



**Special
Olympics
Pennsylvania**



ATHLETICS

**PRE-SEASON
WEBINAR**

SPRING 2026



Today's Agenda

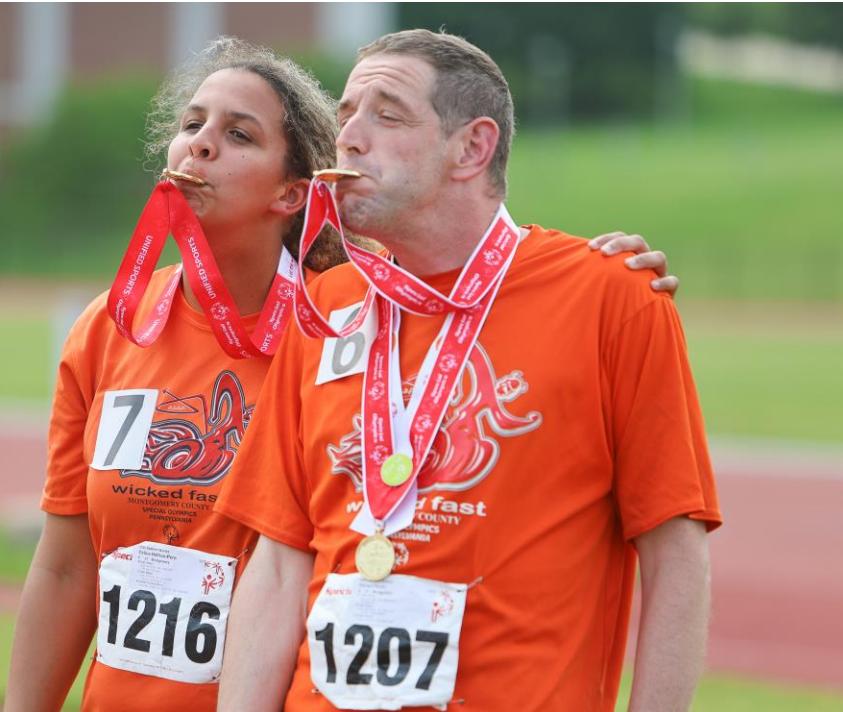


- Welcome/Introductions
- Athletics Rule Updates
 - Competitions
 - Divisioning
- Seasonal Reminders
- Sectional & State Events
- Questions

**Special
Olympics
Pennsylvania**



ATHLETICS UPDATES





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.
- Virtual meetings at the beginning of the spring Athletics season and late summer for the fall LDRW season.
- Occasional email/short meeting as needed
- We are looking for requests or recommendations for the Athletics/LDRW Sport Management Team to fill the vacancies.
- Visit or share this interest form:
 - [Sport Management Interest Form](#)

Technical Delegate



Scott Otterbein

Athletics and Long-Distance Running/Walking
Sports Director

Tom Robinson

SOPA Sport Director
Northeast Region





Sport Management Teams

Current roster

- Region 1 – Heidi Long (volunteer), Amanda MacIsaac (volunteer) & Lawrence Smith (athlete)
- Region 2 – Rob & Christine Masters (volunteers) **Need athlete rep**
- Region 3 – Lester Loner (volunteer), Burdett Porter (volunteers), & Melissa Brandt (athlete)
- Region 4 – Frank Passetti (volunteer) **Need to verify athlete rep**
- Region 5 – **Need both reps**
- Region 6 – Tom Delaney (volunteer), Ernie Roundtree (athlete), & Chip Tamagni (athlete)
- Region 7 – Marge Ulrich (volunteer) & Kyale Tulos (athlete)
- Region 8 – **Need both reps**
- Region 9 – Mary Aiello (volunteer) & Logan Aiello (athlete)

The Rule Book!



2024 SOI Athletics Rule Book

Rule Changes

- Standing Long Jump
 - The take-off line shall be placed at the nearer edge of the landing area (pit).
 - The take-off line can be marked by a colored tape or permanent white line.
 - The competitor shall initiate all attempts from behind the take-off line.
 - [2024 Rule Change Summary](#)





2024 Updated Rules

Unified Relays

3.8.3 The athlete to Unified partner ratio must be two (2) athletes to two (2) Unified partners in Unified Relays

3.8.4 It is required that athletes and Unified partners are of similar age, and it is preferred that athletes and Unified partners are of similar ability for Relays.

- under 18 within 3 years of another
- over 18, ideally within 10 year, but not over 20 years apart



Honest Effort Rule (HER)

Remember to :

- Accurately time your athletes
- Check the distance of the course your participants are using to ensure it is the correct distance
- Use a competition like setting when gathering entry times
- It is important to record times with distances
- Athletes have received DQ ribbons that could have been prevented
- Use the "Score Update" form in the last week before tournaments to change times or distances



Outdoor Weather

Every time you see lightning or hear thunder



Stop practice and take shelter for 30 minutes!

Remember every time you see lightning
or hear thunder!

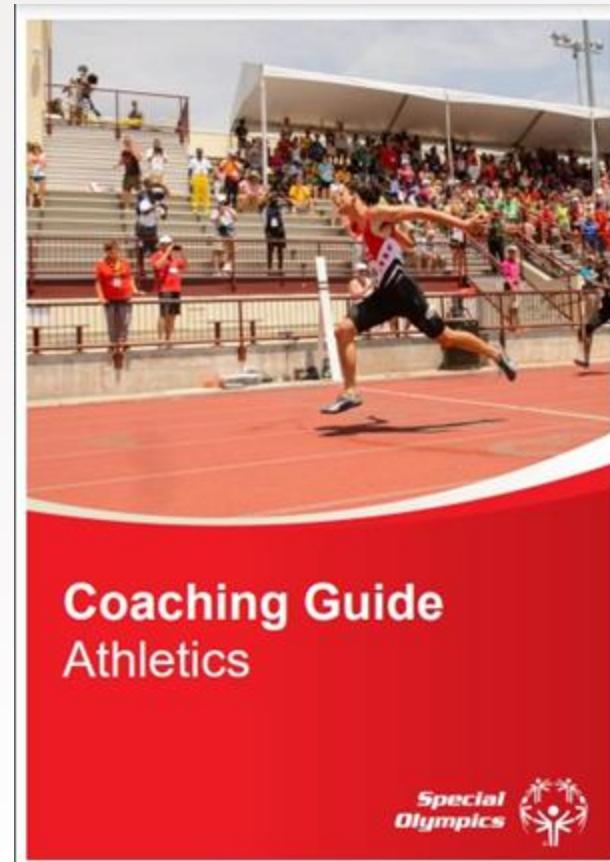


SOI Coaching Guide



SOI Athletics Coaching Guide

- Great resource for track basics
 - Interval training ideas
 - Speed work
 - Technique – running and field events



SOI Coaching Guide



- Key Skills Checklist
- Training Drills for each skill
- Top Coaching Tips
- Training to Improve techniques
- Includes these categories for every skill/event
- Includes training plans for middle – long distance events

Middle Distance Key Skills Checklist

Your Athlete Can

- Run longer distances (400m/800m/1500m)
- Pace self (or can learn)
- Demonstrate speed, strength and endurance
- Maintain erect posture with hips tall
- From the back of the foot, roll through the ball of the foot and push off
- Show spring, rhythm and light touch in foot action
- Have controlled, relaxed arm action
- Keep shoulders not hunched and elbows tucked in
- Keep body relaxed and moving efficiently

Training Drills for Sprinting

Drill	Skips	Purpose	Develop quick leg action Develop consistency in proper foot strike
Reps:	3x30m	When to Use	Warm Up
Teaching Points			
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Take hips tall position2. Bend and drive one leg up3. Extend leg from knee4. Drive leg down on ball of foot.5. Alternate legs every other skip.6. Jog back to start7. Repeat.			
Points of Emphasis			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Heel drive to buttocks



SOI Coaching Guide

TRAINING TO IMPROVE TECHNIQUE - RELAYS

Observation	Correction by coach	Drill/Test
Incoming runner runs into outgoing runner	Outgoing runner may need to start running sooner. Outgoing runner may not be standing close to the correct side of the lane	Correction of starting position. Repetitive practice building to full speed.
Exchange happens outside of zone	Outgoing runner may need to start running later	Practice with incoming runner shouting command at same spot. Tip: Use a mark on the track.
Incoming runner has difficulty putting baton in outgoing runner's hand	Receiving arm position must be at correct height and angle Athlete practices holding the receiving arm steady.	Outgoing runner needs to be aware of how the arm is held using proper form. Outgoing runner can focus on strengthening exercises to hold arm in correct position.

TOP TIPS FOR COACHING THE TAKE-OFF IN LONG JUMP

1. Demonstrate single leg take-off.
2. Always take an odd number of strides in the approach.
3. Begin with a three- or five-stride approach. As the athlete's skill and strength improve, progress to nine strides.
4. Remind the athlete to always take first stride with take-off foot.
5. Practice often. Move the start point back until your athlete has a consistent approach.
6. Emphasize strong extension of take-off knee and ankle.
7. Emphasize vigorous lift and drive by opposite knee and arm.





Change Things Up!

Consider diversifying your athlete events.

100-meter, javelin and shotput are very popular but make for long lines and many divisions

- Consider the 200/400/800/jumps
- Consider Unified relays – 4x100, 4x200 or 4x400
- And the 4x100 walking relay is an option
- Pentathlon



HOW TO: DIVISION 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: specialolympics.org/divisioning for a video and information about examples of divisioning



Process of Divisioning for Athletics:

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 than 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 **Special Olympics Sports Rules Article 1**. Divisioning rules are in Section 10.
- 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 re-assigned 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 SOPA's Sports offered page.

Honest Effort Rule (HER)



Honest Effort Rule (HER) can also be referred to as the Maximum Effort Rule (MER) is 25% of an athlete's entry time.

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 HER Disqualifications

- Keep records of your athletes' event times at practices and competitions
- Make sure your athletes understand they should always perform at their best during every event.
- Take times at practices during the year. Share these with athletes and parents –set goals, 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

GOAL = 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 Athletics Mgt Team members - especially Scott and Tom
- Locate a facility - determine availability and accessibility, set a date
 - *Check with high schools and colleges*
- 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.)
 - Divisioning (Regional Sport Directors can help)
- Recruit volunteers for timers, stagers, officials - others?
- Food – if not able to get donated have athletes bring a packed lunch from home

Competitive Opportunities



Invitation (continued)

Venue Set up and Competition Day:

- Schedule set up time the day before, if possible
- Registration area
- Signs
- Staging area
- Concessions – sell goodies to raise \$ for your team (ask families to donate so there is no cost to your program)
- 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.

Local & Invitational Events



Share all events with your Regional Sports Director – we are building a comprehensive calendar that will be public facing this spring!!!

- Date, location, time, participating teams, etc.

Keep costs low:

- coaches/families provide transportation
- Pack your own food
- All cost associated with attending/hosting need to be pre-approved

Ask for help:

- Ask people to volunteer, great way to bring NEW people into the program
- Regional Sport Directors and HQ Competition Team are here to support your local events – we can help with planning checklist, event schedules, divisioning, official recruitment, etc.



Holding a competition?

**Holding a competition that others could attend –
DROP details into the chat.**

- Your Program
- Date
- How many additional athletes can you accommodate
- Who to contact





SEASONAL REMINDERS



Season at a Glance

SEASONS AT A GLANCE		FALL SEASON	WINTER SEASON	SPRING SEASON	SUMMER SEASON
Training Site Registration (see link below)	April 1 - May 1	August 1 - Sept. 1	Nov. 1 - Dec. 1	March 1 - April 1	
Athlete, Unified Partner, Volunteer Signup	May 15 - July 15	Sept. 15 - October 15	Dec. 15 - Feb. 15	April 15 - May 15	
Season Length	August 9 - Nov. 3	Nov. 1 - March 8	March 14 - June 7	June 1 - Sept. 15	
Eligibility Deadline	August 23	December 20	March 28	June 20	
Sports Offered	Bocce, Flag Football, Long Distance Running/Walking, Powerlifting, Soccer, Volleyball, Walking Clubs	Alpine Skiing, Bowling, Figure Skating, Floorball, Snowboarding, Snowshoe, Speed Skating, Walking Clubs	Athletics (Track & Field), Basketball, Equestrian, Gymnastics, Swimming, Tennis, Walking Clubs	Golf, Softball, Walking Clubs	

- **Sign-ups Athletes and Volunteers - CLOSE February 15**
- Everyone MUST complete a Sign-Up Form.
- Athlete Sign-up forms will NOT be available after **Feb 15**; those needing support after this date must contact Regional Sport Director and will be managed on a case-by-case basis.
- Season officially begins March 14, although sites seeking pre-approval may begin training at an earlier date
- Seasonal Eligibility/Age Group Exemption deadline – March 28

In-Season Communication



SOPA Communication

Stay Informed & Supported: Expect communications throughout the season.

Welcome Message: All participants receive a "Welcome to the Spring Sport Season" message.

Weekly Updates: Regional communications with important dates, deadlines, and more.

State Level Event Email: Qualifiers receive a dedicated email with vital updates.

Text Notifications: Event reminders & sign-ups. Add **833-321-0252** to contacts.

Head Coach Communication Reminders

Coach-Team Connection: The most important communication is between a head coach and their team! It's especially important to connect with new participants who may be nervous or uncertain of what to expect. Your welcoming presence can make their experience even better!

Communicate Continuously: Engage all participants (assistant coaches, athletes, families) before and during the season.

Sample Messages: Need a starting point? **Access sample messages here:**

<https://pdflink.to/847f44e3/>

Up-to-Date Contact Info: Always use current contact information found in the trackers.

Volunteer Eligibility



Volunteer Eligibility: Class A Volunteers ✓

Who is "Class A"? Coaches, Assistant Coaches, Unified Partners, Team Volunteers.

Required Items:

- **Background Check** (18+ volunteers)
- **General Orientation training** (16+ volunteers)
- **Protective Behaviors training** (16+ volunteers)
- **Concussion training** (16+ volunteers)

Important Note: Only Class A volunteers can attend overnight competitions.

Need Support?

Contact your **Regional Administrative Manager**.
Email us: volunteer@specialolympicspa.org

Resources for New and Interested Volunteers



- **Volunteer Guidebook:** Access detailed information on sports seasons, competitions, regions, and contacts at: specialolympicspennsylvania.org/images/2023/registration/special-olympics-pennsylvania-volunteer-guidebook-5.2.23.pdf
- **Monthly Info Sessions:** Learn about volunteering with Special Olympics Pennsylvania staff. These online sessions are held on the **fourth Wednesday of each month from 6:30 - 7:30 PM**. No pressure, no commitment!
- **Zoom Link:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/s/81791877620#success>
- **Or join by phone:** Dial +1 309 205 3325 (Meeting ID: 817 9187 7620)

Upcoming Dates:

- January 28th
- February 25th
- March 25th

No registration needed, just join!

Special Olympics Pennsylvania Portal: Volunteer Registration



- **Access the Portal:** Log in at portals.specialolympics.org to check & update your eligibility.
- **Need Help logging into your account?**
 - Contact us at:
portalsupport@specialolympicspa.org
- **New Volunteers:**
 - After registering, click "**Select your Volunteer Role**" to select your desired role (e.g., coach, Unified Partner).



Special Olympics Pennsylvania Portal: Athlete Registration



Athlete Registration: New athletes will need to register and complete a Health History & Release Form. Returning athletes may need to renew their Health History & Release form before or during the sport season.

Our Regional Admin Managers are actively reaching out to those who need new or renewing HHF. You can support by reminding athletes/families to complete this step, if needed!

- **Resources:** Find written & video guides on the [**"Become an Athlete" webpage.**](#)
- **Resource for athletes renewing their HHF:** [https://scribehow.com/viewer/How to Renew Athlete Forms and Update Medications a61u_s8UR6eOW97s0x5cHA](https://scribehow.com/viewer/How_to_Renew_Athlete_Forms_and_Update_Medications_a61u_s8UR6eOW97s0x5cHA)
- **Requirements:**
 - **Short Health History & Release Form** (initial screening).
 - If concerns arise, a more detailed **Medical Form** (with doctor input) may be required.

Note: If you already created an athlete account you **do not** need to create a new one! Health history forms are good for one year.

Special Olympics Pennsylvania Portal: Coach Zone



- **Coach Zone: Your Team Management Hub** 
- **Access:** Available to Head Coaches (and some key volunteers).
- **Features:**
 - View team member **eligibility status**.
 - Access **athlete Health History forms**.
- **Optional Resource:** You are **not required** to use it, but it is helpful to start getting used to navigating the Portal.
 - We still provide **eligibility trackers** and a "**Hot Sheet**" for Health History.
- **Athlete Registration:** Coaches should **only register an athlete as a last resort**.
 - Help athletes and caregivers navigate the process themselves.
- **Access Forthcoming:** If you're a Head Coach and don't have access yet, it's coming soon!
- **Video Guide:** [Watch the video guide](#); or here is a step by step walkthrough with screenshots: [Step by Step Guide](#)

Health History Summary



Primary Region	Primary Area	First Name	Last Name	Preferred Name	Date of Birth	Mobile Phone	Details	Summary	Religious or Other Objection	Do not Consent to Blood Transfusions.	Emergency Contact Name	Emergency Contact Mobile Phone	Emergency Contact Relationship
							-Behavioral, Mental, or Sensory Disorder: DMDD, anxiety, depression, loud noises,						Parent/Guardian
							-Behavioral, Mental, or Sensory Disorder: Anxiety around crying	-Asthma	No	No			Other Family
									No	No			Parent/Guardian
							-Behavioral, Mental, or Sensory Disorder: Autism,		No	No			Parent/Guardian
							-Behavioral, Mental, or Sensory Disorder: Anxiety	-Heart Condition	No	No			Sibling
									No	No			Parent/Guardian
							-Behavioral, Mental, or Sensory Disorder: Anxiety		No	No			Parent/Guardian
							-Behavioral, Mental, or Sensory Disorder: Anxiety, Claustrophobia, Sensitivity to loud noises		No	No			Parent/Guardian
								-Asthma	No	No			Sibling
							-Behavioral, Mental, or Sensory Disorder: Skin picking - anxiety with loud noises		No	No			Parent/Guardian

You are required to have this information accessible during all Special Olympics Pennsylvania practices and events.

You may access the spreadsheet electronically (e.g., on your phone or tablet) and are not required to print it if you can access it digitally.

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. If you don't already have your Tracker, please contact your RSD. The Trackers will be locked for editing until end of Sign-up period, after that time you are able to populate attendance and the sport specific data columns.

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

Team Sport Rating Form

- Must be completed for each TEAM at your training site, don't forget to complete top portion, providing ³⁹ level of your team

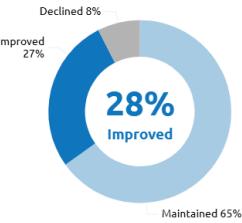
APT Tracker



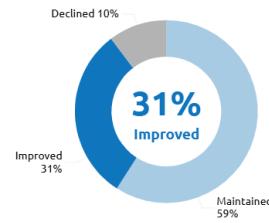
SOPA's Athlete Performance Training (APT) program has served nearly 600 athletes since Fall 2022!

A majority of high-risk athletes maintained or improved their health status!

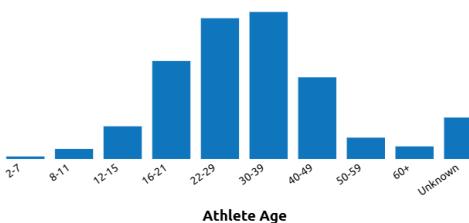
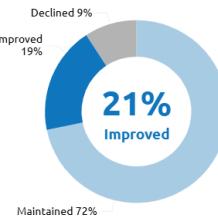
6-Minute Test



Blood Pressure



BMI



If you are looking to participate or learn more, please reach out to [Calvin Trisolini, Research Operations Manager](#), 610-630-9450 ext. 221.

You can also visit:
<https://specialolympicspa.org/apt>

Tracker (Last tab) - APT Data Collection Form



- We HIGHLY encourage you to add Athlete Performance Training to your practice routine.
- This is a great way to help the athlete set personal Health and Fitness goals and improve their sport performance.
- Repeating the program allows athletes to see improvements season to season for those who have previously participated and helps maintain health and fitness habits.



Homepage - Special Olympics PA

specialolympicspa.org

Apps | Microsoft 365 | SOPA | SOI | Other | Recruitment Materi... | Adobe Acrobat | Project ALL STAR | Calendly

Special Olympics Pennsylvania

ABOUT | SPORTS | BEYOND SPORTS | GET INVOLVED | EVENTS | SUPPORT

DONATE NOW!

THREE-PEAT!! Manheim Township is your 2025 Unified Track & Field State Champion!

IT'S A THREE-PEAT!!! Manheim Township School District wins back-to-back-to-back PIAA Unified Track & Field State Championships, becom...

READ MORE ...

Track & Field



Calvin Trisolini





TRAINING

Coaching Roles:



HEAD COACH:

- Certified in the sport
- Supervises all coaches and athletes
- Responsible for equipment, transportation, and lodging
- Develops **practice plans** and assigns duties to Assistant Coaches
- Ensure everyone at practice is actively eligible
- Completes all required paperwork (competition, training numbers)

ASSISTANT COACH:

- Assist head coach/help supervise athletes (1:4)
- Performs duties assigned by head coach
- Assist in evaluating training
- Arrives on time for practice/stays throughout practice
- Assists with uniforms, collection of medicals and taking attendance

Full position descriptions for both head and assistant coaches can be found here: **SOPA Website on the Resources/Training**
<https://specialolympicspa.org/resources>

Coaching Principles that EQUAL a great practice



1. Know your players

- How do you want to see each individual develop throughout the season
- Observation IS coaching

2. Focus on the BASICS

- Individual CORE skills – repetition is SO important
- Individual Game/Competition Understanding

3. MOVE IT, MOVE IT



Prepare: Build a Training Plan



- **Writing a Practice/Training Plan**
 - Pull from pre-existing resources (SOI Coaching Guide, SOPA Sports Offered page, National Governing Body/Sport- specific websites, internet)
- **Prepare prior to practice**
 - share with Assistant Coaches and assign who will run each aspect of practice. i.e.: taking attendance, running warm-ups, managing drill stations, etc.
- **Volunteers want to be useful** – it will help lighten your load and improve the experience at practice!

SOI Coaching Guide - great resource for developing a training plan, goal setting with athletes, warm-up drills, etc.

Key elements of a Training Plan



INDIVIDUAL



LEARN THE SKILL

30-40 minutes

Individual in COMBINATION with Teammates



USE THE SKILL

30-40 minutes

Cool Down

Coach give home practice drills

10 minutes

Certified Coach Requirement



- Certified Coaches are required for all sports.
- We encourage all coaches to become certified
- Certified Coaches are required for attendance at State level events.
- Each TEAM must have at least 1 certified coach; each individual sport must have 1 certified coach per 25 athletes

How to get Certified

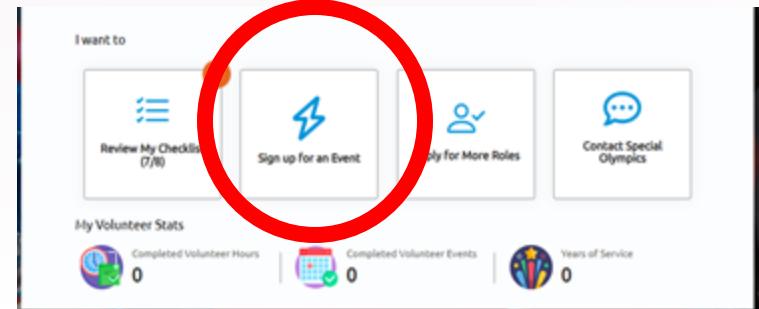


- **OPTION #1:** SOPA runs **Coach Training Schools** – these provide the rules of the sport and basic knowledge like development of training plans, to help you get started
 - Training school for **Athletics** is offered virtually. Visit the portal to see what is available or contact your RSD for more information.
- **OPTION #2:** Volunteers with a lot of sport-specific experience (coaching outside of SOPA, playing at a high level, officiating, etc) can apply for **Track 2 – Experienced Coach**

Register for Coach Training Schools



- From Portal home screen - Sign up for event – Training School Registration
- **VIRTUAL Training School** is available. If ANYONE needs trained please make sure they register and join.
 - **Saturday, February 28th 8:30am-12:00pm**
- Registration REQUIRED
 - closes 2 days prior



Athlete as a Coach



Athlete as a Coach: Empowering Our Athletes ☀

Program Overview:

- Athletes can become certified coaches.
- Requires Coaches Training School attendance & practicum.

Getting Started:

- **Approval Needed:** Regional Sport Director approval required (with head coach feedback).
- **Request Form:** Access here: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WZC14Ssl1silbBO_93WDmsaQq9-wmK3/view?usp=sharing
- **Registration:** RSDs register approved athletes (and support person) for training schools.
- *Note: Athletes should NOT self-register or create new volunteer profiles.*

Important Considerations:

- **Competing vs. Coaching:** Can coach one sport, compete in another (same season).
- **Playing during Training/Competition:** Yes, for demonstration in training; No, for competition.
- **Chaperone Role:** Not permitted; no background checks needed.
- **Ratio:** Part of the **4:2 ratio** (expected to manage themselves independently).
- **Required Trainings:** Complete General Orientation, Protective Behaviors, and Concussion trainings in online portal profile.
- *Assistance with portal profile: portalsupport@specialolympicspa.org*

Questions?

Contact: **Jordan Schubert**. Email: jschubert@specialolympicspa.org. Phone: 610-630-9450 ext. 236

Sportsmanship/ SOPA Code of Conduct



- The [SOPA Code of Conduct](#) should be reviewed with all athletes and coaches at the beginning of the season.
- It is the **Head Coaches job to ensure their coaches, team members and spectators are acting appropriately and managing the situation** if someone is not acting in accordance with this Code of Conduct.
- The Regional Teams can support in working with athletes, coaches, families if issues arise.

Sportsmanship Statement – for PA announcement prior to game/event



Special Olympics Pennsylvania and its constituents promote the highest ideals of good sportsmanship. Actions or language not in alignment with SOPA Code of Conduct or meant to demean participants, coaches, spectators, officials or SOPA staff will not be tolerated. Let today's competition reflect mutual respect. We request everyone's cooperation in supporting participants and officials in a positive manner. Offensive and unsportsmanlike language or conduct from anyone in attendance will not be tolerated and may serve as grounds for removal. Please respect our participants, coaches, officials, volunteers, and game administration with your cooperation to promote a safe, positive game environment. Thank you.

Safety & Preparedness: Key Reminders



Emergency Action Plans:

- Know your facility's Emergency Action Plan (EAP).
- Familiarize yourself with evacuation routes.

Weather Awareness:

- Monitor local weather conditions (e.g., lightning, extreme heat/cold).
- Understand protocols for moving indoors or rescheduling due to weather.

Health & Hygiene:

- Encourage athletes and volunteers to stay home if sick.
- Promote good hygiene practices (handwashing, covering coughs).

Equipment & Facilities:

- Ensure all equipment is safe and in good working order.
- Report any facility hazards immediately.

Staying Current:

- Regularly review updated sport rules.
- Work with Assistant Coaches on seasonal plans and task assignments.



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.



COMPETITIONS



Sectional & State Events

- Western Spring Sectionals:
 - Carnegie Mellon University: April 18, 2026
 - Event information shared Feb. 20
- Central Spring Sectionals:
 - Saint Francis University: April 26, 2026
 - Event information shared Feb. 27
- Eastern Spring Sectionals:
 - Kutztown University: May 9, 2026
 - Event information shared Mar. 13



Lunch at Sectionals



- FREE sandwiches are provided at Sectional events thanks to our great partner Sheetz.
 - These typically include turkey, ham, Italian or cheese sandwich.
- Sheetz is not able to safely and with confidence accommodate dietary requests
- **BEGINNING SPRING 2026 anyone with a dietary requirements must bring their own food to these events.**
- A bottle of water and snack such as chips or granola bar will also be provided.
- Anyone in need of additional food items throughout the day should bring it along with them. There are no guarantees that concessions stands or additional food to purchase will be available.

State Games – Summer Games



Penn State University: June 4-6, 2026

- We will be in East Dorms
- Findlay Dining Hall is up and running
- Parking at East Deck should be available

Registration information will be sent by April 10



Penn Relays



- **Thursday, April 23rd – 10am-2pm**
- Not SO sponsored event, but great opportunity with SO events
 - 100m – male/female
 - 4x100 Relay
 - 4x100 Unified Relay
 - Shot Put – male/female
- Great opportunity for local programs (community or UCS)
- All travel/meals are on your own
- Email with details will be shared soon
- Contact Michelle Boone:
mboone@specialolympicspa.org



World Games 2027



Santiago, Chile

Santiago will welcome more than 6,000 Special Olympics athletes from over 170 nations to compete in 22 Olympic-type sports at Santiago's state-of-the-art competition venues

We will know SOPA allocations by end of March, Fall Fest 2025 and IWG/Summer Games 2026 are the qualifying events for this opportunity.





THANK YOU

