



***Special  
Olympics  
New York***

***Program  
Handbook***

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*Updated April 2021*

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# **Section I - Special Olympics New York**

## **Administration**

### **Board of Directors**

#### **Officers**

Ceylane Meyers-Ruff  
James Rosenstock  
Adam Merino  
Helen Squillace

Chair  
Vice Chair  
Treasurer  
Secretary

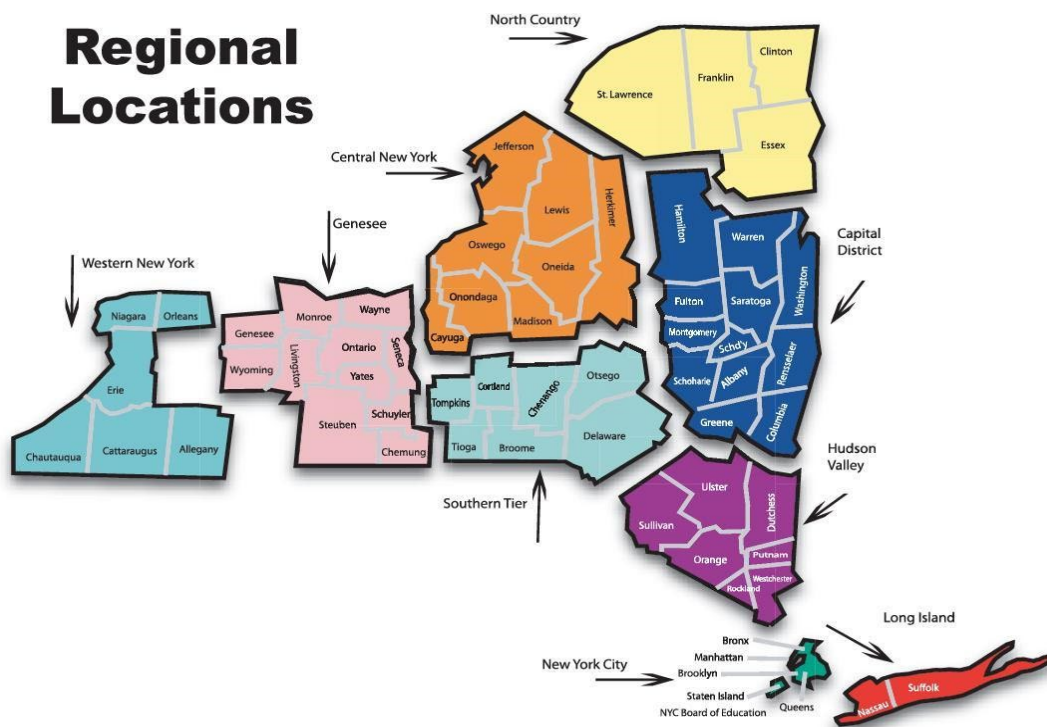
#### **Directors**

Rick Allen (LETR Director)  
Paul Asaro  
Kevin Brown  
Robert S. Cohen  
Mitch Cohen  
Joseph Belluck  
Anishah Cumber-Taj  
Heather Dwyer  
Rhonda Frederick  
Grace Hightower  
Raheem Haji  
David Keib  
Christopher A. Kus, MD  
Angelo Mazzone  
Kan Kotecha  
His Excellency Abdalla Shaheen

Stacey B. Hengsterman

President & CEO, Ex-Officio

# Regional Locations



**Headquarters**  
 94 New Karner Road, Suite 208  
 Albany, NY 12203  
 1-800-836-6976  
 Phone: 518-388-0790

**Capital District Region/  
 North Country Office**  
 94 New Karner Road, Suite 208  
 Albany, NY 12203

**Central Region Office**  
 6315 Fly Road  
 East Syracuse, NY 13057

**Genesee Region Office**  
 1 Grove Street, Suite 216  
 Pittsford, NY 14534

**Hudson Valley Region Office**  
 1207 Route 9, Suite 1C  
 Wappingers Falls, NY 12590

**Long Island Region Office**  
 560 Broadhollow Road, Suite 106  
 Melville, NY 11747

**New York City Region Office**  
 211 East 43rd Street, Suite 802  
 New York, NY 10017

**Southern Tier Region Office**  
 6315 Fly Road  
 East Syracuse, NY 13057

**Western Region Office**  
 2821 Wehrle Drive, Suite 7  
 Williamsville, NY 14221

Additional contact information can be found at: [www.specialolympics-ny.org](http://www.specialolympics-ny.org)

# Section II - Special Olympics Information

## **Mission Statement**

The mission of Special Olympics is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

## **Goal of Special Olympics**

The ultimate goal of Special Olympics is to help people with intellectual disabilities participate as productive and respected members of society at large, by offering them a fair opportunity to develop and demonstrate their skills and talents through sports training and competition, and by increasing the public's awareness of their capabilities and needs.

## **Founding Principles of Special Olympics**

The principles on which Special Olympics was founded, and which must continue to guide the operation and expansion of the global Special Olympics movement, include the following:

- People with intellectual disabilities can, with proper instruction and encouragement, enjoy, learn and benefit from participation in individual and team sports, adapted as necessary to meet the needs of those with special mental and physical limitations.
- Consistent training under the guidance of qualified coaches, with emphasis on physical conditioning, is essential to the development of sports skills, and competition among those of equal abilities is the most appropriate means of testing these skills, measuring progress and providing incentives for personal growth.
- Through sports training and competition, people with intellectual disabilities benefit physically, mentally, socially and spiritually. Families are strengthened and the community at large, both through participation and observation, is united with people with intellectual disabilities in an environment of equality, respect and acceptance.
- Every person with an intellectual disability who meets the eligibility requirements set out in these General Rules (found at [www.specialolympics.org](http://www.specialolympics.org)) should have the opportunity to participate in, and benefit from, the sports training and athletic competition programs offered by Special Olympics.
- Special Olympics must transcend all boundaries of race, gender, religion, national origin, geography, and political philosophy, and offer sports training and competition opportunities to all eligible people with intellectual disabilities in accordance with uniform worldwide standards.
- Special Olympics celebrates and strives to promote the spirit of sportsmanship and a love of participation in sports for its own sake. To that end, Special Olympics aims to provide every athlete with an opportunity to participate in training and competition events which challenge that athlete to his or her fullest potential, regardless of the athlete's level of ability. Special Olympics therefore requires that Special Olympics games and tournaments offer sports and events which are appropriate for athletes of all levels of ability, and in the case of team sports, provide every athlete with an opportunity to play in every game. Special Olympics encourages sports training and competition opportunities at the local, area and community level (including schools) as a means of reaching the greatest number of eligible athletes.

## **History of Special Olympics**

From a backyard summer camp for people with intellectual disabilities, to a global movement, Special Olympics has been changing lives and attitudes for more than 50 years.

### **1957**

Eunice Kennedy Shriver took over the direction of the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation. The Foundation, established in 1946 as a memorial to Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr.--the family's eldest son, who

was killed in World War II, has two major objectives: to seek the prevention of intellectual disabilities by identifying its causes, and to improve the means by which society deals with citizens who have intellectual disabilities.

### **First Steps**

Eunice Kennedy Shriver guided children with intellectual disabilities into sports at her Camp Shriver events, which were the predecessor to Special Olympics.

### **June 1962**

Eunice Kennedy Shriver starts a summer day camp for children and adults with intellectual disabilities at her home in Maryland to explore their capabilities in a variety of sports and physical activities. It was clear that people with intellectual disability were far more capable in sports and physical activities than many experts believed.

### **19-20 July 1968**

The 1<sup>st</sup> International Special Olympics Summer Games are held at Soldier Field in Chicago, Illinois, USA. 1,000 individuals with intellectual disabilities from 26 U.S. states and Canada compete in track and field and swimming.

### **1969**

Special Olympics makes its way to New York State!

### **December 1971**

The U.S. Olympic Committee gives Special Olympics official approval as one of only two organizations authorized to use the name "Olympics" in the United States.

### **5-11 February 1977**

Steamboat Springs, Colorado, hosts the 1st International Special Olympics Winter Games with more than 500 athletes competing in skiing and skating events. CBS, ABC and NBC television networks cover the Games.

### **1984**

On 24 March 1984, U.S. President Reagan awarded Shriver the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian award, for her work on behalf of persons with intellectual disabilities.

### **June 1981**

Wichita, Kansas (USA) Police Chief Richard LaMunyon launches a Special Olympics awareness campaign that becomes the Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics. The Torch Run grows into the movement's largest grassroots fundraiser.

### **1987**

In her opening address to the 4,000 athletes assembled at the opening ceremonies of the 1987 International Summer Special Olympics Games, Mrs. Shriver captured the meaning of Special Olympics.

### **July 1988**

Special Olympics Unified Sports® is launched at the annual Special Olympics Conference in Reno, Nevada, and Lake Tahoe, California. Unified Sports brings together people with and without intellectual disabilities on the same teams. Bowling, volleyball and softball are the first sports to be included.

### **20-27 March 1993**

The 5th Special Olympics International Winter Games are hosted in Schladming and Salzburg, Austria. These Games are the first International Games held outside the USA.

**July 1998**

Special Olympics celebrates its 30th anniversary with the introduction of the first Sargent Shriver International Global Messengers. These 12 remarkable men and women travel the world as spokespeople for the rights and respect for people with intellectual disabilities over a two-year term.

**21-29 June 2003**

Ireland hosts the first Special Olympics World Summer Games to be held outside the United States. 5,500 athletes participate in this landmark event. It is the world's largest sporting event in 2003, capturing the hearts and imaginations of the Irish people.

**2005**

Eunice Kennedy Shriver was honored for her work with Special Olympics as one of the first recipients of a sidewalk medallion on The Extra Mile Point of Light Pathway in Washington D.C.

**2009**

Eunice Kennedy Shriver died on Aug. 11, 2009. Her husband, Sargent Shriver, died January 18, 2011. They are survived by their five children: Robert Sargent Shriver III, Maria Owings Shriver Schwarzenegger, Timothy Perry Shriver, Mark Kennedy Shriver and Anthony Paul Kennedy Shriver.

**Athlete Participation in Special Olympics:**

2019—Special Olympics NY has 63,143 athletes

2018—Special Olympics serves over 5.4 million from over 190 countries, representing every continent, and 106,000 competitions around the world

2016—Special Olympics exceeds its ambitious goal of getting 1 million athletes and partners involved in Unified Sports.

2008—Special Olympics celebrates its 40th anniversary as a true global movement, with almost 3 million athletes in more than 180 countries representing every continent. With sports at the core, the movement stands as a leader in advancing rights and opportunities and policy change for its athletes in 165 countries worldwide.

2000—About 1.2 million from over 156 countries

1990—750,000

1988—588,500

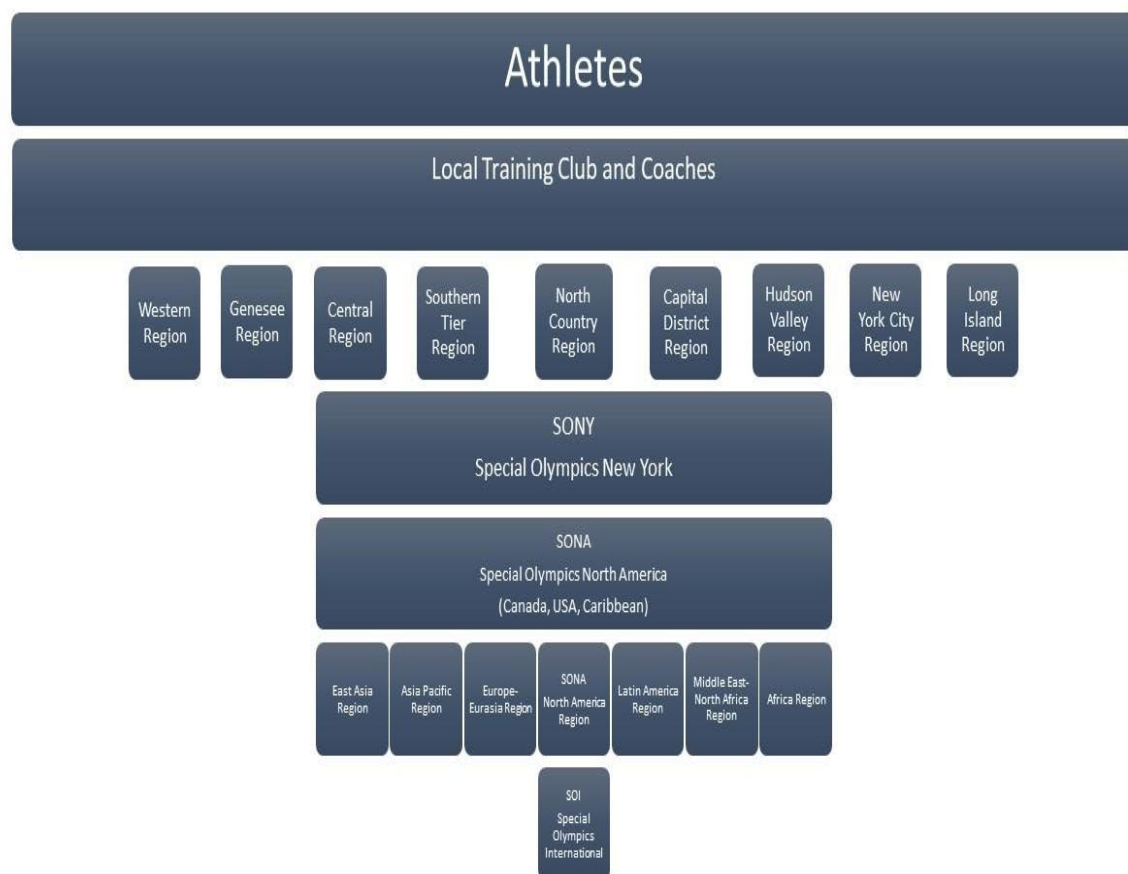
1968—1,000



## **Organizational Structure**

Special Olympics, Inc. (SOI) is the world governing body of Special Olympics and is based in Washington, DC, USA. SOI is responsible for accrediting Programs, worldwide, to conduct Special Olympics activities and programs. It also oversees the management of all World and Multi-National Games and coaching education. In addition, SOI provides support and collaboration in the development of materials, international conferences, and regional train-the-trainer seminars.

## Special Olympics Structure



# Section III - Sports Programs

## **Sports Seasons**

New York offers the following sports opportunities in 3 sports seasons. A sports season lasts approximately 3 months. Athletes must train for a minimum of 8 weeks under the direction of a certified coach to be eligible to compete in a Special Olympics event.

### **Summer Sports**

The summer sports season begins the day after State Winter Games. Local, Regional and Super Regional competitions occur throughout the season. The summer season ends in mid-June with State Summer Games.

Basketball Team & Skills  
Volleyball Team & Skills  
Swimming\*  
Athletics (Track & Field)  
Tennis  
Powerlifting\*  
Bowling (under 21)  
Gymnastics\*

### **Fall Sports**

The fall sports season begins the day after State Summer Games. Local, Regional and Super Regional competitions occur throughout the sport season. The fall season ends in mid-October with State Fall Games.

Softball Team & Skills  
Golf  
Equestrian\*  
Cross Country Running  
Bocce  
Bowling (over 22)  
Cycling  
Football (Soccer) Team & Skills

### **Winter Sports**

The winter sport season begins the day after State Fall Games. Local, Regional and Super Regional competitions occur throughout the sports season. The winter sports season ends in mid-February with State Winter Games.

Floor Hockey Team & Skills  
Speed Skating  
Snowboarding\*  
Figure Skating  
Nordic Skiing (Cross Country)  
Alpine Skiing (Downhill)\*  
Snowshoeing

\*Need specialized training and have extensive experience in this specific sport to become a certified coach.

- High-quality athlete training has a huge impact on our athletes. Coach qualifications and expertise are highly valued resources, and we thank our coaches for their commitment to partner with us.
- A successful sports experience requires frequent quality sports training.

- Each training club is encouraged to train as often as possible. Community-based training clubs typically train 1 evening a week, while clubs based in schools or day service programs are usually able to train more frequently.
- A sports season lasts approximately 3 months, during which coaches train athletes for 8 weeks and attend 2 or 3 competitions.

### **Sports Classification and Sports Advancement Criteria**

All SONY sports are categorized as Official SONY Sports, Recognized SONY Sports and Locally Popular Sports. The sports and those participating athletes would only advance to the highest level of participation, competition and games when certain basic participation requirements are met. Those requirements are:

- **Official SONY Sports compete at every level including State Games:** Self-explanatory and determined annually based on census.
- **Official SONY Sport:** A sport that currently has 7 or more Regions participating (training & competition). These sports are annually eligible for the highest level of State, Regional and Super Regional competition.
- **Minimum Percentile:** A sport would require a minimum percentile of participation to be included as an Official SONY Sport. Thirty percent, or more, of SONY's athletes must participate to qualify the sport. For Example, if less than 30% of our total number of athletes participate in a sport the year prior, the sport is considered as a Recognized SONY Sport or a Locally Popular Sport and not recognized as an Official SONY Sport the following year.
- **Recognized SONY Sport:** A sport that currently has 4 to 6 Regions and 15% or more of the total athletes participating. These sports are annually eligible for the highest level of Regional or Super Regional competition.
- **Locally Popular Sport:** A sport that currently has 3 or less Regions participating.
- **Special Circumstances Waiver:** Prior to each season, SONY issues a *Special Circumstances Waiver* to those sports that do not meet the Official SONY Sport criteria but are recognized as having a growing base of active athletes or alternatively recognized as having active interest and avid participation. This Waiver is issued at SONY's discretion and contingent upon cost and feasibility.
- **Promotion as the Result of Participation:** State Games allocations relate directly to Regional athlete participation. Over time, SONY transitions the percent of allocation distribution per sport to the percent of qualified Regional participation.

<b>Official SONY Sports</b>	<b>Recognized SONY Sports</b>	<b>Locally Popular Sports</b>
The sport has met all criteria of the SOI classification for an Official Sport	The sport has met all criteria of the SOI classification for a Recognized Sport	The sport has met all criteria of the SOI classification for a Locally Popular Sport
Competition provided at the Local, Regional, Super-Regional and State Games levels	Competition provided at the Local level. Competition provided at the Regional and Super-Regional level are encouraged but optional	Training at the Local level, Local competition encouraged
*Participation in 7 or more Regions	*Participation in 4 to 6 Regions	*Participation in 3 or less Regions
*Participation of at least 30% of total athletes	*Participation of 15% or more of total athletes	

\*As reported in the previous annual census

## **Sports Rules**

Special Olympics rules are located through the Special Olympics International website. The rules are updated every 2 years. Make sure when referencing the Special Olympics rules you are using the most up to date version. You can find updated rules [www.specialolympics.org](http://www.specialolympics.org)

## **Philosophy of Credible Competitive Sports Participation**

Special Olympics aims to provide every person with an intellectual disability, who meets the eligibility requirements, with an opportunity to participate in, and benefit from, competitive sport trainings and competitions which challenge the athlete to his or her fullest potential, regardless of the athlete's level of ability. Proper instruction, encouragement and consistent training under the guidance of qualified coaches is essential to the development of sport skills. Participating in credible competitive sports competitions, among those of equal abilities, is the most appropriate means of testing these skills, measuring progress and providing incentives for personal growth. Individuals with intellectual disabilities will also benefit physically, mentally, socially and spiritually through participation in credible, competitive, sports training and competition.

## **Principle of Meaningful Involvement**

Fundamentally, the principle of meaningful involvement ensures that every player is given an opportunity to contribute to the success of his or her team through their unique skills and qualities. This means that every teammate: (a) demonstrates sufficient sport specific skills and game understanding; (b) plays a valued role on the team that emphasizes his or her personal talents; and (c) has an opportunity to play without a heightened risk of injury.

## **Sport Programs**

### **Special Olympics Traditional Sports**

Training and competition among athletes with intellectual disabilities. The largest and most familiar program. Special Olympics New York offers 22 Olympic-style individual and team sports that provide meaningful training and competition opportunities for persons with intellectual disabilities. This training facilitates competition amongst peers with fair and equitable divisioning. (See divisioning principles and criteria for advancement page 22).

### **Traditional Team Competition**

A team is deemed a traditional sports team if it is comprised solely of Special Olympics athletes. Traditional Special Olympics teams compete against one another. Traditional teams can be comprised of all male athletes, all female athletes, or they may be co-ed allowing for competition amongst peers with fair and equitable divisioning. (See divisioning principles and criteria for advancement page 22).

### **Special Olympics Unified Sports®**

An inclusive sports program that combines an approximately equal number of Special Olympics athletes (individuals with intellectual disabilities) and partners (individuals without intellectual disabilities) on teams for training and competition.

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### **Unified Champion Schools®**

A program aimed at promoting social inclusion through intentionally planned and implemented activities affecting systems-wide change. With sports as the foundation, the three-component model offers a unique combination of effective activities that equip young people with tools and training to create sports, classroom and school climates of acceptance. This is accomplished by implementing inclusive sports, inclusive youth leadership opportunities, and whole school engagement.

The program is designed to be woven into the fabric of the school, enhancing current efforts and providing rich opportunities that lead to meaningful change in creating a socially inclusive school that supports and engages all learners

### **Interscholastic Unified Sports**

Beginning in 2013, Special Olympics New York and the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA) offer Unified Champion Schools programming through interscholastic Unified Sports and inclusive youth leadership clubs to NYSPHSAA member schools. Special Olympics New York provides initial seed funding, ongoing technical support and rules interpretation, as well as training for coaches, advisors and youth leaders.

As of 2020, 200 High Schools across 11 Sections currently offer Interscholastic Unified Sports and inclusive youth leadership programming in New York. Over 7,100 students are engaged in Unified Sports, with over 3,100 students participating in inclusive youth leadership clubs. Unified Sports currently offered include bowling (winter season) and basketball (spring season). Inclusive youth leadership clubs are offered throughout the school year.

### **Young Athletes (YA) Program**

Special Olympics Young Athletes is an early childhood sport program for children with and without intellectual disabilities, ages 2 to 7 years old. Young Athletes introduces basic sport skills, like running, kicking and throwing. Young Athletes offers families, teachers, caregivers and people from the community the chance to share the joy of sports with all children. Young Athletes provides children of all abilities the same opportunities to advance in core developmental milestones. Children learn how to play with others and develop important skills for learning. Children also learn to share, take turns and follow directions. These skills help children in family, community and school activities.

### **Motor Activity Training Program (MATP)**

Non-competitive, training program designed to introduce any athlete, at an introductory level of skill and at any age to the fundamental motor skills that mirror our recognized sports and in addition meeting the unique individual needs of each athlete participating.

For more information about the Motor Activity Program visit our MATP Resources page found at [www.SpecialOlympics.org](http://www.SpecialOlympics.org).

## **Special Olympics Health Programs**

### **Health and Fitness Program**

Despite severe need and higher health risks, people with intellectual disabilities are often denied health services and die on average 16 years sooner than the general population. Special Olympics Health made possible by the Golisano Foundation, and in the United States in collaboration with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is creating a world where people with intellectual disabilities have every opportunity to be healthy. Staying physically active is an important part of training for sport and maintaining and improving overall health. The bridge between health and sports, fitness is optimal health and performance through adequate nutrition, hydration, and physical activity.

### **Healthy Athletes**

Healthy Athletes® is a Special Olympics program that provides free health screenings and health education in a fun, welcoming environment with a focus on removing the anxiety people with intellectual disabilities often experience when faced with a visit to a medical professional. Healthy Athletes offers screenings in eight disciplines, including Fit Feet, FUNfitness (Physical Therapy), Healthy Hearing, Health Promotion, Opening Eyes®, Special Smiles®, MedFest® and Strong Minds.

### **Healthy Communities**

Healthy Communities is a model Special Olympics Health program addressing the severe health disparities faced by people with intellectual disabilities (ID) through **immediate and long-term community-based solutions**. Healthy Communities is working to increase access to quality health care and prevention programming to improve the health status of people with ID.

To address the health disparities faced by people with ID, Special Olympics Healthy Communities program offers the following programs:

- Health screenings in 8 different disciplines known as Healthy Athletes
- Training for health and fitness professionals specific to serving persons with a vast array of intellectual and developmental disabilities
- Partnerships with local health organizations to provide quality, inclusive care to individuals with ID.
- Opportunities to participate in community sports, fitness and wellness programs and activities.

Check out our Health & Wellness webpage for more information and resources.

## **Athlete Leadership Programs**

As Special Olympics athletes gain in confidence and feel empowered, they often seek new challenges. They want to build on their successes, including their social skills. They can become mentors for other athletes, train to become coaches and officials, and they can also move toward a more public role as a speaker or spokesperson, telling audiences and journalists about the remarkable changes that Special Olympics helped bring to their lives.

Special Olympics Athlete Leadership allows athletes to explore opportunities for greater participation in our movement beyond sports training and competition: as coaches, officials, SONY Ambassadors, SOI Global Messengers, board members and SONY Athlete Leadership Council members. These roles give athletes a voice in shaping the Special Olympics movement, and a chance to spread the word about the transformations Special Olympics can bring to individuals and families. Athlete Leadership also provides a way for athletes to showcase talents and interests that may have gone unnoticed, such as public speaking.

### **Unified Leadership**

Unified Leadership is an inclusive culture that benefits everyone by involving Special Olympics Athlete Leaders in equal roles as part of organizational leadership, to advance program activity and the Special Olympics Mission. This can only be achieved through a commitment by athlete leaders to develop proficient leadership skills, matched by the commitment of all leaders to adapt practices and build an inclusive environment where athlete leaders have a genuine opportunity to contribute and lead individually or with others. Unified leaders focus not on their own power but unleashing the power of others, including Athlete Leaders. Ultimately great leaders develop others and let them lead.

### **SONY Athlete Leadership Council**

The purpose of the Athlete Leadership Council (ALC) is to provide athletes with meaningful leadership development opportunities. Through personal skill development, addressing organizational calls to action, athletes develop critical insight and are asked to provide analysis and direction regarding existing Special Olympics programs. In this unified leadership environment, these athlete leaders increase their participation in a wide variety of Special Olympics activities, and assume enhanced leadership roles in every area of their life.

### **Principles of the ALC**

The role and responsibility of an Athlete Leadership Council member is to learn and grow as an athlete leader. To serve and correspond with the athletes of their home region and participate in a series of Athlete Leadership Council meetings. These athletes must be able to communicate their interest in program topics beyond local training and competition. It is imperative these members meaningfully participate in discussions on a variety of Special Olympics topics and be able to address leadership projects, to develop critical insight and provide feedback regarding their experiences.

All members of the Leadership Council must:

- Be actively involved in SO sports programs as an athlete, coach or official.
- Follow the Athlete Code of Conduct at all times.
- Be able to share their unique experience as a leader with others.
- Must remain an active Athlete Leadership Council member.

### **Membership and Structure of ALC**

Leadership Council members will be selected by SONY staff and volunteer leaders. Regional leaders will consider all Special Olympic New York athletes who are involved in SONY sports programs. Each region will strive to have 6-8 athletes participate in the Regional Athlete Leadership Council. The highest consideration will be given to athletes that demonstrate leadership abilities. These qualities should include hard work, strong commitment, great sportsmanship, independent thinking and a positive outlook while motivating others. Regional staff will recommend 2 athlete leaders who have successfully participated on the local ALC to represent their region on the State Athlete Leadership Council.

Leadership Council membership is a provisional appointment based on the athlete's commitment and ability to attend the ALC meetings, convey SONY priorities and calls to action as well as participate in a variety of events throughout the year. If a council member is unable to fulfill their leadership role and becomes inactive, SONY regional staff will activate another eligible athlete to fulfill the vacancy. Leadership Council members are expected to serve one 3-year term; alumni may return to non-consecutive terms given that there is a hiatus of at least one year.

Each Region is responsible for selecting a Unified Coordinator whose role is to provide impartial and neutral support to facilitate attendance and participation for state ALC members.

# Section IV - Athletes

## Eligibility

Every person with an intellectual disability who is at least eight years of age is eligible to participate in Special Olympics.

### **Intellectual disability defined**

The American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) defined intellectual disability as being characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical skills. This disability originates before age 18.

### **Assumptions**

Assumptions are an explicit part of the definition because they clarify the context from which the definition arises and indicate how the definition must be applied. Thus, the definition of intellectual disability cannot stand alone. The following assumptions are essential to the application of the definition of intellectual disability:

- Limitations in present functioning must be considered within the context of community environments typical of the individual's age peers and culture,
- Valid assessment considers cultural and linguistic diversity as well as differences in communication, sensory, motor, and behavioral factors,
- Within an individual, limitations often coexist with strengths,
- An important purpose of describing limitations is to develop a profile of needed supports, and
- With appropriate personalized supports over a sustained period, the life functioning of the person with intellectual disability generally will improve.

Relation of 2010 definition of intellectual disability to 2002 definition of mental retardation: the term intellectual disability covers the same population of individuals who were diagnosed previously with mental retardation in number, kind, level, type, and duration of the disability, and the need of people with this disability for individualized services and supports. Furthermore, every individual who is or was eligible for a diagnosis of mental retardation is eligible for a diagnosis of intellectual disability.

## Athlete Registration

- Eligible individuals register for Special Olympics training by completing an Athlete Registration form, an Athlete Medical and an Athlete Release form. Forms are available from the Regional Offices and at [www.specialolympics-ny.org](http://www.specialolympics-ny.org)
- The Athlete's **full name**, not a Nickname, must be identified. Be sure to include the Primary Training Club, if known.

## Medical Policy

- Training Club Head Coaches **must collect and review the completed Medical forms before athletes are permitted to begin any participation in Special Olympics activities** (training or competition).
- Training club Head Coaches are responsible for collecting and maintaining current medical forms for all athletes in the training club. A copy of the medical forms should be retained, with the originals **being submitted to the regional office**.
- The Medical Forms are valid for up to three (3) years.
- Medical forms must travel with the athletes to **all** training practices and competitions. In the event of an injury these records must be made available for Medical Personnel.
- Athletes without a valid original Medical form **on file with the Regional Office will not** be permitted to compete in Local, Regional or State competition.

## Athlete Release Policy



- All athletes are required to have an Athlete Release Form completed before they can participate in any Special Olympics activities (training or competition). Forms are available from the Regional Office and at [www.specialolympics-nv.org](http://www.specialolympics-nv.org).
- Athlete Release Forms for minors (under 18 years of age) must be completed by a parent or guardian. The Athlete Release Form is valid until the athlete turns 18 years of age.
- Athlete Release Forms for Adults (18 +years of age) can be completed by the athlete if they are able to independently provide consent, or by a parent or guardian. This release form does not expire once completed for an adult athlete.

### **Blood Borne Contagious Infection or Virus**

No Accredited Program may exclude or isolate any athlete who is known to be a carrier of a blood-borne contagious infection or virus from participation in any Special Olympics training or competition, or otherwise discriminate against such athletes solely based on that medical condition. If one or more athletes may have such an infection during Special Olympics events, the Accredited Program and GOC shall follow "Universal Precautions" or "Universal Blood and Body Fluid Precautions" for every exposure to any person's blood, saliva or other bodily fluid. SOI shall keep Accredited Programs apprised of the written Universal Precautions which meet the requirements of the general rules.

### **Religious Objections**

If any athlete or their parents have religious objections to emergency medical treatment, as set forth in the Athlete Release Form, the Accredited Program may permit such athletes or parents to delete or strike out the provisions of the Athlete Release Form which contain the authorization for emergency medical treatment (but not any other provisions of the Athlete Release Form). If the authorization for emergency treatment has been stricken out, such athletes or parents shall sign and submit a separate release, Religious Objections Form, addressing how medical emergencies are to be handled. The Religious Objections Form must be signed by an adult athlete or the parent or guardian of any athlete who is legally a minor.

### **Gender Identity**

No participant should ever have to fear negative, threatening, discriminatory or adverse treatment by others because of the individuals' differences, including, but not limited to, gender expression or identity.

### **Fees**

No Accredited Program or GOC may require Special Olympics athletes or their families to pay, or promise to pay, any type of admission, registration, training, participation, competition fee, or any other fee or charge of any type as a condition for admission to any Special Olympics event or activity, or as a fee for the athletes' participation in any Special Olympics or competition (collectively, "Prohibited Fees"). The preceding sentence does not prohibit an Accredited Program from charging accreditation fees to its Sub-Programs to help defray the cost of administering those Sub-Programs in accordance with these General Rules, so long as the amount of any such accreditation fee is reasonable and is approved by SOI, and so long as the Sub-Program required to pay that fee does not charge or accept any Prohibited Fees from athletes or their families.

### **Athlete Code of Conduct**

Special Olympics New York is committed to the highest ideals of sport and therefore expects all athletes to honor sports and Special Olympics. All Special Olympics New York athletes and Unified Sports partners agree to the following code:

#### **Sportsmanship**

- I will practice good sportsmanship.
- I will act in ways that bring respect to me, my coaches, my team and Special Olympics.
- I will not use bad language.
- I will not swear or insult other people.

- I will not fight with other athletes, coaches, volunteers or staff.

### **Training and Competition**

- I will train regularly.
- I will learn and follow the rules of my sport.
- I will listen to my coaches and the officials and ask questions when I do not understand.
- I will always try my best during training and competitions.
- I will not “hold back” in preliminary competition just to get into an easier finals competition division.
- I will be on time for any training or competition.
- I will fully participate as a member of my training club, which may include traveling and staying with the overnight with my training club.

### **Responsibility for My Actions**

- I will engage in only respectful communication, both in-person and electronically.
- I will not make inappropriate or unwanted physical, verbal or sexual advances on others.
- I will not smoke in non-smoking areas.
- I will not drink alcohol or use illegal drugs at Special Olympics events.
- I will not take drugs for the purpose of improving my performance.
- I will follow the Special Olympics policy that says athletes cannot date volunteers.
- I will obey all laws and Special Olympics rules, the international federation and the national federation/governing body rules for my sport(s).
- I will tell my coach immediately if I experience behavior or abuse from another member of Special Olympics and/or if I become aware of such behavior occurring between other athletes.

I understand that if I do not obey this Code of Conduct, I will be subject to a range of consequences up to and including exclusion from participation.

### **Athletes Housing/State Games**

The health and safety of all Special Olympics New York participants is of paramount importance to Special Olympics New York. Participants should feel that every Special Olympics New York event is a safe, positive experience and should not be fearful of other athletes, coaches or volunteers. Each member of the delegation shall be assigned his/her own bed. Athletes and volunteers may not share a room with an athlete or volunteer of the opposite sex\*. The chaperone/athlete ratio of at least one properly registered chaperone to every four athletes must be maintained during overnight events. All chaperones must be screened in accordance with the Special Olympics Volunteer Screening Policy. (\* Please see Policy requirement for exceptions.)

### **Policy Requirements**

**1. Gender** – Athletes and volunteers may not share a room with an athlete or volunteer of the opposite sex.

### **Potential Exceptions:**

- At the discretion of Special Olympics New York, married volunteers who are both attending the event as members of a registered delegation. This exception does not apply if one of the volunteers is required to share a room with an athlete (other than the married couple’s child), if this scenario will create a situation whereby an athlete is housed with a volunteer of the opposite sex.
- Family members of the opposite sex who serve as a one-to-one chaperone for the related athlete. Housing in a facility that has multiple private rooms in addition to living space (such as a suite or dormitory). Both males and females may be assigned to one suite, if necessary, but private rooms may not be shared by individuals of the opposite sex. Chaperones must also be housed in the suite and the chaperone/athlete ratio (as outlined in the supervision section of the policy) must be maintained.

- Use of barracks or other facility (such as a gym) where many individuals are assigned to one room. Athletes and volunteers must be separated as much as possible by gender (for example, females on one side of the gym and males on the other side).

2. **Supervision** - The chaperone/athlete ratio of at least one properly registered chaperone to every four athletes must be maintained during overnight events. Proper supervision can be maintained without having a chaperone present in the room at all times. All chaperones must be screened in accordance with the Special Olympics U.S. Volunteer Screening Policy.

3. **Young Athletes** – Young Athletes events that involve overnight activities require increased supervision and therefore, Young Athletes participants must be accompanied by a properly registered and screened parent, guardian or an individual designated by a parent or guardian at all overnight activities. Rooming assignments for Young Athletes should be separate from the remainder of the delegation, whenever possible (for example, separate hotel rooms).

4. **Acknowledgment** – Special Olympics New York must secure a parent's/guardian's signature acknowledging the possibility for overnight activities and that additional information about the rooming assignments or the Program's housing policy should be directed to Special Olympics New York. Athletes who are legally responsible for themselves are permitted to provide acknowledgment on their own behalf. This requirement provides confirmation that the parents/guardians are aware that the Program has a policy relative to housing arrangements, empowers the parents/guardians to learn more about the housing practices, and provides them an opportunity to notify Special Olympics New York if there are any concerns with the housing arrangements or information about which Special Olympics New York should be aware.

All athletes participating in Special Olympics New York overnight events, must have a signed Housing Policy document.

**Policy Implementation** – Special Olympics New York State and/or Regional offices are responsible for implementing the Housing Policy.

# Section V - Training

## **Training Policy Statement**

Special Olympics athletes have the right to be provided with sports training that is led by competent coaches who are knowledgeable about both the sport and Special Olympics, who also work effectively with people with intellectual disabilities. Proper sports training develops sports skills and physical fitness and prepares athletes adequately for competition. Training emphasis is placed on encouraging athletes to reach their highest level of athletic achievement.

No athlete is to be entered into a competition until they have acquired the skills and demonstrated the level of physical conditioning necessary to compete in a safe and meaningful way. As to not prohibit other competition opportunities as part of an athlete's training, skill development competitive components are a part of most sports.

## **Importance of Training**

Sports training is designed to improve the participant's physical fitness and skill in various sports. Training programs are developed and directed by the coach after an individual assessment of an athlete's skills. Many resources can and will be used when constructing each program. Coaches will consult with several individuals, including but not limited to, the Director of Competition for Special Olympics New York as well as guardians and training specialists.

An athlete improves in sports and skills by progressing toward measurable goals at his/her own pace. Through a Special Olympics training, an athlete learns the importance of proper warm up and cool down, as well as strength and fitness training. Proper training reduces sports injuries and increases safety awareness in sport. It is imperative that all parties associated with Special Olympics work to ensure that every athlete receives necessary and proper training to enjoy and achieve the maximum benefit of participation.

## **Training Club Registration/Rosters**

Special Olympics New York requires that each training club submit a roster containing names of athletes, coaches, unified partners and chaperones. Additionally, this roster must include information regarding training location, day and time the club will meet. Rosters are to be submitted to the respective SONY Regional office on or before the current training season start date. One annual roster may be submitted for training clubs who are active year-round. If training club rosters are not received prior to, or at the beginning of, the training season, Regional, Super Regional and State Games allocations can be negatively affected. Training club rosters will be used to identify athletes and coaches who need to update credentials prior to the start of the season. If an athlete, coach, unified partner or chaperone joins a training club after the roster has been submitted, it is the responsibility of the head coach or training club manager to notify their Regional Program staff immediately. Roster forms can be attained by contacting your Regional Program staff.

## **8 Weeks Minimum Training**

A sports season lasts approximately 4 months, during which athletes must train for a minimum of 8 weeks under the direction of a certified coach to be eligible to compete in any Special Olympics events.

## **Sport Training Guides**

Special Olympics offers a wealth of information on how to conduct successful practices and training program. It is the responsibility of coaches to review their Sports Training Guide prior to every training season. Training guides are located under each sports coaching resources page found at [www.specialolympics.org](http://www.specialolympics.org)

## **Athlete Development Model**

The Special Olympics Athlete Development Model (ADM) is a support plan designed to empower each of our athletes. The model promotes motor and skill development as well as health and fitness, while preparing athletes for competition at all levels.

The ADM is based on a progression from sport fundamentals to learning to train to training to compete. The ADM recognizes that not all athletes will move through the stages at the same pace and allows athletes to train at a level that works for them.

### **Fundamental Stage**

The focus is on the basics of motor development and fundamentals of sports skills, building a foundation of health, fitness and nutrition habits.

### **Learning to Train Stage**

Intent to convert skills learned in the Fundamental stage into sports specific skills, within multiple sport settings, focusing on learning to train.

### **Training to Compete Stage**

The athlete narrows their training to focus on one or two sports. Becomes comfortable with all aspects of competition preparation.

### **Recreational Activities Stage**

The athlete continues to participate in sports, have fun and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

## **High Performance Divisions**

In an effort to encourage more athletes to achieve their greatest potential, Special Olympics New York will offer the longer distances and most challenging recognized events within each sport at our State Games. These high-performance athletes will be showcased to bring attention to the possibilities of what can be achieved and reaching the highest potential.

- Entry criteria - an athlete must meet the performance criteria to be entered in the high-performance program
- Competition in all events is *open*.
- Divisions of 8 or more athletes are allowed.
- Gold, Silver, Bronze medals for top 3 finishers; 4th -8th place ribbons for the next 5 finishers; participation ribbons for all other competitors.
- Minimum age: 16

# Section VI - Competition

## **Competition Registration Process**

Every level of Special Olympics Competition requires a pre-registration process for both coaches and athletes to ensure the eligibility of all participants prior to competition. Athletes and coaches deemed ineligible through the competition registration process will have the opportunity to rectify their eligibility issues prior to the event registration deadline or be deemed ineligible. The registration process and timeline are established by the host region. Upcoming Competitions are located on the SONY Events Calendar at [www.specialolympics-ny.org](http://www.specialolympics-ny.org). Please contact your regional office for registration process information on all upcoming events.

## **Local, Regional, Super Regional Competitions**

Prior to any State, US or World Games competition, Special Olympics New York athletes are provided with opportunities to participate in various levels of sub-Program Games, including local, Regional and Super Regional competitions. These events should be conducted with the same competition rules each athlete will encounter at subsequent levels of competition.

### **Local**

Local competitions provide an opportunity for athletes from one or more training clubs within a Region, but not the entire Region, who are participating in the same sports training, a chance to compete against others of like ability through individual, skills, and/or team competition.

### **Regional**

Regional competitions provide an opportunity for athletes from every training club within a Region, who are participating in the same sports training, a chance to compete against others of like ability through individual, skills, and/or team competition. In areas where a Regional competition for a specific sport is not offered, a training club will often participate in a Regional event offered by a neighboring Region.

### **Super Regional**

Super Regional competitions provide an opportunity for training clubs from multiple Regions within the State, but not the entire State, who are participating in the same sports training, a chance to compete against others of like ability through individual, skills, and/or team competition. The Program team of the hosting Region must be informed of all training clubs interested in attending. The team will then accept or deny a training club's request to attend based on factors such as the number of athletes or teams the venue can accommodate. Training clubs must receive authorization from their own Regional Program team before attending a Super Regional event.

## **State Games**

SONY State Games showcase the highest level of sports competition in New York and serve as the culminating event for our progressive and competitive sports seasons. All regions and each sport should be well represented at State games to ensure the largest variety and depth of participation possible. All Special Olympic competitions follow the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules and the National Governing Body of each sport.

## **State Games Registration Cadence**

Action	Timetable
Quota Surveys Sent Out to Regions	10 weeks before games
Quote Surveys Due	8 weeks before games
Registration Packets Sent Out	7 weeks before games
Registrations and Rosters Due	5 weeks before games
Delegation Numbers Due	4 weeks before games
Rooming Lists Due to Sport Nation and GMS Deadline	3 weeks before games

## **Required Attire for Competition**

Special Olympics aims to provide every person with an intellectual disability the opportunity to participate in, and benefit from, sport trainings and credible competitions. For these reasons all athletes must dress in the required athletic attire as described in the Official Rules. Athletes not dressed in the required athletic attire may be prevented from participation and/or disqualified until the necessary attire is worn.

**Appropriate Footwear** - e.g.: Running shoes for athletics, figure skates for figure skating, speed skates when speed skating, bowling shoes for bowling, etc.

AT NO TIME ARE STREET SHOES TO BE WORN FOR COMPETITION ACTIVITIES.

**Appropriate Uniforms** - e.g.: leotards for gymnastics, running shorts for Athletics, uniform jerseys for team sports, etc.

AT NO TIME ARE JEANS APPROPRIATE FOR COMPETITION ACTIVITIES.

**Appropriate Seasonal Dress** - e.g.: lightweight moisture wicking clothes for summer sports, appropriate head cover, gloves and boots for skiing and outdoor winter sports, shorts or lightweight warm-ups for active indoor sports, etc.

**Appropriate Athletic Equipment** - Each Special Olympics sport has its own specifications for both required and recommended attire and equipment, with listings available in the Official Rules found at [www.specialolympics.org](http://www.specialolympics.org)

## **LOGO Usage**

The Special Olympics logo is the official trademark of the worldwide Special Olympics program and is registered with the US patent office. Permission for use of this logo may be granted only by SOI or its duly administered agents. The logo must be produced in its official form and may be enlarged or reduced. It may not be distorted in any way. The trademark symbol must appear, as pictured, as part of the logo at all times. There are currently branding changes that require additional guidelines for use of the words "Special Olympics" that can be found at [www.specialolympics.org](http://www.specialolympics.org)

## **Alcohol and Tobacco Policy**

### **Use of Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco Products**

No Accredited Program shall knowingly permit the use of any alcohol or tobacco products at any Special Olympics training or competition venue.

## **Divisioning Principles**

The fundamental difference between Special Olympics competitions and those of other sports organizations is that athletes of all ability levels are encouraged to participate, and every athlete is recognized for his/her performance. Competitions are structured so that athletes compete with other athletes of similar ability in equitable divisions. At Special Olympics competitions, all athletes are given an equal chance to participate, perform and be recognized for doing their best by their teammates, family, and fans. This happens through a unique process called divisioning.

Through divisioning, athletes are grouped by age, gender and ability – giving everyone a reasonable chance to succeed. The typical age groups by which athletes will be divisioned are as follows 8-11 years, 12-15 years, 16-21 years, 22-29 years and 30 and older. Age groups and genders can and will be combined when necessary to create competitive divisions. The most important factor in divisioning is ability. These principles are applied to both individual sports and team sports. Ability is determined by submission of an athlete or teams' prior performance by their coach. This submission should be a recent and accurate accounting of the athlete or teams' performance skills.

Each division should include a minimum of 3 athletes or teams and a maximum of 8 athletes or teams. There should be no more than a 15% difference between the most highly skilled athlete or team and the lowest skilled athlete or team in each division. Due to the wide range of athletic abilities and/or varying numbers of registered athletes in any given sport, there will be occasions when a minimum division of 3 athletes is not possible or the difference of ability within a division is greater than 15%. The divisions are created by the Event Director and are not contestable.

## **Criteria for Advancement**

Athletes of ALL ability levels have an equal opportunity to advance to the next higher-level competition provided the sport and the event are offered at the next highest level of competition. Every effort should be made to provide athletes with competitive opportunity where possible through all levels of regional program without limiting allocations.

Athletes must meet the following eligibility requirements: having participated in a previous level of competition and having trained for that sport with adequate training in the same sport per the sport specific rules.

Advancement allocations for State Games, as a result of limiting factors, will be equitably distributed to the Regions. Every effort will be made to distribute allocation per sport to the Regions in relationship to, and in correlation with, their participation in competition as identified in the SONY census. Additional allocations may be granted to Regions as a result of special request where feasible.

## **Coach to Athlete Ratio at Competitions**

Coach quotas are based on the following: three coaches per team; and a 1:4 ratio of coaches to athletes in individual sports (except Athletics - 1:3). **All coaches must be Special Olympics New York Certified.** All coaches in Aquatics, Gymnastics, Equestrian, Powerlifting and Alpine Skiing must be sports specific certified in those sports. At least one coach per team must be sports-specific certified for all other sports.

## **Responsibilities of Competition Sport Directors**

The Sport Director is a key volunteer who provides technical and logistical expertise in a designated sport working primarily with the SONY leadership to plan, organize and implement competition. This individual shall be responsible for ensuring that each competition is a high quality, credible and safe sporting event



which embodies the principles and mission of Special Olympics New York by enforcing the relevant national governing body (NGB) rules as well as the Special Olympics Sports Rule modifications. The Sport Director is also responsible for organizing and supervising all aspects pertaining to the field of play during competition and assists in the planning process, venue selection, event scheduling, and volunteer and official coordination. Additionally, the Sport Director is asked to help lead the sport forward throughout the state and assists the Director of Competition or designee with assessing and improving training and competition across the state.

The Sport Director along with the Technical Director (if present) shall represent Special Olympics as the key sport advisors for a specific sport and shall be responsible for ensuring that SONY correctly interprets, implements and enforces Special Olympics Sports Rules and modifications. The Sport Director shall advise the Director of Competition on the technical requirements of the specific sport to ensure that a safe, quality and dignified sports environment is provided

### **Technical Directors**

The Technical Director is a key volunteer who primarily works with the Sport Director or designee to provide expertise and direction regarding rule interpretation and implementation during competition. This individual shall be responsible for ensuring that each competition is a high-quality sporting event which embodies the principles and mission of Special Olympics New York by enforcing the NGB rules, as well as the Special Olympics Sports rule modifications. The Technical Director is also responsible for establishing and maintaining relationships with certified officials for these competitions. Additionally, the Technical Director is asked to help lead, organize and educate certified officials to improve the competitive experience throughout the state.

### **Protest Procedures**

Only an acting Head Coach may file a protest or appeal.

All protests must be made by notifying the Sport Director within 30 minutes of the contested event.

Protests may be submitted for one or more of the following reasons:

- Misinterpretation of sport rules.
- Failure of a referee or judge to apply the correct rule.
- Failure to impose the correct penalty for a violation.

The following are not subject to protest or appeal:

- Fact-specific judgment calls of referees, judges or others.
- Divisioning and meaningful involvement decisions.

Each protest must identify the relevant section number of the official Special Olympics Sport Rules or federation rules and clearly describe how that rule has been violated.

In the case of team sports, officials must be notified of a protest, at the point of contention, with the remainder of the games being played under protest. Whenever possible, the presentation of competition awards will be held until the protest has been resolved. In the case where awards are distributed prior to the resolution, *and* the outcome of the protest results in different award placements, duplicate awards will be presented. Awards will not be taken away from an athlete once received in the awards ceremony.

A jury shall review the protest and render a decision. The jury will consist of the Sport Director, The Director of Competition and the Head official. Once the sport specific jury has made its decision, the person who submitted the protest may either accept the decision or submit an appeal to the Jury of Appeals. The Jury of Appeals will consist of The Director of Competition, The State Games Project Manager (or their designees), and the Vice President of Program (or their designee). All Appeals must be submitted within 60 minutes after the relevant decision of the Sport Specific Jury. All decisions made by the Jury of Appeals are final.

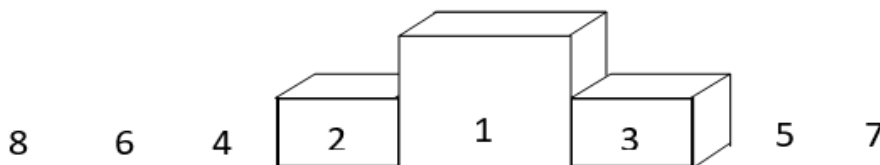
## **Awards**

The Special Olympics awards ceremony provides an opportunity to recognize athletes' accomplishments in a dignified and enthusiastic atmosphere that reflects the Olympic tradition.

### **Awards General Guidelines**

- All athletes who compete in a Special Olympics competition should receive recognition for their efforts in the form of a ribbon or medal. At all Regional and State Games first through third places receive gold, silver or bronze medals, respectively. Fourth through eighth places receive ribbons.
- Athletes disqualified for technical rules infringements or who "do not finish" will be awarded a participation ribbon on the last position on the podium. Athletes who are disqualified for unsportsman like behavior will not receive an award.
- Sufficient time should be allowed between individual presentations in order to provide family and friends the opportunity to take photos and enjoy the moment.
- Only athletes, not coaches or managers, may be part of the ceremony in individual sports.
- Coaches do not receive awards.
- If an athlete is not present for the ceremony, awards will proceed without him or her. Awards will be set aside for later pickup.
- If an athlete receives the incorrect award, the correct award shall be given without removal of the original award.
- Any protest or complaint should be dealt with/resolved by the Sport Director or Protest Committee. It is not the responsibility of the awards personnel to deal with any protest.
- In the case of a tie, each athlete or team that has achieved the same result shall receive the award for the highest place. Athletes or teams that follow shall receive the appropriate award for their order of finish. A tie for one place will result in no award being given for the next place - a tie for first place means there is no second place winner- i.e., 2 athletes tie for second Gold, no Silver, 1 Bronze Medal, 1 4<sup>th</sup> place ribbon, etc.; 1 Gold, 2 tie for Silver, no Bronze, 1 4<sup>th</sup> place ribbon, etc.

### **Awards Podium Set-up**



## **Officials at competitions**

Special Olympics NY wants to provide quality competitions for its athletes at every level of competition; local, regional, or state. Every effort will be made by Event Directors to secure an adequate number of certified officials in offered sports for each competition.

## **National and World Games**

### **National Games**

The Special Olympics USA Games is a premier, national sports competition that showcases the power and joy of sports throughout the country. The USA Games take place every four years.

The Special Olympics USA Games are a national sports competition, taking place every four years. Similar to other national competitions, locations for each USA Games are held in varying US cities. Thousands of athletes and coaches will represent each of the 50 states, and the District of Columbia. Each state chapter receives National games allocations to participate.

**World Games**

World Games are the highest level of competition for Special Olympics athletes. Events are held every two years and alternate between Summer Games and Winter Games. World Games will follow the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules and the International Federation Rules for each sport, where applicable. The US national delegation is selected from athletes across the United States. Each state chapter receives National games allocations to participate.

Special Olympics New York follows SOI's General Rules Criteria of advancement for athlete selection to Invitational, National and World Games. We follow the criteria both in spirit and to the letter depending on timing and eligible pool of athletes.

# Section VII - Coaching

## **Coach Education Plan**

The Special Olympics New York Coaches Education System requires a General Orientation, Protective Behaviors course, Concussion Training course, Coaching Special Olympics Athletes course and a Sport Specific Training course for all coaches. Additionally, SONY will offer an online Principles of Coaching course for coaches wishing to gain advanced coaching knowledge. SONY requires coaches to re-new their coaching status every 3 years.

## **Special Olympics New York Coaches' Education Highlights**

### **Sport Assistant/Chaperone**

Class A Volunteer-Entry Level Requirements:

General Orientation (new coaches only)

- Part I (1.5 hrs)
  - History, Mission, Programmatic basics
- Part II (1.5 hrs)
  - Protective Behaviors course
  - Concussion Training course
  - Volunteer Application + Background Check
  - (Part II – repeat every 3 years)

### **Level I Certified Coach: Core Coaching Knowledge**

<i>Traditional Special Olympics Coach</i>	<i>Unified Sports Coach</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Sport Assistant Requirements</li> <li>• Coaching Special Olympics Athletes Course</li> <li>• Coaching Application w/release</li> <li>• 1st Season Practicum w/veteran Head Coach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Sport Assistant requirements</li> <li>• Coaching Unified Sports Course</li> <li>• Coaching Application w/release</li> <li>• 1st Season Practicum w/veteran Head Coach</li> </ul>

**Level II Certified Head Coach:** Sports Specific Knowledge (Must have one Head Coach per team attending State Games and all Coaches attending USA National Games in the specific sport being coached)

<i>New Coach Requirement (2.5 hours)</i>	<i>Veteran Coach Requirement (2.5 hours /3 years)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Level I requirements</li> <li>• Sport Specific Coach Training Course</li> <li>• Coach Application w/release</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Level I requirements</li> <li>• Coach Re-Certification Course = any qualifying Coach training school or NGB coursework</li> <li>• Coach Application w/release</li> </ul>

**Level III Advanced Certified Coach:** Advanced Coaching Knowledge (Required for all Coaches attending World Games)

- Principles of Coaching Course (3 hours)
- Coach Application w/release

## **Responsibilities of the Coach**

Coaching at any level involves much more than scoring points or preventing your opponent from doing so; Coaching involves accepting tremendous responsibility. As a coach, you will be called upon for the following:

### **1. Know and fulfill the Special Olympics mission and philosophy**

The Special Olympics mission must be part of every Special Olympics' coach's philosophy. What a coach does and how a coach communicates must be in line with our views. For example, Special Olympics views "winning" as achieving, not as coming in first. It is true that athletes train in order to compete, and it is competition that conveys how the athletes or teams are progressing, what is going well and what needs to be reviewed or learned next.

### **2. Provide a safe physical environment**

Participating in any sport holds inherent risks, but as a coach you are responsible for regularly inspecting the practice and competition facilities and equipment. It is important to teach athletes and parents the importance of keeping their equipment in good working order. Reassure them that, to avoid injury, they will learn the safest techniques and that you have a safety plan, and you will follow it.

It is also a priority to explain to the athletes and parents before the start of the season that all sports involve risks. Therefore, during the course of the year, athletes:

- will get bumps and bruises,
- will be tired and need extra rest, and
- will need to increase their fluid intake to stay hydrated.

### **3. Communicate in a positive way**

You will have a lot to communicate, not only with your athletes and parents but also with the coaching staff, officials, administrators, and others. Using a positive tone and being open to questions will help get your points across in an efficient manner.

### **4. Teach the fundamental skills of your sport**

When teaching the fundamental skills of your sport, you want to be sure that your athletes have fun. Therefore, we ask that you help all athletes be the best they can be by creating a fun, yet productive, practice environment. To help your athletes improve their skills, you need to have a sound understanding of sport-specific skills. It is important to know the correct skills components for both competition and assessment scores, your coaching guide will help you with this.

### **5. Teach the rules of the sport**

Introduce the rules of the sport and incorporate them into individual instruction. Many rules can be taught in the first practice, and at any time an opportunity naturally arises in later practices. Consulting the Coaches guide and rule books will assist you with these tasks.

### **6. Direct athletes in competition**

Directing athletes through sound tactical decisions in competition may involve determining the starting lineup or event assignments along with a substitution plan. It will be your duty to communicate appropriately to officials and opposing coaches and athletes. In preparing for and coaching during competition, it's important to remember that the focus is not on winning at all costs, but on coaching your athletes to compete well, improve their skills, and strive to win within the rules.

### **7. Effectively plan for all aspects of the season**

Planning for all aspects of a season includes practices, competitions, fitness and administrative requirements related to training and competition (such as facilities, equipment and competition registration). Planning each individual practice and sharing the practice plan among assistant coaches allows everyone to be as effective and efficient as possible during the time allotted. Planning also involves fitness, preparing for each competition and taking assignments for supervisory responsibilities

as well as crisis management. In essence, take into account the technical, tactical, mental and fitness needs and how to address all with a level of quality in a limited amount of time.

### **8. Encourage overall health fitness**

Help your athletes become fit and value fitness for a lifetime. We want you to help your athletes be fit so that they can participate safely and successfully. We also want your athletes to learn to become fit on their own, understand the value of fitness, and enjoy training. Thus, we ask you not to make them do push-ups or run laps as punishment. Make it fun to get fit for their sport and make it fun to participate in their sport so that they'll stay fit for a lifetime.

### **9. Help athletes develop character and manage their relationships with parents, guardians and caregivers effectively**

Character development includes learning, caring, being honest and respectful, and taking responsibility. These intangible qualities are no less important to teach than the fundamental skills of the sport. We ask you to teach these values to athletes by demonstrating and encouraging behaviors that express these values at all times.

These are your responsibilities as a coach. Remember that every athlete is an individual; meet them where they are in development – psychologically, physically and socially, and provide a wholesome environment. Every athlete must have the opportunity to learn without fear while having fun and enjoying the overall experience.

Coaches must submit training roster for each team in order to register athletes into a competition. All athletes are required to have a medical and consent form completed before training begins. Medical forms need to be updated every 3 years.

## **Coach Code of Conduct**

Special Olympics New York is committed to the highest ideals of sport and expects all coaches to honor sport and Special Olympics New York. All Special Olympics coaches agree to observe the following code:

### **Health and Safety of the Athletes**

#### **Training**

- I will ensure that the equipment and facilities are safe to use.
- I will ensure that the equipment, rules, training and the environment are appropriate for the age and ability of the athletes.
- I will review each athlete's medical form and be aware of any limitations on that athlete's participation noted on that form.
- I will encourage athletes to seek medical advice when required.
- I will maintain the same interest and support toward sick and injured athletes.
- I will allow further participation in training and competition only when appropriate.

#### **Travel and Competition**

- Ensure acceptable supervision and maintain an adequate 4:1 volunteer/coach-to-athlete ratio.
- Prepare for travel and overnight trips lodging (need for same-sex supervision), work out the most effective rooming and seating arrangements, taking into account athlete choice, behavioral and personality clashes.
- Prepare for supervision throughout the entire trip. There will be multiple event components to supervise such as Social activities, Coaches meetings, awards ceremonies, travel to and from events etc.

#### **Respect for Others**

- I will respect the rights, dignity and worth of athletes, coaches, other volunteers, friends and spectators in Special Olympics.

- I will treat everyone equally regardless of sex, ethnic origin, religion or ability.
- I will be a positive role model for the athletes I coach.

#### **Ensure a Positive Experience**

- I will ensure that, for each athlete I coach, the time spent with Special Olympics is a positive experience.
- I will respect the talent, developmental stage and goals of each athlete.
- I will ensure each athlete competes in events that challenge that athlete's potential and are appropriate to that athlete's ability.
- I will be fair, considerate and honest with athletes and communicate with athletes using simple, clear language.
- I will ensure that accurate scores are provided for entry of an athlete into any event.
- I will instruct each athlete to perform to the best of the athlete's ability at all preliminaries and final heats in accordance with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules.

#### **Act Professionally and Take Responsibility for My Actions**

- My language, manner, punctuality, preparation and presentation will demonstrate high standards.
- I will display control, respect, dignity and professionalism to all involved in the sport (athletes, coaches, opponents, officials, administrators, parents, spectators, media, etc.).
- I will encourage athletes to demonstrate the same qualities.
- I will not drink alcohol, smoke or take illegal drugs while representing Special Olympics New York at training sessions, competition or during Games.
- I will refrain from any form of personal abuse towards athletes and others, including inappropriate or unwanted sexual advances on others, verbal, physical and emotional abuse.
- I will be alert to any form of abuse from other sources directed toward athletes in my care.
- I will abide by the Special Olympics New York policy on the prohibition of coaches dating athletes.

#### **Quality Service to the Athletes**

- I will seek continual improvement through performance evaluation and ongoing coach education.
- I will be knowledgeable about the sports rules and skills of the sport(s) I coach.
- I will provide a plan for a regular training program.
- I will keep copies of the medical, training and competition records for each athlete I coach.
- I will follow the Special Olympics Sports Rules for my sport(s).

If a coach does not adhere to this Code of Conduct, they may be subject to a range of consequences, up to and including being prohibited from coaching in Special Olympics New York.

### **Coaching Applications**

Coaches applications are the forms submitted to the regional staff office upon completion of the coach's education process. There are three different types of coach applications that each serve a different purpose.

**Standard Coach Application:** the application that every new coach should fill out while attending a Coaches Training School and submit to their regional office for review.

**Coach Re-Certification Application:** this application is for a Current Special Olympics Coach whose sport certification has expired. A coach must renew their certification at least once every three years.

**Athlete as Coach Application:** This application is for a Special Olympics Athletes who wishes to become Certified as a Coach. All Special Olympics Athletes who become coaches will be assigned a Mentor to provide support and guidance throughout the coaching experience.

Special Request Coach Application: this application is for someone who is already an established coach either with in Special Olympics or outside of Special Olympics. This form allows a coach to bypass part of the sport specific training course by proving to Special Olympics NY that their qualifications already meet some of the criteria for a sport certification.

All coaches' applications will be provided by the SONY Regional Offices. Please reach out to your Regional office to obtain copies of the coach applications.

### **Coaching Training Schools**

In order to become certified in a Special Olympics sport, individuals must: attend a Coaches Training School, select a mentor to supervise their ten-hour practicum (or supervised training) of Special Olympics athletes and forward their certification application to their SONY regional office for processing. Training schools are sport specific and must be completed for each sport. Coaches Training Schools are organized by the SONY regional offices to ensure adequate opportunity for certification in all available sports. In order to attend a Coaches Training School please reach out to your regional office to find out when the next scheduled coaches training school will take place.

### **Online Coach Education**

In an effort to increase our ability to train new coaches, we have developed online courses that can provide a high quality, credible and informative General Orientation. The goals of this training are to increase accessibility and to streamline the way we collect paperwork associated with a new certification. We are currently offering 3 online courses. The available courses are: A General Orientation for coaches, a General Orientation for non-coaches (Boards Members, 1 on 1 Staff Etc.) and a Class A Volunteer recertification course. If you would like more information about these courses or would like to participate in them, please reach out to your regional staff member. They will be able to explain the process and provide you with a course link.

### **Coaching Credentials**

All certified coaches are required to wear Photo ID Credentials while attending SONY competitive events. In order to obtain a coaches Credential, certified coaches must provide a photo to their regional staff members. Upon completion or submission of their coach application, new certified coaches must submit a passport size photo in .JPG format electronically to their regional staff member. After their Coaches application is processed regional staff will ensure the delivery of coaches' credential.



# Section VIII –Volunteering

## **Volunteer Guidelines**

The Mission of Special Olympics New York (SONY) is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-style sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

In fulfilling the mission, SONY relies heavily upon a wide range of volunteers supports, those who help on the day of an event, and those who have long term relationships with the organization, having direct contact with athletes and or SONY's assets. SONY has the responsibility to ensure a safe environment for all participants including athletes, coaches, volunteers, staff, and spectators. To that end, Special Olympics Inc. (SOI) has developed and adopted a mandatory volunteer screening policy with standards for each of the U.S. programs to follow for Class A, B and Class C Volunteers.

Volunteer related General Rules as outlined by SOI and SONY are below listed and referenced:

### **SOI General Rules, Section 3.13**

#### **Volunteers**

All Accredited Programs and GOC's should use volunteers in all aspects of their programs to the greatest extent possible, consistent with the requirements of these General Rules. Each Accredited Program shall institute and enforce written procedures for screening, training and monitoring volunteers. U.S. Programs and their respective Sub-Programs shall comply specifically with the requirements of this Section 3.13 in utilizing volunteers.

U.S. Programs and all GOCs operating within the United States shall comply with the following requirements:

#### **(a) Classification of U.S. Program Volunteers**

Volunteers to U.S. Programs shall be classified into three functional categories, as follows:

- (1) "**Class A**" volunteers are those who (i) are or may be in regular close physical contact with athletes, such as coaches, drivers, and overnight hosts, or (ii) have or may have administrative and/or fiscal authority.
- (2) "**Class B**" volunteers are those who have or may have only casual or limited contact with athletes, such as Committee members and officials.
- (3) "**Class C**" volunteers are those who volunteer for Special Olympics for a single day or for a single event, and thus have the most limited contact with Special Olympics athletes.

#### **(b) U.S. Program Volunteer Registration Requirements**

Each U.S. Program shall require all volunteers to register with that U.S. Program prior to their participation in Special Olympics. The required procedure for completing that registration will depend on the classification of the volunteer, as follows:

- (1) Class C volunteers may register on the same day of their participation (but before that participation actually begins), by providing the U.S. Program with their full name, complete address, telephone number, and if applicable, the name of the civic group or corporate sponsor with which they are associated.
- (2) Class A and Class B volunteers must provide all of the information required in subsection (1), as well as the following additional information:
  - i. positive photo identification (such as a driver's license or student identification);

- ii. the names, addresses and telephone numbers of at least two personal references who are not family members; and
  - iii. written responses to the following questions:
    - (A) Do you use illegal drugs?
    - (B) Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense?
    - (C) Have you ever been charged with neglect, abuse or assault?
    - (D) Has your driver's license ever been suspended or revoked in any state or other jurisdiction?
- (3) Class A volunteers shall also, in addition to providing all of the information required by subsections (1) and (2) above, provide written authorization to the U.S. Program for the conduct of a criminal background check with appropriate state and local police authorities.

**(c) Background Investigations.**

Each U.S. Program shall institute procedures for further investigating the backgrounds of any prospective volunteers who respond affirmatively to any of the questions listed in subsection (2) (iii) above. In addition, each U.S. Program shall comply with the laws and regulations of its own jurisdiction with respect to its screening and supervision of volunteers. Where permitted by such laws, each U.S. Program shall, using the authorization described in subsection (b) (3) above, arrange for a background check to be made of any Class A volunteer, who responds affirmatively to any of the questions listed in subsection (2) (iii) above, with such check to be completed satisfactorily prior to that Volunteer's participation in Special Olympics.

**(d) Orientation and Training.**

All volunteers shall receive and be required to review, before the start of their participation, written information prepared by the U.S. Program concerning the general responsibilities of a Special Olympics volunteer and policies relative to appropriate individual personal behavior. In addition, Class A and Class B volunteers shall also receive additional in-person orientation and training conducted by staff of the U.S. Program before the start of their participation. SOI shall have the right to inspect and approve all volunteer orientation and training materials used by any Accredited Program in recruiting or training volunteers.

**Additional SONY Guidelines:**

Special Olympics New York uses a network solution (*DocuSign* and *ProProfs*) to provide individualized application and personalize training for Class A and Class B volunteers.

**SONY Limits and Approval:**

Prospective volunteers who are at least 16 years old and under the age of 18 are considered Minor Class A volunteers, and are not subject to a criminal records check. Minor Class A volunteers will submit (2) non-family personal references to be verified by Special Olympics New York. Minor Class A volunteers may fulfill the majority of assigned tasks with the exception of a prohibition from overnight travel and a restriction from athlete supervisory responsibilities.

SONY shall use an SOI-approved vendor with access to a national database that includes the sex offender registry for each available state to conduct the required criminal records check.

Class C volunteers may register on the same day prior to participation, by providing the SONY with their full name, complete address, telephone number, and if applicable, the name of the civic group or corporate sponsor with which they are associated. Class C Volunteers must be at least 13 years of age; those 13 to 15 years old must be accompanied by an adult.

**Background Check Review and Disqualification:**

If the background check discloses a conviction for any of the charges below, the volunteer applicant shall automatically be disqualified from participation as a volunteer: **child abuse, sexual abuse of a minor/adult, causing the death of any person, including murder or manslaughter, neglect of child or any other individual for whom the potential volunteer had/has responsibility, assault, kidnapping,**

**physical abuse, battery, arson, criminal sexual conduct, attempted murder, cruelty to animals, and fraud.**

If the background record check or motor vehicle record check discloses a conviction for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, driving while intoxicated, driving while impaired by alcohol or drugs, or comparable offenses within the seven years immediately preceding the record check, the volunteer applicant shall automatically be disqualified from driving on behalf of Special Olympics New York. In cases involving other prospective volunteer activities not involving driving; SONY may consider rejection or appropriate restrictions on volunteer activities based upon such a record.

If the background record check or motor vehicle record check discloses convictions for three or more moving violations within the three years immediately preceding the record check, the volunteer applicant shall automatically be disqualified from driving on behalf of Special Olympics New York. In cases involving other prospective volunteer activities not involving driving; SONY may consider rejection or appropriate restrictions on volunteer activities based upon such a record.

If the background check discloses any of the below-listed circumstances, and the applicant is not otherwise disqualified under the preceding provisions, SONY may also reject the volunteer applicant:

- A judgment against the applicant for damages in a civil action or entry of a civil penalty with regard to any claim that is similar in nature to the items identified as grounds for immediate disqualification.
- Conviction of the applicant for theft of funds, larceny or other financial crime, prostitution-related crime, or controlled substance crime
- The applicants being the subject of any court order involving any sexual abuse or physical abuse of a minor that restricts contact with a minor
- If a volunteer believes the information from the national vendor is incorrect, they may work out the incorrect information directly with the vendor. Upon the time SONY receives new information, they will reconsider the volunteer's application.
- With regard to criminal or traffic violation, the granting of probation before entry of judgment or any similar disposition under the laws of this or any other state whereby a finding of guilt is withheld or otherwise stayed, shall be considered a "conviction" for purposes of this policy and one's suitability to serve as a volunteer.

SONY shall reserve the right and the authority to make the final decision as to the acceptance of any volunteer applicant in accordance with the law. The fact that a volunteer applicant's background check does not reflect any of the matters set forth above does not, in and of itself, mean that the applicant's application will be accepted. Other factors, including business needs of SONY, are factors considered in making any final determination.

SONY will notify the applicant of acceptance or rejection of the application within thirty (30) days after receipt of the background check. The fact that an applicant is not rejected on the basis of a background check does not create a right to be accepted in the SONY volunteer program. As noted above, SONY may and does consider other lawful factors in making determinations regarding volunteers.

**Maintenance of records**

SONY is committed to ensuring the privacy of our volunteer's personal information and has established safeguards to help protect such information. Personal information, including the results of the background check, is secured in accordance with the Special Olympics International privacy policy, found here:

<https://www.specialolympics.org/privacy-policy>

## **Dating Policy**

Special Olympics prohibits any staff and/or volunteers from dating Special Olympics athletes. Special Olympics respects the right of athletes to have a full range of human relationships available to other human beings. This policy shall not be interpreted as a limitation on the rights of athletes, but only as a restriction on Special Olympics staff and volunteers

## **Regional Program Committee Members**

Regional program committees are comprised of a group of volunteers who are appointed and lead by the regional program staff. Meetings are expected to occur on a regular basis, monthly or seasonally, and are guided with a formal agenda. Individuals asked to sit on the committee may include current or former coaches, sport directors, family members, athletes, Unified Sports partners, or professionals with experience in key functional roles such as finance, public relations, sports, or fundraising. Committee members will work alongside the regional program staff to ensure sustainability of the local program by providing leadership, administrative support, and labor. The committee will also formulate goals and action items that are consistent with the mission of Special Olympics, ensuring the local program stay on track, evolve and adjust to change.

## **Games Organizing Committees**

The Games Organizing Committee (GOC) is a team of community leaders who volunteer to support SONY in organizing the multiple functions that must work in conjunction with one another. Lead by the Committee Chairperson, the GOC separates into several sub-committees, made up of individuals whose influence and skills best suits them for a particular aspect of Games. Guided by goals, strategies, and needs set forth by SONY, the subcommittee generates the means by which they will satisfy these goals. Each GOC meeting will serve as a platform to announce the subcommittee's intentions as well as report on their progress to the entire GOC. This partnership allows for each athlete to experience a unique touch on each Games while helping Special Olympics New York adhere to its core mission and accomplish its goals of planning and conducting high quality events.

## **Volunteer Captains**

The Volunteer Captain works with the SONY Volunteer Management team and Sport Director to provide added management at a competition. This is an individual has agreed to take on the role and responsibility of organizing the 'day of event' volunteers and their tasks while ensuring the process stays in accordance with the policies established by Special Olympics New York.

### **Requirements**

Has leadership skills and is able to solve problems in an efficient and diplomatic manner. Extensive knowledge of sports competitions and event management is a plus but not mandatory. Willing to be trained prior to the event for all operations of volunteer check-in, assigning and training. The Volunteer Captain defers to the Sport Director with any rules questions. Having previous experience as an athlete, coach, official, partner or volunteer in the sport are assets.

### **Planning**

Attends at least two planning meetings via conference call; one for orientation/planning with the Volunteer Management team and one call with the Sport Director.

### **At Event**

Volunteer Captains are to arrive to games minimum of 1 night before competition. Volunteer Captains are encouraged to arrive 2-3 days in advance to help lead set-up.

### **Competition day**

- Arrive one hour before and leave one half hour after the schedule set for the general volunteers reporting to that venue.

- Review list of expected volunteer groups and group leaders.
- Locate equipment and signage. Give equipment to Sport Director and set out the signage around the venue.
- Set up then oversee volunteer registration. Confirm number of checked-in volunteers.
- Send service competition volunteers to be trained and managed by the Sport Director.
- Train and manage service support volunteers in volunteer registration, lunch, awards, fan station, water, and garbage monitor/control.
- Report any shortages or surpluses of volunteers to Volunteer Management team.
- Report any behavior or safety issues to the Sport Director and Volunteer Management team.
- Ensure the volunteer code of conduct is communicated to and followed by all volunteers.
- Work with Sport Director and Special Olympics NY onsite staff to pack up and return all remaining materials and equipment to location according to communicated plan.

#### **Post Event**

- Submit feedback or formal evaluation to the SONY Volunteer Management team.
- Participate in a conference call to evaluate the competition and volunteers in effort to improve competition for the following year.

### **Service Volunteers**

#### **Service volunteers get their hands dirty!**

Non-sport volunteers help with set-up, clean-up, food service, ceremonies, housing support, registration and administrative work, among other tasks. Sport-specific volunteers serve as starters, timers, linesmen, results runners, spotters, and in many more roles required to make every event run smoothly. All of these volunteers must be age 13 or older—and kids ages 13 to 15 must be accompanied by an adult.

### **Volunteer to cheer**

#### **Fans in the stands cheer loud and proud!**

At state-level competitions, these dedicated volunteers make sure that every athlete is buoyed by positive, thrilling support—whether their family is present or not. Volunteers of all ages are welcome to cheer and to visit the fan stations to make signs and boost the electric atmosphere even higher!

### **Social Ambassadors**

#### **Social ambassadors capture and share the moment!**

From various event venues, social media enthusiasts make a point to snap photos, write captions and share the excitement of the day using the event hashtags on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

# Section IX - Safety

## **Safety Precautions at Competitions**

### **Medical and Safety Requirements - Generally**

SONY programs conduct all sports training and competition activities in a safe environment, taking all reasonable steps, including good risk management practices, to protect the health and safety of athletes, coaches, volunteers and spectators and other attendees at all Special Olympics events. SONY will also adhere to the general or sport-specific medical and safety requirements set forth in the SOI Sports Rules.

### **Supervision of Athletes**

Accredited Programs shall provide for adequate supervision and coaching for all athletes. For competition activities, a maximum ratio of four athletes-to-one Coach/Chaperone (4:1 athlete-to-coach ratio) is required.

### **Coaches Responsibilities**

A coach's first priority is the health and safety of the athlete. Coaches must follow medical and safety protocols outlined by SOI and SONY. Coaches of team sports must consider the potential safety risk of placing athletes of varying sizes, skill levels and ages on the same team. If there is a safety risk, the coach should help athletes seek alternative training and competition opportunities that may better meet the athletes' needs.

### **Minimum Medical Facilities at Competitions**

A qualified emergency medical technician will be in attendance or readily available at all competitions. At State level competitions, first aid areas will be clearly identified, adequately equipped, and staffed by a qualified emergency medical technician for the duration of the event.

### **Minimum Safety Precautions at Competitions**

Adequate precautions must be taken to avoid exposing athletes to sunburn, hypothermia or other conditions or illnesses caused by exposure to the elements.

Special precautions must be taken when holding competitions at high altitudes, including providing training recommendations for athletes before the competition and equipping the competition venues with oxygen tanks.

Ample water or other liquids will be provided for athletes throughout the competition and athletes should be encouraged to take appropriate hydration breaks.

Special precautions are taken to ensure that each participant receives any medications that have been prescribed for his/her use.

Competition organizers, officials and coaches will take into account the cardiovascular effect and level of strenuousness of a sport when setting the competition schedule for that sport, taking into account the length of competition, weather conditions, the physical ability of the participants and the need for adequate rest periods. In general, athletes should be given adequate time between competitions.

## **COVID-19**

Prioritizing the health and safety of our community as New York State continues to navigate the impact of COVID-19. Our return to play ensures an opportunity for every athlete to get back in the game, either by training in-person or at home.

### **COVID-19 Protocol General Summary / Basic Overview:**

Special Olympics New York must comply with our Special Olympics International protocol, NY Forward guidance and the current Department of Health (DOH) protocol. Our guidance should be understood by all participants prior to continued participation. The protocol documented is detailed and comprehensive.

- Participants are defined as every person involved in activity: including athletes, staff, volunteers, coaches, partners, officials, etcetera.
- Risk categories for participants are defined within the protocol, those at High Risk as defined by the CDC are discouraged from returning in our early phases, 1 and 2.
- The S.O. Protocol for return to activity is a safe and phased approach, consistent with New York Forward and the Department of Health. Within each phase, it is necessary to comply, become educated, and prepare before participating in activity:
  - Phase 0 (zero) is at-home program only, gathering is prohibited.
  - Phase 1 includes small gatherings of 10 or less participants. Minimal participation in activity is permitted, consistent with NYS DOH. Direct and indirect contact is prohibited. Participants who would be at high risk are strongly discouraged from returning.
  - Phase 2 allows for larger gatherings of 50 or less participants. Minimal to high participation in activity is permitted consistent with NYS DOH. Direct contact is prohibited. Those at high risk are strongly discouraged from returning.
  - Phase 3 allows for the largest gatherings; more extensive, nearly full participation in activity will resume. All participants of all risk groups are eligible to return. This phase may be implemented in steps prior to allowing unlimited gatherings, long distance travel and overnights may be eventually restored. At this time, this phase is not recognized for implementation. COVID-19 will need to be a non-pandemic, non-epidemic condition.
  - In each phase, the process of Comply, Educate, Prepare and Activity is repeated.
- SONY moves through the phases of return, there will be extended time utilized between each phase to assure the rate of COVID-19 does not climb, that our participants are safe and the organization can meet all the necessary conditions outlined for each phase.
- Eligibility for return is conditional based on:
  - Individual risk, health and safety; high risk individuals may be limited.
  - Observance of training or competition facilities safety and distancing precautions.
  - Availability of necessary personal protective equipment and sanitizing supplies.
  - Volunteer & coach participants having attended an online safe return training(s). Coaches and SONY will assure all other participants and athletes understand safe return guidelines.
  - All participants having completed a new Code of Conduct Risk Assessment form.
  - All participants making themselves available for on-site screening assessment, body temperature, wellness checks prior to every SONY event, activity, training and gathering.
  - Personal protective equipment, facility and equipment sanitization, gloves where necessary for equipment exchanges, face masks and physical distancing required.
  - Facility signage and attendance records used and maintained for each practice or gathering.
- Those who identify as having had COVID-19 will be required to obtain written permission from their physician to return.

## SPECIAL OLYMPICS RETURN TO ACTIVITIES PHASES

Phase 0 Prevalence: community transmission occurring Stay at home order in place for all individuals.	Phase 1 Prevalence: clusters of cases occurring Stay at home order is lifted, restriction on size of gatherings (≤10 people).	Phase 2 (Prevalence: sporadic cases reported) Size restrictions on gatherings increased to ≤50 people.	Phase 3 (Prevalence: No reported cases*) No restrictions on size of gatherings and public facilities are open. <i>* In Epidemic or Pandemic stage</i>
<p>No events or activities of any sort to be held in person.</p> <p>Individual sport training sessions in own home using own equipment.</p> <p>Coaching occurs virtually.</p> <p>Fitness and Health programming offered virtually or at home.</p> <p>Meetings, conferences or trainings to be held virtually.</p>	<p><b>HIGH RISK INDIVIDUALS</b> (see appendix) should continue to remain at home.</p> <p><b>PRACTICES, HEALTH/FITNESS, LEADERSHIP and LOCAL EVENTS</b> (10 or fewer participants) <b>MAY</b> resume if they adhere to strict physical distancing and sanitation protocols. No direct or indirect contact (e.g. through a ball in the hand) should take place.</p> <p>Virtual programming should be made available for those not able to attend in person.</p> <p>Select disciplines of <b>HEALTHY ATHLETES</b> occur for disciplines where risk mitigation and infection control precautions can be put in place.</p> <p><b>SCHOOL</b>-based activities led by schools should comply with guidance from schools/districts.</p>	<p><b>HIGH RISK INDIVIDUALS</b> (see appendix) should continue to remain at home.</p> <p><b>PRACTICES, HEALTH/FITNESS, LEADERSHIP and LOCAL EVENTS</b> (50 or fewer participants), <b>MAY</b> resume if they adhere to physical distancing and sanitation protocols. Indirect contact (e.g. through a ball in the hand) <b>MAY</b> resume. No direct contact should occur in sports.</p> <p>Virtual programming should be made available for those not able to attend in person.</p> <p><b>HEALTHY ATHLETES</b> may occur for disciplines where risk mitigation and infection control precautions can be put in place.</p> <p><b>SCHOOL</b>-based activities led by schools should comply with guidance from schools/districts.</p>	<p><b>HIGH RISK INDIVIDUALS</b> (see appendix) can resume public interactions, but should practice physical distancing, minimizing exposure to social settings where distancing may not be practical, unless precautionary measures are observed.</p> <p><b>LARGE COMPETITION and GAMES</b> (with people traveling from multiple geographic areas who are in same phase) <b>MAY</b> potentially occur, if permitted by WHO, country and local standards.</p> <p>Virtual programming should still be made available for those not able to attend in person.</p> <p><b>HEALTHY ATHLETES</b> may resume activities, with appropriate infection control precautions in place.</p> <p><b>SCHOOL</b>-based activities led by schools should comply with guidance from schools/districts.</p>

### General Sports Precaution:

- Phase 1 = ≤10 people (includes, athletes, coaches, and volunteers) No spectators
- Phase 2 = ≤50 people (includes, athletes, coaches, and volunteers)
- Individuals at a Higher Risk defined by the SOI Protocol should continue to remain at home until S.O. Phase 3
- Outlined in the protocol: PPE masks, gloves, sanitizer and disinfectant would be in use
- When helping athletes with equipment is needed, please be sure to wear a mask and gloves
- Volunteers that are helping athletes and sanitizing equipment will wear and change gloves between athletes
- Bring your own equipment whenever possible (balls, golf clubs, bats, etc.)
- Always ensure that all facility guidelines are followed
- Sanitize all equipment before and after practice
- Maintain physical distancing at all times, arrival, during warm-ups and any training activity
- Utilize Sport Specific Virtual Training Resources - <https://www.youtube.com/user/polarsony>
- In phase 1, it is highly recommended that all activity take place outside or in well-ventilated facilities. Where possible instruct participants to use single entry point (to allow for screening process and separate exit)
- In Phase 2 indirect contact may resume. No direct contact should occur in sports
- Special Olympics New York protocol and full sports guidance are found online at: <https://www.specialolympics-ny.org/>



### **Covid-19 Participant Code of Conduct**

- If I have COVID-19 symptoms, I will stay at home and NOT go to any activities until 7 days after all of my symptoms are over. If I am exposed to COVID-19 and have no symptoms, I can return 14 days after exposure.
- Special Olympics gave me education on Special Olympics rules for COVID-19 and who is at high-risk.
- I know that if I have a high-risk condition, I have more risk that I could get sick or die from COVID-19. If I have a high-risk condition, I should not go to Special Olympics events in person, until there is little or no Coronavirus in my community,
- I know that before or when I get to a Special Olympics activity, they will ask me some questions about symptoms and exposure to COVID-19. They may also take my temperature. I will answer truthfully and participate fully.
- I will keep at least 6 ft/2m from all participants at all times.
- I will wear a mask at all times while at Special Olympics activities. I may not have to wear it during active exercise.
- I will wash my hands for 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer before any activities. I will wash my hands any time I sneeze, cough, go to the bathroom or get my hands dirty.
- I will avoid touching my face. I will cover my mouth when I cough or sneeze and immediately wash my hands after.
- I will not share drinking bottles or towels with other people.
- I will only share equipment when instructed to. If equipment must be shared, I will only touch the equipment if it is disinfected first.
- If I get or have had COVID, I will not go to any in-person Special Olympics events until 7 days after my symptoms end. I will go to my doctor and get written clearance before returning to any sport or fitness activities.
- I understand that if I do not follow all of these rules, I may not be allowed to participate in Special Olympics activities during this time.

### **Summary of Insurance**

Our Special Olympics New York insurance liability plan through American Specialties will protect athletes, coaches and registered volunteers with respect to Special Olympics' conducted or sponsored activities and travel. The accident medical insurance policy is excess of any other valid and collectible insurance or medical plan applicable to the injured participant. This insurance covers injuries resulting from an accident occurring during a covered event or during covered travel. A covered event is any scheduled activity authorized, organized, and supervised by Special Olympics including authorized pre-competition activities, competition and practice sessions. The volunteer's insurance is always primary and American Specialties through Special Olympics is secondary.

### **Transportation Guidelines**

Special Olympics New York expects transportation service providers and volunteers to transport our passengers (athletes, volunteers and staff members) to and from events efficiently and safely. The transportation vendor, driver/pilot, and passengers shall take reasonable precaution to afford protection for themselves and the individuals being transported.

### **Athlete Transportation in Private or SONY Vehicles**

Special Olympics New York recognizes that there are times in which private vehicles are used by our stakeholders to transport athletes for Special Olympics activity inside and outside of their local region. When private vehicles are to be used to transport athletes and stakeholders, the following guidelines are applicable:

- The driver of the private or SONY vehicle will be a Class A volunteer.
- Each athlete must travel with a copy of their valid medical and consent forms.
- The transportation arrangements must either be acknowledged and approved by the local leadership as a routine expectation established by the training club practice plan or a unique standalone arrangement for the purpose of participation in an event or activity.

### **Transportation Standards for Contract or Charter Providers**

Charter bus servicers are frequently utilized when traveling in large groups including competition outside of the local region. Special Olympics New York expects the provider to meet the following expectations:

- Special Olympics will engage the transportation service or charter provider in a contract relationship that stipulates our reasonable expectations for industry minimums standards as they relate to transporting our stakeholders. This includes the expectation that the provider will assure that all buses and drivers/pilots are in compliance with all requirements applicable federal and state laws and state regulations.
- The transportation service provider shall provide Special Olympics New York with a carrier contact person or dispatch number.
- While not a required prerequisite, Special Olympics New York retains the right to request an inspection history, either through the transportation service provider or via the Safety and Fitness Electronic Records (SAFER) System, provided by the U.S. Department of Transportation: Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. This record may help to reflect the quality history for the evaluation of a new vendor or charter company.
- While in transit all stakeholders are responsible for fulfilling their applicable codes of conduct.
- The bus driver/pilot is responsible for fulfilling the relevant State and Federal laws including the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) guidelines, in addition to the general safety and well-being of all passengers. The driver's/pilot's reasonable directions must be followed at all times.
- If at any time during transit the charter is failing to meet expectations, the Bus Captain will notify the Head of Delegation and/or the Regional staff person immediately.

### **Charter Bus Planning, Safety and Travel Plan**

For any given charter trip the travel itinerary will be determined, coordinated and communicated by the local staff leaders prior to departure for the trip. Each bus will have an identifiable pre-determined volunteer Bus Captain responsible for onsite coordination, team communication and delegation support. Regional leadership staff are expected to develop a travel itinerary.

#### **The travel itinerary shall include**

- A reasonable predetermined gathering point, boarding plan and drop-off location for the round trip.
- A travel plan including a realistic time frame for travel including an expected route of travel and expected rest stops.
- Identification of volunteer bus captain(s).
- A travel delegation roster.
- For State Games, these travel itineraries are filed with the delegation registration.

### **Volunteer Bus Captain Expectations**

#### **Communication**

These responsibilities include communicating with SONY staff leader and or Head of Delegation prior to departure and while in transit the following details:

- Departure or roster related issues, scratches and housing implications.
- The time of departure.
- Ongoing issues or problems including a deviation from the established itinerary including emergency stops.
- Arrival at final destination.

#### **Pre-Boarding**

- To fulfill the Bus Captain job description
- Assure the SONY supplied bus travel kit including amenities and a first aid kit is available.
- Before boarding the bus, each athlete and class a volunteer shall be checked-in by the Bus Captain. If an individual is not on the Bus Captain's travel delegation roster, they are not allowed to board the bus. Individuals other than the driver/pilot, the athletes, Class A volunteers and

- staff members are restricted from boarding the bus.
- Make sure all luggage is labeled, color coded if applicable and loaded beneath the bus; coaches and athletes should assist.

### **Boarding and Departure**

- Individuals other than the driver/pilot, the athletes, Class A volunteers and staff members are restricted from boarding the bus.
- Manage Delegation Attendance:
- Utilizing the delegation roster and before boarding the bus, each athlete and Class A volunteer shall be recognized "checked-in" by the Bus Captain.
- If an individual is not on the Bus Captain's travel roster, they are not allowed to board the bus.
- In addition to checking boarding attendance, scratches must be acknowledged and recorded for later communication. Scratches related to Coach support must be reviewed for proper supervision ratios prior to departure.

### **Travel through Arrival**

- Distribute the applicable phone & communication lists, coach packets and other Games related materials to necessary stakeholders.
- In the event of an emergency stop the bus captain will aid the driver/pilot to employ safety measures including evacuation.
- In the event that the Bus Captain perceives the transportation or circumstances to be unsafe and beyond the driver's/pilot's ability to support they are empowered to contact 911 or the local authorities immediately.
- Bus Captains will notify the regional team leader if there is a change to any element of the travel itinerary including emergency stops.
- Monitor travel conditions - stay aware of driver safety, weather conditions, and approximate location. In the case of emergency, you may need to communicate this detail with authorities.

### **Concussion Policies**

A concussion is a brain injury caused by a bump or blow to the head that can change the way your brain normally works. All Special Olympics New York coaches are required to take a Concussion course once every three years as a part of their Special Olympics coaching certification.

### **Venue Safety**

Special Olympics New York takes the following actions to ensure athlete safety at each sports venue.

- Inspect all venues before the event.
- Repair or improve the venues to meet safety standards.
- Obey safety rules and use good judgment and common sense.

In general, the venue should supply these items to ensure the highest level of safety:

- Adequate lighting to illuminate the entire venue, including the parking lot.
- Communications systems to connect with safety and medical services.
- Universally accessible restroom facilities.
- Fire prevention, protection and suppression systems.
- Safe walking areas free of slip, trip and fall hazards for participants and spectators.
- Safe spectator seating and access to the seating.
- Participant safety in locker rooms, competition and training areas.
- Working public address system.

## **Water Safety**

### **Emergency Action Plan**

An emergency action plan shall be in place prior to any Special Olympics participants entering the water for any reason, be it training, competition or recreation. The original plan should be written and reviewed by the staff on hand the plan shall include the following:

- The procedure for obtaining emergency medical support if a medical doctor, para – professional or medical support is not present.
- The procedure for obtaining weather information or weather watch information, particularly if the event is outside.
- The procedure for reporting accidents.
- There shall be at least one certified lifeguard on duty for every 25 swimmers in the water.
- The sole function of the lifeguard shall be to guard. If no relief lifeguard is available, the pool must be cleared, even for a short duration, when a lifeguard must leave the poolside.
- The Event Director will review the Emergency Action Plan prior to each occasion.
- There shall be enough coaches in accordance with FINA or program NGB guidelines.
- Pool depths must be marked and easily visible.
- The minimum depth of the pool for racing starts shall meet FINA or NGB specifications.
- It is recommended that all starting blocks meet FINA or NGB specifications.
- A pool facility shall not be used unless a satisfactory inspection rating is received prior to any Special Olympics participant entering the water.
- An athlete with Down syndrome who has been diagnosed with Atlanto-Axial Instability may not participate in Butterfly events, Individual Medley events, diving starts or diving. For additional information and the procedure for waiver of this restriction, please refer to Article I, Addendum F of the general rules found at [www.specialolympics.org](http://www.specialolympics.org)
- If in the judgment of the referee or competition management an athlete's swimming competence that the athlete is not capable of completing the race distance and may even put his/her life in danger, the referee may, with the Technical Delegates approval, require a test of swimming competence before the athlete is allowed to compete in any further swimming event or in any final.
- Enough supervision to provide for a minimum ratio of observer to swimmers of 1 per 2 for those swimmers who are prone to seizures.

### **Recreational Swimming**

Special Olympics New York has determined, for the health and welfare of its participants, to prohibit recreational swimming at any time during Special Olympics competitions or activities unless specifically authorized and stated otherwise by Special Olympics NY with respect to a specific event. This applies not only to the time on-site at Special Olympics competitions or activities, but also while in transit to/from Special Olympics competitions or activities. Any such exceptions must comply with the "safety considerations" found in section 5 of the Special Olympics swimming rules. <https://media.specialolympics.org/resources/sports-essentials/sport-rules/Sports-Essentials-Swimming-Rules-2020-v2.pdf?qa=2.264307983.1267617637.1608053856-662844947.1604341999>

## **Weather Safety**

### **Thunder and Lightning Policy**

**(This policy has been adopted from the New York State Public High School Athletic Association)**

- Thunder and lightning necessitates that contests be suspended. The occurrence of thunder and/or lightning is not subject to interpretation or discussion
  - In coordination with your site administrator, a plan for shelter should be in place prior to the start of any contest.
- When thunder is heard and/or when lightning is seen, the following procedures should be adhered to:
  - Suspend play and direct participants to go to shelter, a building normally occupied by the public or if a building is unavailable, participants should go inside a vehicle with a solid metal top (e.g., bus, van, car).

- Do not permit people to stand under or near a tree; and have all stay away from poles, antennas, towers and underground watering systems.
- After thunder and/or lightning have left the area, wait 30 minutes after the last boom is heard or strike is seen before resuming play or competition.

#### Administration of Heat Index Procedures

- Heat index will be checked 1 hour before the contest/practice by a certified athletic trainer, athletic director, or school designee when the air temperature is 80 degrees (Fahrenheit) or higher.
- The athletic trainer, athletic director, or school designee will use the [accuweather.com](http://accuweather.com) website to determine the heat index for the area of the contest/practice. Once a person is on the [accuweather.com](http://accuweather.com) website, they will put in the zip code for the location of the contest/practice and the website will give them the air temperature as well as the RealFeel temperature (heat index).
- If the RealFeel temperature (heat index) is 90 degrees or above, the athletic trainer, athletic director, or school designee must re-check the RealFeel (heat index) at halftime or midway point of the contest. If the RealFeel (heat index) temperature is 96 degrees (Fahrenheit) or more, the contest will be suspended.

Please refer to the following chart to take the appropriate actions:

	RealFeel (Heat Index) under 79 degrees	Full activity. No restrictions
R E C O M M E N D E D	Heat Index Caution: RealFeel (Heat Index) 80 degrees to 85 degrees	Provide ample water and multiple water breaks. Monitor athletes for heat illness. Consider reducing the amount of time for the practice session.
	Heat Index Watch: RealFeel (Heat Index) 86 degrees to 90 degrees	Provide ample water and multiple water breaks. Monitor athletes for heat illness. Consider postponing practice to a time when RealFeel temp is lower. Consider reducing the amount of time for the practice session. 1 hour of recovery time for every hour of practice (ex. 2hr practice = 2hr recovery time).
	Heat Index Warning: RealFeel (Heat Index) 91 degrees to 95 degrees	Provide ample water and water breaks every 15 minutes. Monitor athletes for heat illness. Consider postponing practice to a time when RealFeel temp is much lower. Consider reducing the amount of time for the practice session. 1 hour of recovery time for every hour of practice (ex. 2hr practice = 2hr recovery time). Light weight and loose fitting clothes should be worn. For Practices only Football Helmets should be worn. No other protective equipment should be worn.
REQUIRED	Heat Index Alert: RealFeel (Heat Index) 96 degrees or greater	No outside activity, practice or contest, should be held. Inside activity should only be held if air conditioned.

### Administration of Wind Chill Procedures

Wind Chill will be checked 1 hour before the contest/practice by a certified athletic trainer, athletic director, or school designee when the air temperature is 39 degrees (Fahrenheit) or lower. The athletic trainer, athletic director, or school designee will use the [accuweather.com](http://accuweather.com) website to determine the heat index for the area of the contest/practice. Once a person is on the [accuweather.com](http://accuweather.com) website, they will put in the zip code for the location of the contest/practice and the website will give them the air temperature as well as the RealFeel temperature (wind chill).

If the RealFeel temperature (wind chill) is 10 degrees or below, the athletic trainer, athletic director, or school designee must re-check the RealFeel (wind chill) at halftime or midway point of the contest. If the RealFeel (wind chill) temperature is -11 degrees (Fahrenheit) or lower, the contest will be suspended.

**Please refer to the following chart to take the appropriate actions:**

	RealFeel (wind chill) above 40 degrees	Full activity. No restrictions
<b>R E C O M M E N D E D</b>	Wind Chill Caution: RealFeel (wind chill) 36 degrees to 20 degrees	Stay adequately hydrated. Notify coaches of the threat of cold related illnesses. Have students and coaches dress in layers of clothing.
	Wind Chill Watch: RealFeel (wind chill) 19 degrees to 10 degrees	Stay adequately hydrated. Notify coaches of the threat of cold related illnesses. Have students and coaches dress in layers of clothing. Cover the head and neck to prevent heat loss.
	Wind Chill Warning: RealFeel (wind chill) 9 degrees to -10 degrees	Stay adequately hydrated. Notify coaches of the threat of cold related illnesses. Have students and coaches dress in layers of clothing. Cover the head and neck to prevent heat loss. Consider postponing practice to a time when RealFeel temp is much higher. Consider reducing the amount of time for an outdoor practice session.
<b>REQUIRED</b>	Wind Chill Alert: RealFeel (wind chill) -11 degrees or lower	No outside activity, practice or contest, should be held.

**Special Note: Alpine Skiing will be exempt from this policy and will follow the regulations of the host ski center where the practice or event is being held.**