisions of the sport/event.
- d. Repeat this process, adding each place of finish as necessary, until the quota is filled.





Special Olympics Washington reserves the right to utilize additional criteria for advancement to State competition when safety or well-being of the athletes or others may be in jeopardy.

### **Procedure for World Games Selection**

- a. The World Games Organizing Committee (WGOC) will determine the quota system.
- b. SOWA will determine the number of athletes or teams to represent SOWA based on assigned allotment from the WGOC.

In order to advance, an athlete must:

- a. Follow Special Olympics Washington Guidelines and meet eligibility requirements.
- b. Qualify in the sport at the State competition during the year prior to the World Games.
- c. Place first in the sport or event at State competition.
- d. Complete a SOWA Application Form for World Games available up to 12 months prior to the World Games.
- e. Athletes or teams that meet requirements will be selected by random draw.

## **Allocations: Questions and Answers**

### **Why can't all Special Olympics athletes participate in State competitions?**

First, the Special Olympics movement is modeled after the International Olympics movement. Like most amateur and professional sports programs, teams and individuals earn the right to advance through their performance at each level of competition.

Second, the capacity and availability of facilities often determine the number of teams or individuals that can take part in a given tournament. For example, the number of lanes on a track or in a pool may limit the number of runners or swimmers who can compete. Accommodations may be a related component; the housing area at Fort Lewis, during Summer Games, has a limited number of beds.

A third factor is time. If all track and field athletes advanced to Summer Games or if all bowlers advance to the Fall Sports Tournament, SOWA would have to expand the competitions beyond a present two-day length or rent additional facilities. Either option would increase the cost of the event and require more volunteers. In addition, there is the issue of scheduling other activities. If a dinner and a victory dance are scheduled, for example, the competition must end in time for athletes to attend these events.

The final factor is financial. While Special Olympics Washington receives significant in-kind donations, those donations do not cover all the costs of staging a large event. Contrary to



popular belief, for example, use of Fort Lewis and other Summer Games venues is not free of charge. Meals are not all donated and neither are medals. Corporate sponsorships and individual donations remain an important source of revenue to support the program. Sponsor and individual donations, however, are difficult to obtain and resources are often limited.

These limitations compacted with the fact that the number of participating athletes increase regularly statewide, it is likely future percentages of athletes that qualify for State competitions will decrease rather than grow. An emphasis on regional competitions may then exist.

### **How does SOWA determine the number of athletes allocated for a Region in a particular sport?**

Using athletics as an example, given the limitations of time, facilities, beds and money, 1,000 track and field athletes can compete during Summer Games at Fort Lewis. Using numbers from pre-season registrations, the SOWA Program Department calculates allocations for each Region. For example, if the NW Region has 200 athletes in athletics, and there are 2000 athletes in athletics statewide, the NW Region has 10% of all athletes in that sport. Therefore, NW Region will be allocated 10% of the 1,000 slots for Summer Games, or 100 athletes.

### **Do all sports have allocations?**

The most popular team and individual sports are likely to have allocations. Currently, all sports have allocations with the exception of the following: Golf, Long Distance Running, Power Lifting, Speed Skating and Figure Skating.

For team sports, a team must win its division in a Region Tournament to automatically advance to a state tournament. Other teams may be invited if there are vacancies in a division.

### **Can a coach guarantee athletes' participation in State competitions?**

A coach should consider coaching a less heavily subscribed sport that currently does not have allocations. Again, this includes Golf, Long Distance Running, Power Lifting, Speed Skating and Figure Skating.

### **Isn't it all about going to state competitions?**

It's about much more than that. The mission of Special Olympics Washington is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for persons 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.

While the goal of every athlete should be to compete at the highest possible level, Special Olympics exists to improve quality of life for all participants. Athletes and teams should in



deed strive to win division competitions and advance to state competitions. This should, however, never be the only goal of either an athlete or a coach. If it is, many additional positive aspects of Special Olympics may be missed. Learning competition and sports rules, and how to live within the guidelines, helps athletes learn life lessons with grace and dignity.

### **Is it fair the most talented athletes are advanced?**

As with most competitive sports, the most accomplished teams and individuals win the right to advance to higher and better competition. This is earned through many weeks of hard work and training. Since Special Olympics athletes compete in divisions according to age, gender and ability, athletes compete against those of similar ability. Therefore, they have a very good chance, through consistent and proper training, to improve their performance, win their division and become eligible for State competitions. This also allows athletes the ability to gauge how well they are advancing relative to those of similar age, gender and ability.

By maintaining standards for advancing to higher levels of competition, it also gives the athletes and coaches a goal to focus on. When the goal is achieved, coaches and athletes will feel a sense of accomplishment that is a well-deserved life lesson.

## **Metric System**

Special Olympics Washington converted to the Metric system in 1979. All athletics, aquatics and long distance events will be measured in the metric system. In athletic events, the adjustment from yards to meters can be made either at the start or at the finish line.

<b>Old Event</b>	<b>New Event</b>	<b>Change</b>
50 yard dash	50 meter dash	add 14 feet
100 yard dash	100 meter dash	add 28 feet
220 yard dash	200 meter dash	subtract 4 feet
440 yard run	400 meter run	subtract 8 feet

SOWA highly recommends local programs purchase either a 30-meter tape or a 100-meter tape that also has feet and inches on the back of the tape. It is imperative qualifying times are recorded in meters. Failure to do this will result in an athlete being placed in the wrong division during subsequent competitions.

## **Motor Activities Training Program (MATP)**

The Special Olympics Motor Activities Training Program (MATP) is designed for persons with the most severe disabilities that do not possess the physical, mental or behavioral skills necessary to participate in Official Special Olympics Sports. The program provides a comprehensive motor activity and recreation training curriculum for these participants, a program that can be administered by a variety of trainers (e.g. physical educators, recreation therapists and volunteers). In addition, direct care workers, parents and volunteers will find the MATP helpful in developing appropriate programs for individuals with severe disabilities.



The MATP emphasizes training and participation rather than competition. It utilizes goals, short term objectives, task analyzed activities, assessments, and teaching suggestions for individualizing motor activity instruction. This enables persons with severe disabilities or new young participants can pursue appropriate recreational activities geared to their ability levels. The motor and sport activities included in this program are mobility, dexterity, striking, kicking, wheelchair and aquatics. Each activity is customized to challenge each athlete according to his/her abilities. The MATP activities can be conducted in schools and large residential facilities as well as in community based settings.

A training session is conducted for eight weeks and is followed by a Training Day to give the athletes a chance to demonstrate skills for family and friends. The Training Day should be short (no longer than four hours for training demonstrations, plus any extra activity) and not require long travel.

Training for MATP Coaches is available periodically in Washington and Oregon. SOWA Sports and Training Managers will try to find coaches and volunteers to assist locally with a MATP. For more information about MATP or to find out when the next training will be held contact the SOWA Sports and Training Manager or the SOWA office.

## **Unified Sports®**

Special Olympics Unified Sports is a pioneer program combining athletes with intellectual disabilities and those without, on teams that compete against other Unified Sports teams. Unified Sports teams are made up of equal numbers of athletes with intellectual disabilities, and those without, that are of similar age and ability levels.

Special Olympics Unified Sports expands sports opportunities to individuals with intellectual disabilities and furthers the Special Olympics mission by:

- integrating athletes with intellectual disabilities and those without, in a setting where all athletes are challenged to improve their skills;
- fostering a spirit of equality and team unity;
- further increasing public awareness of the spirit and skills of individuals with intellectual disabilities;
- enabling Special Olympic athlete's families to participate as Unified Sports team members and coaches;
- providing a valuable sports opportunity for individuals with intellectual disabilities that are not presently involved with Special Olympics, especially those with mild disabilities that have few, if any, opportunities to participate in sports competition in their local community; and
- providing opportunities for training and competition for athletes in communities where there are not enough Special Olympics athletes to conduct team sports.



A Special Olympics Unified Sports program can be conducted in a variety of ways and settings:

- in a community or church sports program, such as an adult softball league or YMCA volleyball league;
- with an interscholastic after-school league at the Junior High School or High School levels;
- as part of the league system at a local bowling alley; or
- with an independent league sponsored by businesses or civic groups.

Athletes with intellectual disabilities can be recruited from schools, corporations, civic groups or other community organizations.

The Unified Sports season will run concurrently with the Special Olympics sports season. Teams are coached by volunteers who must attend Special Olympics Coaches Training Schools in the appropriate sports. All participants are covered under Special

Olympics accident insurance coverage. All Unified teams will participate in Unified Sports divisions at Region and State Games. National governing body rules are followed for each sport.

Athletes will practice and play games during the same time of the year as the established SOWA Sport Season, so athletes will choose between Unified teams or regular Special Olympics team. SOWA teams are encouraged to play in other sports leagues such as church leagues and parks and recreation leagues.

A coach can create a team by finding athletes with similar abilities – both Special Olympics and non-Special Olympics – and training together. Ex-college players and other outstanding athletes are not appropriate because sports skills will not be comparable to those of the rest of the team.

#### **Unified Sports Coaches should:**

- ensure that **all** team members **must** have a good understanding of sport rules and be capable of performing all the basic skills in the sport;
- pre-register with the SOWA office to be assigned games with other Unified teams;
- begin practices at least eight weeks prior to a tournament; and
- arrange practice games with other community adult teams, church leagues or parks and recreation leagues.



### **Partners Must:**

1. Fill out a Partner Release form and give to Head Coach prior to first practice (these forms are good for the partners tenure with Special Olympics Washington).
2. Submit a Washington State Patrol form prior to season if 18 years of age or older (see Volunteer Screening section).

## **Alpine Skiing**

### **National Governing Body**

- United States Ski Association  
1750 E. Boulder Street  
Colorado Springs, CO 80909  
(719) 578-4600

### **Sport Season**

- Winter (December - March)

### **Uniform Requirements**

- Parka or shell
- Warm-ups and/or stretch pants
- Ski gloves
- Goggles
- Warm under garments

### **Registration Requirements**

- Athletes must compete in a Regional competition prior to the SOWA Winter Games. Coaches must submit those times for Winter Games registration, due to there Region office by the designated deadline.
- Athletes may compete in up to three events.
- Events identified with \*\* are for athletes with lower ability levels who are unable to participate in the other events.
- Finish time for the downhill race is determined by the time of one run.
- Finish time for the slalom and giant slalom race is determined by the combined time of the two runs.
- Check with your Region Office for specific pre-season and event registration deadlines.

### **Events Offered**

- 10 M Ski Race\*\*



- Glide Event\*\*
- Slalom
- Giant Slalom
- Downhill
- Unified Slalom
- Unified Giant Slalom
- Unified Downhill

## **Aquatics (Swimming)**

### **National Governing Body**

- United States Swimming, Inc. (USS)  
1750 East Boulder Street  
Colorado Springs, CO 80909  
(719) 578-4578

### **Sport Season**

- Spring (March - June)

### **Uniform Requirements**

- One piece swimsuit (women)
- Swim trunks or racing brief (men)
- Swimming cap, eye goggles, ear and/or nose plugs are optional

### **Registration Requirements**

- Athletes must compete in a Regional competition prior to the SOWA Summer Games.
- Athletes may compete in up to three events plus a relay.
- Events identified with \*\* are designated for athletes with lower ability levels who are unable to participate in the other events.
- Check with the SOWA office for specific pre-season and event registration deadlines.

### **Events Offered**

- |                             |                      |                           |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| • 10M Asst. Swim**          | • 100M Freestyle     | • 100M Ind. Medley        |
| • 15 M Walk**               | • 100 M Backstroke   | • 200 M Ind. Medley       |
| • 15 M Flotation**          | • 100 M Breaststroke | • 4x25 M Freestyle Relay  |
| • 15 M Unasst. Swim**       | • 100 M Butterfly    | • 4x50 M Freestyle Relay  |
| • 15 M Unasst. Backstroke** | • 200 M Freestyle    | • 4x100 M Freestyle Relay |
| • 25 M Flotation Race       | • 200 M Backstroke   | • 4x25 M Medley Relay     |
| • 25 M Freestyle            | • 400 M Freestyle    | • 4x50 M Medley Relay     |
| • 25 M Backstroke           | • 800 M Freestyle    | • 4x100 M Medley Relay    |



- 25 M Breaststroke
- 25 M Butterfly
- 50 M Freestyle
- 50 M Breaststroke
- 50 M Backstroke
- 50 M Butterfly
- 1500 M Freestyle
- 200 M Breaststroke
- 4x100 M Unified Relay
- 4X200 M Unified Relay

## **Athletics (Track & Field)**

### **National Governing Body**

- USA Track and Field  
P.O. Box 120  
155 West Washington St., Suite 220  
Indianapolis, IN 46204 (317)638-9155

### **Sport Season**

- Spring (March - June)

### **Uniform Requirements**

- Running shoes
- White socks
- Shorts, tights or sweat pants
- Tank top, singlet or T-shirt

### **Registration Requirements**

- Athletes must compete in a regional competition to qualify for Summer Games.
- Athletes may compete in two track and one field event and one relay.
- Contact the SOWA office for specific registration requirements.
- Check with the SOWA office for specific pre-season and event registration deadlines.
- Events identified with \*\* are designated for athletes with lower ability levels who are unable to participate in the other events.

### **Events Offered**

- 10M W/C Race Manual\*\*
- 25M W/C Race Manual\*\*
- 30M Motor W/C Slalom\*\*
- 30M Manual W/C Slalom\*\*
- 100M W.C Race Manual
- 50M Walk\*\*
- 100M Walk
- 200M Walk
- 400M Walk
- 800M Walk
- 1500M Run
- Stand Long Jump
- Running Long Jump
- High Jump
- Tennis Ball Throw\*\*





- 200M W/C Race Manual
- 400M W/C Race Manual
- 25M Motor W/C Obstacle\*\*
- 50M Motor W/C Slalom\*\*
- 25M Asst. Walk\*\*
- 50M Asst. Walk\*\*
- 4x100M Relay
- 4x400M Relay
- 4x400M Unified Relay
- 110 Hurdle
- 50M Dash
  - 100M Dash
  - 200M Dash
  - 400M Dash
  - 800M Run
- Softball Throw
- W/C Shot Put
- Shot Put
- Pentathlon
- 3000M Unified Run
- 5000M Unified Run

## Basketball

### National Governing Body

- Amateur Basketball Association of the U.S.  
1750 East Boulder Street  
Colorado Springs, CO 80909  
(719) 632-7687

### Sport Season

- Winter (January - March)

### Uniform Requirements

- Basketball or court shoes
- White socks
- Shorts or sweatpants
- Basketball jersey or T-shirt
- T-shirts must be numbered on front and back
- Numbers used shall have no more than two digits and must be combination of 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5

### Registration Requirements

- Teams must compete in a minimum of **four** games prior to a Regional Tournament and **qualify** at the respective Region Tournament.
- Teams placing first in the Regional Tournament will automatically advance to the State Basketball Tournament at Winter Games.
- Team rosters must have a minimum of five players and are limited to 10 players.
- Wheelchair athletes and athletes using walking devices will not be allowed to compete on a team with unassisted ambulatory athletes due to safety concerns.
- Check with the SOWA Sports and Training Manager for specific pre-season and event registration deadlines.



## **Events Offered**

- Lead-Up skills competition
- Individual skills competition
- Regulation Team Play: Juniors, Seniors, Masters
- Unified Team Play: Juniors, Seniors, Masters

## **Bowling**

### **National Governing Body**

- American Bowling Congress (ABC) 5301 South 76th St.  
Greendale, WI 53129

### **Sport Season**

- Fall (September - December)

### **Uniform Requirements**

- Bowling or casual shirt
- Casual slacks or skirt (women)
- Bowling shoes

### **Registration Requirements**

- Check with SOWA office for specific pre-season and event deadlines and requirements.
- Athletes are limited to one event.
- A 15 game average must be submitted as an entry score for all bowlers.
- Teams with Special Olympic athletes are to consist of four bowlers.
- Unified teams are to consist of two Special Olympics athletes and two partners.

## **Events Offered**

- Singles competition
- Singles ramp competition
- Special Olympics team bowling
- Unified team bowling
- Unified team doubles
- Team doubles

## **Cross Country Skiing (Nordic)**

### **National Governing Body**



- United States Ski Association  
1750 E. Boulder Street  
Colorado Springs, CO 80909 (719)578-4600

### **Sport Season**

- Winter (December - March)

### **Uniform Requirements**

- Parka or shell
- Knickers, tights or shell pants
- Winter gloves
- Warm under-garments

### **Registration Requirements**

- Athletes must participate in a Regional competition to qualify for SOWA Winter Games.
- Athletes may compete in up to two events and a relay.
- Events identified with \*\* are designed for athletes with lower ability levels who are unable to participate in other events.
- Check with your Region Office for specific pre-season and event registration deadlines.

### **Events Offered**

- |                         |             |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| • 10 M Ski Race**       | • 1K Race   |
| • Glide Event**         | • 3K Race   |
| • 50 M Ski Race**       | • 5K Race   |
| • 4 x 1 K Unified Relay | • 10K Race  |
| • 1 K Unified Race      | • 100M Race |
| • 3 K Unified Race      | • 300M Race |
| • 5 K Unified Race      | • 500M Race |

## **Cycling**

### **National Governing Body**

- U.S. Cycling Federation (USCF)  
1750 E. Boulder Street  
Colorado Springs, CO 80909  
(719) 578-4581

### **Sport Season**

- Spring (March - June)



## **Uniform Requirements**

- SNELL or ANSI Approved Helmet
- Protective eye-wear (optional)
- T-shirt or cycling jersey
- Cycling shorts or tights
- White socks (preferably ankle height)
- Cycling shoes or stiff sole sneakers
- Cycling gloves

## **Registration Requirements**

- Check with the SOWA office for specific pre-season and event registration deadlines.
- Athletes must compete in a regional competition to qualify for SOWA Summer Games.
- Athletes are allowed to enter up to three events.
- Athletes competing in the Stage Race may not compete in any other event.

## **Events Offered**

- 500 M Time Trial
- 1 K Time Trial
- 5 K Time Trial
- 10 K Time Trial
- 5 K Road Race
- 10 K Road Race
- 15 K Road Race
- 25 K Road Race
- 40 K Road Race
- 15 K Unified Team Race
- 1 K Unified Tandem Time Trial
- 5 K Unified Tandem Time Trial
- 10 K Unified Tandem Time Trial
- 10 K Unified Team Race
- 25 K Unified Team Race
- 40 K Unified Team Race
- Stage Race – 1 K Road Race
- Stage Race – 10K Unified Team Race
- Stage Race – 25 K Unified Team Race

## **Figure Skating**

### **National Governing Body**

- U.S. Figure Skating Association (USFSA)  
20 First Street  
Colorado Springs, CO 80906  
(719) 635-5200

### **Sport Season**

- Winter (December - March)

### **Uniform Requirements**



- See specific guidelines in the Special Olympics Winter Sports Rules Book, pp. 49-50.

### **Registration Requirements**

- Athletes must submit competition levels to qualify for SOWA Winter Games.
- Athletes may compete in up to three events.
- Check with the SOWA office for specific pre-season and event registration deadlines.

### **Events Offered**

- Singles Compulsory & Free Competition
- Singles Freestyle Figure Competition
- Ice Dancing
- Pairs Competition
- Unified Ice Dancing
- Unified Pair

## **Golf**

### **National Governing Body**

- United States Golf Association PO Box 109601  
Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410  
Phone (561) 624-8400  
Fax (561) 624-8462

### **Sports Season**

- Summer (June-August)

### **Uniform Requirements**

- Golf or casual shirt
- Casual slacks, shorts or skirt
- Golf Shoes

### **Registration Requirements**

- Athletes in team or stroke competition must establish a handicap based on the equivalent of six, 18-hole rounds.
- Unified partners must submit a handicap.
- Athletes may only compete in one event.
- All players must submit scorecards from three rounds of 9 or 18-holes of play to qualify for SOWA Summer Classic.
- Check with the SOWA office for specific pre-season and event registration deadlines.



### **Events Offered**

- Individual Skills Contest
- Unified Partner Team Competition
- Individual Stroke Play

## **Long Distance Running**

### **National Governing Body**

- USA Track and Field  
PO Box 120  
155 West Washington St., Suite 220  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
(317) 638-9155

### **Sport Season**

- Fall (September - December)

### **Uniform Requirements**

- Tank top or T-shirt
- Running Shorts
- Running/Walking Shoes

### **Registration Requirements**

- Athletes should compete in a region or pre-approved community run/walk prior to the SOWA Summer Games.
- Coaches must submit the region competition times to the Sports and Training Manager by the designated deadline for Summer Games.
- Athlete may compete in up to two events.
- Check with the Sports and Training Manager for specific pre-season and event registration deadlines.

### **Events Offered**

- 1.5 K Race Walk: Regulation and Unified
- 5 K Race Walk: Regulation and Unified
- 5 K Road Race: Regulation and Unified
- 10 K Road Race: Regulation and Unified



## **Powerlifting**

### **National Governing Body**

- U.S. Powerlifting Federation  
2103 Langley Avenue  
Pensacola, FL 32504  
(904) 477-863

### **Sport Season**

- Spring (March - June)

### **Uniform Requirements**

- T-shirt
- Singlet
- Shorts or sweatpants (optional)
- Weight belt (optional)
- Court shoes

### **Registration Requirements**

- Athletes must have two years lifting experience to compete in the squat event.
- Qualifying weights must be submitted for each lift performed.
- Check with SOWA for specific pre-season and event registration deadlines.
- Athletes may compete in three or four events depending on the years of sport experience.

### **Events Offered**

- Squat
- Bench Press
- Dead Lift
- Combination 1: Bench Press & Dead Lift
- Combination 2: Bench Press, Dead Lift & Squat

## **Soccer**

### **National Governing Body**

- United State Soccer Federation (USSF)  
1750 E. Boulder Street  
Colorado Springs, CO 80909  
(719) 578-6400



## **Sport Season**

- Spring (March - June)

## **Uniform Requirements**

- Sneakers or turf footwear
- Soccer socks or tube-socks
- Shin guards (required)
- Shorts or sweat pants
- Soccer jersey or tee-shirt
- Shirts must be numbered on the back at least 8 high, with numbers between 1 and 20.
- Goalkeepers must wear distinctly different uniforms.

## **Registration Requirements**

- Teams must compete in a minimum of four games prior to a Regional Tournament and qualify at their respective Regional Tournament to participate in SOWA Summer Games.
- Team rosters must have a minimum of five players and a maximum of 10.
- Check with your Region Office for specific pre-season and event registration deadlines.
- Wheelchair athletes and athletes using walking devices will not be allowed to compete on a team with unassisted ambulatory athletes due to safety concerns.
- Events with \*\* are for athletes of lower ability levels who are unable to participate in other events.

## **Events**

- Individual Skills Competition\*\*
- Team Competition; Juniors, Seniors, Masters
- Unified Team Competition; Juniors, Seniors, Masters

## **Softball**

### **National Governing Body**

- Amateur Softball Association 2801 NE 50<sup>th</sup> St.  
Oklahoma City, OK 73111-7203  
Phone (405) 424-5266  
Fax (405) 424-3855

### **Sport Season**

- June through August

### **Uniform Requirement**





- Hat (same for all team members)
- T-shirt or team jersey with numbers on back (min. 6 high)
- White socks
- Sneakers or turf footwear
- Face mask and helmet (required for Catchers)
- No metal cleats or jewelry

### **Registration Requirements**

- Teams must compete in a minimum of **four** games prior to regional competition **and qualify** at the respective Region Tournaments.
- Teams placing first in the Regional Tournament will automatically advance to the SOWA Summer Sports Classic.
- Team rosters must have a minimum of 10 players and a maximum of 15 players.
- Wheelchair athletes and athletes using walking devices will not be allowed to compete on a team with unassisted ambulatory athletes due to safety concerns.
- Events with \*\* are designed for athletes with lower ability levels who are unable to participate in the other events.

### **Events Offered**

- Lead-Up Skills Competition\*\*
- Individual Skills Competition\*\*
- T-ball Team Play: Juniors, Seniors, Masters
- Regulation Team Play: Juniors, Seniors, Masters
- Unified Team Play: Juniors, Seniors, Masters

## **Speed Skating**

### **National Governing Body**

- U.S. International Speed Skating Assoc.  
17060 Patricia Lane  
Brookfield, WI 53005  
(800) 334-7981

### **Sport Season**

- Winter (December - March)

### **Uniform Requirements**

- SNELL or ANSI approved helmet
- Sweater, sweatshirt or turtleneck
- Warm-ups or tights
- Elbow and knee pads



- Gloves or mittens

### • **Registration Requirements**

- Check with SOWA for specific pre-season and event registration deadlines.
- Athletes may compete in up to three events.
- Events with \*\*are designed for athletes with lower ability levels that are unable to participate in the other events.
- A qualifying time must be submitted for all athletes entered in order to qualify for SOWA Winter Games.

### **Events Offered**

- 25 M Skate Race\*\*
- 50 M 1/2 Lap Race\*\*
- 100 M Race • 300 M Race • 500 M Race
- 800 M Race
- 1000 M Race
- 1500 M Race
- 1500 M Unified Short
- 4 x 400 Unified Long
- 4 x 500 Unified Relay
- Unified Team Sprint

## **Volleyball**

### **National Governing Body**

- USA Volleyball  
1750 East Boulder Street  
Colorado Springs, CO 80909  
(719) 578-4750

### **Sport Season**

- Fall (September - December)

### **Uniform Requirements**

- Long sleeve T-shirt or jersey
- Team jerseys must be numbered; 3" high on front, 6" on back
- Shorts or sweatpants
- Socks and white sole court shoes

### **Registration Requirements**



- Teams must compete in at least four games.
- Team rosters must have a minimum of six players and are limited to 12 players.
- Wheelchair athletes and athletes using walking devices will not be allowed to compete on a team with unassisted ambulatory athletes due to safety concerns.
- Events with \*\* are for athletes with lower ability levels who are unable to participate in the other events.

### **Events Offered**

- Lead-Up Skills Competition\*\*
- Individual Skills Competition\*\*
- Modified Team Play
- Special Olympics Team; Juniors, Seniors, Masters
- Unified Team Play; Juniors, Seniors, Masters

### **Safety Guidelines**

The health and safety of athletes, volunteers and spectators is the highest priority at every Special Olympics team practice, competition or special event. Risk reduction and accident prevention requires good planning, effective communication and a high level of awareness by all participants.

#### **Hypothermia or Frostbite**

Prolonged exposure to cold temperatures can lead to hypothermia or frostbite. Wear several layers of loose-fitting, lightweight clothing rather than one layer of heavy clothing. Wear mittens instead of gloves and always wear a cap. Signs of frostbite are white or pale fingers, toes, nose or ear lobes. Signs of hypothermia are uncontrollable shivering, slow speech, memory lapses, frequent stumbling, drowsiness and exhaustion. Do not give a frostbite or hypothermia victim any liquid containing caffeine. Do not use hot water to warm cold hands or feet.

#### **Heat and Hydration**

Overheating and dehydration are serious dangers, please be sure that athletes and volunteers drink plenty of water throughout the competition and related activities. In hot weather, pure water is the best source of hydration (not soda or water-based drinks like coffee). Whenever possible, water coolers will be placed at each venue and refilled periodically by medical staff. At outdoor events, avoid the sun whenever possible; wear hats and apply sunscreen frequently.

#### **Seizures**

Seizures sometimes occur under the stress of competition or strenuous activity. Seizures normally last only a few minutes and the athlete requires only rest to recover. Medical personnel will determine if the athlete requires further treatment at a hospital. In the event a seizure occurs:

- Notify the on-site medical personnel, venue manager or Special Olympics staff.
- Place towel or coat under athlete's head; do not interfere with body movements.



- Do not force anything between the athlete's teeth.
- When movement stops, roll athlete to side and make sure breathing is unobstructed.

### **Injuries**

Injuries can occur at any time, but are more likely as athletes encounter fatigue and dehydration. In the event an injury occurs:

- Keep the injured athlete calm and stationary; do not move the injured athlete.
- Contact the on-site medical personnel, venue manager or Special Olympics staff.
- Stay with the injured athlete until medical personnel arrive.

Medical personnel will evaluate the injury and determine if the athlete requires further treatment. Athletes requiring further treatment will be transported to an approved medical facility.

### **Accident/Incident Reporting**

A Special Olympics First Report of Accident/Incident form should be completed as promptly and accurately as possible. This procedure allows claims to be processed quickly and provides information for improved safety and risk reduction at subsequent Special Olympics events.

## **Emergency Procedures**

In the event of an emergency situation requiring immediate evacuation, it is imperative that all event participants be prepared to respond calmly and quickly. Emergency plans are effective only if all participants are prepared to assess the situation carefully, respond rather than react, use good judgment and common sense.

### **Severe Weather/Lightning**

When Games organizers receive warning of an approaching storm that involves risk to participants from lightning, high winds, heavy rain or snow, the event may be suspended until the risk has ended. Upon notice of impending danger, participants should:

- Move out of open areas to safe refuge or designated shelter.
- In case of lightning, do not seek shelter under trees.
- Stay away from objects that conduct electricity, such as utility poles or metal objects.
- If you feel a tingling sensation, drop to the ground and curl up as tightly as possible.
- If you are traveling in a vehicle, remain inside the vehicle.

### **Tornado**

Tornadoes are violently rotating columns of air that descend in a funnel shape and form during the early stages of thunderstorms. The best protection during a tornado is in an interior room on the lowest level of a building, preferably a basement.

### **Earthquake**

The Pacific Northwest is a high-risk area for earthquakes. If an earthquake occurs, athletes, coaches, volunteers and spectators should observe the following guidelines:



- **Outdoors:** Stay outside. Move away from buildings, trees, signs, utility poles or downed electrical wires. Expect aftershocks that may also cause damage due to potentially weakened condition of load-bearing structures from the first quake.
- **Indoors:** Stay inside the building, away from windows, glass doors or elevators. Drop-Cover-and-Hold. Crawl under a desk/table or sit with your back to interior walls. Protect your head with your arms. Don't leave until the shaking is over.

### **Fire**

Know the location of exit doors and windows. Plan your escape route and practice it.

- If caught in smoke, drop to your hands and knees and crawl; breathe shallowly through your nose or use your blouse, shirt or jacket as a filter.
- If forced to advance through flames, hold your breath; move quickly; cover your head and hair; keep your head down and close your eyes as much as possible.
- If your clothes catch fire, Stop-Drop-and-Roll until the fire is out.

### **Coaches and Volunteers**

Remain calm and keep others calm. Determine if injuries have occurred, notify on-site medical personnel and assist others if necessary. Make sure all athletes and coaches are accounted for. Report to the Venue's designated evacuation area and await instructions from the venue manager or emergency coordinator.

### **Evacuation Plans**

In case of severe environmental conditions or other threat to participants' health and safety, athletes and volunteers will be directed to a designated safe gathering place at each venue. The venue manager or emergency coordinator will determine the appropriate course of action.

## **Crisis Communication Guidelines**

The risk of a crisis or controversial situation is a reality at every Special Olympics Washington event. The likelihood of illness or serious injury to athletes, volunteers or spectators, lost or missing athletes or family members, extreme weather conditions, fire, natural disasters or other emergency situation should be considered by all participants whenever engaged in a Special Olympics activity.

### **Responding to a Crisis**

The challenges in dealing with a crisis situation are:

- remaining calm and keeping others calm;
- keeping perspective and dealing with the crisis effectively;
- coordinating internal communication and speaking with one voice; and
- avoiding temptation to withhold information in order to protect the organization.

A well-defined crisis communication plan enables SOWA to manage the present situation, avoid further crisis or controversy, and maintain a positive, professional image.



### **Crisis Management Team**

Special Olympics Washington has identified a Crisis Management Team, consisting of the Chief Executive Officer, Vice President of Sports / Outreach, VP of Philanthropy, Chair of the Board of Directors, Games Chair and a legal advisor.

All public communication regarding crisis situations, especially communication with media, will come from members of the Crisis Management Team. Under no circumstances shall anyone else make any statement to the media regarding a crisis situation. Any inquiries by media or others should be directed to a member of the Crisis Management Team.

Please note that this policy deals with public communication during a crisis, not such things as personal safety or evacuation issues. As coaches or key volunteers, your first priority is to act in the interest of any persons at your venue who are affected or potentially affected by the situation at hand.

In most cases, your first contact should be with venue managers, medical personnel or Special Olympics Washington staff on site.

### **Whom Do You Call?**

In case of a crisis situation, after medical personnel have been called to the scene, one of the following individuals should be contacted immediately in the order listed.

Joe Hampson	Vice President, Sports / Outreach	206.412.2232
Dave Lenox	Chief Executive Officer	206.362.4949

The above individuals will contact members of the Crisis Management Team, and they will determine the appropriate course of action, prepare a statement and designate a spokesperson to respond to media inquiries.

## **Blood-Borne Pathogens**

Blood-borne pathogens are disease-causing microorganisms that can be potentially transmitted through blood contact. The blood-borne pathogens of concern include (but are not limited to) the hepatitis B virus (HBV) and the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). These diseases have potential for catastrophic health consequences. Knowledge and awareness of preventive strategies are essential.

### **Hepatitis B Virus (HBV)**

HBV is a blood-borne pathogen that can cause infection of the liver. Many of those infected will have no symptoms or a mild flu like illness. Individuals at the greatest risk for becoming infected include those practicing risky behaviors of having unprotected sexual relations or sharing intravenous (IV) needles. There is also evidence that household contacts with chronic HBV carriers can lead to infection without having had sexual relations or sharing of IV needles. These rare instances probably occur when the virus is through unrecognized-wound or mucous-membrane exposure.



## **HIV (AIDS Virus)**

The Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) that infects cells of the immune system and other tissues. Some of those infected with HIV will remain asymptomatic for many years. Others will more rapidly develop manifestations of HIV disease (i.e., AIDS). The risk of infection is increased by having unprotected sexual relations, as well as the sharing of IV needles. Like HBV, there is evidence suggesting that HIV has been transmitted in household-contact settings without sexual contact or IV needle sharing. Similar to HBV, these rare instances probably occur through unrecognized wound or mucous-membrane exposure.

## **Communicable Disease Procedures**

While risk of one infecting another with HIV during competition is close to non-existent, there is a remote risk that other blood-borne infectious diseases can be transmitted. For example, HBV can be present in blood as well as in other body fluids. Reducing transmission of the infectious agents should include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. The bleeding must be stopped, the open wound covered and if there is an excessive amount of blood on the uniform, it must be changed before the athlete participates.
2. Routine use of gloves or other precautions to prevent skin and mucous-membrane exposure when contact with blood or other body fluids is anticipated.
3. Immediately wash hands and other skin surfaces if contaminated (in contact) with blood or other body fluids. Wash hands immediately after removing gloves.
4. Clean all contaminated surfaces and equipment with an appropriate equipment disinfectant before competition resumes.
5. Practice proper disposal procedures to prevent injuries caused by needles, scalpels and other sharp instruments or devices.
6. Although saliva has not been implicated in HIV transmission, to minimize the need for emergency mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, mouthpieces, resuscitation bags, or other ventilation devices should be available for use.
7. Athletic trainers/coaches with bleeding or oozing skin conditions should refrain from all direct athletic care until the condition resolves.
8. Contaminated towels should be properly disposed of/disinfected.
9. Follow acceptable guidelines in the immediate control of bleeding and when handling bloody dressings, mouth guards and other articles containing body fluids.

## **Forms**

The following forms are available online at [www.sowa.org](http://www.sowa.org) and following this page.

- Application for Participation (Medical)
- Atlanto-Axial Instability
- Special Provisions Regarding Medical Treatment
- Incident Report
- Volunteer Application Form
- Volunteer Opportunities Form
- Unified Partner Release Form
- Washington State Patrol Form



- Pre-Season Registration Form
- Scrimmage Summary Form
- Housing Roster Form
- Individual Sports Entry Form
- Team Line-Up Form
- Team Sports Entry Roster Form
- Team Cover Sheet Form
- Transportation Request Form
- Check Request Form
- Coaches Conference Registration Form
- Fundraising Registration Form
- In-Kind Contribution Form