



***Special Olympics***  
***Illinois***

**SPECIAL OLYMPICS ILLINOIS**

**SPORTS TRAINING & COMPETITION  
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Revised 8/1/06

## **Coaches Management**

Coach Ratio Policy .....	C-1
Coaches Conduct .....	C-2
Coaches Education System & Newsletter Subscription .....	C-4
Coach/Chaperone Responsibilities .....	C-6
Responsibilities of SOAD (Special Olympics Athletic Director) .....	C-8
Water Safety .....	C-10

## **Event Management**

Ability Divisions .....	E-1
Advancement to Higher Level Competition .....	E-4
Age Grouping .....	E-10
Application for Participation .....	E-11
English Version .....	E-14
Spanish Version .....	E-16
Unified Sports Partner .....	E-18
Area Competition .....	E-20
Athlete/Partner Conduct .....	E-21
Atlantoaxial Instability .....	E-23
Awards .....	E-24
Commercial Messages .....	E-25
Communicable Disease .....	E-27
Disqualification Process .....	E-28
Protests .....	E-29
District or Sectional Competition .....	E-30
District/Sectional/State Host Site Procedures .....	E-32
District Host Information .....	E-33
District /Sectional Proposed Budget .....	E-34
State Host Form .....	E-35
State Proposed Budget .....	E-36
Itemized Breakdown of Budget Items .....	E-37
Eligibility to Participate .....	E-38
IHSA Participation .....	E-39
Entry Procedures .....	E-40
Event Entry Policy .....	E-41
Housing Summer Games .....	E-43
Local/Mini Event Approval .....	E-44
Sanction Request Form .....	E-45
Metrics Use .....	E-46
Metrics Conversion Chart .....	E-47
Out-of-State Sanctioned Participation .....	E-48
Relay/Doubles/4 Person Team Procedures .....	E-49
Risk Management .....	E-50
Team Entry Process .....	E-52
Wheelchair/Mobility Assistant Devices Use in Team Sports .....	E-52

Unified Sports.....	E-54
Volunteer/Athlete Dating Policy .....	E-56
Volunteer Code of Conduct .....	E-57
Volunteer Screening Policy .....	E-58
Class A Adult.....	E-66
Class A Minor .....	E-68
Class B Form.....	E-71
Class B Medical Form .....	E-72
Class B Group Form.....	E-73
Weather Policy for Competition.....	E-75

### **Rule Interpretations**

Alpine Skiing .....	R-1
Aquatics .....	R-3
Athletics.....	R-5
Basketball.....	R-10
Bocce .....	R-14
Bowling.....	R-19
Cross Country Skiing .....	R-21
Equestrian .....	R-23
Figure Skating .....	R-27
Floor Hockey .....	R-28
Football (Soccer).....	R-31
Golf.....	R-37
Gymnastics .....	R-39
Powerlifting.....	R-41
Snowshoe .....	R-45
Softball .....	R-48
Speed Skating .....	R-53
Tee Ball .....	R-55
Tennis .....	R-58
Volleyball.....	R-60

The supervision of athletes with intellectual disabilities, though they may be the highest level of ability and the most prepared, is still the most important job of the Special Olympics coach at local, Area, and Chapter level Games.

The Special Olympics coach has been entrusted by parents, guardians, and program supervisors with the responsibility for care and safety of any Special Olympics athletes in his or her charge.

Special Olympics Illinois has established an acceptable athlete/coach ratio that is in accordance with the General Rules and guidelines of Special Olympics Incorporated. The following statement of policy governs Special Olympics Illinois position on coach to athlete ratio for District, Sectional, State, and International level competitions.

1. A written explanation must be submitted at the time of registration for any increase in the coach ratio and must be approved by the Director of Competition Operations.
2. The usual athlete to coach ratio will be 4:1. This ratio will be enforced at all times and includes food and lodging at all levels of competition unless the following conditions are seen.
  - A. Wheelchair athletes often require a 1:1 ratio for aid and supervision. This will be acceptable.
  - B. Athletes with special needs or behavioral requirements often require an increased ratio limit in order to provide proper supervision. Ratio in these instances may be increased up to 1:1.
  - C. In the case of team entries with the consideration that team events require a less varied need for coaches than do individual entries, the recommended ratio will be 5:1 and no more than 6:1.
  - D. Unified Sports Partners (14 years of age or older) may also serve as chaperones, which will allow agencies to factor in Unified Partners for the coach to athlete ratio.
3. The coach to athlete ratio will not exceed the 1:1 maximum.
4. The recommended ratio of 4:1 athlete to coach may be questioned with higher functioning athletes. The need to provide supervision may be less of a requirement than an attitude of good judgment. Special Olympics Illinois adheres to a minimum ratio at all times of 6:1 in order for an agency to register athletes for any chapter level activity, tournament, or event.
5. In order for an agency to enter a Special Olympics Illinois activity, tournament, or event, at least one (1) coach, who is at least 18 years of age or older, must be registered with athletes. Special Olympics Illinois policy will not allow coaches or chaperones under the age of 14. These rules will be strictly enforced.

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

- 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.
- I will ensure that for each athlete I coach, the time spent with Special Olympics is positive.
- 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/heats and finals.
- 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 at training sessions or during competition.
- I will refrain from any form of personal abuse towards athletes and others, including 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 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 planned training program.
- I will keep copies of the medical, training, and competition records for each athlete I coach.
- I will follow the Special Olympics and the National Governing Body rules for my sport(s).
- 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 noted on that athlete's participation form.
- I will encourage athletes to seek medical advice when required.
- I will maintain the same interest and support towards sick and injured athletes.
- I will allow further participation in training and competition only when appropriate.

Should the behaviors, attitudes or actions of any coach or other faction of the member organization be contrary to these principles or to the goals and philosophies of Special Olympics, then one or more of the following steps may be taken by the Games Committee, Sports Officials, and/or by Special Olympics Illinois in an effort to alleviate the situation without further affecting Special Olympics athletes:

- The coach will be notified of the undesirable behavior or action and requested to remedy the situation for continued participation.
- The coach will be requested to withdraw personally, or as an organization from the remainder of the event or tournament.

- If a team is found using an ineligible or illegal player then the team will forfeit all games in which the athlete played and will also forfeit any awards that were received and the team will not advance to the next level of competition.

In the event of extreme or repeated behavior or actions Special Olympics Illinois may:

- Prevent the coach or organization from participating in any or all Special Olympics events for a specified period of time.
- Prevent the coach or organization from participating in Special Olympics Illinois indefinitely.

## **COACHES EDUCATION SYSTEM**

Coaches are strongly encouraged to participate in the Coaches Education System offered through Special Olympics Illinois. This four tiered system is designed to help coaches promote the mission of Special Olympics, enhance coaching skills, and to keep up to date regarding current rules and training techniques. **The basic education courses offered are as follows:**

1. General Orientation & Protective Behaviors – This course is designed to provide basic information concerning Special Olympics as a whole. This course is a prerequisite for other courses and is required for certification.
2. Sport Specific Skills Course - These courses are designed to provide basic information regarding techniques and instructional methods for teaching basic sports skills, organizing training sessions and competition experience.
3. Principles of Coaching – This course is designed to provide valuable information regarding coaching philosophy, developing a coaching staff, designing training sessions, administrative and management skills, sports safety and risk management.
4. Tactics Course - Courses are designed to provide information on sports specific strategies and tactics such as creating drills, competition preparation, competition strategies, bench coaching, and preparing athletes as leaders.

### **Other Education Courses Offered are as follows:**

1. Comprehensive Mentoring – Courses are designed to match a newly active coach with a certified veteran coach. The veteran coach offers support, ideas and experiences that will facilitate a new coach's introduction to the Special Olympics program.
2. Mentoring Training – Courses provide individuals interested in becoming mentors with information regarding the Comprehensive Mentoring program as well as strategies and expectations for their participation.
3. Clinician Training – Courses are designed for individuals interested in becoming a clinician for Special Olympics focusing on strategies for making effective presentations and training school formats.
4. Unified Sports – Course provides an introduction to the Special Olympics Unified Sports Program which pairs Special Olympics athletes with non-disabled peers for doubles or team competition.
5. Officials Training – Courses are designed for individuals who wish to become officials for Special Olympics Illinois competitions.
6. Sports Medicine – Courses are designed to provide coaches with information concerning injury prevention, injury recognition and basic treatment, conditioning, flexibility, nutrition and emergency procedures.
7. Sport Refresher – Courses designed to cover new rules, innovations in technology or equipment, strategies and medical concerns related to the sport.

### **Education Event Attendance and Participation Guidelines:**

The following are the expectations of coaches attending training events:

1. Coaches will attend the entire training event from beginning to end.
2. Coaches will dress appropriately for physical activity.
3. Coaches will participate in all classroom discussions and activities as well as all hands-on activities that are presented during the training event.

Failure to fulfill any of the expectations will result in the denial of certification for the individual.

**Below is the procedure for obtaining a coaches certification in any given sport:**

1. Attend a General Orientation – valid for life
2. Attend a Certified Training School
  - a. sign the registration form
  - b. fill out an Application for Certification and turn into clinician or host
3. Complete your 10 hour practicum with your team utilizing the information you learned at the training school
4. Once your 10 hour practicum is complete, coaches will receive a confirmation letter and a certificate of certification.

For any questions regarding this process, please go to our website at [www.soill.org](http://www.soill.org) or contact your Regional Manager of Sports Training:

Brianna Beers  
Northern Regional Manager of Sports Training  
800 Roosevelt Rd. Bldg B, Suite 220  
Glen Ellyn, IL 60137  
630-942-5610  
[bbeers@soill.org](mailto:bbeers@soill.org)

Amber Daulbaugh  
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**COACH'S NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTION**

The purpose of the coaches' newsletter subscription is to identify, inform, and acknowledge the Special Olympics coaches in Illinois. The volunteer coach in Illinois is one of our most important resources. They ensure proper safety, training, and growth of the athlete. In an attempt to improve the quality and satisfaction of coaches in Illinois, the coaches' newsletter subscription has been implemented.

1. Registration will be updated annually.
2. Special Olympics Illinois will provide Area Directors with a current list of Coaches' Newsletter recipients and coaches' subscription forms to be distributed at the beginning of the program year and throughout the year as new coaches are identified.
3. Upon receipt of a completed Coaches' Newsletter Subscription Form, Special Olympics Illinois will register that coach.
4. Coaches will be sent the Special Olympics Illinois Update, the Coaches' Newsletter, and information on Certified Training Schools as well as other training opportunities.
5. Area Directors and Area Training Directors will receive all coach mailings.
6. Any questions concerning Coaches' Newsletter Subscription should be directed to the Special Olympics Illinois Regional Managers of Sports Training & Competition.



1. A coach must have an approved Class A volunteer form on file prior to assuming any coaching activities. Special Olympics Illinois does not recognize any agency volunteers or employees prior to approval of the Class A form.
2. The coach is responsible for the athlete 24 hours a day. It is up to the coach to ensure the physical and emotional needs of the athlete(s) are met during the games.
  - a. Be sure athletes and partners are properly warmed up prior to competition.
  - b. Take precautions to avoid weather- related problems. In summer, avoid sunburn and heat exhaustion by using sun screen, drinking plenty of fluids, and taking advantage of shaded areas whenever possible. In winter, be sure athletes are adequately clothed, take advantage of opportunities to warm up, and avoid sunburn and wind burn with sun screen and moisturizers.
  - c. Be sure needed first aid is administered promptly. Bring a first aid kit if possible.
  - d. Be sure athletes get adequate rest.
  - e. Be sure athletes eat properly; avoid overeating or missing meals. NOTE: If an athlete requires a special diet, it is the responsibility of the coach to provide for the athlete's needs. For special diets, bring a cooler with all the proper foods.
  - f. Be aware that the excitement of the games may encourage inappropriate behaviors. Close supervision at night and at all activities is required.
3. The coach should be aware of athlete possessions. Do not leave items unattended, double-check rooms when packing, and inquire for lost items before leaving the games.
4. The coach is expected to be totally familiar with the medical conditions, precautions, and medication requirements of the athlete. It is the coach's responsibility to have medication administered. Knowledge of the medication regimen (what, how much, and when) is essential.
5. The coach is expected to carry a copy of the valid Application for Participation for each athlete and a copy of the Unified Sports Partner Application for Participation for each Unified Partner.
6. The coach must ensure that proper identification (wristbands, bibs, name badges, etc.) is worn by athletes and coaches at all times.
7. The coach must be totally familiar with all schedules: sports, special events, and meals. It is the coach's responsibility to ensure the athlete or partner is on time for all sports competition and also has the opportunity to participate in special activities.
8. **NO ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES ARE ALLOWED AT SPECIAL OLYMPICS COMPETITIONS.** (This includes Olympic Village). A coach possessing alcohol will have the alcohol confiscated and the coach will be placed on a two (2) year suspension from all Special Olympics activities beginning at the conclusion of the event. If the safety of the athlete(s) is jeopardized, the coach will be immediately removed from the event and the status of the team will be determined on a case by case basis. Notification of suspension(s) will be sent to the Area Director and to the Special Olympics Athletic Director for the agency.

9. For events when Special Olympics Illinois provides housing: If an agency is discovered to have anyone not officially registered for the event in Special Olympics Illinois provided housing during the designated closed hours for the event, the coach(es) responsible will be placed on a one (1) year suspension from all Special Olympics activities beginning at the conclusion of the event. If the safety of the athlete(s) is jeopardized, the coach will be immediately removed from the event and the status of the team will be determined on a case by case basis. Notification of suspension(s) will be sent to the Area Director and to the Special Olympics Athletic Director for the agency.
10. The coach is expected to know and adhere to all Special Olympics Illinois policy and procedures, rules and regulations, and sports rules. Violations may result in a coach facing probation, suspension or expulsion from Special Olympics Illinois events.
11. Any individual using, possessing or distributing illegal drugs will be permanently banned from any Special Olympics Illinois activity and the proper legal authorities will be notified.

The Special Olympics Athletic Director (SOAD) is responsible for the administration of the total Special Olympics agency program in his or her facility. The Special Olympics program will also be under the spirit and intent of the rules of Special Olympics Incorporated, Special Olympics Illinois and the sports governing bodies.

The SOAD should:

1. Serve as the chief administrator and main contact person to all matters involving Special Olympics policies, procedures and forms.
2. Attend or ensure the attendance at all Area or Chapter meetings.
3. Ensure that all policies, procedures, rules, regulations and activities of Special Olympics and sports governing bodies are conformed to.
4. Assist their coaching staff in solving any problems that arise.
5. Ensure that all athletes have a valid medical Application for Participation on file per Special Olympics Illinois and the Area policy and all partners have completed an Application for Participation in Special Olympics Unified Sports Partner Form.
6. Ensure that a team roster is up to date and is provided when requested.
7. Ensure that a Class A Volunteer roster is up to date and is provided when requested. Special Olympics Illinois does not recognize any agency volunteer or employee prior to approval of the Class A form.
8. Ensure that all Team Rating Forms (TRF) are administered correctly.
9. Ensure that all coaches, partners, and athletes or athletes' families are informed of the Special Olympics Illinois insurance policy.
10. Ensure that information relating to Special Olympics Illinois events is dispersed to the athletes' and partners' families.
11. Keep permanent records on file of all athlete and partner participants.
12. Secure transportation for all Special Olympics Illinois events entered, ensuring adequate time is allotted to arrive on time.
13. Inform assistant coaches and families of athletes and partners who are ineligible and why.
14. Approve and submit fund raising requests to the Area Director as per Special Olympics Illinois policy.
15. Inform his/her coaching staff of all Special Olympics Incorporated, Special Olympics Illinois, and Area meetings and documentation requirements.

16. Ensure a program is developed at all levels of the sport under his/her direction with the regulations, policies and procedures of Special Olympics Incorporated, Special Olympics Illinois, and the Area.
17. Plan and ensure supervision is done at all practice sessions for the agency's athletes and partners.
18. Assign responsibilities and duties to coaches and assistant coaches at all levels.
19. Inform the Area Director of any athletes and partners transferring out of their agency.
20. Ensure that medical applications go with the person in charge at any Special Olympics event. The S.O.A.D. should:
  - Conduct a meeting at the beginning of the agency's Special Olympics season with parents and administrators going over all rule changes and policy and procedure changes.
  - Conduct an appropriate closure to their season. Example: Awards Banquet, all-agency pep rally, including parents.

All Special Olympics aquatics training, competition, and recreational sessions will be conducted in accordance with basic safety practices as specified in Section C of the aquatics section in the *Special Olympics Sports Rules Book, Revised Edition, 2004-2007*. Briefly this policy specifies that in all swimming activities, there must be a certified lifeguard on duty while our athletes are in the water. This policy is in place for training and competition as well as recreational aquatic activities at the hotel pool. Proof of certification must be produced upon request.

NOTE: American Red Cross Water Safety Instructor's Certification **does not** authorize one as a certified lifeguard.