



Special Olympics Washington Hosts the 2020 Virtual Summer Games

First-time event brings athletes together virtually to “Connect and Compete”

July 31, 2020 – SEATTLE– Let the games begin! For the first time, Special Olympics Washington will host its State Summer Games virtually. The coronavirus pandemic prompted the cancelation of in-person practices, regional competitions and state competitions across Washington. Starting now and culminating the week of August 17, the Special Olympics Washington Virtual State Summer Games (SOWAVirtualGames.org) will bring together athletes, Unified partners, family members, coaches and volunteers, adding a sense of community and competition to summer fun!

The Virtual Summer Games will offer competitions in four sports: athletics (track and field), golf, soccer, and softball as well as a Fitness Challenge. Participants can compete in up to two sports, plus the Fitness Challenge. In addition, the games will feature a new program, Passport to Health, designed to help athletes build healthy habits that will last beyond the Virtual Summer Games.

“The coronavirus pandemic has been challenging for all of us, but especially for our athletes, who crave the sense of inclusion and community that comes from being able to connect with their teammates and coaches at in-person practices and competitions,” said Dave Lenox, president and CEO of Special Olympics Washington. “Although we can’t be together physically, our Virtual Summer Games experience will give participants the opportunity to stay active at home, compete and enjoy some of the elements found at our traditional state games.”

Key dates for the 2020 Virtual Summer Games include:

- Monday, August 3: Virtual Summer Games Opening Ceremony. The public is invited to tune into the ceremony at 6:00 p.m. PT on Special Olympics Washington’s Facebook page ([@SpecialOlympicsWa](https://www.facebook.com/SpecialOlympicsWa)).
- Monday, August 10: Deadline for participants to submit virtual competition results.
- Week of August 17: “Celebration Week” events include daily awards ceremonies on Facebook and a virtual Closing Ceremony on Friday, August 21.
- Friday, August 21: Virtual Victory Dance Party presented by the T-Mobile Foundation. All athletes and volunteers are encouraged to dance with us on Zoom.

SOWAVirtualGames.org



Throughout August, the community can cheer on the athletes as a virtual fan in the stands by submitting encouraging videos on Special Olympics Washington's Flipgrid board: flipgrid.com/sowavirtualgames.

Also, as an added incentive for participants to submit their final scores, Kaiser Permanente, the Official Health Partner of Special Olympics Washington, will provide all registered athletes with an at-home training kit.

For more information on the 2020 Virtual Summer Games, including a schedule of events, please go to SOWAVirtualGames.org.

About Special Olympics Washington

Special Olympics Washington provides year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for more than 19,500 children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in the sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community. For more information, please visit SpecialOlympicsWashington.org.

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