

**For Immediate Release:**

**CONTACT:** Wenona Sutton, Marketing Communications Manager, 610-630-9450 ext. 219 or [wsutton@specialolympicspa.org](mailto:wsutton@specialolympicspa.org); Day of Event, Eric Cushing at 484-433-6201

**Special Olympics Pennsylvania's 12th Annual State Floor Hockey  
Tournament Set for March 3 – 4, 2018**

*This Year Marks the Last Time That the Competition Will Be Held As a Standalone Event*

**(Norristown, PA, February 28, 2018)** – More than 350 athletes and 120 coaches will participate in the 2018 Special Olympics Pennsylvania (SOPA) State Floor Hockey Tournament from March 3rd-4th. This statewide competition is returning to Bald Eagle Area (BEA) School District, located at 751 S. Eagle Valley Road in Wingate, PA, for the 12th consecutive year. The Tournament will feature the theme of “Shoot for the Stars,” and Opening Ceremonies will be emceed by P.J. Mullen, Director of Player Development & Community Relations for Penn State University, and SOPA – Butler County athlete Jacki Abel.

Preliminary team competition will begin on Saturday, March 3rd from 11:30 a.m. – 1:45 p.m. on the BEA courts (1, 2, and 3) and individual skills will take place at 11:45 a.m. at Wingate Elementary School. Opening Ceremonies will be held in the BEA Auditorium at 2:15 p.m. and will feature an array of speakers to motivate and entertain the athletes including remarks by Congressman Glenn Thompson representing the 5th District of PA and the official the lighting of the Olympic Cauldron.

Final team competitions are slated to begin on Sunday, March 4th on the BEA courts (1, 2, and 3) and at Penn State University's (PSU) White Building from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Individual Skills finals will take place at Wingate Elementary School at 10:30 a.m. Rolling awards will be presented from 1:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. in the BEA Lobby and White Building with a 4:30 p.m. departure.

This year marks the last time that the tournament will be held as a separate event. Starting in March 2019, state floor hockey competition will be offered as a part of Special Olympics Pennsylvania's new Indoor Winter Games, along with figure skating, speed skating and bowling, in York County. The Indoor Winter Games will combine events that were previously held on a standalone basis, or as a part of the annual winter or summer games.

“We are grateful for the Bald Eagle Area School District's support of our State Floor Hockey Tournament throughout the years,” said Gina Reid, SOPA Senior Competition Director. “While we will be folding this floor hockey event into our new Indoor Winter Games and no longer hosting it at BEA after this year, we are excited that the High

**Special Olympics Pennsylvania**

2570 Blvd. of the Generals, Ste. 124, Norristown, PA, 19403 **Tel** + 610- 630-9450 **Toll Free** + 800-235-9058 **Fax** + 610-630- 9456  
[www.specialolympicspa.org](http://www.specialolympicspa.org)

*Created by the Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation for the benefit of persons with intellectual disabilities*

School recently agreed to become a Unified Champion School and continue a partnership with us through our Interscholastic Unified Sports program.”

Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools (UCS) creates climates of inclusion, acceptance, respect, and human dignity for all students. BEA will join the UCS by piloting a unified indoor bocce program this spring that will bring people with and without intellectual disabilities together on a team.

SOPA athletes and coaches from the following programs will compete in this year’s State Floor Hockey Tournament: Allegheny, Area M, Bedford, Berks, Butler, Cambria, Clearfield, Clinton, Columbia/Montour, Crawford, Delaware, Franklin, Lebanon, Monroe, Montgomery, Northumberland/Snyder and a team from New York State.

More than 250 volunteers from the community, corporations, and the BEA School District participated in the event last year, serving in numerous capacities including officials, athlete escorts, award presenters, and administrative support services. Volunteers from across the state are welcome and spectators are encouraged to visit any of the competition venues on or near campus to cheer on our athletes. A full schedule of events is attached.

**About Special Olympics Pennsylvania**

Special Olympics Pennsylvania provides year-round training and competition in 21 Olympic-type sports to nearly 20,000 children and adults with intellectual disabilities or closely related developmental disabilities. For more information about how you can help “Reveal the Champion Inside” thousands of Special Olympics athletes, visit [www.specialolympicspa.org](http://www.specialolympicspa.org).

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