



Special Olympics
South Dakota



ATHLETE HANDBOOK

Athletics

2021

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Special Olympics South Dakota



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Dear Special Olympics Athlete,

Congratulations on becoming a part of Special Olympics South Dakota (SOSD)!

Through your commitment to Special Olympics and its programs, we challenge you to train and compete in all sports you desire. We also challenge you to find your voice and to help us shape and grow SOSD. 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.

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 a person. This handbook is designed to introduce SOSD to you and to provide general information needed as an athlete.

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



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1. Competition

The state is divided into four Areas. The city in which you live will determine which Area competitions you attend.

Northeast (NE) - Aberdeen, Huron, Watertown, and the surrounding communities

Southeast (SE) - Brookings, Mitchell, Sioux Falls, Yankton, and the surrounding communities

Black Hills (BH) - Custer, Rapid City, Spearfish, and the surrounding communities

Central (C) - Pierre, Mission, Winner, and the surrounding communities. These delegations do not have dedicated Area competitions to attend. In other words, you can choose where you wish to go.

For those who qualify, there are also State competitions held in the following sports:

State Basketball Tournament - Team (Traditional & Unified), Cheerleading (Traditional & Unified) and Skills (Individual & Team)

State Summer Games - Swimming (Traditional & Unified), Powerlifting, Volleyball, Soccer (Traditional & Unified), Soccer Skills, Racewalking and Track & Field (Traditional & Unified)

State Equestrian

Fall Classic - Bocce (Traditional & Unified), Softball (Traditional & Unified), and Softball Skills

State Traditional Bowling

State Unified Bowling

Eligibility to participate in these events will depend on you meeting all of the training requirements and rules developed by your Delegation or Team.

Please Note: Delegations and Teams may choose to NOT participate in events. There could be many reasons for this, including the availability of coaches, finances, and roster numbers.

2. Practices / Training Requirements

The time, place, duration, and content of your practices will be established by your program leadership and can vary rather significantly from program to program. However, rest assured your coaches have completed the required certification course work and have demonstrated competence in coaching their sport. The following are general training expectations set forth by the State Office:

- Bowling: A minimum of five 3-game series or a total of 15 games over a minimum of 8 weeks.
- Winter Games: A minimum of 15 hours over a minimum of 8 weeks.
- Basketball: A minimum of 15 hours over a minimum of 8 weeks.
- Summer Games: A minimum of 15 hours over a minimum of 8 weeks. The number of hours required would be divided among the number of sports in which you are participating; for example 3 sports - 5 hrs per sport / 2 sports - 7.5 hrs per sport / 1 sport - 15 hours.
- Equestrian: A minimum of 15 hours over a minimum of 8 weeks.

- Fall Classic: A minimum of 15 hours over a minimum of 8 weeks. The number of hours required would be divided among the number of sports in which you are participating; for example: 2 sports - 7.5 hrs per sport / 1 sport - 15 hours.

3. Unified Sports

There are two kinds of teams in Special Olympics, Traditional and Unified. Everyone on a Traditional Team is a Special Olympics Athlete. On a Unified Team, some of the players have a disability and some do not.

4. Athletes Code of Conduct

Special Olympics is committed to the highest ideals of sport and expects all athletes to honor sports and Special Olympics. All Special Olympics athletes and Unified Sports Partners are expected to observe the following code:

Sportsmanship

I will practice good sportsmanship.

I will act in ways that bring respect to me, my coaches, my team, and Special Olympics.

I will not use bad language.

I will not swear or insult other persons.

I will not fight with other athletes, coaches, volunteers, or staff.

Training and Competition

I will train regularly.

I will learn and follow the rules of my sport.

I will listen to my coaches and the officials and ask questions when I do not understand.

I will always try my best during training, divisioning, and competitions.

I will not “hold back” in preliminary competition just to get into an easier finals division.

Responsibility for My Actions

I will not make inappropriate or unwanted physical, verbal, or sexual advances on others.

I will not smoke or vape in non-smoking areas.

I will not drink alcohol or use illegal drugs at Special Olympics events.

I will not take drugs for the purpose of improving my performance.

I will obey all laws and Special Olympics rules

I understand that if I do not obey this Code of Conduct, I will be subject to a range of consequences by my Program or a Games Organizing Committee for a World Games, up to and including not being allowed to participate.

5. You Know What I mean?

People often use short-cuts when speaking and writing about Special Olympics.

DQ = Disqualification. An athlete will receive a participation ribbon when, during competition, a judge determines a rules infraction has occurred.

GOC = Games Organizing Committee. For every State event we host, there is a group of people from the host city who help organize the event.

HA = Healthy Athletes. At our State Summer Games, we provide health screenings to athletes.

HOD = Head of Delegation. This is the person in charge of your delegation/team.

ID = Intellectual Disability. All athletes participating in Special Olympics have an ID.

LETR = Law Enforcement Torch Run. These are people who help raise money for SOSD.

SO or SOI = Special Olympics and Special Olympics, Inc. The preferred name is Special Olympics.

SOSD = Special Olympics South Dakota. SOSD is a state program of Special Olympics. The State Office is located in Sioux Falls.

UP = Unified Partners. These are players on teams who do not have an ID.

YA = Young Athletes. These are future Special Olympics athletes who are ages 2 - 7.

6. Application for Participation in Special Olympics South Dakota

To participate in Special Olympics, you must complete Form A: Application for Participation in Special Olympics South Dakota. This form contains the following components:

- ⇒ Your contact information
- ⇒ Contact information for a parent/guardian
- ⇒ Health insurance information
- ⇒ Physical exam that must be completed by a medical professional every three years
- ⇒ A release signed by either you or a parent/guardian
- ⇒ Once this form is completed, you should give it to your HOD. They will give a copy to the State Office.
- ⇒ If you should get injured or become ill at a Special Olympics event and should require the care of a medical professional, your HOD should bring this document with you.

7. Concussions

Defining a Concussion

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury caused when you get hit on the head or from a bunch of smaller blows to the head. Concussions can also occur from a blow to the body that causes the head and brain to move quickly back and forth—causing the brain to bounce around or twist within the skull. Although concussions are usually not life-threatening, their effects can be serious, therefore, proper attention must be paid to individuals suspected of sustaining a concussion.

Suspected or Confirmed Concussion

If a coach or official thinks you have sustained a concussion in a practice, game, or competition, you will be removed from practice, play, or competition at that time. If a qualified medical professional is available on-site to render an evaluation, that person shall have final authority as to whether or not a concussion is suspected. If applicable, your parent or

guardian should be made aware that the participant is suspected of sustaining a concussion.

Return to Play

If you have been removed from practice, play or competition due to a suspected concussion, you may not participate in Special Olympics sports activities until either of the following occurs A) at least seven consecutive days have passed since you were removed from play and a currently licensed, qualified medical professional* provides written clearance for the participant to return to practice, play and competition or B) a currently licensed, qualified medical professional determines you did not suffer a concussion and provides written clearance for you to return to activities immediately. Written clearance in either of the scenarios above shall become a permanent record.

*A qualified medical professional is defined as a person who is registered, certified, licensed, or otherwise recognized in law, by the State of South Dakota, to provide medical treatment and is trained and experienced in the evaluation, management, and care of concussions.

8. Abuse

Your health, safety, and well-being are of the highest concern to those in your Special Olympics family (Coaches, chaperones, staff, and volunteers). If you should ever feel unsafe or mistreated, we urge you to seek the assistance of a family member or a trusted member of your Special Olympics family.

9. Competition Readiness

To compete at your best you need to be prepared!

1. Proper sports equipment: For example, you will need a softball glove that fits your hand.
2. Uniform or sports clothing: Blue jeans are not appropriate for competition. Your shoelaces should be tied and you should be wearing sports socks.
3. Proper sports shoes: If you wear cowboy boots while competing in basketball, for example, the possibility of injuring an ankle is quite high. Plus, you won't look like a serious athlete.
4. Minimal or no jewelry.
5. Hair is out of your face.
6. Sunscreen on exposed skin.
7. Eat a healthy snack or meal within 2-3 hours of the event.
8. Drink one bottle of water within an hour of the event.
9. Warm-up before the event.

10. Year-round Fitness

Staying fit and healthy should not end when your latest State event is over. It is very important for you to set fitness goals and strive to fulfill them. Here are some ideas:

1. Work out or go for a walk at least 5 times per week.
2. Eat fast food no more than 3 times per week.

3. Get 8 hours of sleep per night.
4. Drink 5 large glasses of water per day.
5. Do not drink soda... even diet soda.
6. Eat 5 fruits and/or vegetables every day.

11. Athlete Leadership

Inclusion starts with Athlete Leadership! What does the word “inclusion” mean? Many things, but as it applies to Special Olympics it means:

- A. You should have the opportunity to enjoy the same experiences as people without an ID, and;
- B. You should have the same opportunities to contribute to SO through the sharing of your talents and gifts outside of competition.

The following are roles athletes can and should be filling:

1. Athlete Leadership Council
2. Coaches
3. Committee Members
4. Fund-raisers
5. Games Organizing Committee Members
6. Global Messengers (Giving Speeches)
7. Health Promoters
8. Officials
9. Photographers
10. Reporters
11. SOSD Board of Directors
12. Volunteers

For more information regarding any of these roles, contact the state office at 605.331.4117.

12. Fundraising

It takes a lot of money to put on Special Olympics events. You can help your local program as well as the State with this. We strongly encourage you to attend fundraising events in your community and actively help out when applicable.

For you to perform at your best, you need to know the rules of the game. Look for Athlete Handbooks for all of your sports.

Special Olympics South Dakota Sports Rules - Athletics

TRACK EVENTS

Event Restrictions

1. Athletes may compete in three individual events and one relay event.
2. Athletes entered in MATP events are not eligible to participate in any other individual or relay events. MATP Events include: 10 M Race, 25 M Race, and MATP Tennis Ball Throw.
3. Athletes entered in the Pentathlon are also eligible to do one relay.

General Track Rules:

1. Races 400 meters or below, the commands of the starter shall be "On your marks...set". The whistle will then be blown.
2. In races 800 meters or longer, the commands shall be "On your marks". The whistle will be blown. A competitor shall not touch the ground with their hand.
3. In races up to and including the 400 M, athletes have the option of using or not using blocks.
4. 100 M, 200 M, 400 M races and assisted and wheelchair races: Competitors should remain in their assigned lanes for the duration of their race.
5. During walking events, athletes must have one foot in touch with the ground at all times.
6. Athletes must abide by the rules of the event in which they are entered. Walk, run, or wheelchair. An athlete may be disqualified if they run in a walk event or run outside of their lane and impede the progress of another runner.
7. Any athlete who is disqualified in a track event will receive a participation ribbon.
8. A rope or sighted guide runner may be provided to assist athletes who are visually impaired.
9. Rope or sighted guide runner must be provided by the delegation. A sighted guide runner may not be ahead of the athlete in any manner. At no time may the guide runner pull the athlete or propel the athlete forward by pushing.
10. A tap start will be used for an athlete who is both deaf and blind.

50 Meter Walk

- All athletes shall start from behind the starting line. An athlete completes this race when your torso crosses the finish line.
- An athlete shall be disqualified if you interfere, obstruct, or gain an advantage over another competitor.
- One foot must be in touch with the ground at all times in walking events. Disqualification will result if an athlete runs at any point in this event. Participation ribbon, not a place ribbon is awarded to those athletes who are disqualified.

50 Meter Dash and 100 Meter Dash

- All athletes shall start from behind the starting line. An athlete completes this race when your torso crosses the finish line.
- An athlete shall be disqualified if you interfere, obstruct, or gain an advantage over another competitor.

200 Meter Dash, 400 Meter Dash, 800 Meter Run, 1500 Meter Run & 3000 Meter Run

- 200 and 400 Meter Races will be conducted on an oval track. You will stay in your lane for the entire race. There will

be staggered starts.

- 800 Meter Races, runners will start in their assigned lanes through the first turn and break toward lane one at the break line which is marked after the first turn.
- 1500 Meter Races or greater, a waterfall start is used. Athletes may cut as soon as they have space to not interfere with another athlete.

Relays (4 x 100 Meter Relay, 4 x 400 Meter Relay)

- Each relay will consist of 4 team members. **No one athlete can do more than one leg.**
- Competition age groups will consist of 15 & under, 16-21, 22 & over. Age group divisions will be either male or female. Coed teams will be combined with the male divisions.
- The age group division of the team is determined by the oldest member of the team.
- The baton must be passed within the 20 meter passing zone. If not you will be disqualified.
- A dropped baton must be retrieved by the team member who dropped it unless both team members are in the passing zone. In this case, the baton may be retrieved by either member.
- If a baton is dropped and goes into another lane, the person who dropped it must get it. You must return to your lane before passing to your teammate. You will be disqualified if you interfere with another team.
- If a relay runner drops the baton while running, you may pick it up and return to your lane and continue running. If you interfere with another team you will be disqualified.

Unified 4 x 100 Relay

- Teams shall consist of two athletes and two partners.
- Runners on a relay team may be assigned to run in any order.

10 Meter Assisted Walk and 25 Meter Assisted Walk

- You must provide your own assisted walking devices. Assisted devices may consist of canes, crutches, or walkers.
- You may use 2 lanes.
- You may not receive assistance from anyone, including coaches, officials, or family.

Motor Activity Training Program (MATP) Track Events (10 and 25 Meter Races)

- Athletes participating in MATP events are not allowed to enter any other track or field event.
- Athletes are allowed to have a coach assist them as needed to ensure full participation in the MATP events.
- No athlete will be disqualified. All athletes entered in MATP events will receive a 1st place ribbon or medal.

Wheelchair Events (Motorized and Non-motorized)

- Only athletes who truly use a wheelchair may participate in these events.
- Athletes entered in the 100 or the 200 M Wheelchair Race may not participate in the 10, 25, or, 30 M Wheelchair events.
- The lanes for the wheelchair events shall be two track-lanes wide.
- You must start with your wheels behind the start line.
- Athletes shall not be pushed, pulled, or otherwise assisted during these events.
- Each competitor must stay in their assigned lanes from start to finish and may not interfere, obstruct or impede the progress of another competitor. Infractions may result in disqualification.

- Four persons make up a 4 x 25 M Wheelchair Relay team. Each team member will complete 25 M of the relay. The 2nd, 3rd and 4th relay team member may not leave the start line until your teammate crosses the take-off line 1 M in front and parallel to the starting line.

Wheelchair Slalom (Motorized and Non-motorized)

- The front two wheels of the chair should be behind the starting line and timing stops when the front two wheels have crossed the finish line.
- The athlete must maneuver their chair through the course, going to the right of the first cone and then left of the next one (going in between all cones) and across the finish line without impeding another athlete on the course.
- Knocking down a marker constitutes a violation, and a three-second penalty will be assessed.
- Not correctly completing the designated course will result in disqualification and the competitor will receive a participation ribbon.

FIELD EVENTS

General Field Rules:

1. Athletes can enter only one of the following jumping events: running long jump or standing long jump.
2. Athletes may enter only one of the following throwing events: shot put, mini-javelin, softball throw, or tennis ball throw.
3. Athletes entered in the MATP Tennis Ball Throw cannot enter any other field event. They are also allowed to have whatever assistance is needed to fully participate in this event.
4. Coaches must stay out of the competition area during field events. The competition areas are designated with flagging and other markings. Only event volunteers and athletes are allowed inside these spaces.
5. Before competition, coaches are allowed to be in running long jump and high jump competition areas to assist athletes with getting their “marks” on the runway, as needed.
6. For the running long jump, standing long jump, and throwing events (shot put, mini-javelin, softball throw, and tennis ball throw) each athlete shall be allowed three non-consecutive attempts. All three attempts shall be measured and recorded. The longest measurement of the three attempts shall be used for scoring. The athlete’s second best, then third best, attempts shall be used to break ties. Measurements are recorded in meters and centimeters.
7. For the long jump, standing long jump, high jump, and throwing events, a competitor shall be charged a foul if the competitor does not initiate an attempt within one minute after the competitor’s name has been called. For the High Jump, when 3 or more athletes are remaining in the competition the time shall be one minute. When 2 or 3 athletes are remaining in the competition the time shall be one and a half minutes. When there is only one remaining athlete in the competition the time shall be two minutes.
8. Athletes with qualifying scores of 15M and above for the tennis ball throw should be encouraged to compete in the softball throw, mini-javelin, or shot put.
9. Athletes with qualifying scores of 24M and above for the softball throw should be encouraged to compete in the mini-javelin, or shot put.
10. Any athlete who is disqualified in a field event will receive a participation ribbon.

Running Long Jump

- To be in this event, an athlete must be able to jump at least 1 meter, which is the minimum distance between the take-

off board and the sandpit.

- Athletes shall take-off on one foot and land on two feet.
- Distance will be measured from the closest impression in the pit made by any part of the body. Measurements should be read from the take-off line and not from the jumping pit.
- If an athlete jumps less than 1M and does not make it to the pit, they will receive a scratch on their attempt (0 score). If they scratch 3 attempts they will receive a participation ribbon.

Standing Long Jump

- A competitor shall jump off both feet on the take-off. You may rock backward and forward lifting your heels and toes alternately, but you may not lift either foot completely off the ground.
- Distance will be measured from the closest impression on the landing area made by any part of the body.

High Jump

- The competitor shall take off on one foot.
- The minimum opening height for all high jump competitions shall be 1.00 meter.
- Each competitor will have 3 attempts to clear each height and must successfully clear a previous height to advance to the next height.
- Competitors may pass at a height and move to the next height, but will only be scored on heights successfully cleared.
- If a competitor breaks the vertical plane of the crossbar, it will be counted as an attempt.
- Competitors shall not dive forward over the bar or take off from a two-footed stance.
- The crossbar should be raised 5 cm after each round.

Shot Put

- It is acceptable to include a wheelchair athlete in the regular divisions of the shot put, but the weight of the shot must be the same for all competitors.
- A legal put shall be made from within the circle. In the course of an attempt, the athlete, or wheelchair, may not touch the top edge of the stop-board, the top of the iron ring, or any surface outside of the circle. It is legal to touch the inside of the stop-board or the iron band.
- For your put to count, you must enter the ring from the back. The shot shall be “put” from your shoulder with one hand only. The shot shall touch or be in close proximity to the neck or the chin and the hand shall not be dropped from this position during the action of putting. The shot shall not be taken behind the line of the shoulders, such as when you throw a ball.
- You must exit through the back of the ring when your attempt is over.
- If you enter the shot put you cannot enter either the softball throw or the tennis ball throw.

Mini-Javelin

- The mini-javelin must be held by the grip with one hand.
- The mini-javelin shall be thrown over the shoulder or upper part of the throwing arm and may not be slung or hurled.
- At no time shall you turn completely around so that your back is towards the throwing area.
- The measurement of each throw shall be made from where the tip first struck the ground.
- It will be counted as a foul if you do not use proper throwing technique: the point does not land first, the jav lands

out of bounds, and you step outside the throwing box.

Softball Throw

- Competitors may use any type of throw.
- The throw will be considered a foul if the ball lands out of bounds or if you step over the restraining line.

Tennis Ball Throw

- Competitors may use any type of throw.
- The throw will be considered a foul if the ball lands out of bounds or if you step over the restraining line.

Motor Activity Training Program (MATP) Tennis Ball Throw

- Athletes entered in the MATP Tennis Ball Throw can not enter any other field event.
- Athletes may receive whatever assistance is necessary to fully participate in this event.
- No athlete will be disqualified.
- All athletes entered in MATP events will receive 1st place ribbons or medals.

Pentathlon

- If achieved time or distance is not given in the pentathlon score table, the score for the nearest lesser performance should be recorded.
- All pentathlon athletes (male and female) will advance through all pentathlon events as a group rather than separated by gender. Running events can be combined on the track so that divisions are competing with each other regardless of gender or qualifying times in an attempt to create a better competitive experience for all.
- The Pentathlon will follow the male track/field schedule.

Race Walking

- Race walking is technically considered a Track & Field event, although we treat it as a separate competition
- Athletes will automatically be disqualified if they run at any point during their race.
- Spotters will be located around the track who will signal if an athlete is disqualified. The athlete will be allowed to finish the race but will be given a participation ribbon.
- Athletes must have one foot in touch with the ground at all times.
- In all race walking events, an athlete does not have to have a straight advancing leg while competing.
- There will be staggered starts for the 400's. Stay in your lane the entire race.
- There will also be staggered starts for the 800's. Stay in your lane through the first turn before breaking toward lane one at the designated cut mark.
- Competitors shall be disqualified when a technical violation has been committed that results in an advantage being gained.

Divisioning

- At your practices, coaches will get a time for you on the track and measure your jumps and throws. This is how it is decided who you will compete against at your Area events.
- The results of your Area events will determine who you will compete against at State.

- To save time, there could be multiple divisions of athletes running together in a race. You are only competing for awards against the athletes in your division.

Sportsmanship

- Put forth maximum effort during each event.
- Practice the skills with the same intensity as you would perform them in competition.
- If you start a game or event you should finish it.
- Always comply with the rules.
- Demonstrate sportsmanship and fair play at all times.
- Respect the decision of the officials at all times.