LONG-DISTANCE RUNNING & WALKING

At-Home Guidelines for Training & Competition
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Coaches Guide to Training and Competition during Return to Activities: Phase A

As we head into Return to Activities the following requirements will be in place for a program to begin training:

**PHASE A: At-Home:**

- Individual sports will be allowed during the fall 2020 season.
- All athletes and Unified Partners with active SOPA medicals are eligible to participate in at-home training.
- No in-person competitions will be permitted during the fall 2020 season.
- All State competitions will be done virtually – including Fall Sectionals and Fall Festival.

**Coach Responsibilities:**

- Verify with Local Program leaders that all athletes have current medicals.
- You as a coach must be an active Class A volunteer.
- Conduct weekly training sessions to engage athletes, discuss health and fitness and prepare athletes for competition.
- Engage athletes virtually (see appendix)
- Engage athletes who do not have access to technology. (See appendix for ideas)
- Provide each athlete with needed equipment if they do not have access to their own.
- Instruct athletes on how to prepare their competition site to participate in virtual competition.
- Adhere to deadlines for competition information.

**Requirements for Phase A:**

To conduct at-home training and competition, Local Programs must adhere to the following:

- Prepare appropriate resources for safe at-home activities.
- Prepare participants for participation in training and virtual competitions.
- Share resources digitally and when necessary, mailings to activate participants virtually.
- At-home participants with COVID-19 symptoms must refrain from participating in activities and consult with a healthcare professional for further evaluation.
- Ensure that athletes and coaches abide by the Honor Code (see appendix).
• Athletes are required to work virtually with a Class A coach.
• Ensure athletes have the necessary equipment to conduct at-home training and competition safely.
• Ensure athletes have assistance in recording scores and preparing competition area.
• Adhere to deadlines for competition information.

LDR/W Training

**Description**
For individual sports, in Phase A, athletes will be able to compete in their regular events.

**Recommended and Substitute Equipment**
- Timing device: stop watch, wrist watch, phone, kitchen timer; GPS watch, smartphone app
- Measuring tool: measure baseline time (conversion chart available), walk distance then have someone drive and check with odometer, treadmill, local track

**Sample Training Plan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5-10 Min</td>
<td>Warmup/Stretch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Min</td>
<td>Skill Recap and Follow up</td>
<td>Prior to first training have meetings with the athletes to discuss a drill to work on. See how their development in that skill has come along.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Min</td>
<td>Fitness Work</td>
<td>Fitness Drills may include the Additional Drill examples in the Skills Guide. This can also be a good time to do a pushup challenge or something of that nature with your athlete.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Min</td>
<td>Nutrition Recap</td>
<td>Discuss the athlete’s nutrition over the time between meetings. Fit 5 is a great turnkey program that can give coaches and athletes nutritional guides.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Min</td>
<td>Drill to Work on Prior to Next Meeting</td>
<td>Identify drills that the athlete can do on their own in the time before the next meeting to improve their skills in anticipation of the upcoming competition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Min</td>
<td>Cool Down</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Business**
I like to keep notes on the upcoming training and competition schedule here.

It is great to have notes on pertinent information for the athletes and coaches.
Recommended Warmups

- Hip Circles - 25
- Arm circles – 25 front, 25 backwards
- Jumping Jacks – 25
- High Knees - Travel forward for 25 feet lifting your knees as high as possible. Turn and jog to the starting line.
- Butt Kicks – Start by jogging forward and try to hit your butt with the heels of your sneakers. Once you travel 25 feet, turn and return and jog to the starting line.
- Moving lunges - Start with your hands on your hips, step with your left foot forward, lean your body forward as you bend your left knee. Return to standing position by extending your left knee and bring your right foot to your left foot. Repeat this process until you have traveled 25 feet. Turn and jog to the starting line.
- Have the athletes perform 2 or 3 more warm-ups that will help them get their heart pumping.

Recommended Cool Downs

- Reach for the sky
- Side stretches
- V Sits
- Modified hurdles

Additional Drill Examples

- Plyometric drills
  - Wall sits
  - Air squats
  - Burpees
  - Jump rope
  - Plank
  - Jog 2 laps around the gym or playing field

Phase A Training Drills

- Step 1 Find fun ways of having your athlete practice at home:
  - Timed Run
    - Set a stopwatch for 5 minutes, have the athletes run wherever they like until the time runs out.
    - Increase the time every other practice.
  - Simon says
    - Start the athletes jogging
    - The coach will call different skills ex. Simon says sprint, Simon says
walk.
  - Just like the child’s game, once you catch them not doing the skill or you didn’t say “Simon Says” they sit until you have 1 winner.

- Slalom
  - Set out cones at different distances to represent other athletes on the course.
  - Have the athletes run to the cones and maneuver through the cones as quickly as possible without knocking them over.

- Square
  - Create a 12ft by 12ft square, use cones to mark the corners.
  - Have the athlete move cone to cone performing skills
    - Example
      - From corner 1-2 he athlete side steps,
      - From corner 2-3 the athlete sprints
      - From corner 3-4 the athlete jogs backwards
      - From corner 4-1 the athlete performs moving lunges
  - Once the athletes have accomplished the square add a activity to each corner
    - Example:
      - Corner 1 - 5 burpees
      - Corner 2 - 10 jumping Jacks
      - Corner 3 - 10 sit-ups
      - Corner 4 - 5 push-ups

**Long Distance Running/Walking Training and Competition**

**Description**

Athletes will train under the guidelines of SOPA’s Return to Activities Policy. For LDR/W the events remain the same, competition will be conducted at your home and results will then be compared to others across the state for divisioning and awards.

**Recommended Equipment**

- Timing device: stop watch, wrist watch, phone, kitchen timer; GPS watch, smartphone app
- Measuring tool: measure baseline time (conversion chart available), walk distance then have someone drive and check with odometer, treadmill, local track

**Virtual Competition Entry Information**

- Athletes and Unified Partners are allowed to enter up to three individual events.
- Athletes are not allowed to enter walking events and running events. They must select one method of movement for all of their track events.
• Qualifying scores will be due three (3) weeks prior to State level competitions.
• These scores will be used for divisioning and must follow the SOPA Honor Code.
• Coaches will Record and submit the athlete’s time in the chosen event(s)
  o 1500M Walk
  o 1500M Unified Walk
  o 1500M Run
  o 1500M Unified Run
  o 3000M Walk
  o 3000M Unified Walk
  o 3000M Run
  o 3000M Unified Run
  o 5000M Walk
  o 5000M Unified Walk
  o 5000M Run
  o 5000M Unified Run
  o 10000M Run
  o 10000M Unified Run
• There is a data collection form at the end of this guide that will help to compile the information during your practice.
• The Qualifying Score will be submitted to the Sport and Competition Coordinator/Regional Sport Director for submission.

**Phase A Competition**

• Athletes will be divisioned according to their Qualifying Scores.
• Coaches will submit final scores to the Local Program Sport and Competition Coordinator/Regional Sport Director by the established deadline.
• Final scores are due to the appropriate SOPA Competition Director by the Monday prior to the event.
• In adherence with the Honor Code, the same course must be used for divisioning and competition.
## LDR/W - VIRTUAL COMPETITION

At-Home data collection form

### AREA/COUNTY:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATHLETE/PARTNER NAME:</th>
<th>Athlete/Partner</th>
<th>Event 1: Time in HH:MM.SS.00</th>
<th>Event 2: Time in HH:MM.SS.00</th>
<th>Event 3: Time in HH:MM.SS.00</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Fall Sectional - 1st score**

Date completed:

**Fall Sectional - Final score**

Date completed:

**Fall Fest - 1st score**

Date completed:

**Fall Fest - Final score**

Date completed:

### TRAINING RECORD:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event 1 -</th>
<th>Event 2 -</th>
<th>Event 3 -</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- Date: Week 1
- Date: Week 2
- Date: Week 3
- Date: Week 4
- Date: Week 5
- Date: Week 6
- Date: Week 7
- Date: Week 8
- Date: Week 9
- Date: Week 10

Events include:

- 1500M Run
- 3000M Run
- 5000M Run
- 1500M Unified Run
- 3000M Unified Run
- 5000M Unified Run
- 1500M Walk
- 3000M Walk
- 5000M Walk
- 1500M Unified Walk
- 3000M Unified Walk
- 5000M Unified Walk
- 10,000M Run
- 10,000M Unified Run
All Special Olympics athletes want to compete fairly and know everyone is following the same rules. This is always important, but even more so now that many athletes are not competing in-person. For athletes who decide to participate virtually at-home, Special Olympics Pennsylvania (SOPA) has created the following Honor Code.

The Honor Code is a tool to let all athletes understand how to fairly compete virtually in Special Olympics Pennsylvania (SOPA). Fair and meaningful opportunities are the most important parts of SOPA competitions. Athletes and coaches must follow this Honor Code to make sure everyone can have a fair and meaningful experience in virtual competitions.

SOPA demonstrates a spirit of mutual trust and honesty. As an athlete I promise:

- I will only use one attempt to record my competition score, which is the same as when I compete in-person. Using more than one attempt to try and submit a better score is illegal and violates the rules of virtual competition.
- I will follow the competition rules for my sport.
- I will use the same course, field, court, and equipment for all parts of the virtual competitions.
- I will give my exact recorded time, distance, or score to my coach.
- I will follow all virtual competition rules provided by Special Olympics Pennsylvania.
- I will meet all deadlines to turn in my scores.
- I will give my best effort in training to try to achieve my best competition performance.

This Honor Code and the SOPA Code of Conduct outline how an athlete should train and compete in a virtual setting.

The “Virtual Competition Review Committee” will make sure athletes and coaches follow the rules of the Honor Code. The committee will consist of SOPA Staff and members of Local Programs, and will not tolerate any violation of the Honor Code.
The purpose of this Honor Code is to communicate the meaning and importance of athletic integrity to all members of the Special Olympics Pennsylvania (SOPA) community and to articulate and support the interest of the athletes and coaches in maintaining the highest standards of conduct in virtual competition.

SOPA embodies a spirit of mutual trust and honesty. As a coach I promise to:

- Give athletes one attempt to record their competition score as is done in-person. Providing multiple attempts to try and submit a higher score is illegal and violates the integrity of virtual competition.

- Follow and enforce the competition rules for each sport which includes calling any illegal attempt or violation.

- Have my athletes use the same course, field, court, and equipment for divisioning, as well as all virtual competitions.

- Submit the exact time, distance, score, or other performance measurement for each athlete for divisioning and all competitions.

- Follow all virtual competition guidelines and standards provided by Special Olympics Pennsylvania.

- Meet all deadlines for submission of scores.

- Ensure the athletes I coach have the proper equipment and practice facilities which provide them with the best opportunities to succeed.

This Honor Code summarizes the expected standards of conduct in virtual athletic competitions. The Honor Code is an addendum to the existing SOPA Code of Conduct to ensure equality in competition during any time in person competitions cannot be offered.

The Honor Board is the organizational body charged with enforcement of the Honor Code. The Honor Board will consist of state level Competition Staff and select members of Local Programs, and will not tolerate any violation of the Honor Code.
“HOW TO”
ENGAGE ATHLETES IN A VIRTUAL SETTING

This is a moment of high anxiety, grief, and trauma for many of our athletes. As a coach, you have the opportunity to support your athletes through this difficult time through your support and love for our athletes. Below are guidelines and suggestions for ways to interact and engage our athletes over your preferred video conferencing tool.

Schedule out your meetings
- Just like your in person training, plan out the virtual training with your athletes. There is a sample Phase A plan in the Sport Specific Guidebooks, please adapt that sample to fit your needs.
- Acknowledge each athlete when they log on, address them by name and make sure they know you are glad to see them.
- Ask questions that acknowledge the situation, while also providing a sense of hope and something to look forward to.

Establish team support
- Set normal expectations for each of the virtual training: no phones or other devices that could distract the athlete or group, when someone is talking be are actively listening, develop responses from the group to positively support their teammates.
- When an athlete says something positive or encouraging to a teammate, pause to highlight that behavior.

Celebrate every little thing
- Just like when you are in person, you want your athletes cheering each other on.
- When meeting remotely, try to include activities that engage the athletes and set them up for success (garbage can basketball, soccer dribbling, pushups, etc.).
- Many of our athletes are dealing with challenges away from Special Olympics. Discuss those challenges at your meetings and be proud of how they are working through those challenges.

Focus on the skills
- Training the athletes through this virtual experience will take some creativity. In your meetings, adjust your camera so the athletes can watch you model a skill or drill. You can also have the athletes lead a skill or drill during training as well.
- Keep up their (and your) fitness. Lead your athletes through some basic exercises that they can do at home. You can set goals to reach from meeting to meeting, like 10 pushups without stopping, so the athletes can work toward that goal outside of your meeting time.
Set the example
- Be a role model for how you want your athletes to interact. Be mindful that social cues can be read differently on a virtual platform.
- Do the activities with them. Don’t be afraid to fail in front of your athletes. It is great to show your athletes that it is ok to struggle as long as you are improving.
- Talk to your athletes about how you manage your time. Be honest about how these times can be challenging, it’s ok to feel flat, lethargic, and unmotivated from time to time - but focus on the time you have together to be high energy and productive.

Be Coachable
- Talk to other coaches about what they are doing to engage their athletes.
- The best coaches are the best thieves, use other people’s ideas to engage the team.
- Learn about other platforms that you can interact with your athletes on. See what they are using, research those platforms, and use them if you believe it is an appropriate format.
## OPTIONS FOR TWO-WAY VIDEO CHAT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Participants Allowed</th>
<th>Time Limit</th>
<th>Option to Record</th>
<th># of People on Grid View</th>
<th>Breakout Rooms</th>
<th>Join Without Account</th>
<th>Setup</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zoom</td>
<td>Free (Basic Plan)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>40 Min. (unless and Edu Account)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Up to 49</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Link</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skype</td>
<td>Free (up to 100 HR/month)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>4 Hrs.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Up to 25</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Link 1, Link 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook Messenger</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>No Limit</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Up to 8</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Link 1, Link 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microsoft Teams</td>
<td>Free (Basic Plan)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>No Limit</td>
<td>For a Fee</td>
<td>Up to 9</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Link 1, Link 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### PROS
- **Zoom**: Popular. Many already use
- **Skype**: Good mobile platform
- **Facebook Messenger**: Easy to use. Many on Facebook
- **Microsoft Teams**: Many using for work

### CONS
- **Zoom**: Poor security: must use passwords
- **Skype**: Desktop version not as strong
- **Facebook Messenger**: Facebook account required
- **Microsoft Teams**: Not as easy if not familiar w/Microsoft
“HOW TO”
ENGAGE ATHLETES WITHOUT COMPUTER/INTERNET

We understand that not all athletes have access to a computer or internet, therefore we created this guidance to support coaches in engaging their athletes.

ATHLETES WITHOUT CELL PHONES

Mail Printed Resources
- Create training plans that can be printed and mailed
- Print and mail competition instructions from Sports Specific Guidance
- Work with assistant coaches and Unified partners to print and mail

Home Phone calls
- Contact athletes as often as you can
- Communicate instructions and weekly expectations to athletes

Socially Distant Visits
- Work with assistant coaches and Unified partners to print and deliver to athletes
- Work with athletes and caregivers to have a central packet pick-up location
- Ensure all are utilizing proper PPE and following social distance guidelines (minimal of 6”) when delivering
- No materials should be re-shared or exchanged

ATHLETES WITH CELL PHONES

Cell Phone Calls
- Call athletes with weekly practice plan and expectations
- Be cognizant of athletes phone plans so they do not incur additional charges
- Utilize assistant coaches and Unified partners to make phone calls
- Use conference call function on cell phone to connect multiple athletes on one call

Conference Calls
- Utilize a free conference call line so athletes can call in during training session
  - FreeConferenceCall.com
  - Google Meet
  - Zoom
Social Media Platforms
- Use social media platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook or Google
- WhatsApp uses less data than Facebook or Google
- Create a Closed Facebook Group for your team

Text Messaging
- Use SMS to send training plans
- Use plain text instead of attachments when emailing. Plain text is easier to access and requires less data (therefore, less money), so consolidating content into the email body using plain text rather than attaching a .pdf is preferable