

# FALL 2023

# Season Kickoff

***Special Olympics***  
*Pennsylvania*



# Agenda



Seasonal Sport Calendar

Sport Offerings & Changes

Coach Training & Competitions

Fall Sign-ups

# Seasonal Sport Calendar



3 Seasonal Phases: **Prepare** (Kick off), **Plan**, **Play** (Season)

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
Fall		Kick off	Planning Phase				Season					
Winter	Season					Kick off	Planning Phase				Season	
Spring	Planning		Season						Kick off	Planning Phase		

# Sport Offerings

- Offered
  - Team Sports
    - Soccer: 5v5; 7v7; Unified 7v7 (new focus: ages 16-21)
    - Volleyball: Traditional and Unified Player Development
    - Flag Football: Traditional and Unified
  - Individual
    - Bocce: Doubles and Unified Doubles
    - Powerlifting: Traditional and Unified (pilot)
    - LDR/W: Traditional and Unified
- Not offered at State Level
  - Roller Skating
    - Can continue to be offered as locally popular sport
- Non-traditional Fall sport
  - Bowling



# Sport of Emphasis

## Soccer: Unified 7v7

- Age group focus 16-21
  - Great opportunity to recruit from UCS programs
  - Goal – at least 2 teams per Region
- Purpose
  - Community Integration
  - Recruit and retain athletes, Unified partners, teachers, coaches, families from the Unified Champion Schools



# Sport of Emphasis



## Volleyball: Unified Player Development

- Transition lower division teams into [Player Development](#)
  - Identify, contact and work with 6-8 teams on transition
  - Teams will receive in-person and virtual coach education and Unified partner recruitment assistance
- Purpose
  - Goal of this program is to provide athletes with a better volleyball experience, provide better understanding of the game, improve skills and ability

# Changes - Sports



- **Roller Skating**

- Will no longer be offered at Fall Fest
- Diminishing number of participants, expense and access to facilities
- Past programs sponsoring: Area M, Adams, Lancaster, York, Chester, Blair
- I will connect with all programs/coaches to talk about options moving forward
- Programs can still sponsor at local program level and hold local/regional competitions

# Changes - Sports



- **Powerlifting**

- Consideration to pilot Unified, would be in accordance with [2022 Special Olympics Powerlifting Sport Rules](#)
- Unified Partners in this sport would be participants (training and competing alongside the athletes), they CANNOT also be coaches.
- For competition athletes can choose traditional or Unified, but cannot do both.
- If your program is interested contact me, [mboone@specialolympicspa.org](mailto:mboone@specialolympicspa.org)



# Changes – Age Groups



- We must better comply with age groups, to be in accordance with [Special Olympics International, Sport Rules, Article 1](#) and most importantly for the health and safety of all participants
- Primary Reason is for athlete safety.
- Implementing for all Team Sports beginning in Fall 2023.
  - Fall Teams sports include: flag football, soccer and volleyball.
- SOPA will provide specific rules and protocols
- We will no longer allow teams out of compliance to participate at Regional, Sectional or State level competition

# Changes – Age Groups



- All team sports must follow these age groups:
  - Elementary Age Group: 8-11
  - Middle School Age group: 12-15
  - High School Age Group: 16-21
  - Young Adult Age Group: 22-40
  - Adults: over 40
- 8-11 and 40+ age groups are SOPA specific to insure another level of safety for participants.
- SOPA will accept and review exemptions to play up or play down ONE age group if participants meet health, safety and well being criteria

# Coach Trainings



- Initial skills/coach certification
  - In-person - Soccer, Volleyball and Flag football
    - Request MUST be submitted via VSys portal by individuals by June 15
    - We are scheduling Training School locations NOW, so the sooner you submit requests the better
  - Virtual – LDR/W, Bocce, Powerlifting, Bowling
    - SOPA 101 will be a prerequisite for virtual training courses
    - All virtual trainings will be housed on the VSys portal and available in July 2023

Working to move all certifications to virtual trainings, but will take some time to transition all sports

# Coach Trainings



- Pre-Season Coach webinars
  - At least 1 coach from each training site should plan to attend.
  - All sessions are recorded and available on Sports Offered page of SOPA website
- Additional Resources
  - [Sports Offered](#) page of SOPA website
  - [Special Olympics International Resources page](#)

# Competition & Events



- Competition Registration form
  - Similar to current process on Site Registration, it will just be a separate link used solely for competitions
  - Will be shared in May
- Goal to track, share and make most of events
  - Ability to track all of the amazing work across the state
  - Populate into SOPA yearly event calendar to create awareness and encourage more athletes to join the events
  - Result collection particularly for teams to assist in divisioning at Sectionals and State level events – the more data the better!

# Competition & Events



- State events
  - Sectionals – East (DeSales, Oct 1), Central (Juniata, TBD), West (SRU, TBD)
  - Fall Festival – Villanova University, Nov 3-5
- Qualifying Sports
  - Soccer: 5v5, 7v7, Unified 7v7 and Individual Skills (Level 1 and Advanced)
  - Volleyball: Team, UPD and Individual Skills
  - Flag Football: Team, Unified and Individual Skills
  - LDR/W
  - Bocce
  - Powerlifting

# FALL SIGN-UPS



- Site Registration
  - OPEN NOW through May 1<sup>st</sup>
  - Head coach must register their training sites, so it will appear on Sign-up form
- Athlete/Unified Partner/Volunteer Season Sign-up
  - Open May 15-June 15
  - Everyone participating will NEED to complete this form for every site they plan to attend.
  - SOPA will run PSAs, billboards and social to help drive sign-ups
  - Develop a plan for your local community, county, region

# Seasonal Calendar



## Fall 2023 Calendar External.xlsx

- Due to different deadlines for geographical events calendar will be created for East, Central, West.
- East is complete
- West and Central trying to lock in Sectional date
- All pre-season dates are consistent





Let's conquer this  
Fall season  
together!

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