

2026 COMPETITION GUIDE

Section 1

General Information



***Special
Olympics***
South Dakota

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Important Changes / Reminders

NEW THIS YEAR:

FORMS

- When registering for events, all forms must be submitted electronically. This will be the *ONLY format accepted*.
- The form we used to refer to as “**The Medical**” is no longer valid. Form A: “US Athlete Registration Form” is the only registration form accepted. This must be updated annually.

SPORTS

- Cornhole will be a demonstration sport at Summer Games. It will tentatively become a permanent sport as a part of State Summer Games.
- Beginning in 2026, Powerlifting will be a stand-alone event.
- All bowling ramps for Area and State competitions will be provided by the State Office.
- Beginning in 2026, there will be ramp bowling divisions at Area and State Unified Bowling.
- Ramp bowlers will bowl 3-3-4 frames. Please read your Coaches Handbook for more specifics on this topic.
- When determining BOSAT scores for Bocce, the number of balls sampled has been reduced from 8 to 4.
- Complimentary delegation T-shirts will no longer be provided at State Summer Games.

OTHER

- Delegations will be charged for meals if an excessive number are requested but not eaten.
- New guidelines have been established for Athletes who breach the Athlete Code of Conduct. (Section 1 page 22).

IMPORTANT REMINDERS:

- **When completing registration forms, it is *imperative* you spell names correctly, include both first and last names, and write legibly.**
- DO NOT include Unified Partners on Form L: Volunteer Roster
- Delegation receipts turned in for monthly reconciliation **MUST** be itemized.
- Class A volunteers should have an approved background check on file **BEFORE** any contact with athletes, i.e. attending practices.

- Please notify us of coaching changes so vital information gets to the correct person.
- If you wish to receive an up-to-date coach's certification list or athlete registration dates list, contact your Area Director.
- Where specifically stated, area participation is required to be eligible for state competition.

Welcome To Special Olympics South Dakota!

The Special Olympics South Dakota Competition Guide and Sports Handbooks have been designed to enable coaches, agency representatives, and families to prepare their athletes and programs to take part in area and state competitions offered by Special Olympics South Dakota (SOSD).

Please make copies of this guide and share it with your sport-specific coaches. Protect your copy as it contains all state and area registration information that will ensure your program's successful involvement in the next year. THANK YOU, coaches, for your commitment, time, and effort in making Special Olympics a quality sports program.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Special Olympics is to provide 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.

PHILOSOPHY

Special Olympics is founded on the belief that people with intellectual disabilities can, with proper instruction and encouragement, learn, enjoy and benefit from participation in individual and team sports, adapted as necessary to meet the needs of those with intellectual and physical limitations.

Special Olympics believes that consistent training, with emphasis on physical conditioning, is essential to the development of sports skills, and that competition among those of equal abilities is the most appropriate means of testing these skills, measuring progress and providing incentives for personal growth.

Special Olympics believes that through sports training and competition, people with intellectual disabilities benefit physically, mentally, socially and spiritually; families are strengthened; and the community at large, both through participation and observation, is united with people with intellectual disabilities in an environment of equality, respect and acceptance.

Special Olympics believes that every person with intellectual disabilities who is at least eight years old should have the opportunity to participate in and benefit from sports training and competition. Special Olympics also permits individual programs to accept children aged six and seven for training, but these children may not participate in Special Olympics competitions.

2026 Competition Schedule

AREA/STATE WINTER GAMES

For Details call Special Olympics Wyoming:
1.307.235.3062

AREA BASKETBALL TOURNAMENTS

NE Area Tournament

Date: February 13, 2026
Location: Hamlin High School, Hayti
Time: 8:30am
Registration Deadline: January 26, 2026

BH Area Tournament

Date: February 14, 2026
Location: Central High School, Rapid City
Time: 9:00am
Registration Deadline: January 26, 2026

SE Area Tournament

Date: February 28, 2026
Location: Harrisburg High School, Harrisburg
Time: 9:00am
Registration Deadline: January 26, 2026

STATE POWERLIFTING COMPETITION

Date: March 7, 2026
Location: SDSU Miller Wellness Center, Brookings
Competition: Squat, Bench, Deadlift, Double Combination, Triple Combination
Registration Deadline: February 2, 2026

STATE BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

Date: March 28 & 29, 2026
Location: Mitchell
Competition: Team, Unified Team, Individual Skills, Team Skills, 3x3, Cheer
Registration Deadline: January 26, 2026

AREA SWIMMING

NE Area Meet

Date: April 24, 2026
Location: Prairie Lakes Wellness Center, Watertown
Time: 12:00pm-4:00pm
Registration Deadline: April 8, 2026

SE Area Meet

Date: April 24, 2026
Location: Midco Aquatics Center, Sioux Falls
Time: 1:00pm-5:00pm
Registration Deadline: April 8, 2026

BH Area Meet

Date: May 2, 2026
Location: Young Center, Spearfish
Time: 9:00am-12:00pm
Registration Deadline: April 8, 2026

AREA ATHLETICS

Central Area Athletics

TBD
Registration Deadline: April 8, 2026

BH Area Athletics

Date: April 24, 2026
Location: Sioux Park, Rapid City
Time: 9:00am-4:00pm
Registration Deadline: April 8, 2026

SE Area Athletics

Date: April 25, 2026
Location: Brandon High School, Brandon
Time: 8:00am-3:30pm
Registration Deadline: April 8, 2026

NE Area Athletics

Date: May 1, 2026
Location: High School Track, Milbank
Time: 8:00am-3:30pm
Registration Deadline: April 8, 2026

STATE SUMMER GAMES

Date: May 14-16, 2026
Location: Black Hills State University, Spearfish
Competition: Athletics, Cornhole (demonstration), Individual Soccer Skills, Team Soccer, Swimming, Volleyball, Volleyball Skill
Registration Deadline: April 8, 2026

EQUESTRIAN COMPETITION

West River

Date: July 11, 2026
Location: James Kjerstead Event Center, Rapid City
Competition: Equitation, Working Trail, Showmanship, Barrel Racing
Registration Deadline: June 24, 2026

East River

Date: July 18, 2026
Location: K & H Rodeo Grounds, Watertown
Competition: Equitation, Working Trail, Showmanship, Barrel Racing
Registration Deadline: June 24, 2026

AREA SOFTBALL TOURNAMENTS

SE Area Tournament

Date: August 15, 2026
Location: Sherman Park Softball Complex, Sioux Falls
Time: 9:30am
Registration Deadline: July 27, 2026

BH Area Tournament *Tentative*

Date: August 15, 2026
Location: Star of the West, Rapid City
Time: 9:30am
Registration Deadline: July 27, 2026

AREA BOCCE TOURNAMENTS

SE Area Tournament

Date: August 16, 2026

Location: McCart Fields, Sioux Falls

Time: 9:30am

Registration Deadline: July 27, 2026

BH Area Tournament *Tentative*

Date: August 22, 2026

Location: Rapid City Bocce Complex at West Memorial Park, Rapid City

Time: 9:00am-12:00pm / 12:30-3:30

Registration Deadline: July 27, 2026

NE Area Tournament

Date: August 23, 2026

Location: Memorial Park, Lake Norden

Time: 9:00am

Registration Deadline: July 27, 2026

FALL CLASSIC

BOCCE

Date: September 18, 2026

Location: Rapid City Bocce Complex at West Memorial Park, Rapid City

Competition: Traditional Doubles, Unified Doubles

Registration Deadline: July 27, 2026

SOFTBALL

Date: September 19 & 20, 2026

Location: Star of the West, Rapid City

Competition: Slow-Pitch, Unified Slow-Pitch, Tee Ball, Coach Pitch

Registration Deadline: July 27, 2026

AREA UNIFIED BOWLING TOURNAMENTS

NE Area Unified Doubles Bowling

Date: October 8, 2026

Location: The Lanes, Brookings

Time: 9:00am-11:30am / 11:30am-2:00pm

Registration Deadline: September 28, 2026

BH Area Unified Doubles Bowling

Date: October 10, 2026

Location: Meadowood Lanes, Rapid City

Time: 12:30pm-3:00pm / 3:00pm-5:30pm

Registration Deadline: September 28, 2026

SE Area Unified Doubles Bowling

Date: October 11, 2026

Location: Eastway Bowl, Sioux Falls

Time: 9:00am-11:30am / 11:30am-2:00pm / 2:00pm-4:30pm

Registration Deadline: September 28, 2026

AREA TRADITIONAL BOWLING TOURNAMENTS

BH Area Singles Bowling

Date: October 9, 2026

Location: Meadowood Lanes, Rapid City

Time: 9:00am-11:30am / 11:30am-2:00pm / 2:00pm-4:30pm

Registration Deadline: September 28, 2026

NE Area Singles Bowling

Date: October 9, 2026

Location: Village Bowl, Aberdeen

Time: 9:00am-11:30am / 11:30am-2:00pm / 2:00pm-4:30pm

Registration Deadline: September 28, 2026

SE Area Singles Bowling

Date: October 10, 2026

Location: Eastway Bowl, Sioux Falls

Time: 9:00am-11:30am / 11:30am-2:00pm / 2:00pm-4:30pm

Registration Deadline: September 28, 2026

STATE BOWLING TOURNAMENT

Date: November 6-8, 2026

Location: Village Bowl, Aberdeen

Competition: Individual, Team, Doubles & Ramp

Registration Deadline: October 14, 2026

STATE UNIFIED BOWLING TOURNAMENT

Date: November 14 & 15, 2026

Location: Eastway Bowl, Sioux Falls

Competition: Doubles, Team

Registration Deadline: October 14, 2026

CALENDAR OF EVENTS AND DUE DATES

January 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9 Unity Conference	10 Unity Conference
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26 All Area & State B Ball Reg Due	27	28	29	30	31

February 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 State Powerlifting Reg Due	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13 NE Area Basketball Hamlin	14 BH Area Basketball Rapid City
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28 SE Area Basketball Harrisburg

March 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7 State Powerlifting Competition Brookings
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28 State Basketball Tournament Mitchell
29 State Basketball Tournament Mitchell	30	31				

April 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8 Area Athletics and <u>Swimming Reg Due</u> State Summer Games Reg Due	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22 Central Area Athletics Tentative	23	24 NE Swimming <u>Watertown</u> BH Athletics <u>Rapid City</u> SE Swim <u>Sioux Falls</u>	25 SE Athletics Brandon
26	27	28	29 Summer Games Housing Reg Due	30		

May 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 NE Athletics Milbank	2 BH Swim Spearfish
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14 State Summer Games Spearfish	15 State Summer Games Spearfish	16 State Summer Games Spearfish
17	18	19	20	21 Awards Nominations Due	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

June 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24 Equestrian Reg Due	25	26	27
28	29	30				

July 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11 <u>Equestrian</u> West River Rapid City
12	13	14	15	16	17	18 <u>Equestrian</u> East River Watertown
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27 All Area Bocce & Softball Reg Due State Bocce & Softball Reg Due	28	29	30	31	

August 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15 SE Softball <u>Sioux Falls</u> BH Softball Rapid City
16 SE Bocce Sioux Falls	17	18	19	20	21	22 BH Bocce Rapid City tentative
23 NE Bocce Lake Norden	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

September 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18 Fall Classic (Bocce) Rapid City	19 Fall Classic (Softball) Rapid City
20 Fall Classic (Softball) Rapid City	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28 All Area Singles & Area Unified Bowl Reg Due	29	30			

October 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8 NE Unified Brookings	9 NE Singles Aberdeen BH Singles Rapid City	10 SE Singles Sioux Falls BH Unified Rapid City
11 SE Unified Sioux Falls	12	13	14 State Traditional Bowl Reg Due State Unified Bowl Reg Due	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

November 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6 State Traditional Bowl Aberdeen	7 State Traditional Bowl Aberdeen
8 State Traditional Bowl Aberdeen	9	10	11	12	13	14 State Unified Bowl Sioux Falls
15 State Unified Bowl Sioux Falls	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

December 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

General Information

SPECIAL OLYMPICS UNIFIED SPORTS CONCEPT

A Unified Sports program provides an opportunity for people with intellectual disabilities to be included on teams with people without disabilities who are of approximately the same ability level and age. The principle of ability and age grouping is fundamental to Special Olympics. It leads to meaningful inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities on teams, a chance to be contributing teammates, and the potential to make friendships with people from whom they have traditionally been segregated.

Unified sports programs are springing up in communities worldwide through parks and recreation departments, civic organizations, private and public schools, colleges, group home agencies, state institutions, corporations, bowling proprietors, running clubs and other sports organizations.

There are a few basic principles and practices which make Unified Sports work:

Ability Grouping – The more similar the skill level of all athletes on a team, the greater the chance each athlete will play a valued and meaningful role on that team.

Age Grouping – The smaller the age range of all participants, the greater the chance that age-appropriate sport selection, friendships, and activities on and off the field or court will occur.

Training – Teammates are required to practice together on a regular basis. This results in skill development, improved teamwork, better fitness, and camaraderie created by working towards a common goal.

Competition – Teams should have many opportunities to test and display their skills in competitions. Unified Sports rules are similar, with minor modifications to the sports rules commonly used by schools and community sport programs. Participation on a Unified Sports Team facilitates transition into other community and school sports activities.

GOALS OF UNIFIED SPORTS

1. To assist agencies and school systems in offering sports programs that include athletes with and without intellectual disabilities on the same team.
2. To provide team sports opportunities to individuals with intellectual disabilities who are not presently involved in sports, especially those with intellectual disabilities who may be sensitive to participating in traditional Special Olympics sports, and those in communities where there are not enough Special Olympics athletes to conduct team sports.

TIPS FOR UNIFIED TEAMS

- Team practice is just as important, if not more important, for Unified Team Sports. Practice sessions are the ideal opportunity for team members to get to know one another and assess the relative skills of

various team members. Schedule as many practices as possible, and certainly not fewer than two two-hour sessions, before starting competition.

- Remember that all Unified Team members should be closely matched in age - within three to five years for participants 18 and under and 10 years for participants 19 and over.
- Avoid letting one or more players dominate a team, thus depriving other players of the fullest chance to participate. Coaches should replace overly dominant players before team competition starts and referees should disqualify an overly dominant player in a game. It is a judgment call based on doing the most good for all participants.
- Inform athletes without intellectual disabilities that they are covered by Special Olympics International's accident insurance policy.
- Unified Partners must complete the **Class A Volunteer & Unified Partner Registration** (Form D) at least every three years. Applicants 18 years and older will be subjected to a criminal records check, and where applicable, a motor vehicle records check.

UNIFIED CHAMPION SCHOOLS

Unified Champion Schools bring youth with and without intellectual disabilities together through education and sports and related initiatives that provide them with the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to create and sustain school communities that promote acceptance, respect, and human dignity for all students.

The 3 Components of UCS:

- 1. Inclusive Sports & Fitness** - Provides students opportunities to participate in sports activities alongside one another, which is the most conducive way for breaking down stereotypes—Unified Sports, unified physical education and intramurals, inclusive Young Athletes
- 2. Leadership & Advocacy** - Provides students opportunities to take on leadership roles in promoting UCS activities in the school and in the community—Partners Club, Youth Activation Committees, Youth Summits
- 3. Whole School Engagement** - Provides opportunities for all students in the school to participate in UCS through school-wide activities—Spread the Word >> Inclusion, Fans in the Stands, Pep Rallies, Polar Plunges

We want YOUR school to become a Unified Champion School!

Special Olympics Family Member Code of Conduct

We hope as family members, you will embrace the spirit of Special Olympics and help to provide a competition and training environment that enhances athlete character and skill development. The following Family Code of Conduct should be emphasized during training, competition, and special events at any level – including local programs, state programs, national, regional, and world.

As a Special Olympics family member, I pledge the following:

- I will let my athlete choose the sports in which he/she would like to participate. I will not force my choice upon him/her.
- I will remember that athletes participate to have fun and that the game is for them; not for the family members.
- I will see to it that my athlete's medical form is up-to-date, complete, and on file.
- I will learn the rules of the game and the SOI policies before I complain or protest.
- I (and my guests) will be a positive role model for my athlete and encourage sportsmanship by showing respect and courtesy, and by demonstrating positive support for all athletes, coaches, officials, and spectators at every game, practice, or competition.
- I understand that I play a vital role in the health and safety of my athlete's participation. I have a responsibility to assist Special Olympics in providing for the health and safety of all athletes by reporting suspicious behavior, talking to my child about personal safety, dropping off and picking up my child/guard from Special Olympics events at the times designated by the organization (not excessively earlier or later than said established times), and any and all other reasonable measures to assist in the protection of Special Olympics athletes.
- I (and my guests) will never engage in any kind of unsportsmanlike conduct, such as booing and taunting, refusing to shake hands, or using profane language and gestures with any official, coach, or family member.
- I will never encourage any behaviors or practices that would endanger the health and well-being of the athletes.
- I will teach my athlete to play by the rules and to resolve conflicts without resorting to hostility or violence.
- I will demand that my athlete treat other athletes, coaches, officials, and spectators with respect, regardless of race, creed, color, sex, or ability.
- I will teach my athlete that doing one's best is more important than winning, so that my athlete will never feel defeated by the outcome of a game or his/her performance.
- I will praise my athlete for competing fairly and trying hard, and I will make my athlete feel like a winner every time.
- I will never ridicule or yell at my athlete or other participants for making a mistake or losing a
- I will emphasize skill development and practices, and how they benefit my athlete over winning. I will also de-emphasize games and competition in lower age groups.

- I will promote the emotional and physical well-being of the athletes ahead of any personal desire that I may have for my athlete to win.
- I will respect the officials and their authority during games and competitions, and will never question, discuss, or confront coaches during competitions. Instead, I will take time to speak with coaches at an agreed upon time and place.
- I will demand a sports environment for my athlete that is free from drugs and alcohol, and I will refrain from their use at all sports events and competitions.
- I will smoke/chew tobacco only in designated areas.
- I will refrain from coaching my athlete or other athletes during competitions and practices if I am not the assigned coach.

As a Special Olympics Accredited Program family member, I also understand that if I fail to abide by the aforementioned rules and guidelines, I may be subject to disciplinary action that could include, but may not be limited to, the following:

- Verbal warning by officials, coaches, and/or sub-Program and Accredited Program personnel
- Game suspension with written documentation of incident kept on file in the Accredited Program Office
- Written warning
- Game forfeit through official or coach
- Season suspension
- Misbehavior Report submitted to Event Director

I hereby certify that I have reviewed, understood, and agreed to this Code of Conduct.

Signature of Family Member

Date

Delegation

Athlete's Name

ATHLETE REGISTRATION AND INFORMATION



Eligibility For Participation In Special Olympics

GENERAL STATEMENT OF ELIGIBILITY

Special Olympics training and competitions are open to every person with intellectual disabilities who is at least eight years of age and who registers to participate in Special Olympics as required by the General Rules.

AGE REQUIREMENTS

There is no maximum age limit for participation in Special Olympics. The minimum age requirement for participation is eight years of age. An Accredited Program may permit children who are at least six years old to participate in age-appropriate Special Olympics training programs. Such children may be recognized for their participation through certificates of participation, or through other types of recognition approved by SOI. However, no child may participate in a Special Olympics competition (or be awarded medals or ribbons associated with competition) before his or her eighth birthday.

DEGREE OF DISABILITY

Participation in Special Olympics training and competition is open to all persons with intellectual disabilities who meet the age requirements regardless of the level or degree of that person's disability, and whether or not that person also has other intellectual or physical disabilities.

IDENTIFYING PERSONS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

A person is considered to have an intellectual disability, to determine his or her eligibility to participate in Special Olympics, if that person satisfies any one of the following requirements:

- 1) The person has been identified by an agency or professional as having an intellectual disability determined by their localities; OR
- 2) The person has a cognitive delay, as determined by standardized measures such as intelligence quotient or "IQ" testing or other measures that are generally accepted within the professional community in that Accredited Program's nation 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 general learning (such as IQ) and 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 for participation in Unified Sports which are outlined in the SOI Sports Rules.

PARTICIPATION BY PERSONS WHO ARE BLOOD-BORNE CONTAGIOUS DISEASE CARRIERS

No Accredited Program or GOC may exclude or isolate from participation in any Special Olympics training or competition any athlete who is known to be a carrier of a blood-borne contagious infection or virus, or otherwise discriminate against such athletes solely because of that medical condition. Given the risk that one or more Special Olympics athletes may have a blood-borne contagious infection or virus, in conducting Special Olympics training and competition events, Accredited Programs and GOC shall follow so-called "Universal Precautions, " or "Universal Blood and Body Fluid Precautions" for every exposure to any person's blood, saliva or other bodily fluid.

Athlete Code of Conduct

Local Programs: It is at your discretion if you wish for your athletes to sign the contract below

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 people.
- 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 competition division.

Responsibility for My Actions

- I will not make inappropriate or unwanted physical, verbal, or sexual advances on others.
- I will not smoke in non-smoking areas.
- I will not drink alcohol or use illegal drugs at Special Olympics events.
- I will not take drugs to improving my performance.
- I will obey all laws and Special Olympics rules, as well as the International Federation and National Federation/Governing Body rules for my sport(s).

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.

Athlete Name

Date

Breaching the Athlete Code of Conduct

You, as a Special Olympics athlete or unified partner, are a direct reflection of the philosophy of Special Olympics. You are representing your team, your school, your community, and Special Olympics South Dakota. If you should breach your Athlete Code of Conduct, you could be subject to disciplinary action.

Suspension

If the Code of Conduct is breached, an athlete can be suspended from participation in Special Olympics by either their Delegation or the State Program. The suspension documentation should include:

1. Description of the incident
2. Description of the disciplinary action (including length of disciplinary action)
3. Description of the reinstatement rules (if applicable)

Reinstatement

When the terms of the suspension have been met, the Athlete can request a reinstatement review by submitting a written request to either their Delegation leadership or the State Program. This should be the same entity that authored the suspension.

Suspension Review

Results of the Suspension Review could range from the suspension being lifted, modifications to the suspension, or continuing the suspension as originally written. These results are expected to be communicated in a timely manner. Disciplinary actions will be handed down on a case-by-case basis.

Registering Athletes

To properly prepare for the competition, a minimum of eight weeks of organized training is required.

BEFORE training begins, it is the athlete/agency/school representative's responsibility to ensure the following forms have been correctly completed and on file with the local program and the State Office.

- 1. FORM A: US Athlete Registration Form** This form must be updated annually. A copy should be on file with the local delegation as well as the State Office.
- 2. FORM C: Community Reinvestment Act** Completion of this form is optional.

Note: In the case of a medical emergency, It is imperative Coaches/Chaperones have these forms/information readily available.

All forms can be found under the “Competition” tab on our website:

www.sosd.org

CLASS A & B VOLUNTEER INFORMATION & COACHES EDUCATION



Class A & Class B Volunteer General Information

GENERAL STATEMENT

A person's participation in Special Olympics, as a volunteer, athlete, coach, chaperone, etc. is an opportunity and privilege; it is not an entitlement. Special Olympics has the right and responsibility to protect the well-being and safety of all participants, as well as the right and responsibility to make decisions that are beneficial to the organization in general.

Class A Volunteers are those who have regular, close physical contact with athletes; are in a position of authority or supervision of athletes; are in a position of trust of athletes; and/or handle substantial amounts of cash or other assets of athletes. Examples include: Coaches, Chaperones and Unified Partners.

Class A Volunteers are required to complete Form A: Class A Volunteer & Unified Partner Registration.

Note: This form must be completed by all new Volunteers and Unified Partners in advance of their initial event. Thereafter, it must be re-submitted every 3 years.

For those 18 years and older, the information submitted will be used to complete a criminal records check, and where applicable, a motor vehicle records check. Criminal records checks will be completed at no cost to our volunteers and will help ensure the safety of our athletes.

As a part of this registration process, Volunteers will also complete Protective Behaviors Training.

CLASS A VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES

- The maximum Coach/Chaperone: Athlete ratio shall be no more than 1:1. For example, if you have 20 athletes you cannot register more than 20 Coaches/Chaperones. This limitation will not apply to the sport of Equestrian.
- The minimum Coach/Chaperone: Athlete ratio shall be no less than 1:4, i.e., If you have 12 athletes you should have no fewer than three Coaches/Chaperones registered.
- Registered Class A Coaches/Chaperones must be at least 16 years old. No Coach/Chaperone under the age of 18 should be solely responsible for the supervision of athletes at any time.
- The minimum age requirement for Unified Partners is 8 years.

Class B Volunteers (Day of Event Volunteers) are those who have limited contact with athletes or who have contact with athletes only when accompanied by coaches and chaperones. Examples of Class B volunteers include timers, medical personnel, and officials. Class B volunteers must either bring a completed Class B Volunteer Registration (Form F1 - F2) to the event or complete the form upon your arrival.

For a copy of the volunteer screening policy in its entirety, please contact the State Office.

All forms can be found under the "Competition" tab on our website:

www.sosd.org

Coach Code of Conduct

Local Programs: It is at your discretion if you wish for your coaches to sign the contract below.

Special Olympics is committed to the highest ideals of sport and expects all coaches to honor sport and Special Olympics. All Special Olympics coaches are expected to observe the following code:

Respect for Others

- I will respect the rights, dignity, and worth of athletes, coaches, other volunteers, friends, and spectators in Special Olympics.
- I will treat everyone equally regardless of sex, ethnic origin, religion, or ability.
- I will be a positive role model for the athletes I coach.

Ensure a Positive Experience

- I will ensure that for each athlete I coach, the time spent with Special Olympics is a positive experience.
- I will respect the talent, developmental stage, and goals of each athlete.
- I will be fair, considerate, and honest with athletes and communicate with athletes using simple, clear language.
- I will ensure that accurate scores are provided for the entry of an athlete into any event.
- I will ensure each athlete competes in events that challenge that athlete's potential and are appropriate to that athlete's ability.
- I will instruct each athlete to perform to the best of the athlete's ability at all preliminary competitions and finals competitions in accordance with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules.

Act Professionally and Take Responsibility for My Actions

- My language, manner, punctuality, preparation, and presentation will demonstrate high standards.
- I will display control, respect, dignity, and professionalism to all involved in the sport (athletes, coaches, opponents, officials, administrators, parents, spectators, media, etc.).
- I will encourage athletes to demonstrate the same qualities.
- I will not drink alcohol, smoke or take illegal drugs while representing Special Olympics at training sessions or during competition.
- I will refrain from any form of personal abuse towards athletes and others, including verbal, physical, and emotional abuse.
- I will be alert to any form of abuse from other sources directed toward athletes in my care.

Quality Service to the Athletes

- I will seek continual improvement through performance evaluation and ongoing coach education.
- I will be knowledgeable about the Sports Rules and skills of the sport(s) I coach.
- I will provide a planned training program.

- I will keep copies of the medical, training and competition records for each athlete I coach.
- I will follow the Special Olympics, International Federation, and National Federation/Governing Body rules for my sport(s).

Health and Safety of Athletes

- I will ensure that the equipment and facilities are safe to use.
- I will ensure that the equipment, rules, training, and environment are appropriate for the age and ability of the athletes.
- I will review each athlete's medical form and be aware of any limitations on that athlete's participation noted on that form.
- I will encourage athletes to seek medical advice when required.
- I will maintain the same interest and support toward sick and injured athletes.
- I will allow further participation in training and competition only when appropriate.

I understand that if I violate this Code of Conduct I will be subject to a range of consequences, up to and including being prohibited from coaching in Special Olympics.

Coaches Name

Date

Breaching the Coach Code of Conduct

You, as a Special Olympics coach or volunteer, are a direct reflection of the philosophy of Special Olympics. Your behavior needs to serve as a positive example that exemplifies fair play and sportsmanship. A successful coach/volunteer is one who has succeeded in tempering his/her competitive urges and desire for success to assure his/her athletes receive the most benefit from a positive competitive experience.

You are representing your team, your school, your cheering section, your community, and Special Olympics South Dakota. Please keep this in mind when coaching or working with Special Olympics teams or at events.

Should the behavior and/or attitude of any coach, school/facility, or volunteer be contrary to these principles or the goals and philosophies of Special Olympics South Dakota; one or more of the following steps may be taken by Special Olympics South Dakota to alleviate the situation without further affecting our Special Olympics Athletes:

1. The coach or volunteer may be notified of the undesirable behavior and requested to remedy the situation for continued participation.
2. The coach or volunteer may be requested to withdraw personally, or as an organization from the remainder of the event or tournament.

In the event of extreme or repeated behavior contrary to the best interest of Special Olympics Athletes and Special Olympics; Special Olympics South Dakota may:

1. Prevent the coach, organization, or volunteer from participating in any or all Special Olympics events for a specified period of time.
2. Prevent the coach, organization, or volunteer from participating in Special Olympics South Dakota events indefinitely.

Specific complaints against a coach, school/facility, or volunteer must be filed with the State Office in writing within two weeks of the occurrence. Such a written complaint will be signed by the head of the filing organization and site-specific behaviors. Appropriate action will be taken if warranted.

Athlete Protective Behaviors

The following information will be covered in Volunteer and Unified Partner initial registration and every 3 years thereafter.

PROTECTING SPECIAL OLYMPICS ATHLETES

To achieve the mission of Special Olympics, those responsible for supervising Special Olympics athletes in both training and competition must take positive steps to protect athletes as well as other participants.

Below are suggestions for strategies to protect athletes when participating in Special Olympics activities. These procedures are founded in common sense. You will also note that in most respects they reflect the same precautions that would need to be taken to protect any group of vulnerable individuals irrespective of whether they have intellectual disabilities.

Q. If I suspect that an athlete is a victim of abuse or maltreatment, what should I do?

- A. If you have reason to suspect that a Special Olympics athlete is a victim of maltreatment, you should report your suspicions and the reasons for them to the appropriate protective services agency. If the circumstances permit, seek assistance from Special Olympics staff members. When unable to contact a Special Olympics staff member, do not delay your report. Call either child protective services (for athletes younger than 18) or adult protective services (athletes 18 years old and older) or the police department in the jurisdiction in which the suspected abuse occurred.

Nearly all states have laws that require some individuals to report suspected abuse. Usually these include teachers, physicians, counselors, and other individuals who, due to their professions, have contact with individuals who are vulnerable to abuse. If you are a mandated reporter, you have a legal responsibility to report any abuse you suspect – including any that you reasonably believe involved a Special Olympics athlete. In some states all individuals are required by law to report suspected abuse. Each Special Olympics Program should determine what requirements are imposed by law in its jurisdiction and should inform its staff and volunteers accordingly. If you have not been provided with this information, ask your Special Olympics Program.

In addition, you should contact the President/CEO of your Special Olympics Program and inform him or her of the incident and what actions you have taken to report it. Special Olympics needs to be able to mobilize its resources to assist victims of abuse that occur in conjunction with any of its activities.

Q. What if I believe that an athlete abused another athlete?

- A. Technically, assuming the athlete is not responsible for the care of a fellow athlete, the actions would not be considered abuse. They may, however, be criminal. Criminal acts such as assault, battery, sexual assault, rape, and extortion may occur. Acts of violence such as assault and rape should be reported to a law enforcement agency. Special Olympics does not condone violent criminal behavior in Special Olympics and requires that the safety of athletes take top priority. Lesser forms of misconduct should be examined based on the functional level of the individuals and the ability to prevent future incidents from occurring. For guidance in identifying appropriate intervention, contact the President/CEO of your Special Olympics Program.

Q. What should I do if I encounter consensual sexual behavior between athletes?

- A. Some Special Olympics athletes may develop sexual feelings that they will 1) act on, 2) want to act on, 3) be confused by or 4) be told by a caregiver are wrong feelings to have. This is a very difficult subject for many to assess and there are no simple answers. There is a need to balance the requirement to protect vulnerable athletes from exploitation with a desire to respect the privacy rights of the individuals involved, especially if those involved are both adults. Based on your knowledge of the individuals, you will need to determine if both parties are capable of understanding the consequences of their actions.

Both chronological ages and functional levels are relevant considerations.

One factor to consider is whether the athletes are under the supervision of caregivers or are living independently. When one or both athletes are under the care of parents or guardians, the caregivers may have a need – and perhaps a legal right – to be informed of the sexual activities of their athletes. Facilitating a meeting with the caregivers and the athletes should be considered and discussed with Special Olympics staff. It is not the volunteer’s responsibility to initiate such a meeting.

The fact that athletes have engaged in sexual behavior may come to your attention due to the consequences of the behavior (pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, or disclosure by a rejected lover). You should contact the President/CEO of your Special Olympics Program for assistance in responding appropriately.

Q. What should I do if an athlete has questions about sex and sexuality?

A. While these questions are natural and understandable, Special Olympics volunteers and staff are not qualified to provide sex education. The best place for an athlete to get information is from parents, guardians or caregivers. You should refer athletes to these sources of information first. If the athlete is not able to discuss these topics with family members or other caregivers, or the families or caregivers have questions, you can refer them to: The Arc at 301-565-3842, or if the athlete or family members have questions regarding homosexuality, to PFLAG at 202-467-8180.

Q. If an athlete confides in a volunteer and reports that there has been some sexual activity between athletes, but that it was consensual, should the volunteer immediately tell a staff person?

A. In order to ensure the protection of vulnerable athletes, all reports of sexual activity should be reported to your Program’s President/CEO or to a designated Special Olympics staff member. It is best to inform the athlete(s) that you will be disclosing this information because Special Olympics policies require you to notify Special Olympics officials. In this way, the activity can be evaluated as to whether it was abusive and intervention (if necessary) can take place. Staff need to document both the report and their subsequent actions and determinations.

Q. What is abuse?

A. There are slight variations in each state’s definition of abuse. Abuse or maltreatment is generally defined as the non-accidental injury of a person caused by someone responsible for his or her care. Abuse may be classified as physical, emotional, or sexual. Related to abuse is another form of maltreatment – neglect – the failure of a caregiver to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care or other necessities.

Q. How can I tell if an athlete has been abused or maltreated?

A. In addition to statements by the athlete, there may be physical or behavioral indicators of abuse. Physical indicators include questionable injuries such as bruises or lacerations in the soft tissue areas of an athlete’s body. Bruises change color during the healing process and bruises of different colors indicate different stages of healing, thereby indicating that the injuries happened on more than one occasion. Injuries to genital areas may indicate sexual abuse; for example, cigarette burns on the inside of the upper leg or on the buttocks. Tether marks or rope burns and abrasions caused by tying wrists, ankles or the neck are also indicators of probable abuse.

Some athletes are prone to injuries as a consequence of athletic competition, and the location of the injury may indicate whether the injury was due to abuse or competition. Injuries that happen due to athletic competition are most likely to be on the shins, knees, elbows, etc. They are less likely to be on the abdomen, across the back, on the backs of the legs, or on facial cheeks. If you notice that an athlete has been injured, ask how the injury happened. Could the incident described by the athlete

have resulted in the injury you observed?

Possible signs of neglect include unattended medical needs, inappropriate clothing for the climate and weather conditions, chronic hunger, and poor personal hygiene.

Since bodily injuries are likely to be temporary, if present at all, behavior may offer the only visible clue that an athlete is the victim of maltreatment. Individuals under stress often reflect that stress in their behavior. Maltreatment causes stress and victims of maltreatment often exhibit stress related behavior: depression, withdrawal, thoughts of or attempts at suicide, aggression, immature acts, and sleep disturbances. Uncharacteristic changes in behavior that last for more than a few days indicate a possible need for intervention but are not a certain indicator of abuse as there are other causes of stress. The absence of behavioral indicators does not indicate a lack of abuse. Individuals cope differently and some athletes will internalize abuse and display no outward signs.

Q. What if I am wrong when I make an accusation of abuse?

A. When you report suspected abuse, you are not making an accusation. You are requesting an investigation to determine if the athlete in question is being victimized. The report that you make is only one part of the investigation that will determine if abuse occurred and, if so, who the abuser is. The laws in every state protect individuals who make a good faith report from liability if the report cannot be substantiated. It is always a good idea to limit those whom you voice your suspicions to, such as the protective services or law enforcement officials and to Special Olympics staff.

Q. If I am right, will I have to testify?

A. It is unlikely that you will need to testify, because most cases do not result in a trial; however, there is no clear answer, as each case depends on the specific circumstances. If the case is prosecuted in criminal court, and many are not, the prosecutor will determine if your testimony would be helpful at trial. Often criminal court can be avoided as the abusers agree to participate in social service programs that are helpful for preventing further abuse. Even if a case is prosecuted, most criminal cases are settled without a trial. While presenting testimony in court may be an unpleasant prospect for you, the future safety of an athlete could be at stake and that must be every Special Olympics volunteers' and staff member's highest priority.

Q. How should I respond if an athlete comes to me and discloses abuse?

A. An athlete who discloses abuse to you is seeking your help. Your response to his or her disclosure can help to minimize harm to the athlete or make it worse. Self-control is an important asset when confronting a disclosure of abuse. The following represent guidelines for responding appropriately to such disclosure:

- Don't panic or overreact to the information disclosed by the athlete.
- Don't criticize the athlete or claim that the athlete misunderstood what happened.
- Do respect the athlete's privacy and take the athlete to a place where the two of you can talk without interruptions or distractions but stay in a place where you can be seen, not heard, by others.
- Do reassure the athlete that he or she is not to blame for what happened. Tell the athlete that you appreciate being told about the incident and will help to make sure that it won't happen again.
- Do encourage the athlete to tell the proper authorities what happened. You should also tell the

athlete that you are required to report the disclosure to the proper authorities and Special Olympics staff and that you cannot keep it secret but will only tell the people who need to know.

- Do consult a physician or other child abuse authority about the need for medical care or counseling for the athlete.
- Do contact your local Special Olympics Program if the incident occurred at a Special Olympics event.

Q. What should I do if I believe that an athlete is lying about being abused?

- A. It is not up to you to determine if a disclosure of abuse is factual or not. You should file a report with the appropriate agency. When you file a report, you may tell them of your concerns about the truthfulness of the disclosure, but their investigation will determine if there are sufficient grounds to proceed. The athlete should be given the benefit of the doubt until the investigating agency determines otherwise.

The following guidelines have been adopted by Special Olympics to prevent the maltreatment of athletes:

- Special Olympics staff and volunteers should not use corporal punishment including spanking, hitting, slapping, or other forms of physical discipline. Any discipline techniques used should be constructive and positive.
- When helping athletes with bathing or showering, volunteers and staff should check the temperature of the water to ensure that it is not too hot.
- Coaches and volunteers should not withhold water or food from athletes as a form of punishment. Water should be available for athletes during strenuous practice sessions and during competitions to avoid dehydration.
- Only medications that have been prescribed by an athlete's physician should be dispensed to that athlete, and then only as indicated on his or her consent form signed by either a parent or legal custodian.
- At no time should coaches or other volunteers use profanity or otherwise curse at athletes for their performance or behavior during competitions or practices. Special Olympics athletes are not to be threatened or intimidated for any purpose including attempts at improving athletic performance or for controlling behavior.
- Special Olympics staff and volunteers will treat all athletes with courtesy and respect. It is not in keeping with the purposes of Special Olympics to use denigrating and demeaning nicknames for athletes or to permit their use by others.
- There should be at least two volunteers or staff members present to supervise activities such as changing into team uniforms, showering, and toileting. This measure also serves to discourage unfounded allegations of abuse against volunteers and staff.
- When it is necessary for a staff member or volunteer to speak privately to an athlete, they should find a place out of earshot, but within sight of others for their conference.

- Hugs between Special Olympics athletes and volunteers should be open (not secretive) and respect the limits set by the athlete. Staff members and volunteers should respect any resistance by the athlete to physical contact.
- Special Olympics staff members and volunteers should avoid touching areas normally covered by swimming suits: breasts, buttocks and groin. Kissing on the lips and seductive massaging is not permitted (massaging pursuant of an injury or strain is permitted but should be subject to observation by others).
- If an athlete attempts to initiate inappropriate physical contact with a volunteer or staff member, the volunteer or staff member should identify the objectionable behavior, explaining that it makes the volunteer feel uncomfortable and suggest a more appropriate ways to communicate feeling such as “high fives” or handshakes.
- When Special Olympics events require athletes to stay overnight, please refer to the Athlete Housing Policy (found in Section 5 of the Competition Guide)

Coaches Education

All SOSD coaches must be Level 1 certified and all Head Coaches and HODs (Heads of Delegation) must be Level 2 certified. Recertification must be completed every three years.

All forms can be found under the “Competition” tab on our website: www.sosd.org

Coaches Education Training Requirements

All SOSD coaches must be Level 1 certified and all Head Coaches & HODs must be Level 2 certified. Your coach’s education is good for 3 years and can be recertified at any time. The directions on how to become certified and recertified at different levels are listed below.

All correspondence regarding Coach's Education, course requests, and certificate remittance should be directed to coachesed@sosd.org

Steps to Becoming a Certified Coach

Step 1: Obtain Class A Volunteer Status

Class A Volunteers are required to complete on-line registration through a link provided by the delegation’s HOD or designate.

Note: This form must be completed by all new Volunteers and Unified Partners in advance of their initial event. Thereafter, it must be re-submitted every 3 years.

For those 18 years and older, the information submitted will be used to complete a criminal records check, and where applicable, a motor vehicle records check. Criminal records checks will be completed at no cost to our volunteers and will help ensure the safety of our athletes.

As a part of this registration process, Volunteers will also complete Protective Behaviors Training.

Step 2: Complete Level 1 Certification

- Required Courses: All available on [SO Learning Portal](#)
 - **Fitness for the Sport Coach**
 - Complete the course and email the certificate to coacheded@sosd.org.
 - **Heads Up Concussions in Youth Sports**
 - Complete the course and email the certificate to coacheded@sosd.org.
 - **Special Olympics Unified Sports Coaching** (applicable for unified coaches)
 - Complete the course and email the certificate to coacheded@sosd.org.

Step 3: Complete Level 2 Certification – Required of all Head Coaches and HODs

- Required Course:
 - **Principles of Coaching Special Olympics**
 - Complete at [CoachTube](#) and email the certificate to coaches@sosd.org.
- Practicum Hours:
 - 10 hours with a certified head coach (new coaches only).
 - Exemptions: HODs and experienced coaches (case-by-case).

Step 4: Advanced Certification Levels & Recertification

- Recertify by taking one of the classes required of Level 1 & 2 that you have not previously completed or progress on to the next level.
- Progress to the next level by completing requirements for Levels 3 or 4.

Level 3: Sport-Specific Course or In-Person Trainings

- In-person courses (see SOSD Website or email coacheded@sosd.org).
- Online courses available on [NFHS Learning Center](#).
- Email certificates, applications, or questions to coacheded@sosd.org.

Level 4 & Beyond

- Please contact coacheded@sosd.org for individual guidance.

Key Contacts and Links

- **Email for submissions & questions:** coacheded@sosd.org
- **Online Course Portal:**
 - [SO Learning Portal](#)
 - [CoachTube](#)
 - [NFHS Learning Center](#)

GENERAL POLICIES & FORMS EXPLAINED



General Policies

15 PASSENGER VAN USE POLICY

In 2001 and 2002, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration issued two consumer advisory reports regarding the safety risks associated with operating 15-passenger vans following several serious rollover accidents.

After considering this information, the U.S. Risk Management Insurance Task Force (RMITF) mandated that all U.S. Programs discontinue the use of 15-passenger vans to transport athletes, volunteers, and employees effective December 31, 2003. This policy does not apply to the use of 15-passenger vans by other organizations that transport Special Olympics athletes to Special Olympics activities if those other organizations meet the following conditions: (i) operate the vans using the precautions recommended by NHTSA; (ii) understand that the Special Olympics Program is not responsible for any injuries sustained to the driver or passengers if an accident occurs; and (iii) it is clear that the driver is acting on behalf of the third party and not in the capacity of Special Olympics volunteer or staff.

Agencies should not plan on the use of 15-passenger vans for any future events and be aware that any 15-passenger vans that are used will not be covered by Special Olympics insurance.

INTERPRETERS FOR ATHLETES

If an athlete needs an interpreter, their delegation is responsible for providing this service for all events, including their practices, Area Games and State Games. Please contact the President/CEO at Special Olympics South Dakota if further clarification is desired.

ATHLETE HOUSING POLICY

- 1) **Gender** – Athletes and volunteers may not share a room with an athlete or volunteer of the opposite sex. The following exceptions are allowable:
 - a. Married athletes who are both attending the event as members of a registered delegation. This exception does not apply to the spouse of an athlete who is not participating in the event but attending solely as a spectator.
 - b. Married volunteers who are both attending the event as members of a registered delegation. This exception does not apply if one of the volunteers is required to share a room with an athlete (other than the married couple's child), if this scenario will create a situation whereby an athlete is housed with a volunteer of the opposite sex.
 - c. Family members of the opposite sex who serve as a one-to-one chaperone for the related athlete.
 - d. Housing in a facility that has multiple private rooms in addition to living space (such as a condominium or dormitory). Both males and females may be assigned to one condominium, if necessary, but private rooms may not be shared by individuals of the opposite sex. Chaperones must also be housed in the condominium and the chaperone/athlete ratio (as outlined in the supervision section of the policy) must be maintained.
 - e. Use of barracks or other facilities (such as a gym) where a large number of individuals are assigned to one room. Athletes and volunteers must be separated as much as possible by gender (for example, females on one side of the gym and males on the other side).
- 2) **Supervision** – The chaperone/athlete ratio of at least one properly registered chaperone to every four athletes must be maintained during overnight events. Proper supervision can be maintained without always having a chaperone present in the room. All chaperones must be screened in accordance with the Special Olympics U.S. Volunteer Screening Policy.
- 3) **Young Athletes** – Young Athletes events that involve overnight activities require increased supervision and therefore, Young Athletes participants must be accompanied by a properly registered and screened parent, guardian or an individual designated by a parent or guardian at all overnight activities. Rooming assignments for Young Athletes should be separate from the remainder of the delegation, whenever possible (for example, separate hotel rooms).
- 4) **Acknowledgment** – Parents/guardians/athletes must complete and sign the US Athlete Registration Form acknowledging the possibility for overnight activities. Additional information about the rooming assignments or the Program's housing policy should be directed to SOSD.
- 5) **Policy Implementation** – The Head of Delegation (HOD) is required to read, understand, and implement this policy. The HOD is required to verify this by signing Form C: Certificate of Training / Acknowledgment of Policies document before attending each State event.

BEST PRACTICES.

- 1) **Rooming Assignments** – If athletes will be sharing a room, following is a list of items to consider when making room assignments:

- a. Consider matching athletes based on size, level of maturity, ability and age.
- b. Assign connecting rooms to those athletes who require additional assistance or supervision if the chaperone will not be in the same room.

2) **Sleeping Arrangements** – Whenever possible, each member of the delegation should be assigned his/her own bed. If bed sharing is required, an athlete may not share a bed with a chaperone unless the chaperone is a parent or sibling of the athlete and has been screened in compliance with the Special Olympics U.S. Volunteer Screening Policy. The following techniques should be considered to help reduce the number of athletes required to share beds:

- a. Request cots from the facility to increase the number of beds available.
- b. Use air mattresses to increase the number of beds available (check with facility to ensure there is not a policy against the use of air mattresses).

If bed sharing is required, Programs may consider having athletes pack sleeping bags and require athletes to sleep in his/her sleeping bag on top of the linens that are provided.

3) **Supervision** – The following includes suggestions for providing athlete housing supervision:

- a. **Hotels** – Whenever possible, reserve connecting rooms so that chaperones have direct access to the athletes' room(s). If connecting rooms are not available and the chaperone is in a room separate from the athletes for which he/she is responsible:
 - i. Ensure that the chaperone has a key to the athletes' room(s)
 - ii. Ensure that the athletes know how to reach the chaperone at all times
 - iii. Consider using hall monitors
- b. Condo/Dorm (or other facility with multiple private rooms) – Whenever possible, leave the doors to private rooms open so that chaperones can monitor each room.
- c. Barracks (or other facility with a large number of beds in one room) – Whenever possible, chaperones should be assigned to a location in close proximity to the athletes he/she is supervising.

4) **Family Members** – Family members are prohibited from staying in athlete housing unless the family member is an official member of the registered delegation and is screened in compliance with the Special Olympics U.S. Volunteer Screening Policy.

ATHLETE HOUSING POLICY/GUIDELINES CHECKLIST

Following is a checklist that can be used by individuals responsible for making the housing arrangements for overnight events. The checklist is a tool to help ensure compliance with SOSD's written housing policy.

GENDER Are individuals separated by gender? Yes No

-If no, one of the following must apply. Check the box or boxes representing the permissible exceptions that apply:

- Athlete is sharing a room with a family member who is serving as a one-to-one chaperone for the related athlete (note: housing accommodations for these individuals must be separate from the standard athlete housing arrangements)
- Facility has multiple private rooms (condominium or dormitory) and the procedures as outlined in the U.S. Program's housing policy are being followed
- Housing involves barracks or other facility where a large number of individuals are assigned to one room (note: individuals should be separated by gender to the extent possible)

SUPERVISION Housing plan ensures chaperone/athlete ratio of at least one properly registered chaperone to every four athletes is maintained? Yes No

-If no, housing plan must be revised accordingly

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT Parents/guardians have acknowledged they are aware that Special Olympics activities may involve overnight housing accommodations and have been told how to obtain additional information?

Yes No

-This is a part of release section on Form A (Application for Participation)

INSURANCE INFORMATION

Special Olympics, Inc., and all Special Olympics Accredited U.S. Programs are covered by a common insurance policy administered by American Specialty Insurance & Risk Services, Inc. (“American Specialty”).

COMMERCIAL GENERAL LIABILITY

Description of Coverage: The general liability coverage protects insured Special Olympics organizations, athletes and registered volunteers from third-party claims of bodily injury, property damage, and personal and advertising injury due to alleged negligence arising from the conduct of a Special Olympics activity by Special Olympics. Under the policy, the insurer has a “duty to defend” until such time as legal liability has been established, and therefore, defense costs associated with the aforementioned general liability claims are paid regardless of legal liability.

In addition, the general liability policy has been endorsed to provide coverage for losses resulting from damage to property in the care, custody, or control of Special Olympics, excluding watercraft, aircraft, autos, and Special Olympics owned property. The loss must occur during a Special Olympics conducted/sponsored event and Special Olympics must be found legally liable for the loss. The limit of liability is \$100,000 subject to a \$2,500 deductible per claim for such property losses.

PARTICIPANT ACCIDENT MEDICAL POLICY

Description of Coverage: This policy responds when injuries resulting from an accident occur during a Covered Event or during Covered Travel. This is an accident medical policy, not a sickness or illness medical policy. For example, it may cover the medical expenses caused by a broken leg, but not those caused by appendicitis. An accident must occur in order for coverage to apply.

The accident medical insurance policy is excess of any other valid and collectible insurance or medical plan applicable to the injured participant.

Injuries are defined as accidental bodily injuries received while insured under this coverage and resulting independently of sickness and all other causes. A covered loss, for purposes of this insurance, will include: a) the repair or replacement of existing prosthetic devices such as artificial limbs, glass eyes, and artificial dental work; and b) bodily injuries arising as a result of a seizure (including epileptic seizures). To be covered, the injury must occur while:

- (a) participating in activities sponsored and supervised by Special Olympics; or
- (b) traveling to, during, or after such activities as a member of a group in transportation furnished or arranged by Special Olympics.

Covered Event is defined as any scheduled activity authorized, organized, and supervised by Special Olympics. With respect to competition activities, this includes pre-competition activities and practice sessions. Covered Event also includes activities authorized by Special Olympics that are Directly Supervised by Registered Class A Volunteers, but only when participation is part of the Special Olympics athlete’s overall sports training for Special Olympics, or for the purpose of qualifying for Special Olympics competition.

1. Directly Supervised is defined as supervised in person by a Registered Class A Volunteer.
2. Registered Class A Volunteer is defined as an individual currently registered in accordance with the Official Special Olympics General Rules or other Special Olympics policies in effect during the policy period.
3. Covered Travel is defined as travel that is traveling to, during, or after such activities as a member of a group in transportation furnished or arranged by Special Olympics.
4. Insured Persons are defined as United States Special Olympics athletes, unified partners, managers, coaches, officials, chaperones, supervisors, fundraising participants, and other volunteers, whose names are on file with Special Olympics, while participating in a Covered Event.

5. STEPS TO FOLLOW IN THE CASE OF AN ACCIDENT / INCIDENT

- 1) As soon as possible, contact your HOD. 2) In conjunction with your HOD, complete FORM I - First Report of Accident / Incident. Submit completed form to the State Office.
6. A "Certificate of Insurance" form can be provided by the state office if requested by your practice and/or event facility administrator.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Today, social media encompasses a broad sweep of online activity, and social media can be a valuable tool for local organizations to advance our mission and attract new constituents. We are also aware that there are basic risks involved in online content in that it is immediate, easily viewed and shared by many people at the same time, and all online activities are trackable and traceable.

Social networking sites include, but are not limited to: Facebook, X, Instagram, and TikTok.

Here are the guidelines we will follow regarding the creation of social network pages representing Special Olympics South Dakota (SOSD) and any of its local programs. All local websites must also adhere to the following guidelines, where applicable:

1. Each local program's head of delegation should designate one approved volunteer to oversee the creation and maintenance of their social network site. That person may enlist the services of another approved volunteer to aid with the maintenance of the site but will be responsible for all posts and content.
2. Any images used on the site must be supported by approval from the subject(s) featured in the photograph. Any requests to remove images from the subject(s) must be met promptly. By default, athletes' parents/guardians have given permission to use their athlete's image when they sign the US Registration Form; however, requests to NOT use a particular athlete's photo should ALWAYS be honored.
3. All Special Olympics language guidelines should always be followed.
4. All Special Olympics graphic standards must be met when placing logos on the pages. Contact the State office if you have questions regarding graphic guidelines.
5. No profanity shall be allowed on any Special Olympics South Dakota pages
6. For Facebook, the settings should be set up so that others are invited to "Like" a page, not be added as "Friends".
7. The page should be updated at a minimum of once a week.
8. Any questions regarding content or posts should be cleared through the SOSD State Office BEFORE being posted to the site.
9. All content should be spell-checked and edited for proper grammar BEFORE being posted. Any errors should be corrected immediately.
10. Respect the privacy of SOSD staff, volunteers, members, and program participants. No private information should be posted to the site for any reason.
11. Comments on the site should be restricted to matters related to Special Olympics, such as reminders about upcoming events or registration dates, announcements about new programs, congratulations of athletes on their performances, etc. Personal commentaries, political discussions or non-Special Olympics matters should be avoided. Any questions regarding the nature or content of a post should be avoided. Any questions regarding the nature of content of a post should be directed to the SOSD State Office for approval BEFORE being posted.

12. It is entirely appropriate to thank businesses who support our cause and our organization, but we should be careful that sites set up to promote Special Olympics programs don't become overly commercial enterprises. If a business that supports your local program has its own social media site it is also appropriate and allowable to link to, friend, Like or follow their page.
13. Local Program personnel **SHOULD NOT** create Event pages, Fan Pages, Web sites, etc. for **STATE LEVEL** competitive or fundraising events. Do not respond to a negative comment, post, or email without prior approval from the SOSD State Office.
14. Posts may not include discussions of the use of alcohol and drugs, sexual behavior or bullying.
15. Posts may not contain comments that are derogatory with respect to race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, color or disability. Sexually suggestive, humiliating, or demeaning comments are not permitted.
16. Any media requests generated from posts on the site should be directed to the SOSD State Office.
17. All Special Olympics South Dakota local program sites or pages must link to the Special Olympics South Dakota pages and are subject to review by the SOSD State Office.
18. SOSD local programs are not allowed to use social media pages or program web sites for local program fundraising. This violates other organization contracts.

Local programs that do not follow these guidelines will be asked to comply. Continued non-compliance will result in the local program being asked to discontinue their accounts

SERVICE ANIMAL POLICY

Special Olympics South Dakota (SOSD) has outlined a policy as it pertains to service animals to ensure that all participants understand the rules as they pertain to service animals at SOSD events and the actions that may be taken in the event those rules are violated.¹

A “service animal” is a dog (and in certain cases, a miniature horse) that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. Dogs that are not trained to perform tasks that mitigate the effects of a disability, including dogs that are used purely for emotional support, are not service animals. A person with a disability using a service animal is called a “partner.” A person without a disability with a service animal is called a “handler.” Sometimes partners and handlers work together with service animals, while other times partners work solely with service animals. A partner, or a handler, and his/her service animal are called a “team.” The two works as a cohesive unit in accomplishing the tasks of everyday living. SOSD considers the “handler” of a service animal for a Special Olympics Athlete to be considered a Class A Volunteer and therefore must pass a background check.²

Service animals are to be allowed in all areas of a facility where people are allowed unless the animal poses a direct threat, results in a fundamental alteration, is not housebroken or is not under the control of the person with the disability.

SOSD may impose some restrictions on service animals for safety reasons or if the use of the service animal would fundamentally alter its program or event. A person requesting the use of a service animal in a SOSD program or event should make the request to the SOSD State Office as soon as possible before the beginning of the season for that program or event. If an athlete requests the use of a service animal in a SOSD program or event, then the SOSD State Office, including the Sports Director and CEO, will make an individual assessment of the athlete and the use of the service animal in an event-like environment to determine if the use of the service animal in the event or program, as requested, poses a direct threat to others or changes the fundamental nature of the event or program at issue and, if it does, whether other reasonable modifications can be provided before the athlete is allowed to use the service animal in the event or program. Requested modifications that pose a direct threat to others or change the fundamental nature of the event or program are not reasonable.

Regardless of whether a service animal is being used by an athlete in a SOSD program or event, or is accompanying a person or athlete on the premises where a SOSD program or event is being conducted, the partner/handler must ensure that the animal is in a harness or on a leash or tether at all times (though exceptions may be considered individually)² and the partner/handler must ensure that the animal is under full control and behaves properly at all times.

¹ Special Olympics South Dakota understands that legal precedent exists for the proposition that sports sanctioning bodies, like SOSD, are not Title II or Title III entities that come under the auspices of the ADA or the Rehabilitation Act. By instituting policies with respect to the use of service dogs, SOSD is not conceding application of the ADA or the Rehabilitation Act to SOSD; rather, SOSD promulgates these policies in order to promote greater participation in, and access to, its events and programs while, at the same time, protecting the safety of all participants and the integrity of said events and programs by ensuring that they are not being fundamentally altered or changed.

² If, for instance, the handler is unable, because of a disability to use a harness, leash or other tether, or the use of the harness, leash, or other tether would interfere with the service animal’s safe, effective performance of work or tasks, then the service animal must otherwise be under the handler’s control by use of voice control, signals, or other effective means.

Overall, it is the partner / handler's responsibility to ensure the safety of the animal and the team. In addition, the supervision of the animal is solely the responsibility of its partner/handler. While access rights are afforded to users of service animals, with that comes responsibility of ensuring that the animal is under control, that is, behaving and

always responding appropriately in public, and that the partner/handler, as a team, adhere to the same socially acceptable standards as any individual in the community. These standards require that:

- The animal must not be allowed to sniff people, tables or containers with food, or the personal belongings of others.
- The animal must not initiate contact with someone without the handler's direct permission.
- The animal must not display any behaviors or noises that are disruptive to others such as barking, whining, or rubbing against people.
- The animal must not display aggressive behavior including barking at others, bearing of teeth, growling, or biting.
- The animal must not defecate or urinate on the premises and all local ordinances or other laws regarding cleaning up after animals that defecate are to be strictly adhered to.
- The animal must avoid personal grooming in public settings such as excessive scratching or licking its genital areas.
- The animal must not block an aisle or passageway.
- The animal must never be more than twelve inches from the handler's leg or side of the chair.
- The animal must be trained to not be attracted to food that may be present on the premises.
- The animal must meet any local licensing requirements, including maintenance of required immunizations for that type of animal and must always wear a dog license tag.

An athlete, participant, employee, spectator, or any other person at a SOSD event or program may report a concern regarding a service animal to SOSD staff.

A service animal may be excluded by SOSD staff from an event or program or from the premises in or on which an event or program takes place if SOSD staff determines that the animal's behavior poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others, the animal is not under the full control of the partner/handler, the animal's use in an event or program fundamentally alters the nature of the event or program, or the animal is not housebroken. Further, service animals that are ill may be required to be removed from the premises. Although SOSD may exclude any service animal for the above-noted reasons, it will give the person with a disability who uses the service animal the option of continuing to enjoy its event or program without having the service animal on the premises.

If a service animal is temporarily excluded from an event or program, SOSD may investigate all reported concerns or incidents involving the service animal to determine whether the service animal should be excluded from SOSD events or programs for an extended period or permanently. If it is appropriate for the service animal to be excluded permanently, SOSD will work with the partner to determine whether there is a reasonable modification that can take the place of the service animal.

Individuals with medical issues (such as respiratory diseases) who are affected by animals should contact SOSD staff if they have a concern about exposure to a service animal. The individual will be asked to provide medical documentation that identifies the disability and need for accommodation. The appropriate SOSD staff will facilitate a process to resolve the conflict that considers the needs and conditions of all persons involved.

Last updated: December, 2012

CONCUSSION AWARENESS AND SAFETY RECOGNITION POLICY

The Special Olympics U.S. Risk Management & Insurance Task Force (RMITF), with input from the Medical Advisory Committee (MAC), has created the following concussion awareness and safety recognition policy that must be implemented by all U.S. Programs.

Both the MAC and the RMITF have discussed the need for a concussion management policy to ensure the health and safety of all Special Olympics participants. Additionally, insurance requirements and state law have driven many sports organizations to implement concussion management policies. Special Olympics' insurer, Philadelphia Insurance Company, is requiring Special Olympics to have a concussion awareness and safety recognition policy in place.

The primary focus of this policy is the well-being of Special Olympics participants, and all decisions should be made in the best interest of the participants. "When in doubt, sit them out!"

Objective: Special Olympics intends to take steps to help ensure the health and safety of all Special Olympics participants. All Special Olympics participants should remember that safety comes first and should take reasonable steps to help minimize the risks for concussion or other serious brain injuries.

Defining a Concussion: A concussion is defined by the Centers for Disease Control as a type of traumatic brain injury caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head as well as serial, cumulative hits 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 and therefore proper attention must be paid to individuals suspected of sustaining a concussion.

Suspected or Confirmed Concussion: Effective September 15, 2015, a participant who is suspected of sustaining a concussion in a practice, game or competition shall 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 a concussion is suspected. If applicable, the participant's parent or guardian should be made aware that the participant is suspected of sustaining a concussion.

Return to Play: A participant who has been removed from practice, play or competition due to a suspected concussion may not participate in Special Olympics sports activities until either of the following occurs (i) at least seven (7) consecutive days have passed since the participant was removed from play and a currently licensed, qualified medical professional* provides written clearance for the participant to return to practice, play and competition or (ii) a currently licensed, qualified medical professional determines that the participant did not suffer a concussion and provides written clearance for the participant to return to practice play 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

Required Training and Timeline: All Coaches are required to complete a concussion awareness training course. Contact the State Office for further instructions. Confirmation of completed training must be provided to the State Office prior to the individual beginning volunteer duties.

Frequency of Training: Concussion awareness training must be completed by all Coaches at least once every three years.

DELEGATION FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS & ASSETS

All delegation accounts and assets are required to be included on the Special Olympics South Dakota (SOSD) financial statements, better known as centralized accounting.

Please communicate with the SOSD State office if you need to set-up a new accounts or if acquiring any new assets (ie: trailers, vehicles, building structures, etc.)

A few things to note:

- 1) All accounts require a signature card with SOSD staff only on them. The delegation funds/account will remain at your bank, and you will still be able to deposit into the account. NO withdrawals will be allowed without approval from SOSD.
- 2) All Checkbooks will be kept at the SOSD State office and check-writing procedures will occur from there continuing to use the dual signature policy.
- 3) Any payments will only be made with your delegation's approval and will be made from the SOSD Office using your account.
- 4) You will be issued a credit card for your use. All receipts must be turned in monthly for reconciliation.
NOTE: Receipts MUST be itemized
- 5) **You are required to initial the receipts and either:**
Mail them to SOSD 800 E I-90 Lane Sioux Falls SD 57104 Attn: Office Manager,
or
Scan and email them to the SOSD Office Manager.
Your email or initials will be used as approval for reimbursement from your account.
- 6) All Bank statements will be forwarded to you monthly for approval. All local delegations should reconcile their accounts for dual accountability.
- 7) If planning to use a credit card for hotels, you must obtain prior approval with our state office account manager so your card limit can be increased. Each delegation is responsible for securing your room block. SOSD might negotiate room prices on your behalf. If this happens, we will pass this information on to you. However, we will NOT make reservations on your behalf.

Questions, concerns, or comments can be directed to:

Office Manager
Special Olympics South Dakota
800 E. I-90 Lane
Sioux Falls, SD 57104 USA
Tel +1 605 331 4117 (local) +1 800 585 2114 (toll free)

OUT-OF-STATE DELEGATION PARTICIPATION

All out-of-state delegations wishing to participate in SOSD area and state events must adhere to these parameters:

- Written permission must be received from the home state prior to our registration deadline.
- Athlete medicals and approved background checks must be shared with us by the guest delegation by our registration deadline.
- Participation in an SOSD area event is required to be eligible for participation in a state event.
- SOSD Sports Management Teams will review and rule on each request for participation.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS SOUTH DAKOTA AWARD NOMINATIONS

Please show your love for Special Olympics by nominating the deserving people in your life for an **SOSD Outstanding Award!**

Spirit of a Champion (Outstanding Athlete):

<https://forms.gle/Pn4Cq4VGCGRsKpGv5>

Don Baker Award (Highest Honor):

<https://forms.gle/AtmHANeBmUc1kYz2A>

Outstanding Family:

<https://forms.gle/UbyMGPoH6PC9BpVx6>

Ron Stewart Award (Outstanding Coach):

<https://forms.gle/UA7ykhxG3Pxx97tq7>

Lyle Farrand Award (Outstanding Volunteer):

<https://forms.gle/kGacyWyHCX9Ju9yD9>

DJ Mertens Champion Award (Outstanding Business or Organization)

<https://forms.gle/bXtneEhUq2Hi3HPj9>

Unity Award

<https://forms.gle/TBNr6yTayrTVnR3s6>

Nominations will be accepted electronically only. You can also find these on our website.

These forms or processes have been explained in previous sections of the Competition Guide.

Form A: US Athlete Registration Form This form must be updated annually. A copy should be on file with the local delegation as well as the State Office.

Form C: Community Reinvestment Act Completion of this form is optional.

Form D: Class A Volunteer & Unified Partner Registration

Those who have regular, close physical contact with athletes must complete this form.

Form F1 – F2: Class B Volunteer Registration

Those who have limited contact with athletes, such as those who volunteer for events, must complete this form.

Additional Forms Explained

Form H: Life Enhancement Assistance Program

LEAP will be used to reimburse struggling or new start-up Local Programs for lodging expenses related to specific events. To receive funding from LEAP, a Local Program must be outside of a 30 mile radius of the site of the state competition. The Local Program is required to submit this LEAP Application Form with proper documentation (copies of receipts) of lodging expenses incurred related to the approved event. Participants and chaperones (at a 1 chaperone to 4 athlete ratio) will qualify for reimbursement. Upon receipt of documentation, SOSD will reimburse Local Programs at a rate of \$10 per athlete and chaperone per night. All documentation must be submitted to SOSD within 30 days of the completion of the state event.

Form I: First Report of Accident/Incident

If an athlete is injured at practice, an auto accident going to or from an event, a spectator is hit by a foul ball, etc., contact the State Office immediately. You may be instructed to complete Form I.

Form J: Law Enforcement Torch Run Athlete Application

If an athlete has a desire to participate in the LETR run across the state which takes place the week leading up to State Summer Games, Please complete and submit to our LETR staff.

Form K: Event Information / Notification Form

If you are conducting a local competition or a fundraiser, please complete this form.

Form L: Volunteer Roster

You will also find this form within each sport-specific section of the Competition Guide. This must be completed and returned with your Area and State registrations.

Form M: Certificate of Training / Acknowledgement of Policies.

You will also find this form within each sport-specific section of the Competition Guide. This form must be completed and returned with your State registrations.