



**Special
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Pennsylvania



Spring 2024

**Sport and
Competition Call**

January 25, 2024

Today's Agenda

- Pre-Season Reminders
- 2024 State Competitions
- Coach Updates
- Volunteer Updates
- Spring Sports Update
- Questions

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PRE-SEASON REMINDERS



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Athlete & Volunteer Eligibility

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Athlete Requirements: Medical on file WITH signature + expiration dates

- Athlete Medical under Certifications OR Athlete Registration Form & Health History under Certifications
- Valid for 3 years.
- Save attachments under "Attachments" within a person's profile vs. anywhere else in the profile.

Class A Volunteer Requirements: Class A Trainings + Background Check on file

- Background Results under Background Checks, Valid for 5 years.
- General Orientation under Training, Valid for life.
- Protective Behaviors, under Training, Valid for 3 years.
- Concussion Training, under Training, Valid for 3 years.

SEASONS AT A GLANCE



	SPRING	FALL	WINTER
Coach Site Registration	Nov. 1 - Dec. 1	April 1 - May 1	August 1 - Sept. 1
Athlete, Unified Partner, Volunteer Signup	Dec. 15 - Jan. 15	May 15 - June 15	Sept. 15 - Oct. 15
Season Length	March - June	August - November	December - March
Sports Offered	Athletics (Track & Field), Basketball, Equestrian, Golf, Gymnastics, Softball, Swimming, Tennis	Bocce, Bowling, Flag Football, Long Distance Running/Walking, Powerlifting, Soccer, Volleyball	Alpine Skiing, Bowling, Figure Skating, Floor Hockey, Snowboard, Snowshoe, Speed Skating

Access Sign Ups on the

- **SOPA website:**

[https://specialolympicspa.org/
get-involved/sports-sign-ups](https://specialolympicspa.org/get-involved/sports-sign-ups)

Unified Partners Eligibility

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- Unified Sports Partners do not need an athlete medical.
- All Partners – Must have a VSys database record
- Ages 16 and up – must have General Orientation and Protective Behaviors Training
- Ages 18 and up - Must have General Orientation, Protective Behaviors and a Background check.

UCS: PIAA Medical

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A Unified Champion School athlete or Unified Partner may participate in a local program with their PIAA Medical. The participant must request a copy of the medical from their school.

The PIAA physical exam must be inputted into Vsys as an "athlete medical" and the medical form must be uploaded as an attachment.

UPDATE: The PIAA physical exam form is good for one year from the Dr's Signature date. If the date is 1/25/24 the exam expires on 1/25/25.

Attendance Tracker Updates

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Age Calculator – Spring is determined as of **1/15/2024**

Eligibility Tab: Deadline for all rostered individual to be eligible is **3/29/2024**

- UPDATE: Only those Ineligible will be listed
- Athletes need Medical
- Volunteer/UPs need Background Check, Gen Orientation, Protective Behavior, Concussion Training

Sport Specific Rosters/Tabs:

- Team Sports **MUST** complete Competition tab indicating team each athlete is on or skills
- Team Rating Forms, must be completed by **March 29** if submitting age exemptions OR by registration for the first competition

Missing volunteer/athlete

- Did they complete Sport Sign-up Form?
 - If Yes and you don't see them contact RSD

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?

CONTACT YOUR REGIONAL SPORT DIRECTOR

Attendance Trackers

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Coach will receive tracker when they submit Site Registration Form

Site Attendance Tracker has 4-5 tabs: Directions, Attendance, Eligibility, Competition, Rating Form

- **Tab 1: Directions: How to complete the form**
- **Tab 2 Attendance:**
 - Lists all participants that have signed up
 - Includes phone, email, DOB and age
 - Attendance should be tracked after each practice
 - Interest in attending Sectionals & State Games will be used to advance for competitions
 - Data will be used to collect training numbers and ultimately future allocations

Attendance Trackers

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Tab 3: Eligible – NEW this will only list ineligible individuals - if participant is on this list, they cannot participate and should not be attending practice

Athletes: Must have current medical

Volunteer: General Orientation, Concussion Protocol, Protective Behaviors, 18 and over current background check

Highlighted **RED** out of date

Highlighted **YELLOW** will expire prior to state competition

Updated weekly by SOPA from February 2 – March 29

Athletes and Volunteer CANNOT participate in trainings if they have not met all eligibility requirements - it is YOUR responsibility to track this.

IMPORTANT: Spring Deadline – March 29, 2024

Tab 4: Competition – sport specific

Required for Team Sports – identifies team participation or skills for each athlete and coach

Tab 5: Rating Form Tab (Basketball/Softball)

Required to be completed by March 29 if submitting Age Exemption OR by registration date for first competition

Team Sport Age Groups

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Team Sport Age Groups

SOPA sponsored Team Sports include:

- Fall Season: soccer, flag football, volleyball;
- Winter Season: floor hockey;
- Spring Season: softball, basketball

UPDATE: Age groups for 22-40 and 40+ will be combined into one 22+ group.

[Team Sport Age Group Resource](#) outlines the guidelines.

- This document includes links to two supporting documents: [Why Age Groups are Important](#) and [Exemption Process](#).
- Please review all documents for a full understanding of the age groups and how to submit exemptions. This [video](#) will explain these documents and how to submit exemption in more detail.

If you have questions, please contact your Regional Sport Director or Michelle Boone (mboone@specialolympicspa.org).

Spring Qualifiers

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Basketball (3x3, 5v5, Individual Skills)

Golf (All levels and Individual Skills)

Tennis (All levels and Individual Skills)

Softball (Team and Individual Skills)

Must attend a sectional to qualify for Summer Games

Allocations -

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- Swimming at Eastern Spring Sectional is only sport with allocations.
- Will be posted shortly.

Air Quality

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If air quality levels are in an Unhealthy Zone (151) or above, no outdoor activities should occur (social or active); as indicated within the documents these activities should be rescheduled or moved indoors.



You can monitor Air Quality levels at <https://www.airnow.gov/> enter your location and the current status will be provided.



You can use this [Air Quality Guide](#) document as an overall reference.

Brand and Uniform Guidelines



- New Resource that include SO brand and uniform guidelines
- Includes mock-ups of sport specific uniforms

[SOPA Brand and Uniform Guidelines](#)

Everybody Plays

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Team Sports – everyone on the roster must play in each game and preliminary's

At events:

- Coaches must complete line-up cards, with numbers and names.
- Bottom of the card – those who are not playing and why
- Scorekeepers will check the players as they enter the game
- Code of Conduct will be filed on the coach if all players are not played

Honest Effort Rule (HER)

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- Remember to :
 - Accurately time your athletes
 - Check the distance of the course your participants are using to ensure it is the correct distance
 - Use a competition like setting when gathering entry times

Spring Season Rollout

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- [Spring Season Rollout - webinar recording](#)
- [East Spring calendar](#)
- [Central Spring Calendar](#)
- [West Spring Calendar](#)
- Season start date:
 - Summer Games sports must begin training by April 12 (*and complete 8 weeks of training prior to Summer Games*)
 - Indoor training counts as training! Teams that can't access outdoor facilities early in the season should plan to begin indoor training by these dates.

Athlete Performance Training

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Interested Coaches

- Learn More by visiting the [APT webpage](#)
- Participation qualifies coaches for Bronze level certification

How to sign-up

- Go to your VSys portal and complete the Athlete Performance Training under "Training Schools, Webinars and More"
- Watch the video, take the quiz and then complete the registration form

Benefits of APT

- FREE to programs/teams
- Turn-key, easy to execute
- HQ will provide coaches and athletes with materials
- Provide health, fitness and wellness education to athletes and coaches

Medication Reminders - All events

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- **FORMS:** Medication Assistance Best Practices, Consent Form and Tracker - forms are located on SOPA website: <https://specialolympicspa.org/get-involved/resource-library>
- Coaches should be sharing this information with athletes, parents/guardians prior to all full day or overnight events. SOPA will no longer be emailing this information to all participants.
- Please ensure your athletes are completing the Medication Assistance Consent Form and your Class A volunteers traveling with the delegation are completing the Medication Assistance Tracker.
- Please reach out to chammell@specialolympicspa.org directly with any questions or concerns on the process.

Sport Management Teams

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- Special Olympics Pennsylvania Sport Management Teams are comprised of key regional leadership volunteers who represent each of SOPA's sponsored sports. These individuals represent a variety of levels within their respective sports, both inside and outside of Special Olympics.
- Request or recommend someone for a Sport Management Team
 - [Sport Management Interest Form](#)



2024 STATE COMPETITIONS

Spring Sectionals

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Western Spring Sectional

Saturday, April 20, Carnegie Mellon University

Central Spring Sectional

Sunday, April 28, St. Francis University

Eastern Spring Sectional

Saturday, May 4, Kutztown University

Tentative Schedule will be shared 8 weeks prior to each event with Event Registration Information.

Summer Games – Penn State University

June 6 – 8, 2024



Arrival

Delegation Registration

June 6

9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Departure

June 8

3:30 pm – 6:00 pm

Housing

- Housing information will be shared with Event Registration.
- All delegations will be housed Thursday and Friday evening

Tentative Schedule will be shared 8 weeks prior to Summer Games with Event Registration Information.

USA Games



- 2026 USA Games

- June 20-26
- University of Minnesota
- 2024 events will be qualifiers for USA Games, SOPA will not be allocated specific slots until late 2024
- Coach applications will be available July 1



SPECIAL OLYMPICS
USA GAMES
MINNESOTA 2026



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Coach Updates



Spring Pre-Season Coach Meetings

Date	Pre-season Coaches Meeting	Time	Registration Link
Monday, January 29	Swimming	7:00 pm	Register
Tuesday, January 30	Athletics	7:00 pm	Register
Wednesday, January 31	Basketball	7:00 pm	Register
Thursday, February 1	Equestrian, Golf, Gymnastics	7:00 pm	Register
Monday, February 5, 7:00 PM	Softball	7:00 pm	Register
Tuesday, February 6, 7:00 PM	Tennis	7:00 pm	Register

Be Prepared for the Season!

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- Get everyone eligible
- Understand and be aware of Air Quality levels
- Keep a pulse on illness/disease outbreaks within your community – remind athletes not to attend training if they are sick and to practice healthy habits and good hygiene.
- Know your facilities Emergency Action Plan and Evacuation route
- Updated yourself on sport rules and work with assistant coaches on a seasonal plan – identify who will manage each task during practice. Recruit additional assistance if needed.

Athlete as Coach

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Do you have an athlete who would like to be a coach?

- Jordan and Jennifer hosted an Athletes as Coaches webinar last evening for the spring sports season. The link to the webinar can be found below.
- Athlete as Coach Request form to be completed by athletes who wish to apply to be trained as a coach: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WZC14Ssl1IsilbBO_93WDmsaQq9-wmK3/view
- [FAQ](#)
- Link to [Athlete as a Coach Webinar](#)

Coaching Requirements



As of January 2021, Coach requirements for training and competition:

- **Team Sports:**
 - Must have at least one or more certified coach(s) per team
- **Individual Sports and Team Individual Skills:**
 - Must have at least one or more certified coach(s) per 25 athletes



Continuing Education Update



- **Protective Behavior and Concussion Training** has been removed from the list of approved courses for Continuing Education and from the Continuing Education Request form.
- **Effective February 1, 2023, these two courses will not be accepted for continuing education**
- There are plenty of Continuing Education options available on the [SOPA website](#).





Volunteer UPDATES



Volunteer Q & A

What is the minimum age for a Head Coach? **18**

What is the youngest age of a Unified Partner? **8**

What age do you need a Young athlete chaperone for? **Overnight events for 8 & 9 year olds**

Can my assistant coach be 14? **Training yes; Events No**

- **1-day events - 16**
- **Overnight events - 18**

Volunteer Position Requirements



Class B

Volunteer Classifications	VSys, Trainings & Clearances→	Completed Volunteer Application → VSys Record	Background Clearance to include PA Disclosure Statement	Protective Behaviors	General Orientation	Concussion Training	Sport Certification
	Position & Age (If applicable) ↓						(Note: 14 & over may attend Training Schools)
Class B	Medical Volunteer - Student	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Class B	General/Local Program/Team Volunteer - Volunteer are outside the 1:4 ratio with no chaperoning responsibilities 15 yrs. old and younger	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Class B	One Day Volunteer	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Class B	Bus Driver - Non-registered volunteer	No	No	No	No	No	No
Class B	Equestrian Horse Handler 14 and older – one day events	Yes	No	No	No	No	No

Last updated: July 2022

Volunteer Position Requirements



SPECIAL OLYMPICS PENNSYLVANIA VOLUNTEER POSITION REQUIREMENTS							
Volunteer Classifications	VSys, Trainings & Clearances→	Completed Volunteer Application → VSys Record	Background Clearance to include PA Disclosure Statement	Protective Behaviors	General Orientation	Concussion Training	Sport Certification
	Position & Age (If applicable) ↓						(Note: 14 and over may attend Training Schools)
Class A	HOD - 18 yrs. old or older	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Class A	Head Coach - 18 yrs. old or older	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Class A	Assistant Coach - 16 to 17 yrs. old – one day events	Yes	Yes for 18 and over	Yes for 16 and over	Yes for 16 and over	Yes for 16 and over	No
	18 yrs. old or older – overnight events						
Class A	Athlete as Coach - 16 to 17 yrs. old – one day events	Yes	Yes for 18 and over	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
	18 yrs. old or older – overnight events						
Class A	Unified Partner - 8 yrs. old or older	Yes	Yes for 18 and over	Yes for 16 and over	Yes for 16 and over	Yes for 16 and over	No
Class A	1:1- Chaperone Capacity Only	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No but recommended	No
	Volunteer/Athlete are above the 1:4 ratio						
Class A	Group Home Chaperone - Chaperone capacity only	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No but recommended	No
	Volunteer/Athlete are above the 1:4 ratio						
Class A	Equestrian Side Walker - 18 yrs. old or older	Yes	Yes for 18 and over	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Class A	Equestrian Horse Handler	Yes	Yes for 18 and over	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
	14 to 17 yrs. old – one day events						
	18 yrs. old or older – overnight events						
Class A	Health and Fitness Coordinator - 18 yrs. old or older	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Class A	Healthy Athlete Clinical Director	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Class A	Delegation Volunteer - Volunteer are outside the 1:4 ratio with no chaperoning responsibilities	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes for 16 and over	No but recommended	No
Class A	Young Athlete Chaperone - Overnight chaperone for athletes ages 8 and 9 yrs. old	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Class A	Medical Volunteer - Professional	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No



SPRING SPORT UPDATES

SOPA Website - Sports Offered Page

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- Links to all the sport pages
- [Sports Offered](#)
- [Seasonal Sign-up](#)
- Lots of great resources!

Athletics	>
Basketball	>
Equestrian	>
Golf	>
Gymnastics	>
Softball	>
Swimming (Aquatics)	>
Tennis	>

Team Sport Offerings



- Basketball:
 - 5v5 - 16–21-year-old (only if there are 2 teams attending a competition) and 22+
 - 3x3 – 12-15 & 16–21-year-old (only if there are 2 teams attending a competition) and 22+
 - Individuals Skills: Level 1 and Level 2
- Softball:
 - 22+: Traditional, Unified
 - Individual Skills



Individual Sport Offerings

- Athletics: Traditional, Unified Relays
- Swimming: Traditional, Unified Relays
- Tennis: Traditional and Individual Skills
- Golf: Traditional, Unified, and Individual Skills
- Gymnastics: Traditional
- Equestrian: Traditional

Sport Rules



[Athletics Rules](#)

[Basketball Rules 5v5](#)

[Basketball Rules 3x3](#)

[Basketball Rules Skills](#)

[Equestrian Rules](#)

[Golf Rules](#)

[Gymnastics Rules - Artistic](#)

[Gymnastics Rules - Rhythmic](#)

[Softball Rules](#)

[Swimming Rules](#)

[Tennis Rules](#)

No Rule Updates



- Athletics
- Equestrian
- Golf
- Gymnastics
- Softball
- Tennis

Swimming



- Maximum Effort or Honest Effort Rule (HER) will be 15% at all State level events this season (Sectionals and Summer Games)
 - EXCEPTIONS: All events shorter than 25 yards, as well as 25 freestyle, 25 flotation, and the 4 x 25 freestyle relay will remain at the 25% limit for HER.
- Whistles should be used at all meets – specifics will be shared with the coaches with a video explanation to follow

Swimming



- Event selection
 - Sport Mgmt Team (SMT) will share guidelines for competitive times in each event
 - They are not standards, just guidelines for the coaches to help athletes set goals and determine appropriate event participation
 - Recommendation for event selection, an athlete should not swim events that are more than 2 lengths apart
 - If swimming 25m select events up to 100m; if swimming 50m select events up to 200m

Invitational: Lancaster XL meet (all strokes - 200, 400 and beyond), May 11, contact Anne Phillips for additional information: anne.phillips23@gmail.com

Basketball



RULES

[5 v 5 Rules 2022 \(PDF\)](#)

[3 x 3 Rules 2022 \(PDF\)](#)

[Individual Skills 2022 \(PDF\)](#)

Rules are broken up into 3 sections:

1. 5v5 Rules

2. 3x3 Rules

3. Individual Skills (Level 1 and Level 2)

Basketball Individual Skills



Level 1 Basketball Skills

3 Skills

#1 - Target Pass

#2 - 10 Meter Dribble

2 versions -

Version 1 is modified for athletes using Wheelchairs, or those who are not capable of dribbling while moving forward)

Version 2 is athletes who can run and dribble at the same time

#3 - Spot Shot

Basketball Individual Skills Level 2



Level 2 Basketball skills

3 Skills

#1 – 12 Meter Dribble

#2 – Perimeter Shooting

#3 – Catch & Pass

SOPA Specific Basketball 3x3



- The game will be played for 20 minutes or until 21 points.
- A made field goal counts one point unless attempted from behind the arc, then it counts 2 points.
- A made free throw counts as one point.
- There will be a running clock applied until the final minute of regulation play. During this time, the clock will stop for all dead ball situations (e.g., fouls, violations, field goals with fouls, and timeouts).
- A shot clock will not be used during Sectionals and Summer Games. If a team is not sufficiently trying to attack the basket, the referee shall give them a warning by counting the last 5 seconds.
- The clock continues to run after a made field goal.

SOPA Specific Basketball 5v5

- The game will consist of four 6-minute quarters, with a running clock.
- There will be a running clock applied until the final 2 minutes of the 2nd and 4th quarter. During this time, the clock will stop for all dead ball situations (e.g., fouls, violations, field goals with fouls, and timeouts).
- A shot clock will not be used during Sectionals and Summer Games.
- Potential Rule change: after 5 fouls in each quarter, we will shoot 2 foul shots. Each quarter we start at 0 fouls.

Basketball – Team Rating Forms

Basketball - Player Competency Rating Form

Player Role - Athlete or Unified Partner:	For Unified teams, please circle the Unified partner's initials in the squares below
Program/Team Name:	
Team Composition (circle):	Male, Female or Coed/Mixed Gender
Team Type (circle):	Traditional, Unified, Unified - Interscholastic, Unified - Intercollegiate
Event Type (circle):	3v3 or 5v5

Please note sections below that will ask a series of sport-specific competency questions for each player on the team. The objective is for the evaluator to provide a point value rating for each of the players on the team based upon the listed competency. For some competencies, a player may not exactly meet the competency and/or be rated in between two competencies; therefore, please indicate the competency rating that would most closely be aligned to the player. Please enter the player's initials in the boxes below the point value that most closely matches their skill competency. For the three Levels shown across the top, these correspond to the Team Level information that was previously provided. All information will be input into SmartSheets to produce an overall team report.

	Team Level (previously provided)	Level 1 - Novice		Level 2 - Intermediate	Level 3 - Advanced	
	Player Competency Point Values	1	2	3	4	5
Player Competency - Offense	Ball Handling	Has difficulty with controlling/protecting dribble; may be called for double-dribble/walk during games	Has some ball handling skills but they are limited and mostly with dominant hand	Can control/protect dribble with dominant hand regularly and occasionally with off hand	Can handle ball with both hands and occasionally switch speeds/direction while maintaining dribble	Has ability to go either direction on the dribble; proficient with controlling/protecting dribble
	Passing	Has difficulty with completing/receiving short passes; rarely creates a passing lane	Can occasionally complete/receive passes to/from a teammate with token defensive pressure	Regularly completes/receives passes to/from a teammate; occasionally creates a passing lane	Consistently completes/receives passes to/from a teammate and regularly creates passing lanes	Controls game with ability to complete/receive an advanced pass; consistently creates passing lanes

Softball – Team Rating Forms

<u>Softball - Player Competency Rating Form</u>												
Player Role - Athlete or Unified Partner:			For Unified teams, please circle the Unified partner's initials in the squares below									
Program/Team Name:												
Team Composition (circle):			Male, Female or Coed/Mixed Gender									
Team Type (circle):			Traditional or Unified									
Pitchers and Catchers:			Please only enter data in the fields below for those persons that play these positions									
<p>Please note sections below that will ask a series of sport-specific competency questions for each player on the team. The objective is for the evaluator to provide a point value rating for each of the players on the team based upon the listed competency. For some competencies, a player may not exactly meet the competency and/or be rated in between two competencies; therefore, please indicate the competency rating that would most closely be aligned to the player. Please enter the player's initials in the boxes below the point value that most closely matches their skill competency. For the three Levels shown across the top, these correspond to the Team Level information that was previously provided. All information will be input into SmartSheets to produce an overall team report.</p>												
Team Level (previously provided)			Level 1 - Novice			Level 2 - Intermediate			Level 3 - Advanced			
Player Competency Point Values			1	2		3		4		5		
Competencies	Coach(es) Assessment of Team- Please provide feedback related to the following topics											
	Team longevity and chemistry (How long the team has been playing together? Has there been a consistent/core group? Do the players understand each other's roles/tendencies?)											
	Are there any players that posses higher ability skill sets when compared to their											

THANK YOU

