

# Athlete Leadership Updates and Q & A

Saturday, August 26<sup>th</sup> from 4:15 – 5:30 PM  
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***Special Olympics***  
*Pennsylvania*



# Athlete Leadership Self Evaluation Survey



- Purpose was to find out which Athlete Leaders are active, what are some things that they are proud of, what are some road blocks preventing them from being successful and what they hope to accomplish as an Athlete Leader in the future.
- Will be conducted on an annual basis meaning each year from 2017-2020.
- Will allow Special Olympics Pennsylvania to better track current Athlete Leaders, including periods of transition.
- Goal is to compare the responses from each year and see what trends exist.
- Help Special Olympics Pennsylvania decide what we should focus on specific to Athlete Leadership within the next Strategic Plan in 2021.

# Athlete Leadership Self Evaluation Survey Results



- Open from January to March, 2017.
- Completed by 53 Athlete Leaders from 38 of Special Olympics Pennsylvania's 56 Local Programs.
- Common responses when asked about road blocks were:
  - Lack of support from Local Program
  - Transportation (Not being able to drive and/or little/no public transportation available)
  - Work/School Schedule
  - Communication (Lack of phone and/or e-mail access at home)
  - Not having a committed Mentor/Not having a Mentor at all
- All Athlete Leaders had positive responses about their overall experience as an Athlete Leader.
- 75% of the respondents wish to continue their Athlete Leadership University education.

# Games Organizing Committees



**Because of the barriers, listed below are “solutions” if no Athlete Representatives (noncompeting or competing) are available:**

## Other Choices:

- Athlete Representatives meet with Games Organizing Committee members between meetings in person or via video chat.
    - This allows for Athlete Representatives to provide input on different topics and take on tasks that can be managed outside of meetings (Example: Managing Social Media Page(s))
  - Noncompeting Athlete Leader (Global Messenger, Athlete as Coach or Health and Fitness Coordinator)\*
  - Competing Athlete Leader (Global Messenger, Athlete as Coach or Health and Fitness Coordinator) \*
    - Athlete Leaders assigned to subcommittee specific to their skill set.
  - Non Athlete Leader (Non or Competing) \*
- \* Provide some sort of training / documentation to the “Other Choices” so that they are prepared to take on their role.
- \* If the “Other Choices” wanted to pursue a larger role within the GOC, AR I is required.

# Athletes as Coaches



## **Coaching vs. Competing:**

- Athletes serving as coaches may not coach and compete in the same sport.
- Athletes serving as coaches may not compete in other sports taking place in the same season as the one they're coaching.
- If Athlete as Coach may return as a competitor for that sport/season the following year.
- Athletes serving as coaches may compete in sports outside of the season they are coaching.

## **Coach Requirement:**

- Completes required background checks.
- Completion of General Orientation, Protective Behaviors and Concussion training.

## **Certified Coach Requirement:**

- Attend a SOPA training school to become certified.
- Take "Continuing Education" once every three years after certification.

# Athletes as Coaches Continued...



## Chaperoning:

- Athletes as Coaches CANNOT chaperone other athletes.
- This is a policy enforced by Special Olympics International to ensure athletes' safety.
- Athletes as Coaches are to be included within the 4:2 ratio.
  - This means Athletes as Coaches are included within the 4:1 ratio as both an athlete and as a coach.

**For any other questions, please review the Athletes as Coaches Q & A:**  
[http://specialolympicspa.org/images/Athlete\\_Leadership/Frequently\\_Asked\\_Questions\\_and\\_Answers.pdf](http://specialolympicspa.org/images/Athlete_Leadership/Frequently_Asked_Questions_and_Answers.pdf)

# SOPA's Dating Policy



In the case of a SOPA athlete who is also a staff member or volunteer, the President & CEO must evaluate the circumstances on a case-by-case basis and determine if an authority relationship exists between the staff/volunteer athlete and the non-staff/volunteer athlete, and if it is determined that there is such a relationship, then apply the above policy in the same manner as the policy is applied to non-athlete staff or volunteers.”

# Priority vs. Exclusive Consideration



**As more Athlete Leaders are trained each year, Special Olympics Pennsylvania has developed a way to consider Athlete Leaders for different opportunities:**

- **Priority Consideration:** Opportunities will be given to Athlete Leaders that have completed a specific Athlete Leadership University course(s), however, exceptions can be made if there are not enough Athlete Leaders that meet the qualifications.
- **Exclusive Consideration:** Opportunities ONLY given to Athlete Leaders that have complete a specific Athlete Leadership University course(s).

**NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE.**



# Examples Considered “Priority Consideration”



**Opportunities where Special Olympics Pennsylvania can make exceptions if there are not enough Athlete Leaders that meet the qualifications.**

- **Serving on a Games Organizing Committee at a Sectional or State competition:** Priority Consideration given to athletes that have taken Athlete Representative I/II not competing in the event.
- **Co-Emceeing Opening Ceremonies at a State Competition:** Priority Consideration given to athletes that have completed Global Messenger II and are competing in the event.
- **Conducting Athlete Input Surveys at a Sectional or State Competition:** Priority consideration given to athletes that have taken Athlete Representative I/II and/or Global Messenger I/II not competing in the event.

# Examples Considered “Exclusive Consideration”



**Opportunities where Special Olympics Pennsylvania WILL NOT make exceptions.**

- **Attending Athlete Congress:** Exclusive Consideration given to athletes that have completed Athlete Representative I/II.
- **Being Nominated as a Sargent Shriver International Global Messenger:** Exclusive Consideration given to athletes that have completed Global Messenger II and meet additional qualifications specified by Special Olympics Pennsylvania.
- **Instructing Athlete Leadership University Courses:** Exclusive Consideration given to athletes that have completed a specific course and meet other qualifications specified by Special Olympics Pennsylvania.



# Athlete Leadership Questions & Answers.

Athlete Leadership Self Evaluation Survey  
Athletes as Coaches  
SOPA's Dating Policy  
Priority vs. Exclusive Consideration  
Other???