Swimming January 27th, 2025 Pre-season Webinar



Today's Agenda



- Welcome/Introductions
- Seasonal Reminders
- Swimming Updates
- Sectional & State Events
- Tracker & Athlete Performance Training
- Questions



Reminders



Season at a Glance



SEASONS AT A GLANCE









	FALL	WINTER	SPRING	SUMMER
Training Site Registration (see link below)	April 1 - May 1	Sept. 1 - Oct. 1	Nov. 1 - Dec. 1	March 1 - April 1
Athlete, Unified Partner, Volunteer Signup	May 15 - July 15	Oct. 15 - Nov. 15	Dec. 15 - March 1	April 15 - May 15
Season Length	August 9 - Nov. 3	Dec. 1 - March 2	March 14 - June 7	June 1 - Sept. 15
Eligibility Deadline	August 23	December 20	March 28	June 20
Sports Offered	Bocce, Bowling, Flag Football, Long Distance Running/Walking, Powerlifting, Soccer, Volleyball	Alpine Skiing, Bowling Figure Skating, Floor Hockey, Snowboard, Snowshoe, Speed Skating	Athletics (Track & Field), Basketball, Equestrian, Gymnastics, Swimming, Tennis	Golf Softball

- Sign-ups Athletes and Volunteers -March 1
- After this deadline anyone interested in signing-up must contact the Regional Sport Director.
- Season officially begins March 14
- Seasonal
 Eligibility/Age
 Group Exemption
 deadline March 28

Sports Season Prep



Important Spring Dates:

- Spring Calendar:
 - https://specialolympicspa.org/sports/sports-offered
 - Under Spring Season Information; since due dates are different for each Sectional, there is one calendar per section of the state.
- Eligibility Deadline: March 28
- Season Dates: March June

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 Eligibility



Athlete Requirements: Medical Form on file

- We will continue to use the existing "Medical Form."
- Athletes will have the option to submit the form with or without a doctor's signature.
- However, there will still be specific health conditions requiring a doctor's signature from Special Olympics Pennsylvania.

What to expect in the coming weeks:

- We will be updating the medical form on our website to clearly indicate which health conditions require a doctor's signature.
- The Regional Administrative Managers will directly inform athletes and families participating in spring/summer sports who don't currently have a medical form on file.

Coaches are to use the trackers to ensure athletes and volunteers have completed their eligibility requirements.

Volunteer Eligibility



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

- Background Results under Background Checks, Valid for 5 years (18+ volunteers).
- General Orientation under Training, Valid for life (16+ volunteers).
- Protective Behaviors, under Training, Valid for 3 years (16+ volunteers).
- Concussion Training, under Training, Valid for 3 years (16+ volunteers).

Coaches are to use the trackers to ensure athletes and volunteers have completed their eligibility requirements.

Volunteer Eligibility: Volunteer Classifications



Volunteers who CAN supervise athletes and volunteers:

Coach: Head or Assistant coach creates, organizes, and runs a comprehensive sport training program that enables athletes to build sport specific skills. *(Class A) (Must be 16 & Older for Assistant Coach; 18+ for Head Coach)*

Chaperone/Training Site Volunteer: Volunteer who supports a training site/team to cover the 1:4 ratio. Chaperones do not always help with sports training but may support a sport team through supervision and administrative support. (Class A) (Must be 16 & Older)

Head Coaches are expected to enforce these classifications.

Volunteer Eligibility: Volunteer Classifications



Volunteers who CANNOT supervise athletes and volunteers:

- <u>Unified Partner</u>: Volunteer that is 8-year-old and older who trains and competes alongside an athlete. (*Class A*)
- <u>General Volunteer:</u> Volunteer who assist **only** at local training site and has limited contact with athletes and only under the supervision of coaches. General Volunteers **do not** supervise, chaperone, or travel with the team to any competitions. <u>(Class B)</u>

Head Coaches are expected to enforce these classifications.

Be Prepared for the Season!



- Get everyone eligible.
- Understand and be aware of Air Quality risks.
- 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.

In-Season Communication



SOPA Communication

- SOPA is in the midst of a communication overhaul and will be rolling a new communication plan for the Spring Sports Season, here is what to expect:
 - All seasonal participants will get a Welcome to the Spring Season
 - O Bi-weekly communications will go out on regional level to ALL coaches with important deadlines, dates, updates and more
 - All participants who qualify for a statewide competition event will get a "Welcome to Summer Games" email which will highlight important updates and features for the games
 - Text Messaging SOPA will be utilizing Text Message notifications at all Statewide competition events and to promote sports sign ups; please don't unsubscribe and add this number to your contacts: 1-267-341-0663

Head Coach Communication Reminders

- Please be sure that you are communicating with all your assistant coaches going into the season and during – especially any new coaches!
- Please be sure that you are using the most to up to date contact information for your athletes and their guardians, this can be found in the trackers





Basketball is the only Spring Sport that is a qualifier to Summer Games.

 Qualifying events will be at Spring Sectionals.

Games Advancement slots per Sectional will be dependent on total number of slots at Summer Games and % of interest in advancing from each Sectional event.

SPRING

- Athletics
- Basketball
- Equestrian
- Gymnastics
- Swimming
 - Tennis

Spring Allocations



- SECTIONALS:
 - Basketball all Sectionals
 - Swimming at Eastern Spring Sectional (will be available on website)
- Summer Games initial allocations can be found on the SOPA website and will be shared with spring registration information. All additional requests should be submitted on your LOI.

Coaching Requirements



Coach requirements for training and competition:

Team Sports:

 Must have at least one (1) certified coach per team

Individual Sports and Team Individual Skills:

 Must have at least one (1) certified coach per 25 athletes



New: Certified Coach Thank-you boxes



We are pleased to announce that we will begin to send a thank you box to volunteers who complete or renew a coach certification!

- If you recently renewed your certification, don't worry! We hope to get a box to all existing certified coaches by 2026.
- Volunteers who are certified in multiple sports will receive just one box.

We hope that you find the items useful in your coaching. Questions? Reach out to us at volunteer@specialolympicspa.org.

Athlete as Coach



- Athletes can participate in sports in more ways than just an athlete.
- Prior to each sports season, SOPA provides seasonal webinars to any current/interested Athletes as Coaches to help them learn what is expected as a coach vs. an athlete and how to go about getting certified.
- In addition to athletes, these webinars are also for coaches, Team Leaders and other volunteers to better understand how they can support current/potential Athletes as Coaches.
- In the event an interested Athlete as Coach does not want to wait for the next webinar, here is the link to the recording of the most recent one: <u>Athlete as</u> <u>Coach Webinar</u>
- All interested Athletes as Coaches must fill out the Athletes as Coaches <u>request</u> <u>form</u> with approval from the head coach they would be working with. From there, they will be interviewed by their Regional Sports Director to determine if they are appropriate to attend a training school.
- Please contact Jordan Schubert at <u>jschubert@specialolympicspa.org</u> with any questions about Athletes as Coaches.

Swimming Updates



UPDATES



- Sports Management Team
- Rules updates
- Divisioning Rules & Guidelines
- Maximum Effort Rule (MER)
 - Sectionals vs states
- Competition Tips
- Brainstorm: Advanced Training/What help do you need?

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.
- Coaches needed to represent The Wilds, Northeast and Ridge and Valley Regions
- Request or recommend someone for a Sport Management Team
 - Sport Management Interest Form

Sport Management Team



Region	County	Name	
Northwest	Erie	Mark Eulanio	
Wilds		VACANT	
Susquehanna Valley	Columbia/Montour	Stacy Banyas	
Northeast		VACANT	
GLVPR	Bethlehem	Alice Moat - Sport Director	
Greater Philadelphia	Delaware	Kathryn McKeone	
Capital Area	Lancaster	Anne Phillips	
Ridge & Valley		VACANT	
Three Rivers	Lawrence Allegheny	Dan and Carrie Spencer Melody Geer	
Official	Tom Hilands (SG Committee)	Jeff Reitz (Certified official)	

Rule Book



https://resources.specialoly mpics.org/sportsessentials/sports-andcoaching/swimming



2024 Rule Updates



NGB: FINA is now World Aquatics

- combines all swimming-related events into one organization
- website: www.worldaquatics.com

Unified teams must have athletes and partners in the same age group.

- If any member of a team is between the ages of 8-13, the age range must be no more than 3 years.
- If any member of a team is between the ages of 14-17, must be no more than 5 years.
- If all members of a team are 18 and older the variance the age range should be no more than 20 years.

Markings: 2024 Rule changes will not be implemented at at this time

New Portal

- Volunteers can log into our new <u>Online</u>
 <u>Portal</u> (portals.specialolympics.org) to
 check and update their eligibility
 requirements.
- Any volunteer who has not logged into the new portal and needs support with claiming their profile can reach out to us at portalsupport@specialolympicspa.org.
- New volunteers: When a new volunteer registers in the portal, they will need to click on "Apply For More Roles" to sign up for the role of their choice (coach, chaperone, Unified Partner, etc.).





Portal = Coach Training Schools

- From Portal home screen Sign up for event Training School Registration
- In-person Training Schools will need to be scheduled for Swimming - contact your Regional Sport Director ASAP if there are coaches you need trained.
 - Feb 8 at (Susquehanna Valley Northumberland) Shamokin Area HS from 10am-1pm

Feb 22 (CAR - Lancaster) at the Lititz Rec Center main pool

I want to

from 4-7pm.

• Registration REQUIRED

closes 2 days prior

How to: Divisioning and MER



Divisioning Review



- Divisioning is the process to group athletes for competition based on three criteria: age, gender, and most importantly, ability. Divisioning is used for all Special Olympics sports to ensure fair, competitive, and empowering events.
- Within each division the minimum number of competitors or teams is three and the maximum number is eight.
- Guideline: Ability range should be no more than 15% difference
- See Special Olympics website: <u>specialolympics.org/divisioning</u> for a video and information about examples of divisioning

Process of Divisioning for Swimming:



- Step 1. Divide Athletes by gender.
- Step 2. Sort Athletes by age groups.

Ages Groups: 8-11, 12-15, 16-21, 22-30, over 30

Step 3. Sort Athletes by ability (submitted or preliminary times)

Step 4. Group the ranked athletes into divisions so that:

- the range between highest and lowest scores is less than the 15% guideline, and
- the number of competitors is more than three and less eight (also less than the maximum number of lanes).

(continued on next slide)

Resolving Divisioning Issues:



Step 5. If there are fewer than three athletes in a division:

 Step 5A: Modify Age Groups: Age groups may be broadened to achieve an equitable division of no less than three athletes.

If there are still divisions of fewer than three competitors or teams:

 Step 5B: Modify Ability Range: The ability range may be broadened beyond the 15% guideline.

If there are still divisions of fewer than three competitors or teams:

• **Step 5C:** Combine athletes/teams of different genders to achieve divisions with three to eight athletes, provided that it will not pose a risk to the health and safety of athletes to do so.

Where exceptions to these criteria are necessary, competition management makes a decision based with the goal of providing the most dignified, safe and challenging competition experience for each athlete.

Divisioning (cont'd):



- Full Special Olympics divisioning rules can be found in Sports Rules
 Article 1. Visit www.specialolympics.org then search for Specialolympics.org then search for Specialolym
- SOPA's Games Management System (GMS) can be used for divisioning and will auto division based on set criteria. The preliminary divisions are displayed in a way that allow athletes to easily be reassigned to achieve divisioning goals. Even if divisioning is done manually, the screens in GMS will help to check the divisions
- A document showing the steps in detail will be added to the Swimming Section of SOPA's Sports offered.

Maximum Effort Rule (MER)



Maximum Effort Rule (MER) will remain at 20% for Sectional competitions and 15% at 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.

IMPORTANT NOTE FOR STATE GAMES: For events with preliminary competition, the preliminary time will be used to division athletes for finals. It is the responsibility of the coach to submit an improved performance time, if the time recorded in the divisioning competition is not a true reflection of the athlete's ability. This adjustment should be made as soon as possible, but no later than the end of competition for the day.

AVOID MER Disqualifications



- Keep records of your athletes' event times at practices and competitions
- Make sure your athletes understand they should always swim their best at every event.
- Take times at practices during the year. Share these with athletes and parents – get focused on improved times.
- CHECK your entry information when you submit it, and double-check the delegation reports before the competition.
- Provide competition opportunities

How to: Competitions 101



More Competitive Opportunities



BASIC LEVEL COMPETITION:

Take a practice night and make it a competition.

 If possible recruit others (family members, school students, or volunteers) to come and compete.

Award with a certificate with events/times.

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL COMPETITION:

Host a "dual meet" by asking a neighboring team to attend races at your practice. Have an official attend to use proper start commands, and recruit timers to record results. Share results with coaches and athletes after the meet.

Competitive Opportunities ADVANCED LEVEL (Invitational)



Starting your plan

- Communicate with your Regional Sport Director
- Need more help/advice? Brainstorm with Swimming Mgt Team members - especially Anne, Alice, or Kathryn
- Locate a facility determine availability and accessibility, set a date
 - Hint: Check with schools, colleges, community swim teams
- Figure out who to invite: how many teams/athletes
 - are there venue limitations?
- What events will you offer?
- Establish a Competition Committee,
 - Hint: recruit parents to help!

Competitive Opportunities



Invitational (continued)

Get the details worked out:

- Develop an overall timeline for sending information to coaches, collecting entry information, preparing heat sheets, etc.
- Prepare the following:
 - Venue set up diagram and flow of competition
 - An equipment list, including what awards are needed
 - Volunteer position list
 - Day of event schedule (arrival, opening ceremonies, competition, etc)
- Recruit volunteers for timers, stagers, officials others?
- Is food needed? Consider length of meet, travel times

Competitive Opportunities



Invitation (continued)

Venue Set up and Competition Day:

- Schedule set up time the day before, if possible
- Registration area
- Signs
- Staging area
- Food
- Team seating area

COMPETITION TIME !!! HAVE FUN!!!

- Make sure you have a clean-up crew identified for the end.
- After the competition, recap with committee to review the event and identify improvements.



Holding a competition?

May 24:

Lancaster XL meet (200 yd events and longer)

If you are already planning to host a competition and wish to invite other athletes please drop info into the chat

Feedback Needed





Feedback needed

SOPA Coach Certification – basics of being a Special Olympics coach, focused on the sport-specific info:

- Stroke rules and teaching tips, working with athletes, where are available resources
- At least one certified coach per team, required to attend sectionals and state games. A second certified coach required if there are over 25 athletes.
- Recommend that ALL your coaches be certified.

What advanced training related to swimming would you like to have?

What other ways can the Sports Management Team can help?

Swimming specific Questions? Comments?



2025 Sectional & State Events



Sectional & State Events



- 2025 Western Spring Sectionals:
 - Carnegie Mellon University: April 12, 2025
- 2025 Central Spring Sectionals:
 - Saint Francis University: April 27, 2025
- 2025 Eastern Spring Sectionals:
 - Kutztown University: May 10, 2025







State Event



- Summer Games
 - Penn State University: June 5-7, 2025



Visit the SOPA Website for seasonal calendars with deadlines:

https://specialolympicspa.org/sports/competitions

Trackers & Athlete Performance Training



Tracker Updates



TRACKER- is now the ONE place to manage your team: Attendance, eligibility and event registration.

Every individual that signed-up for your training site via the Sign-Up form will appear on your Tracker.

TABS:

Instruction:

- Explains what is contained on each tab and what needs to be completed by the coach during the season.
- Includes total people count and verifies 1:4 ratio is being met.

Athlete/Volunteer:

- View Sign-ups, pull contact information, check eligibility
- Actions to take here complete LOI, track attendance

Sport Specific Roster:

- Manage roster, track athlete data throughout the season
- Actions to take here: assign roles for events, enter sport specific data required for events

APT Tracker

Tracker (Tab 1) - Instruction Tab

Training Site Info

						I .						
	ROSTER STATUS	ACTIVE ▼	Team Name	Lycoming C	ounty	Training Site	Faxon La	ines		Sport	Bowling	Γ
Tr	aditional/Unified	Traditi ▼	Training Site Lead Name	Lester Lone	r	Email				Cell Phone		
	Meets 4:1 Ratio	NO	# Athletes	41	#	Unified Partners	4	# General Volunteer	5			
	# Head Coaches	3	# Assistant Coaches	4	# Total He	ad/Asst Coaches	7	# Certified Coaches	7			

TRACKER COMPLETION INSTRUCTIONS:

Team Roster, Attendance & Competition Participation



Tracker:

This tracker is EXTREMELY IMPORTANT and the ONE place the Head/Assistant Coach/Site Coordinator will enter all KEY information for the season for each team/training site participant. Event LOI and registration will now be pulled directly from this form.

Populating Your Tracker:

Participants will automatically populate to your tracker when a SIGN UP form is completed for your site. Athletes and volunteers **MUST** complete the online sign up form. The participant data (Columns A - J) are **locked and cannot be modified**. **If you need someone removed from your roster or something is incorrect, you must reach out to your Regional Sport Director - they will be happy to update the form.**

Athlete / Volunteer Tab:

Columns A-J will populate automatically from the SIGN-UP form

 $\underline{\textbf{Eligibility:}} \ Column\ \textbf{I}\ will\ indicate\ \textbf{Eligibility}\ for\ participation\ as\ an\ athlete,\ coach\ or\ volunteer.$

* RED - indicates that an athlete, assistant/head coach is either missing or has an expired Required item(s), these are listed in Column J and are INELIGIBLE to participate until

Form Instructions

Tracker - Instruction Tab — APT instructions

TRACKER COMPLETION INSTRUCTIONS:

Athlete Performance Training

Below are the instructions on how collect and report your athletes health and fitness metrics if your team is participating in Athlete Performance Training. See tab labelled 'Af Tracker'. For more information on Athlete Performance Training and to sign up, visit https://specialolympicspa.org/apt.

Reporting Instruction includes:

- Instructions for data collection
- Instructions for data reporting

Key includes:

· Color- coded key to indicate ranges that athlete data falls into for: 6 Minute Run/Walk, BMI, and Blood Pressure (OPTIONAL)

Final Pre & Post Data Collection includes:

- Report athlete information
- Athlete Number: Automatically filled
- · First Name: Enter athletes first name
- Last Name: Enter athletes last name
- Age: Enter athletes age in years
- Gender: Enter athletes gender, M for male, F for female
- **Height:** Enter the height in inches (i.e. a 5 foot 6 inch tall athletes= 65 inches)
- Weight: Enter weight in pounds
- **Systolic Blood Pressure (OPTIONAL):** Enter the systolic bp number (top number)
- **Diastolic Blood Pressure (OPTIONAL):** Enter the diastolic bp number (bottom number)
- 6 Minute Run/Walk: Enter the 6 Minute run/walk test score
- ·BMI: Automatically calculated (based on the height and weight)
- •Nutrition: Enter the athletes answer from the nutrition question from the lifestyle survey
- ·Hydration: Enter the athletes answer from the hydration question from the lifestyle survey
- Physical Activity: Enter the athletes answer from the physical activity question from the lifestyle survey
- Compare are and post data using color coded key.



Tracker (Tab 2) - Athlete/Volunteer Tab Eligibility, LOI, Attendance



Eligibility - Red Event Interest -Yellow Attendance – Blue

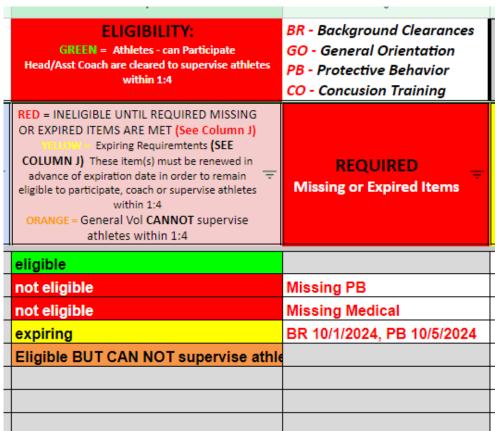
A, B, C are frozen and will remain as you scroll over



RSDs will sort alphabetically, if you would like a specific sort just ASK them!

Tracker - Athlete/Volunteer Tab (cont) Eligibility

- The ELIGIBILITY tab on each of your attendance trackers will be updated on a weekly basis from now - March 28 by your Regional Team. PLEASE encourage and assist your athletes and volunteers in meeting our eligibility requirements.
- The deadline to make sure athletes and volunteers meet eligibility requirements for the Spring is March 28th
- Athletes and Volunteer CANNOT participate in trainings if they have not met all eligibility requirements - it is <u>YOUR</u> responsibility to track this.



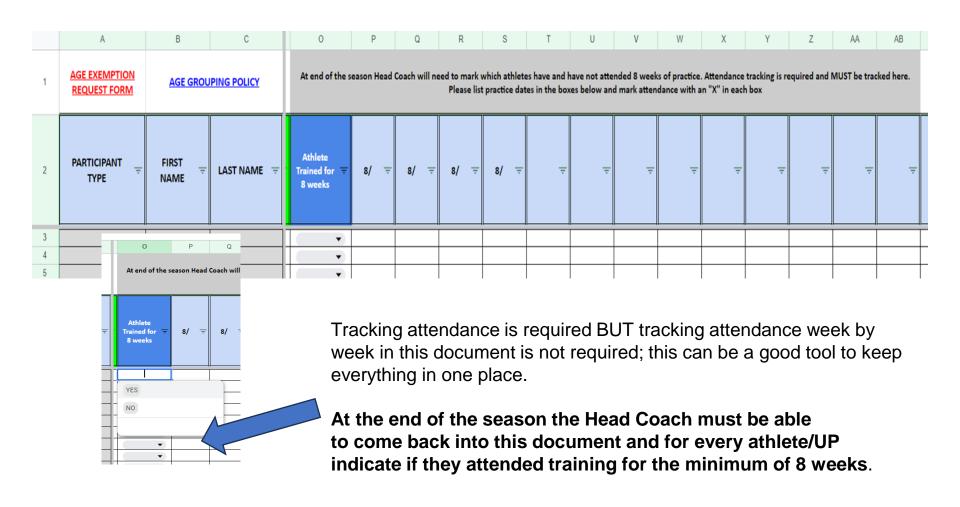
Tracker - Athlete/Volunteer Tab (cont)

				for your LOI - if ATHLI I an event mark with	
PARTICIPANT = Type	FIRST =	LAST NAME =	DEADLINE =	DEADLINES: Regional Bowling Event: 01/12/2025 This column due 12/28/2024	Deadline: \Xi
General/Sport Volunte	Gerald	Anderson	х	Х	
Athlete: Special Olymp	Timothy	Balzer	X	x	
Athlete: Special Olymp	Amir	Beckett	X	x	
Athlete: Special Olymp	Kevin	Boyles	X	х	
Athlete: Special Olymp	Sean	Brink	X	х	
Athlete: Special Olymp	Andrew	Butters			
Athlete: Special Olymp	Airik	Carey	X	X	
Athlete: Special Olymp	Jacob	Carey	X	X	
Assistant Coach: Help	Pamela	Carev	X	х	

Here is where you will complete your INTENT to participate in an event — indicating with an "X" for both athletes and volunteers

- LOIs will be collected in the same way these always have, this is just a place for you to keep track of who is interested in attending events.
- LOI request will come from your Regional team or Program Leadership

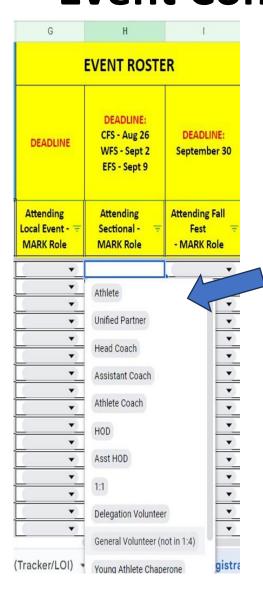
Tracker - Athlete/Volunteer Tab (cont) Attendance



Tracker (Tab 3) - SPORT Roster Tab Event Commitment and Registration



Tracker - SPORT Roster Tab (cont) Event Commitment



Select role for each individual attending the event (can not exceed the total # of your final allocations)



Once a selection is made you can pull down on the blue circle in lower right corner to copy that selection to cells below.

	G	Н
		EVENT ROST
	DEADLINE	DEADLINE: CFS - Aug 26 WFS - Sept 2 EFS - Sept 9
	Attending Local Event - = MARK Role	Attending Sectional - TMARK Role
	Athlete ▼	·
	Athlete ▼ Athlete ▼	· ·
_		• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •
-	Athlete ▼	· ·
-	Athlete ▼ Athlete ▼	· ·
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	Athlete Athlete Athlete Athlete Athlete Athlete Athlete	
	Athlete	
	Athlete	
	Athlete Assistant Assistant	
	Athlete Assistant Assistant Assistant	
	Athlete Assistant Assistant	

Tracker - SPORT Roster Tab Event Registration



Tracker (Last tab) - APT Data Collection Form



- We HIGHLY encourage you to add Athlete Performance Training to your practice routine.
- If opting in this is where you will keep the data collect during the season
- This is a great way to help the athlete set personal Health and Fitness goals and improve their overall well-being.
- Repeating the program allows athletes to see improvements season to season for those who have proviously participated and holps maintain health and fitness.





ATHLETE PERFORMANCE TRAINING

If you are looking to volunteer or learn more, please reach out to <u>Charla Stein</u>, <u>Healthy Communities Coordinator</u>, 610-630-9450 ext. 254.

THANKYOU THANKES!!! COACHES!!!

