

Coaches' Roles for Training & Competition

Policy:

All (area/county/city) Special Olympics Pennsylvania programs will ensure that a no less than 1 coach/chaperone for every 4 Special Olympics athletes ratio is maintained at all times for training and competition. This includes but is not limited to transportation to and from any event. This is the minimum requirement of Special Olympics, Incorporated. In order to ensure the safety of all participants, coaches should not have any other responsibility or role while acting as a coach/chaperone within this 1:4 ratio. This includes but is not limited to performing dual roles during training and competition as a Unified Sports™ Partner or parent.

Rationale:

It has been brought to SOPA's attention that many coaches have additional responsibilities during training and competition. This could result in serious consequences to an athlete(s) or to the coach/organization due to lack of supervision or distraction caused by too many responsibilities. We understand that many of our volunteers have many "life" responsibilities that may limit their ability to attend without bringing children, etc. However, we cannot allow this practice for the safety of all involved (athletes, family members, coaches, etc.). We encourage family members' attendance with other chaperoning arrangements made outside of the 1:4 ratio.

Procedure:

All programs will register coaches in one role only for competition and ensure that coaches have their sole focus as coach at training. If necessary, "alternate" coaches should be registered in case the coach needs to step down as coach at a competition to take on another role such as a player or parent. Programs will not be allowed to register Unified Sports™ Partners as coaches. The 1:4 coach/partner ratio is not necessary for adult Unified Sports™ Partners.

Programs may also register coaches as delegation volunteers outside of the 1:4 ratio and pay the extra fee per delegation volunteer per night for that event so they may assist other coaches whose sole attention is with their athletes. A delegation volunteer is any added volunteer without coaching responsibility who has necessary delegation duties over and above the 1:4 ratio such as bus driver, nurse, horse handler, side walker, group home chaperone, etc. The need for this delegation volunteer must be approved by the SOPA Liaison and must be able to chaperone athletes (i.e. delegation volunteers cannot be children). This volunteer must have a current CRC on file with the local program to be registered. Delegation volunteers, like all coaches, are roomed with other coaches at events and cannot have single housing to share with family members or bring family members not part of the delegation to stay in delegation

housing. However, the delegation volunteer may decide to stay in family housing. Please remember that this option will restrict the delegation volunteer's accessibility for assistance to the athletes.

Finally, we encourage all family members to register for events. They will be responsible for payment of their own housing, food, or any other associated costs. They may register as one-day volunteers and specify delegation assignment to provide additional support to teams in addition to coaches within the 1:4 ratio.

Programs who bring unregistered guests (i.e. family members) of registered coaches for the purpose of coaches chaperoning them (who are within the 1:4 ratio) will be directed to stop the activity and a misconduct report will be completed. Arrangements for home transportation will be finalized. This transportation will be the responsibility of the program in violation.

After a complete review and verification of the circumstances by the manager of the "home" program, the Event Liaison and the President of SOPA, and it is determined that the coach/volunteer/local program did in fact cause the deception intentionally, the parties involved may be removed from our volunteer listing for no less than one year.

A letter stating the consequences will be sent by the President or by an assigned staff member to the individual and copies will be sent to appropriate parties (i.e. SOPA Ineligible Volunteer File, SOPA Event Liaison, Event Contact Person for local program, Local Program Manager, SOPA Field Director, etc.)