



**Special
Olympics
Pennsylvania**



Winter 2023-2024

**Figure Skating
Speed Skating**

Nov. 14, 2023

Today's Agenda

- Pre-Season Reminders
- Figure Skating Updates
- Speed Skating Updates
- Coach Season Planning
- Volunteer Updates
- 2024 State Competition
- Questions

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PRE-SEASON REMINDERS



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SEASONS AT A GLANCE



	SPRING	FALL	WINTER
Coach Site Registration	Nov. 1 - Dec. 1	April 1 - May 1	August 1 - Sept. 1
Athlete, Unified Partner, Volunteer Signup	Dec. 15 - Jan. 15	May 15 - June 15	Sept. 15 - Oct. 15
Season Length	March - June	August - November	December - March
Sports Offered	Athletics (Track & Field), Basketball, Equestrian, Golf, Gymnastics, Softball, Swimming, Tennis	Bocce, Bowling, Flag Football, Long Distance Running/Walking, Powerlifting, Soccer, Volleyball	Alpine Skiing, Bowling, Figure Skating, Floor Hockey, Snowboard, Snowshoe, Speed Skating

Access Sign Ups on the

- **SOPA website:**

[https://specialolympicspa.org/
get-involved/sports-sign-ups](https://specialolympicspa.org/get-involved/sports-sign-ups)

Sports Season Prep

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Important Winter Dates:

- [Winter Season Calendar](#)
- **December 18 – Key Deadline:**
 - Winter Season Eligibility - all athletes must have current medical on file to be eligible for competition
- Season Dates: December to March

Athlete Training Requirement

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- Coaches should begin training at least 10 weeks prior to the state culminating event.
 - Indoor Winter Games: 10 weeks out is December 22nd; knowing you will break for the holidays trainings should be set to begin no later than early to mid December
- Athletes must be trained according to the minimum standards acceptable, for at least eight (8) weeks in the appropriate sport, and must have several opportunities to compete during that period.

Athlete & Volunteer Eligibility

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Athlete Requirements: Medical on file WITH signature + expiration dates

- **Local Programs:** Athlete Medical under Certifications
- **Regions:** Athlete Registration Form & Health History under Certifications
- Valid for 3 years.
- Save attachments under "Attachments" within a person's profile vs. anywhere else in the profile.

Class A Volunteer Requirements: Class A Trainings + Background Check on file

- Background Results under Background Checks, Valid for 5 years.
- General Orientation under Training, Valid for life.
- Protective Behaviors, under Training, Valid for 3 years.
- Concussion Training, under Training, Valid for 3 years.

Unified Partners Eligibility

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- **NEW in 2023** – Unified Sports Partners do not need an athlete medicals.
- All Partners – Must have a VSys database record
- Ages 16 and up – must have General Orientation and Protective Behaviors Training
- Ages 18 and up - Must have General Orientation, Protective Behaviors and a Background check.

UCS: PIAA Medical

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A Unified Champion School athlete or Unified Partner may participate in a local program with their PIAA Medical. The participant must request a copy of the medical from their school.

The PIAA physical exam must be inputted into Vsys as an "athlete medical" and the medical form must be uploaded as an attachment.

UPDATE: The PIAA physical exam form is good for one year from the Dr's Signature date. If the date is 3/22/22 the exam expires on 3/22/23.

Attendance Tracker Updates

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Age Calculator – Winter is determined as of **10/15/2023**

Eligibility Tab: Deadline for all rostered individual to be eligible is **12/18/2023**

- Athlete Medical
- Volunteer: Background Check, Gen Orientation, Protective Behavior, Concussion Training

Sport Specific Rosters/Tabs:

- Team Sports MUST complete Competition tab indicating team each athlete is on or skills
- Team Rating Forms, must be completed by Dec 18 if submitting age exemptions OR by registration for the first competition

Missing volunteer/athlete

- Did they complete Sport Sign-up Form?
 - If Yes and you don't see them contact RSD

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?

CONTACT YOUR REGIONAL SPORT DIRECTOR

Attendance Trackers

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Coach will receive tracker when they submit Site Registration Form

Site Attendance Tracker has 4-5 tabs: Directions, Attendance, Eligibility, Competition, Rating Form

- **Tab 1: Directions: How to complete the form**
- **Tab 2 Attendance:**
 - Lists all participants that have signed up
 - Includes phone, email, DOB and age
 - Attendance should be tracked after each practice
 - Interest in attending Sectionals & State Games will be used to advance for competitions
 - Data will be used to collect training numbers and ultimately future allocations

Attendance Trackers

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Tab 3: Eligibility – If participant is NOT eligible...they cannot participate

Athletes: Must have current medical

Volunteer: General Orientation, Concussion Protocol, Protective Behaviors, 18 and over current background check

Highlighted **RED** out of date

Highlighted **YELLOW** will expire prior to state competition

Updated weekly by SOPA from November 5 – December 18

Athletes and Volunteer CANNOT participate in trainings if they have not met all eligibility requirements - it is YOUR responsibility to track this.

IMPORTANT: Winter Deadline – December 18, 2023

Tab 4: Competition – sport specific

Required for Team Sports – identifies team participation or skills for each athlete and coach

Tab 5: Rating Form Tab (Floor Hockey/Floorball)

Required to be completed by Dec 18 if submitting Age Exemption OR by registration date for first competition

Qualifiers

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- **Bowling is the only winter sport that is a qualifier to Indoor Winter Games.**
 - **Qualifying events will be Regional Bowling Tournaments and the SOPA Bowling League.**
- Games Advancement slots per Sectional will be dependent on total number of slots at Indoor Winter Games and % of interest in advancing from each Regional event with a few additional selected from the SOPA Bowling League.

Allocations -

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- Bowling is the only winter sport providing allocations.
- Regional Tournaments will be allocating as necessary for their events, based on either previous year training numbers or current training season, if all training sites are up and running for the season.
- IWG allocations will be provided in early January once all Bowling Attendance Trackers have been populated with desire to advance to Regional/State competition.

Everybody Plays

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Everybody on the roster must play in each game and preliminary's

At events:

- Teams must complete line-up cards, with numbers and names.
- Bottom of the card – those who are not playing and why
- Scorekeepers will check the players as they enter the game
- Code of conduct will be filed on the coach if all players are not played

SOPA Code of Conduct

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- All athletes and volunteers are expected to read, sign and follow the SOPA Code of Conduct.
- Coaches should review SOPA Code of Conduct during the first practice as a reminder for everyone during the season
- As a coach it is your responsibility to promote good sportsmanship. It is also important to know when to give an athlete a break if a situation is escalating.

Medication Reminders - All events

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- **FORMS:** Medication Assistance Best Practices, Winter 2023/24 Consent Form and Tracker - forms are located on SOPA website: <https://specialolympicspa.org/get-involved/resource-library>
- Coaches should be sharing this information with athletes, parents/guardians prior to all full day or overnight events. SOPA will no longer be emailing this information to all participants.
- Please ensure your athletes are completing the Medication Assistance Consent Form and your Class A volunteers traveling with the delegation are completing the Medication Assistance Tracker.
- Please reach out to chammell@specialolympicspa.org directly with any questions or concerns on the process.



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FIGURE SKATING UPDATES

SOPA Website - Sports Offered Page



- Links to all the sport pages
- [Sports Offered](#)
- [Seasonal Sign-up](#)
- Lots of great resources!

Winter Sports Sign-Ups!

We are gearing up for our **Winter season** and invite all athletes and volunteers to **SIGN UP TODAY!**

Whether you're a new or returning athlete or volunteer, [follow this link to sign up for Winter Sports!](#)

A graphic for the Winter Season 2023. It features a blue snowflake icon on a light blue background with the year "2023" below it. To the right, the text "Special Olympics Pennsylvania" is written in a small font above the large, bold text "WINTER SEASON".

Winter Sports

- [Winter Season Rollout](#) >
- [Alpine Skiing](#) >
- [Bowling](#) >
- [Figure Skating](#) >
- [Floor Hockey/Floorball](#) >
- [Snowboarding](#) >
- [Snowshoeing](#) >
- [Speed Skating](#) >

SOI Sport Rules & Resources

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[Special Olympics Resources](#)

- Coaching Guide (2007)
- Fact Sheet
- Rules (2022)
- Rule Changes (2022)
- Warm Up and Cool Down Guides

Direct Links:

[Figure Skating Resources](#)



Sport Management Team (SMT)

- Lin Huber, Technical Director – Figure Skating
- Brett Eshenour, Technical Director – Speed Skating
- Purpose of SMT is to determine future direction of the sport, plan/execute competitions and train coaches and officials.
- We are looking for 1 representative from each Region to form this team. If you are interested, please contact Michelle Boone, mboone@specialolympicspa.org

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Rule Book - Figure Skating

- **NEW COVER**



Lin will be in touch with all programs to discuss the changes listed below in more detail.



Figure Skating

- Level I Freeskate Program
- Level II Freeskate Program
- Level III Freeskate Program

- CHANGE: Judging and timing will begin when skater commences to skate. The program will not exceed a time limit of one minute **15 seconds**, plus or minus ten seconds.

Ice Dance Competition Music

- OLD:** In Competitions, the current series of ISU Ice Dance music will be used for the Pattern Dances.
- NEW:** All competitors shall furnish Ice Dance competition music of excellent quality on CD or in any other approved format for all dances skated. The music may be instrumental OR vocal music.
- Each level music must have the correct beats per minute for that level, current ISU music can be used but must be provided by competitor

New Ice Dances

- OLD:** Competitors will be required to perform the Dutch Waltz, Canasta Tango or Rhythm Blues in accordance with the following rotation schedule.
- NEW:** All levels of Ice Dance rotate the pattern dances every year or two depending on Winter World Games and qualifying years. See the block within the Level for updated Dances. Level 1

Brand and Uniform Guidelines



- New Resource that include SO brand and uniform guidelines
- Includes mock-ups of sport specific uniforms

[SOPA Brand and Uniform Guidelines](#)

Figure Skating Uniform

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Figure Skating

- Clothing of the Competitors must be modest, dignified and appropriate for athletic competition, not garish or theatrical in design.
- Clothing may reflect the character of the music chosen.
- The clothing must not give the effect of excessive nudity inappropriate for the discipline.
- Men must wear full length trousers and must not wear tights.
- In addition, in Ice Dance, Ladies must wear a skirt.
- Clothing not meeting requirements - penalized 0.5 pts. .
- The decorations on costumes must be non-detachable.
 - Part of the costume or decoration falling on the ice will be penalized by a deduction of 0.5 point.





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SPEED SKATING UPDATES

SOPA Website - Sports Offered Page



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A graphic for the Winter Season 2023, featuring a blue snowflake icon with the year "2023" below it, and the text "Special Olympics Pennsylvania WINTER SEASON" in blue and red.

Winter Sports

- [Winter Season Rollout](#) >
- [Alpine Skiing](#) >
- [Bowling](#) >
- [Figure Skating](#) >
- [Floor Hockey/Floorball](#) >
- [Snowboarding](#) >
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- [Speed Skating](#) >

SOI Sport Rules & Resources

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[Special Olympics Resources](#)

- Coaching Guide (2007)
- Fact Sheet
- Rules (2022)
- Rule Changes (2022)
- Warm Up and Cool Down Guides



Direct Links:

[Speed Skating Resources](#)

Rule Book - Speed Skating

- **NEW COVER**



New Section

- Section 4 Field of Play
 - The “Field of Play” during competitions are the ice surface, the immediate surroundings, Heat Box, Coaches Box, Officials restricted areas and any other so designated areas.
 - During each Divisioning race and Finals there shall be allowed only one Coach per participating Skater or Relay Team in the designated coaching area.
 - The designated team coach may only be in the Coaches box during the race prior to their skaters race, during the race and immediately following their race.

Equipment

- Uniforms and Protective Gear:
- All speed skaters are required to wear the following safety equipment:
 - Long-sleeved and long-legged uniforms
 - Knee pads or have padded knee protection as part of their uniform
 - Shin guards or have cut protection in the lower leg portion of their uniform
 - Cut resistant neck protector
 - Cut resistant gloves or mittens.

Equipment

- The following are recommended but not mandatory for competition:
 - Elbow pads and wrist guards are optional safety equipment.
 - Eye protection meeting the ANSI Z87.1 Standard is recommended
 - Cut resistant undergarments

Equipment

.Link to a company that sales specialized clothing

- [Protective, Special Equipment](#)

- Important:** No skin should be showing when racing. Skate blades are sharp and can be dangerous.

- Make sure ankles and wrists are covered!!

Rules of Competition

- General Rules and Modifications

- All skaters shall start a race with both skates behind the start line.
- Putting the tip of the blade in the ice is an offense and a false start will be given to the Skater concerned.

Brand and Uniform Guidelines



- New Resource that include SO brand and uniform guidelines
- Includes mock-ups of sport specific uniforms

[SOPA Brand and Uniform Guidelines](#)

Speed Skating Uniform

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Speed Skating

- All speed skaters shall wear long-sleeved and long-legged uniforms.
 - One Piece long sleeved full body
 - Long sleeved T-shirt and tights





COACH – SEASON PLANNING

Athlete Performance Training Snapshot

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Interested Coaches

- Learn More by visiting the [APT webpage](#)
- Participation qualifies coaches for Bronze level certification

How to sign-up

- Go to your VSys portal and complete the Athlete Performance Training under "Training Schools, Webinars and More"
- Watch the video, take the quiz and then complete the registration form

Benefits of APT

- FREE to programs/teams
- Turn-key, easy to execute
- HQ will provide coaches and athletes with materials
- Provide health, fitness and wellness education to athletes and coaches



What is Athlete Performance Training (APT)?

- Designed to elevate the fitness levels of athletes and improve their sports outcomes, Athlete Performance Training consists of a combination of coach-facilitated sports practices and at-home fitness programs.
- During practices, coaches will apply an approach that includes education, exertion and evaluation.
 - **Education:** Time is taken during each sports practice to discuss physical activity, nutrition, and hydration as a team.
 - **Exertion:** A practice plan is followed that engages athletes in physical activity throughout the entire practice.
 - **Evaluation:** Athletes' health and fitness metrics are collected at the start and end of the season.
- At home, athletes and their families/caregivers are provided a fitness program to complement the in-person practices.



Key Aspects of APT:



- A minimum of 8 weeks of training are required to fully complete APT.
- Any size team and any sport can participate.
- Health metrics of athletes are collected and recorded electronically on a Google sheet provided to you by SOPA.
- Health metrics: Height, weight and blood pressure can be collected from athlete's previous doctor visits.
- Fitness metrics: Determined by coaches completing a modified Coopers Test at the start and end of training and recording results.





Registering for APT:

- Coaches interested should visit the Online Portal to complete the necessary online training.
- The training can be found under the “**Training Schools, Webinar and More**” tab, labeled as “**Athlete Performance Training.**” You will only be able to access the training if you’ve taken your other required trainings (Concussion Training, General Orientation and Protective Behaviors).
- You will need to complete a short quiz after the training
- Once video and quiz are completed you will be directed to the registration form to sign up your team and request materials
- You will be contacted by SOPA, after with additional information regarding mailings of materials as well as a link to the Athlete Performance Training Tracking.



To find more information on APT visit the SOPA website under **More Than Sports**

Why Participate in APT?



- SOPA athletes are at greater risk for being obese, more likely to suffer from long term health conditions, and are dying 20 years younger.
- By incorporating APT into training, you are providing tools for our athletes to improve to their health and fitness and lower their risk of these health disparities.
- APT will become the standard in trainings, our goal is that all athletes will have the opportunity to participate in Athlete Performance Training





Coaches Training and Progression Plan

By implementing Athlete Performance Training for a minimum of 8 weeks during training AND completing the "Athlete Performance Training Tracking" at the start and end of the season, you are eligible for the **Bronze Level** specifically the Athlete Performance Training component of the Coaches Training and Progression Plan.

Questions? Contact Healthy Communities
Coordinator, Charla Stein
cstein@specialolympicspa.org
610-630-9450 ext. 254

Be Prepared for the Season!

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- Get everyone eligible
- Understand and be aware of Air Quality levels
- Keep a pulse on illness/disease outbreaks within your community – remind athletes not to attend training if they are sick and to practice healthy habits and good hygiene.
- Know your facilities Emergency Action Plan and Evacuation route
- Updated yourself on sport rules and work with assistant coaches on a seasonal plan – identify who will manage each task during practice. Recruit additional assistance if needed.

Coaching Requirements



As of January 2021, Coach requirements for training and competition:

- **Team Sports:**
 - Must have at least one or more certified coach(s) per team
- **Individual Sports and Team Individual Skills:**
 - Must have at least one or more certified coach(s) per 25 athletes



Athlete as Coach

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Do you have an athlete who would like to be a coach?

- Tuesday, November 14th at 6:00 PM, Jordan and Jennifer will be hosting our Athletes as Coaches webinar for the winter sports season. This is open to any athlete that currently is or is interested in becoming a coach in not just a winter sport, but any sport! To register for that one, please click here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUkcu2uqjOrGdHcFJTFL0PuqjntY1qRFkd8>
- Athlete as Coach Request form to be completed by athletes who wish to apply to be trained as a coach: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WZC14Ssl1IsilbBO_93WDmsaQq9-wmK3/view

Continuing Education Update

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- **Protective Behavior and Concussion Training** has been removed from the list of approved courses for Continuing Education and from the Continuing Education Request form.
- **Effective February 1, 2023, these two courses will not be accepted for continuing education**
- There are plenty of Continuing Education options available on the [SOPA website](#).



Coaching Practicum Hours

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- If a coach needs to complete 10 required practicum hours from sport training courses, that were taken in 2019, 2020, 2021 they have until December 2023 to submit these hours.
- **Hours must be submitted on their VSys Portal.**

Expired Sport Certifications

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- If your sport certification expired between 2020 and 2022 you have until December of 2023 to complete your continuing education course to update your certifications.
- **This extension expires on December 31, 2023.**
- On January 1, 2024, you will need to retake the Sport that has not been updated.



Volunteer UPDATES



Volunteer Q & A

What is the minimum age for a Head Coach? **18**

What is the youngest age of a Unified Partner? **8**

What age do you need a Young athlete chaperone for? **Overnight events for 8 & 9 year olds**

Can my assistant coach be 14? **Training yes; Events No**

- **1-day events - 16**
- **Overnight events - 18**

Volunteer Position Requirements



Class B

Volunteer Classifications	VSys, Trainings & Clearances→	Completed Volunteer Application → VSys Record	Background Clearance to include PA Disclosure Statement	Protective Behaviors	General Orientation	Concussion Training	Sport Certification
	Position & Age (If applicable) ↓						(Note: 14 & over may attend Training Schools)
Class B	Medical Volunteer - Student	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Class B	General/Local Program/Team Volunteer - Volunteer are outside the 1:4 ratio with no chaperoning responsibilities 15 yrs. old and younger	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Class B	One Day Volunteer	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Class B	Bus Driver - Non-registered volunteer	No	No	No	No	No	No
Class B	Equestrian Horse Handler 14 and older – one day events	Yes	No	No	No	No	No

Last updated: July 2022

Volunteer Position Requirements



SPECIAL OLYMPICS PENNSYLVANIA VOLUNTEER POSITION REQUIREMENTS							
Volunteer Classifications	VSys, Trainings & Clearances→	Completed Volunteer Application → VSys Record	Background Clearance to include PA Disclosure Statement	Protective Behaviors	General Orientation	Concussion Training	Sport Certification
	Position & Age (If applicable) ↓						(Note: 14 and over may attend Training Schools)
Class A	HOD - 18 yrs. old or older	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Class A	Head Coach - 18 yrs. old or older	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Class A	Assistant Coach - 16 to 17 yrs. old – one day events	Yes	Yes for 18 and over	Yes for 16 and over	Yes for 16 and over	Yes for 16 and over	No
	18 yrs. old or older – overnight events						
Class A	Athlete as Coach - 16 to 17 yrs. old – one day events	Yes	Yes for 18 and over	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
	18 yrs. old or older – overnight events						
Class A	Unified Partner - 8 yrs. old or older	Yes	Yes for 18 and over	Yes for 16 and over	Yes for 16 and over	Yes for 16 and over	No
Class A	1:1- Chaperone Capacity Only	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No but recommended	No
	Volunteer/Athlete are above the 1:4 ratio						
Class A	Group Home Chaperone - Chaperone capacity only	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No but recommended	No
	Volunteer/Athlete are above the 1:4 ratio						
Class A	Equestrian Side Walker - 18 yrs. old or older	Yes	Yes for 18 and over	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Class A	Equestrian Horse Handler	Yes	Yes for 18 and over	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
	14 to 17 yrs. old – one day events						
	18 yrs. old or older – overnight events						
Class A	Health and Fitness Coordinator - 18 yrs. old or older	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Class A	Healthy Athlete Clinical Director	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Class A	Delegation Volunteer - Volunteer are outside the 1:4 ratio with no chaperoning responsibilities	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes for 16 and over	No but recommended	No
Class A	Young Athlete Chaperone - Overnight chaperone for athletes ages 8 and 9 yrs. old	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Class A	Medical Volunteer - Professional	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No



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2024 STATE COMPETITION

Indoor Winter Games: March 2-3, 2024

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Various Venues throughout York, PA

- [2024 State Competition & Important Dates](#)
- Event Reg Info shared January 12th
- LOI due January 25th
- Final Allocation sent out January 26th
- Online Vsys Roster due January 29th
- Registration due February 8th
- Competition Eligibility deadline February 21st
- Scratch/Activation due February 22nd



Indoor Winter Games – Arrival/Departure



Arrival

Delegation Registration, Saturday, March 2, 9-10 am

Departure

Sunday, March 3, 3:30 pm

Housing

- Housing will be available on Saturday evening for all delegations.
- Availability for Friday night housing will be based on travel radius; eligible counties will be alerted with Event Registration

Tentative Schedule will be shared 8 weeks prior to Indoor Winter Games with Event Registration Information.

USA Games



- 2026 USA Games
 - June 20-26
 - University of Minnesota
 - ▶ 2024 events will be qualifiers for USA Games, SOPA will not be allocated specific slots until late 2024 – floor hockey/floorball has not historically been offered as part of USA Games



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USA GAMES
MINNESOTA 2026

THANK YOU

