

**Special
Olympics**
Pennsylvania



SWIMMING

**PRE-SEASON
WEBINAR**

SPRING 2026



Today's Agenda



- Welcome/Introductions
- Swimming Updates
- Seasonal Reminders
- Sectional & State Events
- Reminders
- Questions

SWIMMING UPDATES



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UPDATES



- Sports Management Team
- Rules updates
- Divisioning Rules & Guidelines
- Maximum Effort Rule (MER)
 - Sectionals vs states
- Competition Tips / Proposed New Schedule
- Advanced Trainings / Goal Setting

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 Regions!
- Request or recommend someone for a Sport Management Team
 - Sport Management Interest Form



Sport Management Team Members

Region	County	Name
Northwest	Erie	Mark Euliano
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	Franklin	Chris Roland
Three Rivers	Lawrence Allegheny	Dan and Carrie Spencer Melody Geer
Officials	Tom Hilands (SG Committee)	Jeff Reitz (Certified official)

Coach Certification Training

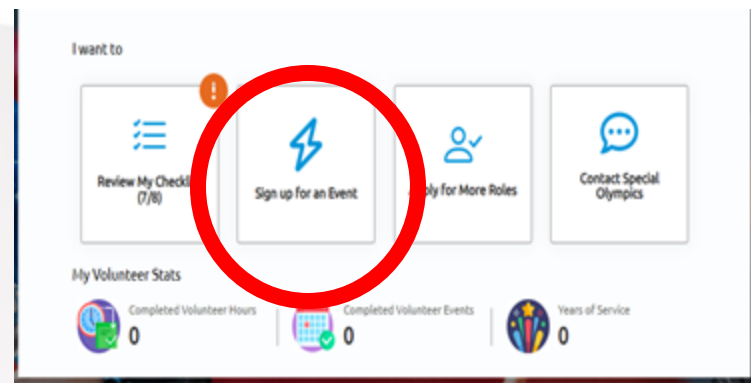


- Certification Requirements :
1 certified coach for every 25 athletes
- You must have a certified coach attending competitions with your team.
- **Good practice** to have all coaches become certified.
- ***Don't forget to update the completion of 10 hours in your portal record after taking a course.***

Special Olympics Pennsylvania Portal: Register for Coach Training Schools



- From Portal home screen -
Sign up for event –
Training School Registration



- Registration REQUIRED - closes 2 days prior to class
- 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 21 – Three Rivers, 3pm-6pm at LaRoche University Center
 - Feb 21 – Greater Phila., 9:00-11:30am at West Chester Univ.

Coach Certification Training



- Experienced swim coaches who are new to Special Olympics can apply for **Track 2 certification**.
- **We need more trainers!** If you are interested, please reach out to Alice Moat or Anne Phillips
- **Prerequisite for attending training sessions, but available to coaches now:**

The Michael Phelps foundation MPF Level 1 IM Coach course is on the Special Olympics Learning portal. The course is 45 minutes in length and shows excellent video clips of each swim stroke along with other great information for coaches.

Link to the training: <https://elearn.specialolympics.org/sports/learn>

Course name: Sport: Michael Phelps Foundation IM Level 1 Course

Sports Management Team



How can the Swimming Sports Management Team (SMT) help you?

*Got ideas? Add to chat or contact
one of the team members.*

Rule Book



<https://resources.specialolympics.org/sports-essentials/sports-and-coaching/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 for marking numbers on arms will not be implemented at this time



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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 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 **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 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 MER.

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

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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.

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?

- **Lancaster XL meet (200 yd events and longer): TBD – May 16th or 23rd**

ANY OTHERS?

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



Possible New Summer Games Schedule No Preliminary competition

Proposal:

Eliminate preliminary competition in 25 yd. & 50 yd. events, and allow swimmers additional individual or relay events.

Benefits:

- Logistical: all divisions are set before Summer Games- better info for teams ahead of time, and meet volunteers can focus on improving the competition

Possible New Summer Games Schedule No Preliminary competition



Benefits (continued):

- Swim Coaches and local programs have tangible reason to focus on time improvement through the season at practice mock races and local, regional and sectional competitions. ENTRY times need to be accurate to avoid MER disqualifications.
- Athlete Experience Centered: Athletes who have a wider event range can add another stroke discipline or distance. Athletes who can only do shorter distances or have stroke limitations have the option to compete in 2 relays at the 25 yd. Or 50 yd. Distance.

Possible New Summer Games Schedule No Preliminary competition



*Currently checking past data
to compare possible effects.*

**Discussion: We'd like to have
your input!**



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PRACTICE ORGANIZATION & GOAL SETTING



Goal Setting

Help athletes identify personal swimming goals, for example:

- Better times
- A new stroke or event
- Longer events
- Exercises/Fitness outside of swimming practice

Track improvements and share with athletes

Involve parents to help with goals

Celebrate achievements!

SOI template



Date: _____ Practice Length: _____ mins

Practice focus: _____

Warm Up: _____ mins

Aerobic Dynamic Stretches Basics and Conditioning

Transition Activity: _____

Drills/Skill Building: _____ mins

Notes: _____

Transition Activity: _____

Stroke Work: _____ mins

Notes: _____

Cool Down: _____ mins

Fitness Lesson of the Day: _____

Tips/Reminders for Athletes: _____

Coach's Reflection: _____

Sample Practice Plan



Date _____

Practice Focus: **STREAMLINE:** CORRECT ARM POSITION, PUSHOFF, KICK (FLUTTER OR DOLPHIN) 3 FREE STYLE STROKES

Dryland Warmup: 10 minutes then move to bleachers Led by Chloe and Coach Megan; Other coaches encourage athletes to perform exercises with correct form.

Demonstration Focus: 10 minutes

Drills/Skills: 20 minutes Coaches/helpers in water holding hoop. Get the swimmer to successfully push off with streamline and kick underwater, holding the streamline.

Lane Specific Work: 20 minutes

Coach	Lane 1: freestyle (with streamline)	athletes.....
Coach	Lane 2: freestyle (with streamline)	athletes.....
Coach	Lane 3: introducing breaststroke kick and arms	athletes.....
Coach	Lane 4: flip turns practice approach and recovery	athletes.....
Coach	Lane 5: New Athletes:	athletes.....
Coach	Lane 6: Backstroke: Lifting of hips, pointed toes on kick, arm/shoulder Many swimmers just flop arms back	
		athletes.....

Challenge of the Day: 20 minutes

Swimming a 25 free with a streamline start

Number swimmers 1-4. Coaches will observe each swimmer's streamline and record successes

Cool Down and move to bleachers for final thoughts



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SEASONAL INFORMATION



Season at a Glance

SEASONS AT A GLANCE



	FALL	WINTER	SPRING	SUMMER
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, Snowboard, 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: specialolympicspa.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/j/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
- **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,		No	No			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 level of your team
- **APT Tracker**

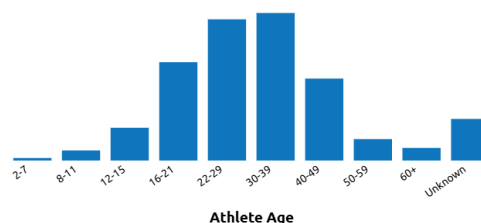


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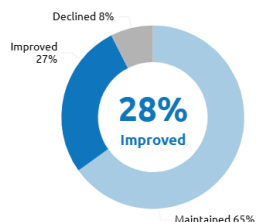


SOPA's Athlete Performance Training (APT) program has served nearly 600 athletes since Fall 2022!

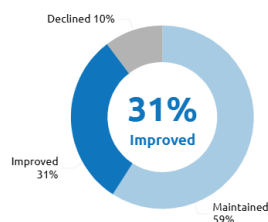
A majority of high-risk athletes maintained or improved their health status!



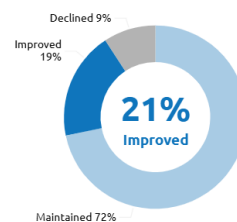
6-Minute Test



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


Key														
Blood Pressure Key						6 Minute Run/Walk Key				BMI Key				
Normal						Very Good		Developing 1		Underweight				
Elevated						Good		Developing 2		Healthy				
High Blood Pressure (Hypertension) Stage 1						Average		Developing 3		Overweight				
High Blood Pressure (Hypertension) Stage 2						Advancing		Developing 4		Obese				
Hypertensive Crisis														
Pre Data: First Training											P			
Gender	Age	Height in inches (pre)	Weight (pre)	Systolic BP (pre)	Diastolic BP (pre)	6 Minute Run/Walk (pre)	BMI (pre)	Nutrition (pre)	Hydration (pre)	Physical Activity (pre)	Height in inches (post)	Weight (post)	Systolic BP (post)	Diastolic BP (post)
							n/a							
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- 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


specialolympicspa.org


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

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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...

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TRAINING

Coaching Roles:

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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>

How to get Certified

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- **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 **Swimming** are offered as in-person courses within **your region** at the beginning of each season. 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](#)

Athlete as a Coach

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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/1WZC14Ssl1IsilbBO_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

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- 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 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

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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.



COMPETITIONS

Sectional & State Events

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- 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

*Special
Olympics
Pennsylvania*



- 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



World Games 2027

**Special
Olympics**
Pennsylvania



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 – Q & A

LET ME WIN

But if I Cannot win



LET ME BE

Brave in the Attempt