

Equestrian, Gymnastics, Golf

February 1st, 2024
Pre-season Webinar

Special Olympics
Pennsylvania





THANK YOU



Today's Agenda



- Welcome
- Reminders
- Athlete Performance Training
- Sectional & State Events
- Sports Rule Updates
- Training
- Questions

Reminders

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Spring Season Updates

- Coaches should begin training at least 10 weeks prior to the state culminating event.
 - 10 weeks from Summer Games: March 29
- 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 Attendance will be tracked on the Attendance Tracker
 - Early Season practice, Team workouts indoors, Athlete Performance Training activities, virtual training, fitness training, team walk/run, etc. count.

Attendance Trackers



- **Coach will receive tracker when they submit Site Registration Form**
- **Site Attendance Tracker has 3 tabs: Directions, Attendance, Eligibility**
 - **Tab 1: Directions: How to complete the form**
 - **Tab 2 Attendance:**
 - Lists all participants that have signed up
 - Includes phone & Email
 - 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
- **SAMPLE TRACKER**

Attendance Trackers



- ▶ **Tab 3: Eligible – NEW this will only list ineligible individuals - if participant is on this list, they cannot participate and should not be attending practice**
 - 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 - Highlighted **RED** out of date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
 - **IMPORTANT: Spring deadline March 29, 2024**
- **Tab 4: Competition – sport specific**



Athlete & Volunteer Eligibility

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: Trainings + Background Check on file

- **Local Programs + Regions**
 - 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

Unified Partners do not need an athlete medical.

- 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 Athletes: PIAA Medical



A Unified Champion School athlete 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 1/25/24 then exam expires on 1/25/25.

Volunteer Q & A



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

What is the minimum age for a Class A volunteer? **16**

What is the minimum age for a Class B Assistant Coach? **14**

Can an assistant coach be 14?

Training yes; Events No

1-day events - 16

Overnight events - 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



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 -	Yes	Yes for 18 and over	Yes for 16 and over	Yes for 16 and over	Yes for 16 and over	No
	16 to 17 yrs. old – one day events						
	18 yrs. old or older – overnight events						
Class A	Athlete as Coach -	Yes	Yes for 18 and over	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
	16 to 17 yrs. old – one day events						
	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

Spring Calendars & Responsibilities



- [Eastern Spring calendar](#)
- [Central Spring Calendar](#)
- [West Spring Calendar](#)
- Season start date:
 - Summer Games sports must begin training by April 12 (*and complete 8 weeks of training prior to Summer Games*)
 - Indoor training counts as training! Teams that can't access outdoor facilities early in the season should plan to begin indoor training by these dates.



Event Registration

- Mark interest in participating in Local/Invitational, Sectional and State competition in columns J, K, L respectively on the Attendance Tracker – **COMPLETE THIS ASAP into the season**

Google Registration:

- On the Coaches and Athletes tab, you will assign each role to their respective sport. That individual will then appear on the corresponding sport tab.
- On the Sport tab, you will add athletes' events and times.
- **Important:** Time entries should appear in the format **MM.SS.00**
 - ❖ Example: **12.14.05** = 12 minutes 14 seconds and 5 hundredths of a second.
 - ❖ Example: 00.15.08 = 15 seconds and 8 hundredths of a second

Google Registration Snapshot



Athlete Tab

Alternate - Y/N	1:1 Name	Sport	Updates to Athlete Information	Interest in Summer Games Drawing	Vaccine received	Date of last dose	Dietary Restrictions
		Swimming ▾		Summer Games ▾	▾		
		▾		▾	▾		
		▾		▾	▾		
		▾		▾	▾		

Sport Specific Tab

Event 1	Event 1 - Time	Personal Best - Time	Event 2	Event 2 - Time	Personal Best - Time	Event 3	Event 3 - Time	Personal Best - Time	Non Diving/Outer Lane
25 Yard Freestyle - Traditional ▾	12.05.05		25 Yard Backstroke - Tradition ▾	12.05.05		25 Yard Breaststroke - Traditic ▾	12.05.05		ND ▾
▾			▾			▾			▾
▾			▾			▾			▾
▾			▾			▾			▾

SOPA Website - Sports Offered Page



Links to all the sport pages

- [Sports Offered](#)
- [Seasonal Sign-up](#)

Sport specific resources:

- Warm-Up/Cool Down resources
- PDF & recording of this webinar
- Link to Sport Rules/SOI Resources
- Scoresheets
- Best Practices

[Athletics](#) >

[Basketball](#) >

[Equestrian](#) >

[Golf](#) >

[Gymnastics](#) >

[Softball](#) >

[Swimming \(Aquatics\)](#) >

[Tennis](#) >

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](#)



Medication Reminders - All events

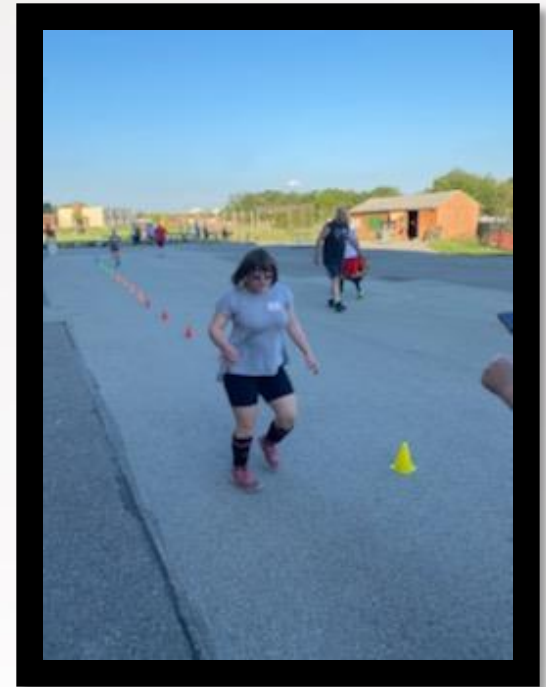


- **FORMS:** Medication Assistance Best Practices, Consent Form and Tracker - forms are located on SOPA website: <https://specialolympicspa.org/get-involved/resource-library>
- Coaches should be sharing this information with athletes, parents/guardians prior to all full day or overnight events. SOPA 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.

Athlete Performance Training (APT)



- APT is an in-season fitness program.
- Health education and fitness evaluations are embedded into sports practice for 8-weeks.
- Athlete Performance Training happens on the field of play.
- Any sport, any size team should implement.
- **Physical fitness is a key part of the Special Olympics mission. Physical activity, adequate nutrition and hydration enhance athletes' sports performance and improve health and overall quality of life.**



Athlete Performance Training Outcomes



- APT works!
- Since the start of APT in Fall 2023 over **22%** have seen an improvement in their fitness assessment,
- **14.5%** of athletes who participated in APT have seen an improvement in their weight.
- Of those athletes who have participated and whose blood pressure was taken, over **16%** saw an improvement in their results by the end of the season.

Athlete Performance Training



Interested Coaches

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

How to sign-up

- **Contact Charla Stein, cstein@specialolympicspa.org**
- Watch a short 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

2024 Sectional & State Events

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Qualifiers

- Basketball (3x3, 5v5, individual skills)
- **Golf (all levels including individual skills)**
- Tennis (all levels including individual skills)
- Softball (team and individual skills)
 - Athletes/Unified Partners are not required to attend Sectional to participate in State Games.
 - All athletes **MUST** have competition at the local, regional level before competition in a State Games

Spring Sectionals



- West: Carnegie Mellon University
 - Saturday April 20th

- Central: Saint Francis University
 - Sunday, April 28th
 - Athletics will be held at Central Cambria HS



- East: Kutztown University
 - Saturday May 4th



[2024 Competition Calendar: Important Dates](#)

Summer Games: June 6 - 8th



- Penn State University
- Important Dates:
 - Reg Info: Will be out by **4/12**
 - LOI: Due **5/2**
 - Final Allocations: **5/3**
 - VSys Rosters: Due **5/7**
 - Google links sent: **5/9**
 - Registration: Due **5/16**
 - Scratch/Activation: Due **5/30**
- **Arrival 6/8, 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.**
- **Departure 6/10 3 – 6 p.m.**



Sport Rule Updates

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Outdoor Weather – Golf, Tennis, & Equestrian



Every time you see lightening or hear thunder



practice and take shelter for 30 minutes!

Remember every time you see lightening or
hear thunder!



Equestrian

Sport Director – Megan Hance

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New Rule Book!



<https://resources.specialolympics.org/sports-essentials/sports-and-coaching/equestrian?locale=en>



English Equitation



- 13.3.2.3 A Level – walk/canter/trot (**removed trot/canter/trot**)
- 13.3.3 Halt (4-6 seconds) from walk or trot (**removed canter**)
- 13.3.10. Change leads at the trot, demonstrating a simple or interrupted change of leads. (**removed canter**)
- 13.3.11 Figure-8 at the canter (circles between 15–20m), demonstrating the correct lead on the circles with a simple change of lead as the rider moves from circle to circle. **The canter change will be over trot.**

English Working Trail



14.3.2.2 Serpentine obstacles at a walk or trot .

Removed Canter

Reading Dressage



Please remember when ready Dressage instructions to read the entire element as a section.

Horses



You were sent a Horse Survey by Sports Director
Megan Hance

Please respond to Megan by February 17th.

At this time, we do not have enough horses for all
the athletes planning on attending the Games.

Please speak to your home barns to see if they will
allow you to bring a horse or two.

No Horse = No Athletes

We all need to work together to make it happen

Gymnastics

Sport Director – Casey Skoglund

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Gymnastics



<https://resources.specialolympics.org/sports-essentials/sports-and-coaching/gymnastics/rhythmic-gymnastics>



<https://resources.specialolympics.org/sports-essentials/sports-and-coaching/gymnastics/womens-artistic-gymnastics-2019-2027>



Rule Books



Artistic -

No rules changes.

Rules are good from 2019 to 2027

Rhythmic – Updates



General Information:

- Location of **new routines**: [Rhythmic Gymnastics \(specialolympics.org\)](https://www.specialolympics.org)
- **Written directions will be available soon!** If in conflict with videos – Use videos.
- **Floor Routine: Required event that receives a participation ribbon and is does not count towards all around!**
 - **In 2024** = New Event Floor Routine – WILL NOT be offered.
 - **In 2025** = New Event Floor Event is Optional – Unless it is a World Games year, then athletes wishing to try to qualify must perform the routine.
 - **In 2026** = New Event Floor Routine is MANDATORY.

Rhythmic Update



- **Instructions in Music**
 - **In 2024** – If an athlete uses words in their music, it is a **4 pt. Deduction for each routine that words are used.**
 - **Sports Management Team recommendation, ONLY IN 2024** – If the athlete does not use the instructions in their music, they will receive a **2 pt bonus for each routine.**
 - **The SMT would like to see the athlete focus fully learning one routine before starting the next.**
 - *****The athlete can still lose 4 pts if the coach does the routine alongside or in front of the athlete**
- **All-Around**
 - Level A, B, and C in the rulebook does not have all-around.
 - **The SMT recommended that all-around awards should be awarded to athletes who do all four routines. This way each athlete can earn 5 medals (or ribbons). This was approved.**
 - Levels 1, 2, and 3 have all-around



Rhythmic Update

Level A – Wheelchair or Sitting

Gender: Male and Female

Events: 4 routines + All Around

Routines:

- 2024 and 2025 - **Hoop, Clubs, Ribbon, Rope**
- 2026 and 2027 - **Hoop, Clubs, Ribbon, Ball**
- 2028 to 2031 - Athletes Choice for Ball or Rope

Level B – Standing

Gender: Male and Female

Events: 4 routines + All Around

Routines:

- 2024 and 2025 - **Hoop, Clubs, Ribbon, Rope**
- 2026 and 2027 - **Hoop, Clubs, Ribbon, Ball**
- 2028 to 2031 - Athletes Choice for Ball or Rope



Rhythmic Update

Level C

Gender: **Female**

Events: 4 routines + All Around

Routines:

- 2024 and 2025 - **Hoop, Ball, Ribbon, Rope**
- 2026 and 2027 - **Hoop, Ball, Ribbon, Clubs + Floor Routine**
- 2028 to 2031 - Athletes Choice - Clubs or Rope

Level C

Gender: **Male**

Events: 4 routines + All Around

Routines:

- 2024 and 2025 - Rope, **Clubs, Rings, Ball**
- 2026 and 2027 - Sticks, **Clubs, Rings, Ball + Floor Routine**
- 2028 to 2031 - Athletes Choice - Rope and Stick

Rhythmic Update



Level 1

Gender: **Male and Female**

Events: 4 routines + All Around

Routines:

- 2024 and 2025 - **Rope, Ball, Ribbon**, Clubs
- 2026 and 2027 - **Rope, Ball, Ribbon**, Hoop + **Floor Routine**
- 2028 to 2031 - Athletes Choice for Clubs or Hoop

Level 2

Gender: **Female**

Events: 4 routines + All Around

Routines:

- 2024 and 2025 - **Hoop, Clubs, Ribbon**, Rope
- 2026 and 2027 - Hoop, Clubs, Ribbon, Ball + **Floor Routine**
- 2028 to 2031 - Athletes Choice for Ball or Rope

Rhythmic Update



Level 3

Gender: **Female**

Events: 4 routines + All Around

Routines:

- 2024 and 2025 - **Ball, Clubs, Ribbon, Rope**
- 2026 and 2027 - **Ball, Clubs, Ribbon, Hoop + Floor Routine**
- 2028 to 2031 - Athletes Choice for Hoop or Rope

Need Equipment



cs@rhythmicgymnastics.com

Gymnastics



Next Training:

- Gymnastics Artistic and Rhythmic
- Saturday, February 10th Beaver County
- 1:30 pm

Anyone else need a training?

Golf

Sport Director – Chuck Jones

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New Rule Book!



<https://resources.specialolympics.org/sports-essentials/sports-and-coaching/golf>



Reminders



- No Slow Play
- Practice Distances with your Athletes

Training

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Be Prepared for the Season!

- 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.

Air Quality



If air quality levels are in an Unhealthy Zone (151) or above, no outdoor activities should occur (social or active); as indicated within the documents these activities should be rescheduled or moved indoors.



You can monitor Air Quality levels at <https://www.airnow.gov/> enter your location and the current status will be provided.



You can use this [Air Quality Guide](#) document as an overall reference.

Athlete as Coach



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

- Link to [Athlete as a Coach Webinar](#)

[Athlete as Coach Request form](#) to be completed by athletes who wish to apply to be trained as a coach

[Athlete as Coach FAQ](#)

Questions contact: Jordan Schubert, jschubert@specialolympicspa.org

Coaching Requirements



- **As of January 2021, Coach requirements for **training and competition:****
- **Team Sports:**
 - Must have at least one (1) certified coach per team
- **Individual Sport (and Skills):**
 - Must have at least one (1) certified coach per 25 athletes



Get Certified!



SUMMER SPORTS

Athletics, Basketball, Golf, Gymnastics, Equestrian, Softball, Swimming, and Tennis

- Coach trainings will be held regionally based on need
- **If you need coaches trained let your Regional Sports Director know ASAP**
- Trainings are currently being scheduled for February/March, check the SOPA Website and SOPA Coaches Facebook page for announcements – these will also be shared in the Weekly Team Leader email
- **Training School registration will now be done within survey format, no longer within the Vsys portal**
- Registration will close Wednesday at 11:59pm prior to Saturday or Sunday training. You MUST register to attend.

Continuing Education Update



- **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](#).

Job Description and Levels of Responsibility



HEAD COACH:

- Certified in the sport
- Supervises all coaches and athletes
- Responsible for equipment, transportation, and lodging
- Develops **practice plans** and assigns duties to Assistant Coaches
- Check athlete medical and volunteer Class A
- Completes all required paperwork (competition, training numbers)

ASSISTANT COACH:

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

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

Coaching Progression



Certified Coach

- Class A volunteer with at least 1 sport certification

Bronze

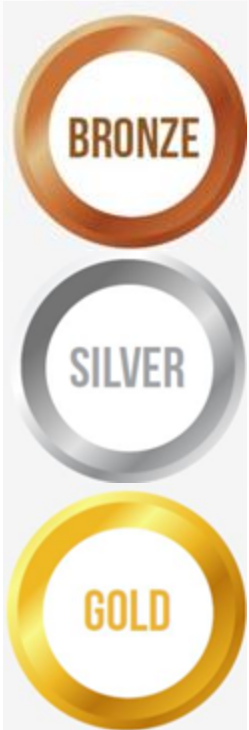
- Adds: Athlete Performance Training activation, personal best performance goals, **Coaching Special Olympics Athletes** course

Silver

- Adds: Athlete goal setting, training minimum of 10 weeks, **Principles of Coaching** course, **Coaching Unified Sports**

Gold

- Adds: advanced sport skills course, training at least twice a week for minimum of 10 weeks, develop year-round training/wellness plan for athletes



Improving Communication



Closed Facebook Group for Coaches:

- 100% Optional
- Direct connection to coaches
- Share Competition Information/Reminders
- Share Training/Coaching Tips
- Encourage sharing of best practices between coaches
- Q&A
- [Coach Page](#)



☺ Which SOPA local program do you coach for?

☺ What sport/sports do you coach?

**THANK YOU
COACHES!!!**

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