

# Athletics

January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Pre-season Webinar

***Special Olympics***  
*Pennsylvania*



# Today's Agenda



- Welcome/Introductions
- Reminders
- Athlete Performance Training
- Sectional & State Events
- Sports Director & Rule Updates
- Training
- Questions



# THANK YOU



# Reminders

***Special Olympics***  
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# Spring Season Updates

- Coaches should begin training at least 10 weeks prior to the state culminating event.
  - 10 weeks from Summer Games: March 29
- Athletes must be trained according to the minimum standards acceptable, for at least eight (8) weeks in the appropriate sport and must have several opportunities to compete during that period.
  - Athlete Attendance will be tracked in the Attendance Tracker
  - Early Season practice, Team workouts indoors, Athlete Performance Training activities, virtual training, fitness training, team walk/run, etc.

# Attendance Trackers



- 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



- **Coach will receive tracker when they submit Site Registration Form**
- **Site Attendance Tracker has 3 tabs: Directions, Attendance, Eligibility**
  - **Tab 1: Directions: How to complete the form**
  - **Tab 2 Attendance:**
    - Lists all participants that have signed up
    - Includes phone & Email
    - 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
- **SAMPLE TRACKER**

# Attendance Trackers



- ▶ **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
  - **IMPORTANT: Spring deadline March 29, 2024**
- **Tab 4: Competition – sport specific**
  - ▶ **REQUIRED** - track athletes events and times throughout the season, event registration info will be pulled from here



# Athlete & Volunteer Eligibility



**Athlete Requirements:** Medical on file WITH signature + expiration dates

- **Local Programs:** Athlete Medical under Certifications
- **Regions:** 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:** Trainings + Background Check on file

- **Local Programs + Regions**
  - 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.**



# Unified Partners Eligibility

Unified Partners do not need an athlete medicals.

- 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 may participate in a local program with their PIAA Medical. The participant must request a copy of the medical from their school.

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

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**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.

# Volunteer Q & A



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

What is the minimum age for a Class A? **16**

What is the minimum age for a Class B Assistant Coach? **14**

Can I be an assistant coach be 14?

**Training yes; Events No**

1-day events - 16

Overnight events - 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**



# 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 -	Yes	Yes for 18 and over	Yes for 16 and over	Yes for 16 and over	Yes for 16 and over	No
	16 to 17 yrs. old – one day events						
	18 yrs. old or older – overnight events						
Class A	Athlete as Coach -	Yes	Yes for 18 and over	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
	16 to 17 yrs. old – one day events						
	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 Calendars & Responsibilities



- [Eastern 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.



# Event Registration

- Mark interest in participating in Local/Invitational, Sectional and State competition in columns J, K, L respectively on the Attendance Tracker – **COMPLETE THIS ASAP into the season**

## Google Registration:

- On the Coaches and Athletes tab, you will assign each role to their respective sport. That individual will then appear on the corresponding sport tab.
- On the Sport tab, you will add athletes' events and times.
- **Important:** Time entries should appear in the format **MM.SS.00**
  - ❖ Example: **12.14.05** = 12 minutes 14 seconds and 5 hundredths of a second.
  - ❖ Example: 00.15.08 = 15 seconds and 8 hundredths of a second

# Google Registration Snapshot



## Athlete Tab

Alternate - Y/N	1:1 Name	Sport	Updates to Athlete Information	Interest in Summer Games Drawing	Vaccine received	Date of last dose	Dietary Restrictions
		Swimming ▾		Summer Gar ▾	▾		
		▾		▾	▾		
		▾		▾	▾		
		▾		▾	▾		

## Sport Specific Tab

Event 1	Event 1 - Time	Personal Best - Time	Event 2	Event 2 - Time	Personal Best - Time	Event 3	Event 3 - Time	Personal Best - Time	Non Diving/Outer Lane
25 Yard Freestyle - Traditional ▾	12.05.05		25 Yard Backstroke - Tradition ▾	12.05.05		25 Yard Breaststroke - Traditic ▾	12.05.05		ND ▾
▾			▾			▾			▾
▾			▾			▾			▾
▾			▾			▾			▾

# SOPA Website - Sports Offered Page



## Links to all the sport pages

- [Sports Offered](#)
- [Seasonal Sign-up](#)

## Sport specific resources:

- Warm-Up/Cool Down resources
- PDF & recording of this webinar
- Link to Sport Rules/SOI Resources
- Scoresheets
- Best Practices

<a href="#">Athletics</a>	>
<a href="#">Basketball</a>	>
<a href="#">Equestrian</a>	>
<a href="#">Golf</a>	>
<a href="#">Gymnastics</a>	>
<a href="#">Softball</a>	>
<a href="#">Swimming (Aquatics)</a>	>
<a href="#">Tennis</a>	>

# 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

### Athletics

- Top - Singlet or T-shirt
- Shorts - Athletics (must end above the knees)



# Medication Reminders - All events



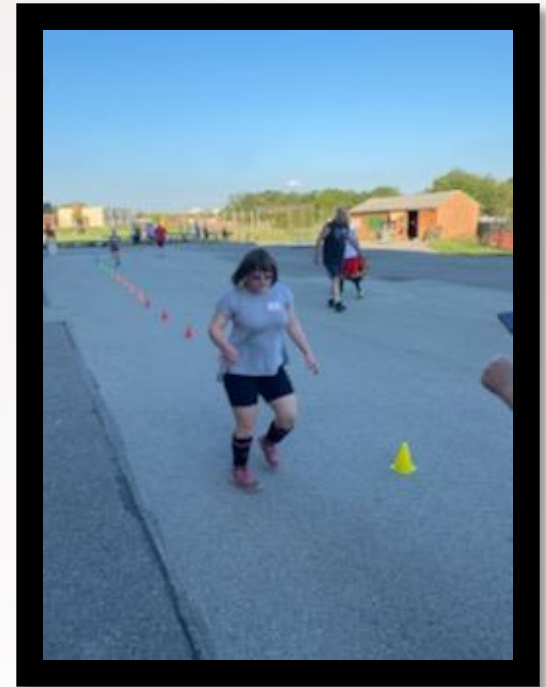
- **FORMS:** Medication Assistance Best Practices, Consent Form and Tracker - forms are located on SOPA website: <https://specialolympicspa.org/get-involved/resource-library>
- Coaches should be sharing this information with athletes, parents/guardians prior to all full day or overnight events. SOPA 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](mailto:chammell@specialolympicspa.org) directly with any questions or concerns on the process.



# Athlete Performance Training (APT)



- APT is an in-season fitness program.
- Health education and fitness evaluations are embedded into sports practice for 8-weeks.
- Athlete Performance Training happens on the field of play.
- Any sport, any size team should implement.
- **Physical fitness is a key part of the Special Olympics mission. Physical activity, adequate nutrition and hydration enhance athletes' sports performance and improve health and overall quality of life.**



# Athlete Performance Training Outcomes



- APT works!
- Since the start of APT in Fall 2023 over **22%** have seen an improvement in their fitness assessment,
- **14.5%** of athletes who participated in APT have seen an improvement in their weight.
- Of those athletes who have participated and whose blood pressure was taken, over **16%** saw an improvement in their results by the end of the season.

# Athlete Performance Training



## Interested Coaches

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

## How to sign-up

- **Contact Charla Stein, [cstein@specialolympicspa.org](mailto:cstein@specialolympicspa.org)**
- Watch a short 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

# 2024 Sectional & State Events

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# Qualifiers

- Basketball (3x3, 5v5, individual skills)
- Golf (all levels including individual skills)
- Tennis (all levels including individual skills)
- Softball (team and individual skills)
- **ATHLETICS is NOT A QUALIFIER**
  - Athletes/Unified Partners are not required to attend Sectional to participate in State Games.
  - All athletes **MUST** have competition at the local, regional level before competition in a State Games







# Allocations

- Spring Allocations can be found on the SOPA Website, State Games tab
  - [SOPA State Games Paperwork Webpage](#)
- As always, please remember that you can request additional allocations through the LOI process.
- Previous Lunch & Learn about the allocation process. This riveting presentation can be found here: [Allocation L&L](#)

# Spring Sectionals



- West: Carnegie Mellon University
  - Saturday April 20th

- Central: Saint Francis University
  - Sunday, April 28th
  - Athletics will be held at Central Cambria HS



- East: Kutztown University
  - Saturday May 4th



[2024 Competition Calendar: Important Dates](#)

# Summer Games: June 6 - 8th



- Penn State University
- Important Dates:
  - Reg Info: Will be out by **4/12**
  - LOI: Due **5/2**
  - Final Allocations: **5/3**
  - VSys Rosters: Due **5/7**
  - Google links sent: **5/9**
  - Registration: Due **5/16**
  - Scratch/Activation: Due **5/30**
- **Arrival 6/8, 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.**
- **Departure 6/10 3 – 6 p.m.**



# Sport Director & Rule Updates

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# Sport Management Teams

- 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.
- Virtual meetings at the beginning of the spring Athletics season and late summer for the fall LDRW season.
- Occasional email/short meeting as needed
- We are looking for requests or recommendations for the Athletics/LDRW Sport Management Team to fill the vacancies.
- Visit or share this interest form:
  - [Sport Management Interest Form](#)

# Sport Director



**Scott Otterbein**

Athletics and Long-  
Distance Running/Walking  
Sports Director





# Sport Management Teams



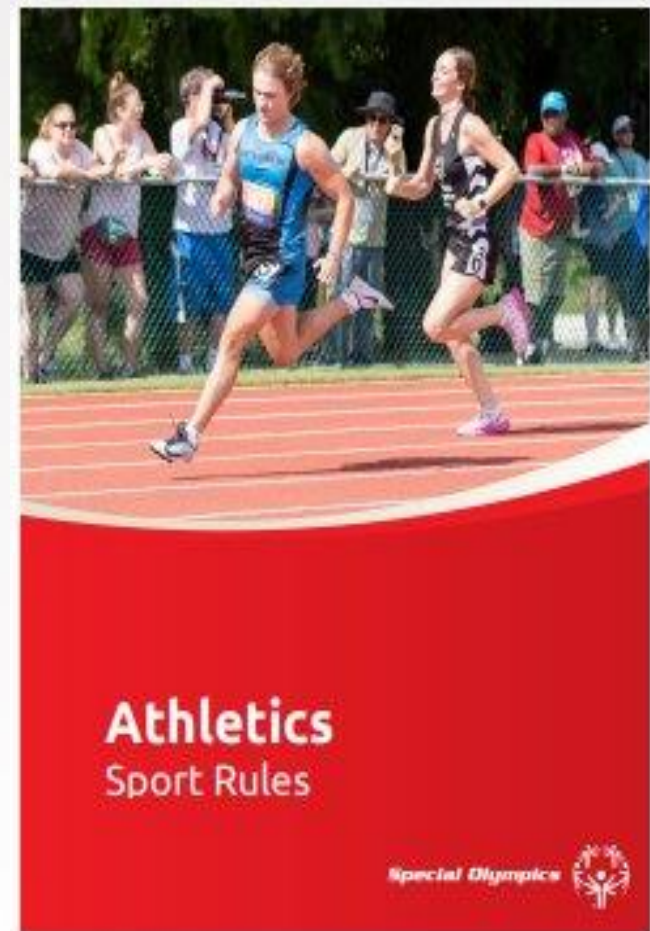
- Current roster
- Region 1 – Heidi Long (volunteer) & Lawrence Smith (athlete)
- Region 2 – Rob & Christine Masters (volunteers) **Need athlete rep**
- Region 3 – Lester Loner & Burdett Porter (volunteers) **Need athlete rep**
- Region 4 – **Need both reps**
- Region 5 – **Need both reps**
- Region 6 – Tom Delaney (volunteer) & Chip Tamagni (athlete)
- Region 7 – Kyale Tulos (athlete) **Need volunteer rep**
- Region 8 – **Need both reps**
- Region 9 – Mary Aiello (volunteer) & Logan Aiello (athlete)

# The Rule Book!



## [Sports-Essentials- Athletics-Rules-2022](#)

No rule changes for 2023



# Reminder - 2022 Updated Rules



## **Pentathlon:**

The 800-meter run shall replace the 400-meter run.

The Pentathlon 5 events shall be run in the following order:

1. 100 Meter Run
2. Running Long Jump
3. Shot Put
4. High Jump
5. 800 Meter Run



# Honest Effort Rule (HER)

- 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
  - It is important to record times with distances
  - Athletes have received DQ ribbons that could have been prevented
  - Use the "Score Update" form in the last week before tournaments to change times or distances

# Outdoor Weather



Every time you see lightning or hear thunder



Stop practice and take shelter for 30 minutes!

Remember every time you see lightning  
or hear thunder!

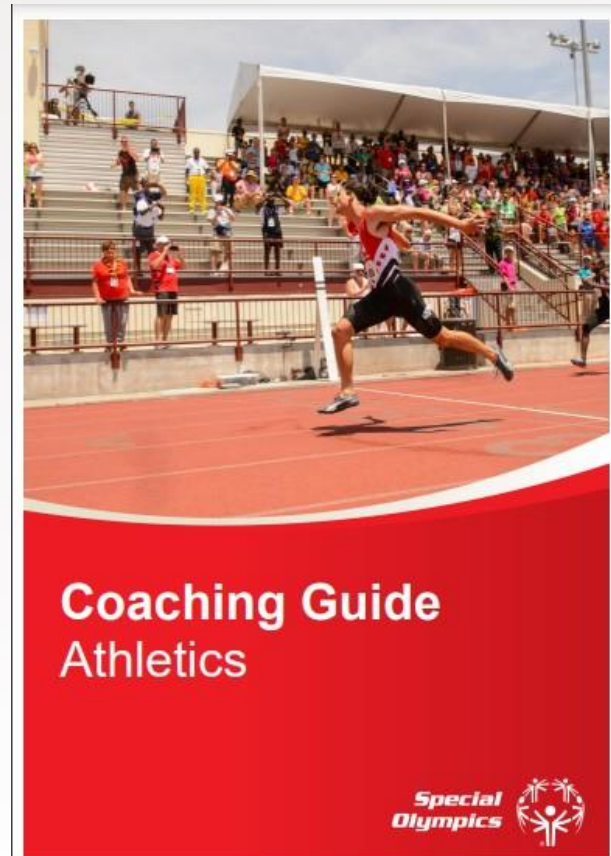


# SOI Coaching Guide



## SOI Athletics Coaching Guide

- Great resource for track basics
  - Interval training ideas
    - Speed work
- Technique – running and field events





# Change Things Up!

Consider diversifying your athlete events.

100-meter, javelin and shotput are very popular but make for long lines and many divisions

- Consider the 200/400/800/jumps
- Consider Unified relays – 4x100, 4x200 or 4x400
  - Pentathlon





# Expand Unified?

- The SMT recently considered and recommended additional Unified events for Athletics.
- Exactly what form and when will be determined
- The current rules already allow for Unified track teams!
- Possible pilot test of a field event such as shotput or javelin and 100/400?
- At the scrimmage, local, regional level?

# Training

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# Be Prepared for the Season!

- 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.

# Air Quality



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.

# Athlete as Coach



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

- Link to [Athlete as a Coach Webinar](#)

[Athlete as Coach Request form](#) to be completed by athletes who wish to apply to be trained as a coach

[Athlete as Coach FAQ](#)

Questions contact: Jordan Schubert, [jschubert@specialolympicspa.org](mailto:jschubert@specialolympicspa.org)

# Coaching Requirements



- **As of January 2021, Coach requirements for **training and competition:****
- **Team Sports:**
  - Must have at least one (1) certified coach per team
- **Individual Sport (and Skills):**
  - Must have at least one (1) certified coach per 25 athletes



# Get Certified!



## SUMMER SPORTS

Athletics, Basketball, Golf, Gymnastics, Equestrian, Softball, Swimming, and Tennis

- Coach trainings will be held regionally based on need
- **If you need coaches trained let your Regional Sports Director know ASAP**
- Trainings are currently being scheduled for February/March, check the SOPA Website and SOPA Coaches Facebook page for announcements – these will also be shared in the Weekly Team Leader email
- **Training School registration will now be done within survey format, no longer within the Vsys portal**
- Registration will close Wednesday at 11:59pm prior to Saturday or Sunday training. You MUST register to attend.

# 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](#).



# Job Description and Levels of Responsibility



## HEAD COACH:

- Certified in the sport
- Supervises all coaches and athletes
- Responsible for equipment, transportation, and lodging
- Develops **practice plans** and assigns duties to Assistant Coaches
- Check athlete medical and volunteer Class A
- Completes all required paperwork (competition, training numbers)

## ASSISTANT COACH:

- Assist head coach/help supervise athletes (1:4)
- Performs duties assigned by head coach
- Assist in evaluating training
- Arrives on time for practice/stays throughout practice
- Assists with uniforms, collection of medicals and taking attendance

Full position descriptions for both head and assistant coaches can be found here: **SOPA Website on the Resources/Training**

<https://specialolympicspa.org/resources>

# Coaching Progression



## Certified Coach

- Class A volunteer with at least 1 sport certification

### Bronze

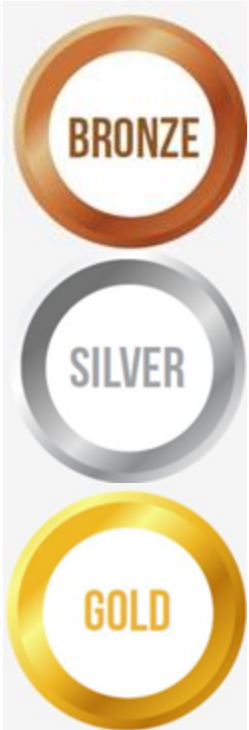
- Adds: Athlete Performance Training activation, personal best performance goals, **Coaching Special Olympics Athletes** course

### Silver

- Adds: Athlete goal setting, training minimum of 10 weeks, **Principles of Coaching** course, **Coaching Unified Sports**

### Gold

- Adds: advanced sport skills course, training at least twice a week for minimum of 10 weeks, develop year-round training/wellness plan for athletes

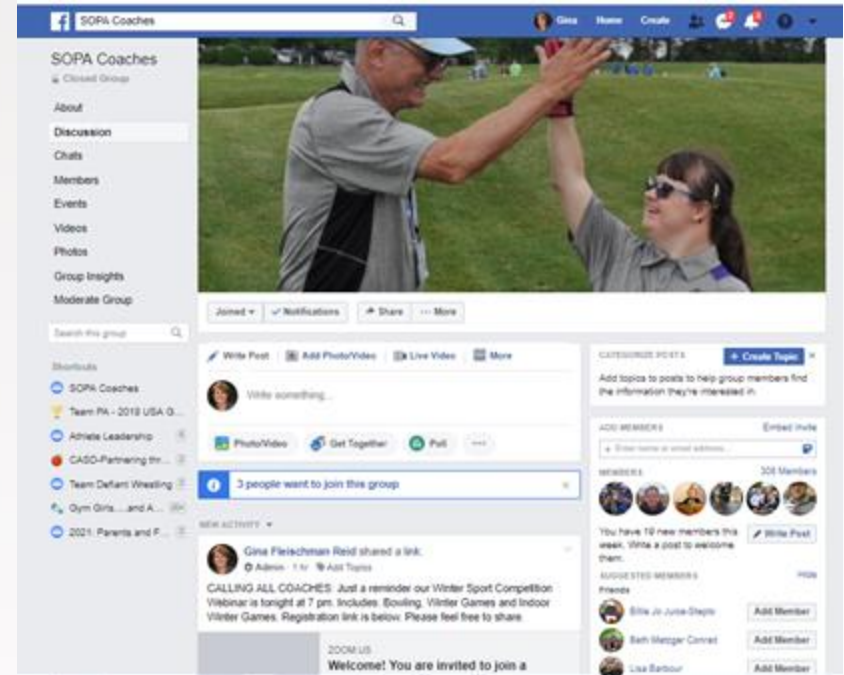


# Improving Communication



## Closed Facebook Group for Coaches:

- 100% Optional
- Direct connection to coaches
- Share Competition Information/Reminders
- Share Training/Coaching Tips
- Encourage sharing of best practices between coaches
- Q&A
- [Coach Page](#)



☺ Which SOPA local program to you coach for?

☺ What sport/sports do you coach?

**THANK YOU  
COACHES!!!**

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